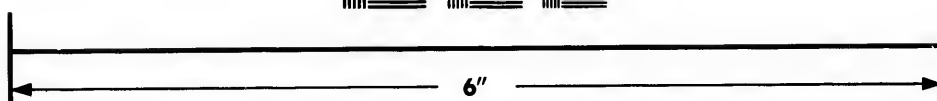
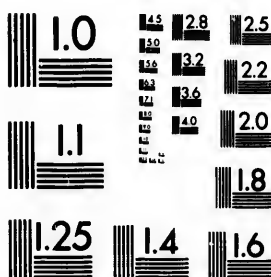


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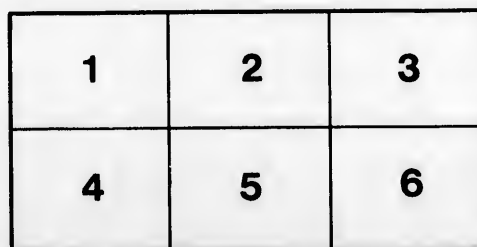
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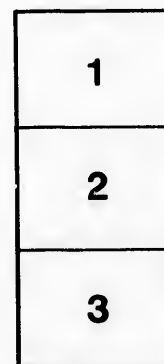
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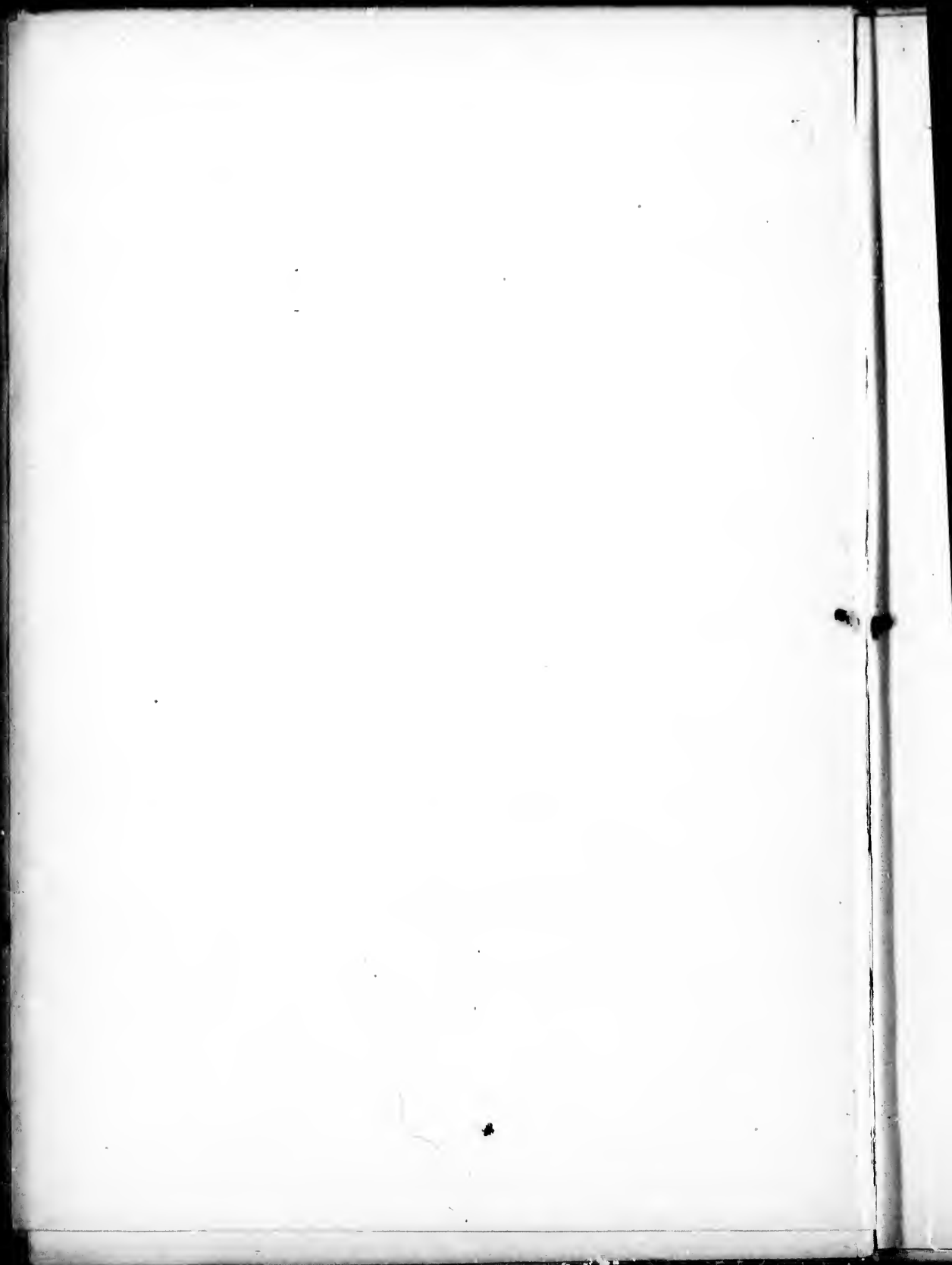
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IN RE WALT WHITMAN



IN RE WALT WHITMAN: EDITED BY HIS
LITERARY EXECUTORS, HORACE L.
TRAUBEL, RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE,
THOMAS B. HARNED

"Now, though this great country is seen to deserve in many ways the wonder of mankind, and is held to be well worth visiting, rich in all good things, guarded by large force of men, yet seems it to have held within it nothing more glorious than this man, nothing more holy, marvellous and dear. The verses, too, of his godlike genius, cry with a loud voice, and set forth in such wise his glorious discoveries that he hardly seems born of a mortal stock."—LUCRETIVS.

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1893

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.....

A FIRST AND LAST WORD.

A LETTER written by Walt Whitman to Dr. Bucke, in September, 1888, read thus :

"Of late I have two or three times occupied spells of an hour or two hours by running over with best & alertest sense, & mellowed & ripened by five years, your 1883 book (biographical & critical) about me & L of G—& my very deliberate & serious mind to you is that you *let it stand just as it is*—& if you have anything farther to write or print, book shape, you do so in an *additional* or further annex (of say 100 pages to its present 236 ones) leaving the present 1883 vol. intact. as it is, any verbal errors excepted—& the further pages as (mainly) reference to and furthermore etc. of *the original vol*—the text, O'C's letters, the appendix—every page of the 236 left as now—this is my spinal and deliberate request—the *conviction* the main thing—the details & reasons not put down."

The present volume may be regarded in the light of the "Annex" foreseen by Walt Whitman. And this is especially permissible since, as a matter of fact, Whitman shared during his lifetime in some of our earlier preparations, and on all occasions referred to the scheme as one that "seemed necessary to the fuller elucidation of the critter and the cause."

A distinguished American critic, into whose hand fell our original announcement, in which we referred to the book as "a darling project" of Walt Whitman himself, remarked: "It is

(v)

curious, anyway. I could not imagine Whittier, for instance, as ever sharing or having anything to do with 'a darling project' that concerned his own fame." But as good reasons as would have made Whittier abstain did induce Whitman to avow his concern.

Whitman had cosmic breadth and port. His "Leaves" foliage the heavens. He was so complicated with all men and all phenomena that his very voice partook of the sway of elemental integrity and candor. Nature has not shame nor vainglory, nor had he, and there was never a breath of distrust in his utterances from first to last. Absolutely candid, he was absolutely unafraid. "Leaves of Grass" has a tone peculiarly its own and strange in all the annals of literary creation. Whitman speaks in it as would heaven, making unalterable announcements, oracular of the mysteries and powers that pervade and guide all life, all death, all purpose.

His consistent and uncompromising acceptance of the individual was necessary, since any color or show of personal abasement must have shaken faith in his own revelation. Therefore could he say to us on his death-bed: "Go on with the book—let it tell its story. Its victory will not be mine, yours—any particular man's victory: it will be a victory of fact, of evolution, of religion. . . . Why, then, should we be apologetic, supplicating?—why hesitate to speak bravely out, not fearing to be set aside by the shameless modesties that in our civilization often pass for virtues?"

