

by a sheaf of double-columned extracts from Reviews— not always the least curious of its singular contents. Here, for example, is a protest against the intrusion of the British muse on the free soil of the States of the Union, which must surely satisfy the most clamant demand for native poetics and republican egotism :

“What very properly fits a subject of the British crown, may fit very ill an American freeman. No fine romance, no inimitable delineation of character, no grace of delicate illustrations, no rare picture of shore or mountain or sky, no deep thought of the intellect, is so important to a man as his opinion of himself is ; everything receives its tinge from that. In the verse of all those undoubtedly great writers, *Shakespeare, just as much as the rest*, there is the air which to America is the air of death. The mass of the people, the laborers and all who serve, are slag, refuse. The countenances of kings and great lords are beautiful ; the countenances of mechanics are ridiculous and deformed. What play of Shakespeare represented in America, is not an insult to America, to the marrow in its bones ? How can the tone—never silent in their plots and characters—be applauded, unless Washington should have been caught and hung, and Jefferson was the most enormous of liars, and common persons, North and South, should bow low to their betters, and to organic superiority of blood ? Sure as the heavens envelop the earth, if the Americans want a race of bards worthy of 1855, and of the stern reality of this republic, they must cast around for men essentially different from the old poets, and from the modern successions of jinglers and snivellers and fops.”—and here accordingly is something essentially different from all poets, both old and new.

The poet, unnamed on his title page, figures on his frontispiece, and unmistakeably utters his own poem :

“I celebrate myself,
And what I assume, you shall assume ;
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.
I loafe, and invite my soul ;
I lean and loafe at my ease—
Observing a spear of Summer grass.”

Such is the starting point of this most eccentric and republican of poets ; of whom the republican critic above quoted, after contrasting with him Tennyson, as “The bard of ennui, and the aristocracy and their combination into love, the old stock love of playwrights and romancers, Shakespeare, the same as the rest,”—concludes by confessing his inability to decide whether Walt Whitman is “to prove the