

Miss Grace Blackburn

Miss Grace Blackburn of the London Free Press, gave a remarkably clever and well-thought out paper at the Whitman supper on the analogy of Whitman and Rodin.

Not only was her address brilliant, but it was delivered in a most convincing way.

Hers would be the popular appeal and the majority might agree with her. If freedom in handling mediums be an analogy then Whitman handles language with the same free abandon that Rodin handles clay.

If disdain for all pre-conceived acceptations of precedents be an analogy, Whitman and Rodin can be pigeon-holed in the same class.

But when method, technique in outward handling, all external modes and the impression made by sense perception be eliminated, there the analogy ends and we find the thought result an antithesis instead of an analogy.

Rodin's "Eve," with bent head is not Whitman's "A Woman Waits For Me." Rodin's "Hand of God" is not Whitman's "To Be Indeed a God," and Rodin's masterpiece "The Thinker" does not tally with Whitman's "I know well that whatever is really Me shall live."

When I was in Paris the year before the War, I spent much time before that great statue "The Thinker," in front of the Pantheon, and I said here is Ingersoll in Bronze—here is the great Agnostic—after all the centuries, after all the "Long reaches of the peaks of Song," these two master-men proclaimed to a waiting world—"I do not Know."

Then when I stood long and long before the Venus of Milo in the Louvre and watched the lights and shadows play about that most wondrous of all statues, watched the calm poise of absolute balance, watched to see where those thinking eyes were looking, I felt they had Cosmic knowledge, that there was there NO DOUBT—they really knew and I said here is "Whitman in Marble."

This conclusion shows the many sided appeal of Whitman's message.

In outward form—Whitman and Rodin—Yes.

In spiritual insight, in cosmic consciousness—Whitman and the sculptor of the Venus of Milo.