This cluster of written matter—abstract, descriptive, anecdotal, biographical, statistical, poetic—in effect supplements the volume produced years ago by Dr. Bucke under Whitman's counsel and credit. The aim has been to avoid having the two volumes repeat each other. Each contributes a part, and the two together

present a measurably complete and flowing narrative. Whitman again advised us: "The main thing is to make the picture true. The rest will take care of itself—the rest must surely follow."

These pages, then, are variously charged, but with a burden whose import is purely according to Whitman's wish and expectation. The main part of the matter is new. Some of it is republished from inaccessible sources, because it may have more than temporary importance. Some of it comes for the first time into English by the hands of translators. As the work has been planned and has grown it becomes in effect a fresh gift, in which even repetition brings life again.

Whitman always insisted that his book should be recognized as something apart from or more than a literary performance. He spoke of it as "a cause." And he claimed that it was a cause in which all were interested, and that if his book failed to speak for all, or failed to make one voice of many voices, it had failed of its motive and aim. "First the human, then the literary," was his declared maxim.

There are certain essays here included which he intended using in his latest volume, and the design of this book really arose from our vehement objection to such a course as the one he proposed. Why violate the integrity of his own work with that of another, be this other however excellent? In the end he saw that we were right. But before the matter was concluded we had struck upon the notion that a volume made up to include the several articles so much esteemed by Whitman as interpretations of his history, and such other chapters as would broaden the measure of the picture, would have an importance not to be over-esteemed. Along through 1891, and even down to his death, Whitman discussed with us all plans and propositions. His sickness delayed our progress. But on his death-bed he frequently re-

verted to our earlier ideas and charged that they should "in some way be fulfilled." Once a friend laughingly rallied him: "You could not take more interest in this book if it was about some other person!" He laughed and responded with a question: "Is it not about some other person? It is about all the Mes with which the 'Leaves' will be finally concerned." Furthermore, he counselled: "Let it be personal—very near, very intimate: don't be afraid to make it personal, don't be afraid to let yourselves out!"

And so we complete the offering, as partly from his hand and partly from our own. We have not sought to be literary nor feared to be personal. "Dr. Bucke's book strikes no uncertain note as far as it goes," said Whitman, "but since Bucke spoke out other interests have appeared and have needed utterers. The new book will amplify the old—the two, taken together, will round the story."

Whitman's death in no sense affected our general scheme. It induced us to add considerable matter descriptive of his last days, and it seemed to give finish to a book which might under other conditions have appeared fragmentary and unsatisfactory.

And so this sheaf of wheat, this foodstuff for the future, this prodigal of earth and sky, is dedicated and sent forth.

CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY,
September 1, 1893.

H T

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LOVE AND DEATH : A SYMPHONY.*

By JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

First Movement.

Too long have I refrained : too long are dumb
The preludings of passionate prophecy.—
Blare of triumphant trumpet, fife, and drum
Startles my musing soul's monotony.—
A mightier spirit than my own controls
The storm of turbulent thoughts that surge in me.
Phoebos Apollon ! the fierce thunder rolls ;
The bickering flames descend ; my sails are driven
Forth to the sea, whereof the waves are souls,
Whose flux and reflux between Hell and Heaven
Are Love and Death, twin brothers !—

Bard sublime,
To whom the keys of mysteries are given,
Throned in thine orb, fulfilling Space and Time,
Noting the world's words with unerring ear !
How shall I dare in this ephemeral rhyme
To tell what thou hast taught me, to unsphere
The new-born star, thy planet, the desire
Of nations faltering in a night of fear,—
More marvellous than Phosphor or the fire
Of Hesperus love-lorn, not less divine
Than that first splendor from the angelic choir
Flashed on poor shepherd-folk in Palestine ?

* To the prophet poet of Democracy. Religion, Love, this verse, a feeble echo of his song, is dedicated.

Thou dost establish—and our hearts receive—
New laws of Love to link and intertwine
Majestic peoples; Love to weld and weave
Comrade to comrade, man to bearded man,
Whereby indissoluble hosts shall cleave
Unto the primal truths republican.

Not therefore is our worship less to thee,
First Muse and mistress of the primeval Pan,
Nurse of the seedlings of Humanity!
Thou shrined within our inmost spirit's core,
Mother and Mate and Sister, One and Three!
Thou to the altar steps of heaven didst soar,
Madonna, maiden mystery, whose womb
Made man and God one flesh for evermore.
Nay, not the less art thou life's beauty-bloom,
Bride, whom we seek and cleave to!—Though afar,
Half buried in dim mist and murky spume,
We watch the rising of thy brother star,
Imperious, awful, vague in night, whose rays,
Mingled of azure hues and cinnabar,
Shed hope and fear on the dim water-ways.
Friend, Brother, Comrade, Lover! last and best!
That from this dull diurnal strife dost raise
My panting soul to thy celestial rest!
How holy are the heavens when thou art near!
I soar, I float, I rock me on thy breast;
The music of thy melodies I hear;
I see thee aureoled with living light
Lean from the lustrous rondure of thy sphere,
Ethereal, disembodied; whom the blight
Of warping passion hath no power to tame;
Who fearest not with eye serenely bright
To gaze on death and sorrow and mortal shame—
For who art Thou to tremble or turn pale,
Whose life is Love eternally the same?

How shall I praise Thee? with what voice prevail
 O'er legion'd heretics, that, madly blind,
 Imagining a vain thing, rise and rail
 Against thy sanctity of godhood shrined
 In beauty of white light they may not bear?
 Lo! Thou, even Thou, in thine own time shalt bind
 And break their kings and captains! from thin air
 Forth-flashing fiery-browed and unsubdued,
 Thine athletes shall consume them unaware!
 Yea, even now, like Northern streamers hued
 With radiant roses of the ascendant morn,
 I see thy fierce unfaltering multitude
 Of lovers and of friends in tranquil scorn
 Arise, o'erspread the dusky skies, and drown
 In seas of flame the pallid stars forlorn.

There shall be comrades thick as flowers that crown
 Valdarno's gardens in the morn of May;
 On every upland and in every town
 Their dauntless imperturbable array,
 Serried like links of living adamant
 By the sole law of love their wills obey,
 Shall make the world one fellowship, and plant
 New Paradise for nations yet to be.

O nobler peerage than that ancient vaunt
 Of Arthur or of Roland! Chivalry
 Long sought, last found! Knights of the Holy Ghost!
 Phalanx Immortal! True Freemasonry,
 Building your temples on no earthly coast,
 But with star-fire on souls and hearts of man!
 Stirred from their graves to greet your Sacred Host
 The Theban lovers, rising very wan,
 By death made holy, wave dim palms, and cry:
 "Hail, Brothers! who achieve what we began!"

O Love in Death! O Love that canst not die!

O Death whom Love on wings of steady fire
Piercing to perfect life, doth sanctify !
In vain unto your summits I aspire,
As though from heaven descending I might bring
Flame-words of force to make dull hearts desire
The seething waters of your sacred spring !
Ho ! ye that sigh for freedom, ye that yearn,
Pent in this prison-house of languishing !
Haste to the everlasting fountains : turn
Your trammels of the flesh to yielding air :
Your aching hours, your tears that freeze and burn,
Your dear expense of passionate despair,
Barter for hope unbounded, perfect bliss !
Who swoons for very love, who longs to snare
Two separate souls in one perennial kiss,
To merge the bounds of being, to become
Of twain one sentient shape of blessedness—
Let him seek Death ! There, in that tranquil dome,
Where what we were dissolves, what we must be
Endures regenerate, there the living home
Of Love defies corruptibility.

Second Movement.

Thus far the chords tumultuous through my soul
Swept from the lyre of him, whose solemn chant
Reverberates like midnight thunder-roll
Mid thwarting hills and pinewoods resonant.
Then on my dreaming eyes—as though to base
The promise of the Future against taunt
Or tumult of the turbulent populace—
There rose a vision of the glimmering Past,
Clear, though scarce-seen, like a remembered face.

