

Whitman's Vitality To-day

Written for the Sunset of Bon Echo

By Henry S. Saunders.

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of his essay on Whitman: "I cannot help feeling that in this attempt to trim my sails between an author whom I love and honor and a public too averse to recognize his merit, I have been led into a tone unbecoming from one of my stature to one of Whitman's . . . I had written another paper full of gratitude for the help that had been given me in my life, full of enthusiasm for the intrinsic merit of the poems . . . " and he speaks of the result of the rewritten essay as "cold, constrained and grudging. In short, I might almost everywhere have spoken more strongly than I did."

Emerson also seems to be open to the charge of tempering his words to make them more palatable for the public. A writer in a recent number of "Poetry" magazine, says: "I have found that before his essays were published, they were trimmed and shorn"—made safe for New England democracy; "I mixed them with a little Boston water, so they would sell in New York and London"; these are Emerson's own words.

This attitude of Emerson's toward the public is verified by the record in "Specimen Days," of the talk he and Whitman had on Boston Common. Whitman says: "During those two hours, he was the talker and I the listener. It was an argument-statement, reconnoitring, review, attack, and pressing home . . . of all that could be said against that part (and a main part) in the construction of my poems, "Children of Adam. . ." "What have you to say then to such things?" said Emerson, pausing in conclusion. (Whitman replied) 'Only that while I can't answer them at all, I feel more settled than ever to adhere to my own theory, and exemplify it'."

Contrast the attitude of Stevenson and Emerson to Whitman's! His fearlessness and stability of purpose are what make "Leaves of Grass" so vital to-day, and just because he remained true to that purpose, in spite of advice and opposition from almost every quarter, he is admitted, in ever widening circles to be a great torch-bearer for humanity.

How I Met Walt Whitman

Written for the Sunset of Bon Echo

By Thomas B. Harned.

Walt Whitman came to live in Camden, N.J., in the year 1873. He was poor, prematurely old, and partially paralyzed. This condition was largely the result of his large-hearted devotion to the sick and wounded soldiers in the hospitals, in and around Washington, D.C. His brother, George Whitman, a high-class expert on gas and water pipe, had accumulated a competence and welcomed Walt to his home at the corner of West and Stevens