

for many years with Dr. James L. Hughes and Dr. A. D. Watson). He then wanted me to meet his wife and many of his friends—It was a memorable three hours. “Flora go right ahead, you will be up against snags. Your best friends will desert you or be indifferent to your work, but go right ahead and I’ll help you. Why the whole thing is magnificent. Canada’s Gibraltar a monument to Walt. Don’t let anything switch you.” I gave Horace a rose-point handkerchief made by a Blood Nun in Belgium for his wife and the letter I received from Anne Montgomerie, thanking me is among the best I have ever received. I have several precious letters from Horace and souvenirs of Walt and I met him again in 1917 at the Whitman dinner in New York. He had sadly changed even then. In August 1918 I went to see him at the home of Frank and Mildred Bain in Hamilton. I felt then that the end was in sight and as though he divined my thought he said “Flora I’ll be at Bon Echo and do anything you want me to next year except make a speech.” In August of 1919 Horace was at Bon Echo and did everything I wanted him to do, including the making of a remarkable speech and here this story begins.

The delightful friendship that existed between Frank and Mildred Bain and Horace Traubel is one of those happenings in life worth while to have contacted—not at all the devotion of a young couple for an older man, not at all. It was comradeship of the chummiest kind. It was jokes and stories and the great joy of just being together. They were all “at home” with each other and Horace’s life work was their life work.

Mildred Bain and her two children Betty and Paul had come to Bon Echo early in the season.

Mildred had accepted the secretarial job of the Whitman Club of Bon Echo and many well-known and distinguished people were expected to attend the Whitman Centennial Convention, among whom the most important was Horace Traubel, Whitman’s biographer, Whitman’s eyes, ears, hands and feet for so many years. Whitman’s friend and chum—the man of all men to make any Centennial Celebration of Whitman a success. Frank Bain was in Cuba. Horace Traubel and Anne were at Karsner’s in New York. Hot sweltering July it was and almost every day letters came to Mildred from Horace who often enclosed notes to me. Sometimes only a few words such as “All in—too weak to write” or “Anne collapsed to-day, the heat here is terrible.”

It did look as though Horace would never be at Bon Echo. About four o’clock on August 4th an auto drove into Bon Echo. Welcome Home was over the door with a Union Jack on one side and Old Glory on the other.

In the auto were Frank Bain, Dave Cummings, Anne Montgomerie and Horace Traubel.

Just the skeleton of Horace—but such a head, I shall never forget the exquisitely modeled death-like face, the shaggy bundles of snow-white hair and the wondrous blue eyes, now seemingly