A city of the Plague, suspense, aghast,
Through all her silent streets and temples dim

With dusky pyre-smoke and with incense cast
In vain to soothe insensible teraphim :—
Black-stoled processions along ways erewhile
Clamorous with Bacchic shout and marriage hymn ;—
With beaten breast, with ominous shriek, they pile
Corpse upon corpse ; then bid the flickering fire,
Lurid on palace-porch and peristyle,
Wrap in one ravening sheet, ascending higher
Than Pallas brazen on the city's brow,
Mother and maid, wife, brother, son and sire.
Day after day they perished. Then, for now
The people were foredone with wasting woe,
Spake the deep-throated prophet :

“ Vow for vow ;
Blood for shed blood ; for blow malignant blow :
Think ye the gods forget ? Think ye the stain
Of sacrilege and slaughter long ago
Spilt to insult the unappeasable fane
Of blood-born, blood-bedewed Eumenides,
Beareth not fruit and blossometh again ?
I tell you, for the crime of Megacles—
Your crime, since who hath purged you ?—like a tree
Springs the dread vengeance of dim goddesses.
Now therefore heed my message : let there be
Ere morning-light two lives of men free-born
By voluntary choice and service free
To death for saving of the city sworn :
Die must they ; this the gods require ; than this
No less shall pluck from Athens' heel the thorn
That rankles and corrodes her comeliness.
Lo ! I have spoken. Take ye now good care :
For like a dream or drop of dew your bliss
Shall surely wither into wandering air,
Till men cry : Here was Athens ! By yon stone
Note where her temples and her houses were !
Unless the debt, exacted now, and grown
Enormous by long lapse, be fully paid ! ”

Thus Epimenides. With muttered moan
The people heard, and bowed faint heads, and laid
Dust on rent raiment, with dull grief distraught.

That eve two lovers in the leafy glade
Of cool Colonos, soothed to solemn thought
By songs the night-bird flung for very mirth,
As though no lurid air weighed fever-fraught
O'er the hushed city and the sickening earth,
Lay merged in dreamings of the doom to be.
Their sounding titles, their resplendent birth,
Their strength, their beauty, their young chivalry,
Shall these be told, or in the noontide blaze
Of their great deed be swallowed utterly?
Ah! wherefore from the Limbo of dead days
Recall thy name, Cratinus? Wherefore dare
To vex thy laurel wreath with wordy praise,
Aristodemus? Noble, valiant, fair,
Of equal youth and honor, for the pride
Of Hellas they arose, a stately pair.
Vast was the love between them—deep and wide
As heaven up-breaking through a myriad spheres:
Sevenfold had it been proved and purified
By yearnings, and by achings, and by tears—
By fierce abstentions, and by fierce recoils
Into the furnace-fire through throbbing years.
Now nobly tempered, from the transient toils
Of sense set free for luminous emprise,
This love, elate, arrayed in radiant spoils,
Shone like a beacon-light from ardent eyes.

"O true and tried!"—

So speech belike arose
Between them, as strong winds in summer rise
With surge Eolian from the rapt repose
Of midnight, to sweep silent lands and fail,
Crying: Dawn comes; the golden gates uncloze;

Before the bridegroom's feet of fire we sail !—
 "O true as beaten brass ! O trebly tried
 As adamantine plates of linked mail !
 Sleep'st thou, or ponderest what the prophet cried ?
 Wherefore should we then live ? The athlete's crown ;
 The warrior's brow with bay leaves glorified ;
 Seats at the hearth-stone of our mother-town ;
 To round and ring the whole, an honoured tomb ;
 These hopes are ours. Were it not well to drown
 These good things in one best ? to pluck the bloom
 Now perfect of young life and love, that ne'er
 Can fill her cup again of pure perfume
 Or spread fresh petals to the nourishing air ?
 This flower once gathered will not die ; no rime
 Shall nip the delicate leaves ; no storm shall bare
 The anthered gold ; no treacherous sap shall climb
 The fragile tubes with husk of hardening fruit
 To choke the fretwork of the fiery prime.
 Who knows—forgive me, Love !—what little root
 Of bitterness might rise to mar our joy ?
 Dimmed eyes, chilled hearts, dry lips with languor mute,
 The years that wither, and the years that cloy,
 These come to other lovers : shall we stay
 To suffer chance and change, our souls destroy ?
 Did not Patroclus die ? Achilles pay,
 Though goddess-born, his life, a little price,
 For love made sure, for fame that flouts decay ?
 Why linger ? Why turn back ? Fix steadfast eyes
 There on the goal of daring ! Is it nought
 That thus fulfilling a fair sacrifice,
 The peace of Athens by our blood be bought ?
 Nought that we shine for ever in pure gold
 At Delphian altars ; that our tale be taught
 On songs from lips of mighty poets rolled,
 To lovers and to longing youths afire
 With sorrow that our sacred dust is cold ?
 Oh ! with what ardent hearts, what proud desire,

Shall those young souls yearn after us—what lays
 Year after year the laurel-wreathéd choir,
 Circling our shrine with hymns and holy praise,
 Shall waft to isles Elysian, where we lie
 Mid lilies and imperishable bays ! ”

In such rapt communing and converse high
 Methinks those lovers lingered, sphere by sphere
 Ascending the celestial galaxy
 Of burning thoughts— : as some rash pioneer,
 Skirting an inaccessible precipice
 Grade over grade, beholds at length the sheer
 Waste of wide heaven unfold, a wilderness
 Of air and light spanning the supine world :
 Thus they on wings out-soaring the abyss
 Of fears and cares and joys diurnal, hurled
 Their souls forth at a venture, sprang like light
 Into ecstatic comet-cycles whirled
 Round heaven's ascendant spirals infinite.
 Growing enamored of the thought of Death,
 They cried :

“ Hail, Death ! Brother of nourishing Night !
 May fails ; the might of summer minisheth ;
 And mortal love endures a little space :
 Nay, even now we draw a dying breath ;
 Our life is one brief flight to thine embrace :
 But thy perennial foison shall not fade ;
 No wrinkles shall corrode thy tranquil face ;
 Nor shall thy blissful slumber be o'erlaid
 With such vain dreams as trouble human sleep.
 Brother of Love ! whose might by thee is made
 More lasting than the adamantine steep
 Of walls Olympian ! unto thee we turn ;
 Into thine ageless hands, to guard and keep,
 We yield these souls unterrified, that burn
 For draughts of cooling from thy sacred lake.
 Thirst deep as ours disdains life's shallow urn ;

While from thy well gods yearn in vain to slake
The lingering fever of immortal hours."

Morn now began to whiten in the wake
Of Phosphor: far athwart dim olive-bowers
Freshened the breeze of dawning: so they rose.
As one with toil forespent, with waning powers,
Forth from the stifling city-tumult goes
In summer to fresh fields and hills serene
For sure rejuvenescence and repose;
So toward the Alps and upland breezes keen,
The snows untroubled and the silver rills,
That death doth hide from life in his demesne,
Those comrades o'er the dew-regenerate hills
Went smiling. Arm in stalwart arm enlaced,
Alike resplendent, and with wedded wills,
They seemed twin Gods, fraternal stars embraced,
Or heroes from red slaughter homeward bound
Of ravening monsters in a dismal waste.
Their tawny curls by summer noons embrowned,
Their limbs athletic, their broad breasts of brass,
With aureoles of the smiting sun were crowned.
So, brushing diamonds from the glimmering grass,
Forth from the fields they paced and toward the shrine
Of Pallas on the city-brow did pass.
There laid they down their lives; there death divine
Made their love perfect in the piety
They bore their mother—Bride of the ocean brine,
Athens, the morning-star of liberty.
Would that my song could utter how the hymn
Swelled in their dying ears victoriously!
How o'er their swooning eyes with death-mists dim
Swam the wild vision of the wistful crowd,
Submiss, suspense, straining each quivering limb
To greet with eyes aflame and blessings loud,
With sobs and tears and sighs and out-stretched hands,
Their saints, in death gods evident avowed!

Night!

Enough! In ancient days and other lands
 Love wrought this miracle—that men should die,
 Daunted by no soul-shattering commands
 Of tyrannous princes, by no promise high
 Of palms and seats celestial lured to fling
 Life like a load away without a sigh;
 But in the prime of manhood, in the spring
 Of passionate expectation, they were bold
 Wide-eyed across theathomless gulf to wing
 Of blank surmise their darkness cold.
 Sustained and steadied for their dread emprise
 By the mere might of Love, whose plumes of gold
 Moved dovelike on the waters, in Love's eyes
 Sounding unfathomable depths, they grew
 Strong to explore untried immensities
 And seek in Death a Lover leal and true.

