

Uncle Walt

The Human Head

THE GREATEST gift the gods bestowed on mortal was his dome of thought; it sometimes seems a useless load, when one is tired, and worn and hot; it sometimes seems a trifling thing, less useful than one's lungs or slats; a mere excuse, it seems, to bring us duns from men who deal in hats. Some men appreciate their heads, and use them wisely every day, and every passing minute sheds new splendor on their upward way; while some regard their heads as junk, mere idle knobs upon their necks; such men are nearly always sunk in failure, and are gloomy wrecks. I know a clerk who's served his time in one old store for twenty-years; he's marked his fellows climb, and climb—and marked with jealousy and tears; he's labored there since he was young; he'll labor there till he is dead; he never rose a single rung, because he never used his head. I know a poorhouse in the vale, where fifty-seven paupers stay; they paw the air and weep and wail, and cuss each other all the day; and there they'll loll while life endures, and there they'll die in pauper beds; their chances were as good as yours—but then they never used their heads. O human head! Majestic box! O wondrous can, from labels free! If man is craving fame or rocks, he'll get them if he uses thee!