

“ Great is life. . . and real and mystical. . . wherever and whoever,
 Great is death. . . . sure as life holds all parts together, death holds all parts
 together ;
 Sure as the stars return again after they merge in the light, death is greater
 than life.”

Such are some of the “ Leaves of Grass,” of the Brooklyn poet who describes himself on one of them as :

“ Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a Kosmos !”

But if the reader—recognising true poetry in some of these,—should assume such a likeness running through the whole as pertains to the blades of Nature’s Grass, we disclaim all responsibility if he find reason to revise his fancy.

In the two very diverse volumes under review it seems to us that we have in the one the polish of the artist, which can accomplish so much when applied to the gem or rich ore ; in the other we discern the ore, but overlaid with the valueless matrix and foul rubbish of the mine, and devoid of all the unveiling beauties of art. Viewed in such aspects these poems are characteristic of the age. From each we have striven to select what appeared most worthy of the space at command, and best calculated to present them to the reader in the most favorable point of view consistent with truth. And so we leave the reader to his own judgment, between the old-world stickler for authority, precedent, and poetical respectability, and the new-world contemner of all authorities, laws, and respectabilities whatsoever. Happily for us, all choice is not necessarily limited to these. The golden mean of poesie does not, we imagine, lie between such extremes. There are not a few left, both in England and in America, for whom old Shakspeare is still respectable enough, and poetical enough;—aye and free enough too, in spite of all the freedom which has budded and bloomed since that year 1616, when his sacred ashes were laid beneath the chancel stone whose curse still guards them from impious hands. Nevertheless we have faith in the future. We doubt not even the present. When a greater poet than Shakspeare does arrive we shall not count him an impossibility.

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