Third Movement.

Deep cries to deep: age to far-sundered age
 With multitudinous voices clarion-clear
 Transmits the inviolable heritage
 Of haughty deeds.—See, yon fleet runner rear
 His flaunting torch! The curled flame backward blown
 Flashes live gold on eager eyes that peer
 Forth from their storm of tresses, tossed and strewn
 To feed the wind he drinks with fiery lips!
 Here frets the expectant athlete: tightened zone,
 Tense thews, knit forehead, quivering finger-tips
 Straightened to seize the splendour, eagle-eye
 Smouldering like some fierce planet in eclipse
 For fear that those swift feet should pass him by—
 From signs like these be sure the flying spark,
 Passing from palm to palm continually,
 Shall thread dim mazes of the wasteful dark,
 Till, fixed beyond all chance or change at last,

Shekinah brood above the sacred ark.
Yea, like a star, enshrined 'mid arches vast
And isles re-echoing to the thunder-beat
Of reflux generations, it shall cast
Its stationary lustre from the seat
Oracular. Thence poet, sage, and priest
Shall kindle seeds of fire in season meet.
I toward this Orient worship: from the East
I hail these rays ascendant: at this shrine
Standing I bid the nations to their feast
Of sacramental bread and hallowed wine,
Outpoured and broken in far distant days
For lips of Lovers holy and divine.
Stretch hand to hand: join praise to booming praise
Through all the dizzying aeries of the dome:
Heap laurel boughs upon the pilléd bays
Of bygone bards and athletes: bid the foam
Outpoured from gleaming vase and golden cup
Leap in live fire—the coals that gloat and gloam
From silver censers lift dry lips to sup
Rivers of nard and frankincense and myrrh!
Arise and join our banquet! Gather up
Your skirts of velvet, and your trailing fur!
Leave board and bed! Leave home and pleasant house!
None but the blanched and base-born dare defer
Glad service to our fierce god amorous.
Oh, blessings on those neophytes whom he,
Forth-pacing from his Ivory chamber, thus
Shall find with prostrate heart, with praying knee!
Once came a youth to Thebes with eyes afire
And love-locks round white brows luxuriously
Vine-laden: neath his smile of scornful ire
Thebes' strong walls into shivering scrolls of flame
Fled like the flickerings of a funeral pyre;
The wisdom of the wise was brought to shame;
Stiff necks of prophets bowed; incredulous lords,
Flouting his mysteries, were taught to tame

Their heat of hardihood; and swinging swords
Snapped in the hands of kings like trivial straw.
Lo, with such recompense a god rewards
Triflers and truants to his mystic law!
Now in your midst, ye nations! Love, a god,
Arrayed in crystal sheen without a flaw
Descends! his holy shrine so long untrod
Once more he paces; summons to his throne
Comrades and lovers! Let the out-stretched rod
Lead you and gather to his feet Love's own:
Else shall it fall and batter, fall and bruise
Princes and potentates in prison thrown!
The poor will throng to greet him: as thick dews,
At night upon the tremulous sward outspread,
Soar toward the morning sun, with rainbow hues
And mist-wreaths to surround his royal head—
By myriads and by millions shall they rise,
Salute their Saviour, and refulgent tread
Clear sapphire spaces of the irradiate skies.
Entwined with Love, their Lord; embracing Death,
Their friend, whose cool kiss frees and sanctifies;
The tempest of their irresistible breath
Shall scatter crowns and kingdoms!—I behold,
As one who on a lone tower wearieth
For dawning, even now thin streaks and cold
Divide yon dusk horizon! Soon—too soon
For you bats, owls, and foxes!—broadening gold
Shall drown the pale, night-wandering, sickly moon.

WALT WHITMAN AND HIS POEMS.

By WALT WHITMAN.

[This article and the two that follow, written by Walt Whitman within the year following the issue of the first edition of his poems, express in deliberate and emphatic form the root emotions and convictions out of which his book expanded and developed. Whitman has remarked to us that in a period of misunderstanding and abuse their publication seemed imperative. He consented before his death that they should here appear, as they have never elsewhere appeared, under his own name.—THE EDITORS.]

AN American bard at last! One of the roughs, large, proud, affectionate, eating, drinking, and breeding, his costume manly and free, his face sunburnt and bearded, his postures strong and erect, his voice bringing hope and prophecy to the generous races of young and old. We shall cease shamming and be what we really are. We shall start an athletic and defiant literature. We realize now how it is, and what was most lacking. The interior American republic shall also be declared free and independent.

For all our intellectual people, followed by their books, poems, novels, essays, editorials, lectures, tuitions and criticisms, dress by London and Paris modes, receive what is received there, obey the authorities, settle disputes by the old tests, keep out of rain and sun, retreat to the shelter of houses and schools, trim their hair, shave, touch not the earth barefoot, and enter not the sea except in a complete bathing dress. One sees unmistakably genteel persons, travelled, college-learned, used to be served by servants, conversing without heat or vulgarity, supported on chairs, or walking through handsomely carpeted parlors, or along shelves bearing well-bound volumes, and walls adorned with curtained and collared portraits, and china things, and nick-nacks. But where in American literature is the first show

of America? Where are the gristle and beards, and broad breasts, and space, and ruggedness, and nonchalance, that the souls of the people love? Where is the tremendous outdoors of these states? Where is the majesty of the federal mother, seated with more than antique grace, calm, just, indulgent to her brood of children, calling them around her, regarding the little and the large, and the younger and the older, with perfect impartiality? Where is the vehement growth of our cities? Where is the spirit of the strong rich life of the American mechanic, farmer, sailor, hunter, and miner? Where is the huge composite of all other nations, cast in a fresher and brawnier matrix, passing adolescence, and needed this day, live and arrogant, to lead the marches of the world?

Self-reliant, with haughty eyes, assuming to himself all the attributes of his country, steps Walt Whitman into literature, talking like a man unaware that there was ever hitherto such a production as a book, or such a being as a writer. Every move of him has the free play of the muscle of one who never knew what it was to feel that he stood in the presence of a superior. Every word that falls from his mouth shows silent disdain and defiance of the old theories and forms. Every phrase announces new laws; not once do his lips uncloze except in conformity with them. With light and rapid touch he first indicates in prose the principles of the foundation of a race of poets so deeply to spring from the American people, and become ingrained through them, that their Presidents shall not be the common referees so much as that great race of poets shall. He proceeds himself to exemplify this new school, and set models for their expression and range of subjects. He makes audacious and native use of his own body and soul. He must recreate poetry with the elements always at hand. He must imbue it with himself as he is, disorderly, fleshy, and sensual, a lover of things, yet a lover of men and women above the whole of the other objects of the universe. His work is to be achieved by unusual methods. Neither classic nor romantic is he, nor a materialist any more than a spiritualist. Not a whisper comes out of him of the old stock talk and rhyme of poetry—not the first recognition of gods or goddesses, or

Greece or Rome. No breath of Europe, or her monarchies or priestly conventions, or her notions of gentlemen and ladies, founded on the idea of caste, seems ever to have fanned his face or been inhaled into his lungs.

