

St., Camden. At that time, I lived with my parents on West Street, a few blocks below. I got to know Walt from the first, because no one needed an introduction. He had a cheerful "Howdy" for everybody. His commanding and benignant personality attracted attention, and I soon realized that I had become acquainted with the most interesting human being that I had ever seen or ever expected to see. Our friendship soon ripened and deepened. In 1876, I was sufficiently acquainted with him to ask him for letters of introduction to be used on my first trip to England in that year. It would be a long story to narrate our lengthened acquaintance. When he came to Camden, death and he were near neighbours, but rest, the ministrations of loving friends and the days and months lived in the open at Timber Creek partially restored his health, and the sunset of his life lasted for nineteen years. It was after he had bought his Mickle Street "shack" and lived in his own home that the devotees became more numerous and this Mickle Street house, became a shrine, where the rich and poor, the great and the humble were welcomed with equal comradeship. If he had any preference, it was for children and for the sons of toil. He knew all the car-drivers and deck-hands on the ferry-boats by name, and was interested in their welfare. He was the most familiar figure on the streets of Camden and Philadelphia, and was universally beloved, although very few of them knew him as an author. After I was married he was a frequent visitor at my home, and I arranged a dinner party almost every Sunday, where it was our great joy to entertain him and his friends, coming as they did, from all parts of the world. Horace Traubel, in his books, "With Walt Whitman in Camden," has given a faithful record of these Camden days, and every Whitman lover should possess a copy of this most wonderful biography in the language. Probably, Traubel was on more intimate and spiritual terms with Walt than any other person, and he has given him a lifetime of unsurpassing devotion. To go into details would require unlimited space and I can only give the briefest outline of these halycon days, which meant so much to me and my family.

The visits ceased, but the visitor always remained. I loved Whitman long before I fully appreciated his mission. This sense of appreciation is a never-ending growth. That "Leaves of Grass" is the basis of a new spiritual acceptance of the Universe, entirely consistent with modern science I firmly believe. I knew this man intimately and I can testify to the entire consistency of his life mission. He was as true a prophet as ever trod this planet. Every heart throb beat in unison with the great heart of humanity. To him, this life was serious business, and he labored here, set and incarnated example here of life and death. Peacefully, joyously, he met his translation. I was with him when he "crossed the bar," when his robust soul, erect before a thousand universes, glided noiselessly forth—this great democrat of earth—without lamentation joining in the song of the Elder Prophet: "Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me."