The movement of his verses is the sweeping movement of great currents of living people, with a general government and state and municipal governments, courts, commerce, manufactures, arsenals, steamships, railroads, telegraphs, cities with paved streets, and aqueducts, and police, and gas—myriads of travellers arriving and departing—newspapers, music, elections, and all the features and processes of the nineteenth century, in the wholesomest race and the only stable forms of politics at present upon the earth. Along his words spread the broad impartialities of the United States. No innovations must be permitted on the stern severities of our liberty and equality. Undecked also is this poet with sentimentalism, or jingle, or nice conceits, or flowery similes. He appears in his poems surrounded by women and children, and by young men, and by common objects and qualities. He gives to each just what belongs to it, neither more nor less. That person nearest him, that person he ushers hand in hand with himself. Duly take places in his flowing procession, and step to the sounds of the jubilant music, the essences of American things, and past and present events—the enormous diversity of temperature, and agriculture, and mines—the tribes of red aborigines—the weather-beaten vessels entering new ports, or making landings on rocky coasts—the first settlements north and south—the rapid stature and impatience of outside control—the sturdy defiance of '76, and the war and peace, and the leadership of Washington, and the formation of the constitution—the union always surrounded by blatherers and always calm and impregnable—the perpetual coming of immigrants—the wharf-hemmed cities and superior marine—the unsurveyed interior—the log-houses and clearings, and wild animals and hunters and trappers—the fisheries, and whaling, and gold-digging—the endless gestation of new States—the convening of Congress every December, the members coming up from all climates, and from the uttermost parts—the noble character of

the free American workman and workwoman—the fierceness of the people when well roused—the ardor of their friendships—the large amativeness—the equality of the female with the male—the Yankee swap—the New York firemen and the target excursion—the southern plantation life—the character of the north-east and of the northwest and southwest—and the character of America and the American people everywhere. For these the old usages of poets afford Walt Whitman no means sufficiently fit and free, and he rejects the old usages. The style of the bard that is waited for, is to be transcendent and new. It is to be indirect, and not direct or descriptive or epic. Its quality is to go through these to much more. Let the age and wars (he says) of other nations be chanted, and their eras and characters be illustrated, and that finish the verse. Not so (he continues) the great psalm of the republic. Here the theme is creative and has vista. Here comes one among the well-beloved stone cutters, and announces himself, and plans with decision and science, and sees the solid and beautiful forms of the future where there are now no solid forms.

The style of these poems, therefore, is simply their own style, just born and red. Nature may have given the hint to the author of the "Leaves of Grass," but there exists no book or fragment of a book which can have given the hint to them. All beauty, he says, comes from beautiful blood and a beautiful brain. His rhythm and uniformity he will conceal in the roots of his verses, not to be seen of themselves, but to break forth loosely as lilacs on a bush, and take shapes compact, as the shapes of melons, or chestnuts, or pears.

The poems of the "Leaves of Grass" are twelve in number. Walt Whitman at first proceeds to put his own body and soul into the new versification:

"I celebrate myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me, as good belongs to you."

He leaves houses and their shuttered rooms, for the open air. He drops disguise and ceremony, and walks forth with the con-

fidence and gayety of a child. For the old decorums of writing he substitutes his own decorums. The first glance out of his eyes electrifies him with love and delight. He will have the earth receive and return his affection ; he will stay with it as the bridegroom stays with the bride. The cool-breath'd ground, the slumbering and liquid trees, the just-gone sunset, the vitreous pour of the full moon, the tender and growing night, he salutes and touches, and they touch him. The sea supports him, and hurries him off with its powerful and crooked fingers. Dash me with amorous wet ! then, he says ; I can repay you.

The rules of polite circles are dismissed with scorn. Your stale modesties, he seems to say, are filthy to such a man as I.

"I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing, hearing, and feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a
miracle.
I do not press my finger across my mouth,
I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the head and heart,
Copulation is no more rank to me than death is."

No skulker or tea-drinking poet is Walt Whitman. He will bring poems to fill the days and nights—fit for men and women with the attributes of throbbing blood and flesh. The body, he teaches, is beautiful. Sex is also beautiful. Are you to be put down, he seems to ask, to that shallow level of literature and conversation that stops a man's recognizing the delicious pleasure of his sex, or a woman hers ? Nature he proclaims inherently clean. Sex will not be put aside ; it is a great ordination of the universe. He works the muscle of the male and the teeming fibre of the female throughout his writings, as wholesome realities, impure only by deliberate intention and effort. To men and women he says, You can have healthy and powerful breeds of children on no less terms than these of mine. Follow me, and there shall be taller and richer crops of humanity on the earth.

Especially in the "Leaves of Grass" are the facts of eternity and immortality largely treated. Happiness is no dream, and perfection is no dream. Amelioration is my lesson, he says with calm voice, and progress is my lesson and the lesson of all things.

Then his persuasion becomes a taunt, and his love bitter and compulsory. With strong and steady call he addresses men. Come, he seems to say, from the midst of all that you have been your whole life surrounding yourself with. Leave all the preaching and teaching of others, and mind only these words of mine.

"Long enough have you dreamed contemptible dreams,
Now I wash the gum from your eyes,
You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light and of every moment of your life.

Long have you timidly waded, holding a plank by the shore,
Now I will you to be a bold swimmer,
To jump off into the midst of the sea, and rise again and nod to me and shout, and laughingly dash with your hair.

I am the teacher of athletes,
He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own proves the width of my own,
He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher.

The boy I love, the same becomes a man not through derived power but in his own right,
Wicked, rather than virtuous out of conformity or fear,
Fond of his sweetheart, relishing well his steak,
Unrequited love or a slight cutting him worse than a wound cuts,
First rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail a skiff, to sing a song, or play on the banjo,
Preferring scars and faces pitted with small pox over all latherers and those that keep out of the sun.

I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me?
I follow you whoever you are from the present hour;
My words itch at your ears till you understand them.

I do not say these things for a dollar, or to fill up the time while I wait for a boat;
It is you talking just as much as myself I act as the tongue of you;
It was tied in your mouth in mine it begins to be loosened.

I swear I will never mention love or death inside a house,
And I swear I never will translate myself at all, only to him or her who privately stays with me in the open air."

The eleven other poems have each distinct purposes, curiously veiled. Theirs is no writer to be gone through with in a day or a month. Rather it is his pleasure to elude you and provoke you for deliberate purposes of his own.

Doubtless in the scheme this man has built for himself, the writing of poems is but a proportionate part of the whole. It is plain that public and private performance, politics, love, friendship, behavior, the art of conversation, science, society, the American people, the reception of the great novelties of city and country, all have their equal call upon him, and receive equal attention. In politics he could enter with the freedom and reality he shows in poetry. His scope of life is the amplest of any yet in philosophy. He is the true spiritualist. He recognizes no annihilation, or death, or loss of identity. He is the largest lover and sympathizer that has appeared in literature. He loves the earth and sun and the animals. He does not separate the learned from the unlearned, the northerner from the southerner, the white from the black, or the native from the immigrant just landed at the wharf. Every one, he seems to say, appears excellent to me; every employment is adorned, and every male and female glorious.

"The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred affections,
They scorn the best I can do to relate them.

I am enamored of growing outdoors,
Of men that live among cattle, or taste of the ocean or woods,
Of the builders and steerers of ships, of the wielders of axes and mauls, of
the drivers of horses,
I can eat and sleep with them week in and week out.

What is commonest, and cheapest, and nearest, and easiest, is me,
Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns,
Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will take me,
Not asking the sky to come down to my goodwill,
Scattering it freely forever."

If health were not his distinguishing attribute, this poet would be the very harlot of persons. Right and left he flings his arms, drawing men and women with undeniable love to his close em-

brace, loving the clasp of their hands, the touch of their necks and breasts, and the sound of their voices. All else seems to burn up under his fierce affection for persons. Politics, religions, institutions, art, quickly fall aside before them. In the whole universe, he says, I see nothing more divine than human souls.

"When the psalm sings instead of the singer,
 When the script preaches instead of the preacher,
 When the pulpit descends and goes, instead of the carver that carved the supporting desk,
 When the sacred vessels or the bits of the eucharist, or the lath and plait, procreate as effectually as the young silversmiths or bakers, or the masons in their overalls,
 When a university course convinces like a slumbering woman and child convince,
 When the minted gold in the vault smiles like the night-watchman's daughter,
 When warrantee deeds loafe in chairs opposite and are my friendly companions,
 I intend to reach them my hand and make as much of them as I make of men and women."

Who then is that insolent unknown? Who is it, praising himself as if others were not fit to do it, and coming rough and unbidden among writers, to unsettle what was settled, and to revolutionize in fact our modern civilization? Walt Whitman was born on Long Island, on the hills about thirty miles from the greatest American city, on the last day of May, 1819, and has grown up in Brooklyn and New York to be thirty-six years old, to enjoy perfect health, and to understand his country and its spirit.

Interrogations more than this, and that will not be put off unanswered, spring continually through the perusal of "Leaves of Grass:"

Must not the true American poet indeed absorb all others, and present a new and far more ample and vigorous type?

Has not the time arrived for a school of live writing and tuition consistent with the principles of these poems? consistent with the free spirit of this age, and with the American truths of

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politics? consistent with geology, and astronomy, and phrenology, and human physiology? consistent with the sublimity of immortality and the directness of common sense?

If in this poem the United States have found their poetic voice and taken measure and form, is it any more than a beginning? Walt Whitman himself disclaims singularity in his work, and announces the coming after him of great successions of poets, and that he but lifts his finger to give the signal.

Was he not needed? Has not literature been bred in-and-in long enough? Has it not become unbearably artificial?

Shall a man of faith and practice in the simplicity of real things be called eccentric, while every disciple of the fictitious school writes without question?

Shall it still be the amazement of the light and dark that freshness of expression is the rarest quality of all?

You have come in good time, Walt Whitman! In opinions, in manners, in costumes, in books, in the aims and occupancy of life, in associates, in poems, conformity to all unnatural and tainted customs passes without remark, while perfect naturalness, health, faith, self-reliance, and all primal expressions of the manliest love and friendship, subject one to the stare and controversy of the world.

AN old man once saw I,
 Bow'd low was he with time,
 Heart-frost'ed, white with rime,
 Ready and ripe to die.
 Upon a cliff he stood
 Above the sea's unrest;
 His beard broke on his breast
 In venerable flood.
 And suddenly there came
 From far with airy tread
 A maiden round whose head
 There burn'd a wreath of flame.
 Ah God! But she was fair!
 To look were to disdain
 All other joy and pain,
 And love her to despair.
 "I come," she cried, in tone
 Like sweetest siren song,
 "Though I have tarried long,
 I come, my own, my own!
 See, Love, 'tis love compels
 These kisses, priceless, rare;
 Come, let me crown thy hair
 With wreath'd immortelles."
 The old man answered her;
 His voice was like the sea:
 "Comest to mock at me?
 Mine eyes are all ablurr.
 Thou art too late. In sooth
 Naught earthly makes me glad.
 Where wert thou in my mad,
 My eager, fiery youth?"
 "Nay, grieve not thou," she said,
 "For I have loved full oft,
 And at my lovers scoffed,
 Alive to woo them dead."
 "Oh fiend!" I cried, "for shame!"
 Yielding to wrath's surprise.
 She turned. I knew the eyes
 And siren face of Fame.

George Horton.

LEAVES OF GRASS: A VOLUME OF POEMS JUST PUBLISHED.

By WALT WHITMAN.

To give judgment on real poems, one needs an account of the poet himself. Very devilish to some, and very divine to some, will appear the poet of these new poems, the "Leaves of Grass;" an attempt, as they are, of a naive, masculine, affectionate, contemplative, sensual, imperious person, to cast into literature not only his own grit and arrogance, but his own flesh and form, undraped, regardless of models, regardless of modesty or law, and ignorant or silently scornful, as at first appears, of all except his own presence and experience, and all outside the fiercely loved land of his birth, and the birth of his parents, and their parents for several generations before him. Politeness this man has none, and regulation he has none. A rude child of the people!—No imitation—No foreigner—but a growth and idiom of America. No discontented—a careless slouch, enjoying today. No dilettante democrat—a man who is art-and-part with the commonalty, and with immediate life—loves the streets—loves the docks—loves the free rasping talk of men—likes to be called by his given name, and nobody at all need Mr. him—can laugh with laughers—likes the ungentle ways of laborers—is not prejudiced one mite against the Irish—talks readily with them—talks readily with niggers—does not make a stand on being a gentleman, nor on learning or manners—eats cheap fare, likes the strong flavored coffee of the coffee-stands in the market, at sunrise—likes a supper of oysters fresh from the oyster-smack—likes to make one at the crowded table among sailors and work-people—would leave a select soiree of elegant people any time to go with tumultuous men, roughs, receive their caresses and

welcome, listen to their noise, oaths, smut, fluency, laughter, repartee—and can preserve his presence perfectly among these, and the like of these. The effects he produces in his poems are no effects of artists or the arts, but effects of the original eye or arm, or the actual atmosphere, or tree, or bird. You may feel the unconscious teaching of a fine brute, but will never feel the artificial teaching of a fine writer or speaker.

Other poets celebrate great events, personages, romances, wars, loves, passions, the victories and power of their country, or some real or imagined incident—and polish their work and come to conclusions, and satisfy the reader. This poet celebrates natural propensities in himself; and that is the way he celebrates all. He comes to no conclusions, and does not satisfy the reader. He certainly leaves him what the serpent left the woman and the man, the taste of the Paradisaic tree of the knowledge of good and evil, never to be erased again.

What good is it to argue about egotism? There can be no two thoughts on Walt Whitman's egotism. That is avowedly what he steps out of the crowd and turns and faces them for. Mark, critics! Otherwise is not used for you the key that leads to the use of the other keys to this well-enveloped man. His whole work, his life, manners, friendships, writings, all have among their leading purposes an evident purpose to stamp a new type of character, namely his own, and indelibly fix it and publish it, not for a model but an illustration, for the present and future of American letters and American young men, for the south the same as the north, and for the Pacific and Mississippi country, and Wisconsin and Texas and Kansas and Canada and Havana and Nicaragua, just as much as New York and Boston. Whatever is needed toward this achievement he puts his hand to, and lets imputations take their time to die.

First be yourself what you would show in your poem—such seems to be this man's example and inferred rebuke to the schools of poets. He makes no allusions to books or writers; their spirits do not seem to have touched him; he has not a word to say for or against them, or their theories or ways. He never offers others; what he continually offers is the man whom

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our Brooklynites know so well. Of pure American breed, large and lusty—age thirty-six years, (1855.)—never once using medicine—never dressed in black, always dressed freely and clean in strong clothes—neck open, shirt collar flat and broad, countenance tawny transparent red, beard well-mottled with white, hair like hay after it has been mowed in the field and lies tossed and streaked—his physiology corroborating a rugged phrenology*—a person singularly beloved and looked toward, especially by young men and the illiterate—one who has firm attachments there, and associates there—one who does not associate with literary people—a man never called upon to make speeches at public dinners—never on platforms amid the crowds of clergymen, or professors, or aldermen, or congressmen—rather down in the bay with pilots in their pilot-boat—or off on a cruise with fishers in a fishing-smack—or riding on a Broadway omnibus, side by side with the driver—or with a band of loungers over the open grounds of the country—fond of New York and Brooklyn—fond of the life of the great ferries—one whom, if you should meet, you need not expect to meet an extraordinary person—one in whom you will see the singularity which consists in no singularity—whose contact is no dazzle or fascination, nor requires any deference, but has the easy fascination of what is homely and ac-

*"Phrenological Notes on W. Whitman," by L. N. Fowler, July, 1849.—Size of head large, 23 inches. Leading traits appear to be Friendship, Sympathy, Sublimity, and Self-Esteem, and markedly among its combinations the dangerous faults of Indolence, a tendency to the pleasures of Voluptuousness and Alimentiveness, and a certain reckless swing of animal will.

[The organs are marked by figures from 1 to 7, indicating their degrees of development, 1 meaning very small, 2 small, 3 moderate, 4 average, 5 full, 6 large, and 7 very large.] Amativeness, 6; Philoprogenitiveness, 6; Adhesiveness, 6; Inhabitiveness, 6; Concentrativeness, 4; Combativeness, 6; Destructiveness, 5 to 6; Alimentiveness, 6; Acquisitiveness, 4; Secretiveness, 3; Cautiousness, 6; Approbativeness, 4; Self-Esteem, 6 to 7; Firmness, 6 to 7; Conscientiousness, 6; Hope, 4; Marvellousness, 3; Veneration, 4; Benevolence, 6 to 7; Constructiveness, 5; Ideality, 5 to 6; Sublimity, 6 to 7; Imitation, 5; Mirthfulness, 5; Individuality, 6; Form, 6; Size, 6; Weight, 6; Color, 3; Order, 5; Calculation, 5; Locality, 6; Eventuality, 6; Time, 3; Tune, 4; Language, 5; Causality, 5 to 6; Comparison, 6; Suavitiveness, 4; Intuitiveness, or Human Nature, 6.

customed—as of something you knew before, and was waiting for—there you have Walt Whitman, the begetter of a new offspring out of literature, taking with easy nonchalance the chances of its present reception, and, through all misunderstandings and distrusts, the chances of its future reception—preferring always to speak for himself rather than have others speak for him.

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AN ENGLISH AND AN AMERICAN POET.

By WALT WHITMAN.

It is always reserved for second-rate poems immediately to gratify. As first-rate or natural objects, in their perfect simplicity and proportion, do not startle or strike, but appear no more than matters of course, so probably natural poetry does not, for all its being the rarest, and telling of the longest and largest work. The artist or writer whose talent is to please the connoisseurs of his time, may obey the laws of his time, and achieve the intense and elaborated beauty of parts. The perfect poet cannot afford any special beauty of parts, or to limit himself by any laws less than those universal ones of the great masters, which include all times, and all men and women, and the living and the dead. For from the study of the universe is drawn this irrefragable truth, that the law of the requisites of a grand poem, or any other complete workmanship, is originality, and the average and superb beauty of the ensemble. Possessed with this law, the fitness of aim, time, persons, places, surely follows. Possessed with this law, and doing justice to it, no poet or any one else will make anything ungraceful or mean, any more than any emanation of nature is.

The poetry of England, by the many rich geniuses of that wonderful little island, has grown out of the facts of the English race, the monarchy and aristocracy prominent over the rest, and conforms to the spirit of them. No nation ever did or ever will receive with national affection any poets except those born of its national blood. Of these, the writings express the finest infusions of government, traditions, faith, and the dependence or independence of a people, and even the good or bad physiognomy, and the ample or small geography. Thus what very

properly fits a subject of the British crown may fit very ill an American freeman. No fine romance, no inimitable delineation of character, no grace of delicate illustrations, no rare picture of shore or mountain or sky, no deep thought of the intellect, is so important to a man as his opinion of himself is; everything receives its tinge from that. In the verse of all those undoubtedly great writers, Shakspeare just as much as the rest, there is the air which to America is the air of death. The mass of the people, the laborers and all who serve, are slag, refuse. The countenances of kings and great lords are beautiful; the countenances of mechanics are ridiculous and deformed. What play of Shakspeare, represented in America, is not an insult to America, to the marrow in its bones? How can the tone never silent in their plots and characters be applauded, unless Washington should have been caught and hung, and Jefferson was the most enormous of liars, and common persons, north and south, should bow low to their betters, and to organic superiority of blood? Sure as the heavens envelop the earth, if the Americans want a race of bards worthy of 1855, and of the stern reality of this republic, they must cast around for men essentially different from the old poets, and from the modern successions of jinglers and snivellers and fops.

English versification is full of these dangles, and America follows after them. Everybody writes poetry, and yet there is not a single poet. An age greater than the proudest of the past is swiftly slipping away, without one lyric voice to seize its greatness, and speak it as an encouragement and onward lesson. We have heard, by many grand announcements, that he was to come, but will he come?

"A mighty Poet whom this age shall choose
To be its spokesman to all coming times.
In the ripe full-blown season of his soul,
He shall go forward in his spirit's strength,
And grapple with the questions of all time,
And wring from them their meanings. As King Saul
Called up the buried prophet from his grave
To speak his doom, so shall this Poet-king

Call up the dread past from its awful grave
To tell him of our future. As the air
Doth sphere the world, so shall his heart of love—
Loving mankind, not peoples. As the lake
Reflects the flower, tree, rock, and bending heaven,
Shall he reflect our great humanity;
And as the young Spring breathes with living breath
On a dead branch, till it sprouts fragrantly
Green leaves and sunny flowers, shall he breathe life
Through every theme he touch, making all Beauty
And Poetry forever like the stars." (*Alexander Smith.*)

The best of the school of poets at present received in Great Britain and America is Alfred Tennyson. He is the bard of ennui and of the aristocracy, and their combination into love. This love is the old stock love of playwrights and romancers, Shakspeare the same as the rest. It is possessed of the same unnatural and shocking passion for some girl or woman, that wrenches it from its manhood, emasculated and impotent, without strength to hold the rest of the objects and goods of life in their proper positions. It seeks nature for sickly uses. It goes screaming and weeping after the facts of the universe, in their calm beauty and equanimity, to note the occurrence of itself, and to sound the news, in connection with the charms of the neck, hair, or complexion of a particular female.

Poetry, to Tennyson and his British and American élèves, is a gentleman of the first degree, boating, fishing, and shooting genteelly through nature, admiring the ladies, and talking to them, in company, with that elaborate half-choked deference that is to be made up by the terrible license of men among themselves. The spirit of the burnished society of upper-class England fills this writer and his effusions from top to toe. Like that, he does not ignore courage and the superior qualities of men, but all is to show forth through dandified forms. He meets the nobility and gentry half-way. The models are the same both to the poet and the parlors. Both have the same supercilious elegance, both love the reminiscences which extol caste, both agree on the topics proper for mention and discussion, both hold the same undertone of church and state, both have the same lan-

guishing melancholy and irony, both indulge largely in persiflage, both are marked by the contour of high blood and a constitutional aversion to anything cowardly and mean, both accept the love depicted in romances as the great business of a life or a poem, both seem unconscious of the mighty truths of eternity and immortality, both are silent on the presumptions of liberty and equality, and both devour themselves in solitary lassitude. Whatever may be said of all this, it harmonizes and represents facts. The present phases of high-life in Great Britain are as natural a growth there, as Tennyson and his poems are a natural growth of those phases. It remains to be distinctly admitted that this man is a real first-class poet, infused amid all that ennui and aristocracy.

Meanwhile a strange voice parts others aside and demands for its owner that position that is only allowed after the seal of many returning years has stamped with approving stamp the claims of the loftiest leading genius. Do you think the best honors of the earth are won so easily, Walt Whitman? Do you think city and country are to fall before the vehement egotism of your recitative of yourself?

"I am the poet of the body,
And I am the poet of the soul.

The pleasures of heaven are with me, and the pains of hell are with me,
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant a new chant of dilation or pride.
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,
I show that size is only development."

It is indeed a strange voice! Critics and lovers and readers of poetry as hitherto written, may well be excused the chilly and unpleasant shudders which will assuredly run through them, to their very blood and bones, when they first read Walt Whitman's

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poems. If this is poetry, where must its foregoers stand? And what is at once to become of the ranks of rhymesters, melancholy and swallow-tailed, and of all the confectioners and upholsterers of verse, if the tan-faced man here advancing and claiming to speak for America and the nineteenth hundred of the Christian list of years, typifies indeed the natural and proper bard?

The theory and practice of poets have hitherto been to select certain ideas or events or personages, and then describe them in the best manner they could, always with as much ornament as the case allowed. Such are not the theory and practice of the new poet. He never presents for perusal a poem ready-made on the old models, and ending when you come to the end of it; but every sentence and every passage tells of an interior not always seen, and exudes an impalpable something which sticks to him that reads, and pervades and provokes him to tread the half-invisible road where the poet, like an apparition, is striding fearlessly before. If Walt Whitman's premises are true, then there is a subtler range of poetry than that of the grandeur of acts and events, as in Homer, or of characters, as in Shakspeare—poetry to which all other writing is subservient, and which confronts the very meanings of the works of nature and competes with them. It is the direct bringing of occurrences and persons and things to bear on the listener or beholder, to reappear through him or her; and it offers the best way of making them a part of him and her as the right aim of the greatest poet.

Of the spirit of life in visible forms—of the spirit of the seed growing out of the ground—of the spirit of the resistless motion of the globe passing unsuspected but quick as lightning along its orbit—of them is the spirit of this man's poetry. Like them it eludes and mocks criticism, and appears unerringly in results. Things, facts, events, persons, days, ages, qualities, tumble pell-mell, exhaustless and copious, with what appear to be the same disregard of parts, and the same absence of special purpose, as in nature. But the voice of the few rare and controlling critics, and the voice of more than one generation of men, or two generations of men, must speak for the inexpressible purposes of na-

ture, and for this haughtiest of writers that has ever yet written and printed a book. His is to prove either the most lamentable of failures or the most glorious of triumphs, in the known history of literature. And after all we have written we confess our brain-felt and heart-felt inability to decide which we think it is likely to be.

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NOTES FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH GEORGE W. WHITMAN, 1893: MOSTLY IN HIS OWN WORDS.

By HORACE L. TRAUBEL.

IN spite of what Walt may have said to you, that *négligé* picture* must have been taken later than 1849. It shows him pretty gray, to be sure. But Walt began to get gray about thirty. I should say he always wore a beard. I never remember his shaving.

Walt was very reticent in many particulars. For example, I never knew him to explain his business projects or schemes of any kind—to communicate particulars of any plan he may have had in hand. When he got into the "Leaves of Grass" affair he seemed to devote everything to that. Do you ask if he was shiftless? No: he was not shiftless—yet he was very curiously deliberate. I could hardly describe his stubborn reserve, patience. He got offers of literary work—good offers: and we thought he had chances to make money. Yet he would refuse to do anything except at his own notion—most likely when advised would say: "We won't talk about that!" or anything else to pass the matter off. I can give you a case. Some of the proprietors of the *Eagle* talked in a way not to suit him, and he straightway started up and left them. He never would make concessions for money—always was so. He always had his own way, or took it. There was a great boom in Brooklyn in the early fifties, and he had his chance then, but you know he made nothing of that chance. Some of us reckoned that he had by

*"Leaves of Grass," Pocket Edition, 1889, facing page 132.

this neglect wasted his best opportunity, for no other equally good chance ever after appeared.

Walt did not always dress in this present style. He was rather stylish when young. He started in with his new notions somewhere between 1850-55.

A good deal is always said as if to convict Walt of indecency. The "Children of Adam" poems opened the way for it. Yet there never was a worse error. Even in early life Walt had no licentious habits. Nor was he qualmish, either.

One of the greatest things about Walt was his wonderful calmness in trying times when everybody else would get excited. He was always cool, never flurried; would get mad but never lose his head; was never scared. His relations with his father were always friendly, always good. I don't think his father ever had an idea what Walt was up to, what he meant. To him, like to all the rest, Walt was a mystery.

On literary topics Walt was the one to go to. We never doubted that. It was always apparent and acknowledged. But in business the rest of us were nearer the mark. We mixed up in business affairs. He seemed to have a contempt for them. Yet he was quick and cute, too. I remember when he went to New Orleans and started the *Crescent*. The whole affair happened just as he described it. At the theater or opera he ran across the moneyed man who was willing to back him up, and they made the contract then and there.

His association with neighbors and strangers was not at that period so marked as later. I do not mean that he was not on the friendliest terms with all. Only, he was scarcely so apt to chime in—establish an acquaintance.

Although I am asked that question, I am confident I never knew Walt to fall in love with young girls or even to show them marked attention. He did not seem to affect the girls. There are many misconceptions or assumptions of this sort current. Why, you even say that you are told by some one who professed to be his friend that Walt was in those years a sore discomfort to his parents. There is no worse nonsense. There's not a word of truth in it. Quite the opposite. He was clean in his habits.

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He was forbearing and conciliating. He was always gentle till you got him started—always. That fisherman story they tell about at such length is all true. Some one who was thoroughly informed must have written it up. If I am not mistaken Walt even gave the fellow a devil of a licking after the trial, the verdict—after the first thrashing, for which he was arrested. He was a muscular young man at that time—very strong—already of striking appearance.

Walt was called Walt probably because his father was Walter. It was a way we had of separating them. He liked "Walt" and stuck to it.

I was in Brooklyn in the early fifties, when Walt came back from New Orleans. We all lived together. No change seemed to come over him: he was the same man he had been, grown older and wiser. He made a living now—wrote a little, worked a little, loafed a little. He had an idea that money was of no consequence. He was not very practical—the others of us could give him points in this direction—but as for the rest, we could not understand him—we gave him up. I guess it was about those years he had an idea he could lecture. He wrote what mother called "barrels" of lectures. We did not know what he was writing. He did not seem more abstracted than usual. He would lie abed late, and after getting up would write a few hours if he took the notion—perhaps would go off the rest of the day. We were all at work—all except Walt. But we knew he was printing the book. I was about twenty-five then. I saw the book—didn't read it all—didn't think it worth reading—fingered it a little. Mother thought as I did—did not know what to make of it. When Emerson's letter came he was set up. That was about the first. I kept no account of it. But those fellows coming on there—Emerson, Alcott, Sanborn—aroused curiosity.

Abuse seemed to make no difference to Walt. He never counselled with anybody. I do not think he took a word of advice from any one. This was so, first and last. It was in him not to do it—in his head, in his heart. In such lines who could he take advice from? I remember mother comparing Hiawatha to Walt's, and the one seemed to us pretty much the same naddle

as the other. Mother said that if Hiawatha was poetry, perhaps Walt's was.

When Lord Houghton came I don't think they had anything but roast apples. I went in. I remember the roast apples. There the two sat at the table together. He was that kind—together simple, informal, no matter who was guest. If we had dinner at one, like as not he would come at three: always late. Just as we were fixing things on the table he would get up and go round the block. He was always so. He would come to breakfast when he got ready. If he wished to go out he would go—go where he was of a mind to—and come back in his own time.

Walt always paid his board. If he had fifty dollars he would give us thirty, even more. And he always gave in about that style. I never knew him to wish to keep, to hoard. He was in fact careless of all that, too careless.

As for dissipation and women. I know well enough that his skirts were clean. I never heard the least bit about his doings with women. Any charge that he led a miscellaneous life is without a bottom. As a young man he was always correct and clean in his conversation. All those fellows intimate with Walt, at night, anywhere, anytime, will tell you the same thing. Doctor Bucke shows this plainly enough in his book. That ought to end all talk. The same thing could have been noticed in Walt till the last. And the stage-drivers, too, would testify to the same effect. Walt was always correct. I could quote all sorts of things from these men. I supposed that that question had all been settled years ago. They get these ideas from writings about "Leaves of Grass," not from Walt himself—they infer them all.

I do not suppose Walt drank at all till he was thirty. John Burroughs and O'Connor could have told enough to clear all this up. There was a party of these men in Washington—a whole group, all eminent. They were free, informal. There were O'Connor, Burroughs, Eldridge—of course Walt. The crowd used to call themselves Bohemians. I have no doubt Walt could occasionally take a glass—perhaps of beer, perhaps

of something else. Yet I never saw him under the influence of liquor in my life. On the contrary his care in this respect was a lesson for any one. I don't remember to have met Conway. He came to the house and mother would tell us about his visits.

I could not say that Walt was fonder of me than of the others or of any other. He was fondest of Han, if he had any preference. He was likewise very affectionate towards Mattie, Jeff's wife. She was practically the only sister he had for some time. Yes, Jeff and his wife lived with us for quite a spell. We had a great large house, twenty-five by fifty, on Portland Avenue, Brooklyn. It is there now. Walt grew to be especially fond of Mattie, probably because she was always there to help mother, and they thus came into frequent contact.

Walt's hearing was very acute, especially at night. Noises in the street he would growl about. He seemed to hear sounds others did not hear or take notice of. His sense of smell, too, was remarkable—for instance, he would catch the odor of paint across the street, and so forth. In the matter of sight I don't know that he was better than the rest. His taste was simple, hardly to be called refined.

From the very beginning Walt was in every way plain, homely, in his way of living. There was no deviation from this. I never knew the consciousness of it to embarrass him.

I can remember Walt's card-playing. That was years and years ago, when I was a shaver. He was in for that sort of thing as well as anybody. But he never danced. Still, he was inclined towards vigorous exercise and play. He once had a ring suspended from the ceiling. The point was to throw this ring on a hook driven in the wall. On one occasion the prize was a mince pie, or twenty-five cents, and I recall that I had to go for the pie. I was part proprietor of the *Long Islander*, and it was in the office of the paper that the game was played.

Walt was not markedly sober or jolly—could be either one or the other. Jeff was always the jolly one. He was always active. There was never any trouble to get along with Walt. He never attempted to bully anybody. He would tell Lou, speaking of

me: "There was a bad boy who grew to a good man." He was always kind—would do anything for us—showed no disposition to browbeat the younger members—seemed as if he had us in his charge. Now and then his guardianship seemed excessive. Sometimes he would talk with us, give us good advice. His opinion was not only asked by the family, even when he was quite young, but by neighbors. We all deferred to his judgment—looked up to him. He was like us—yet he was different from us, too. These strangers, these neighbors, saw there was something in him out of the ordinary.

Another point about Walt: he never cared what anybody thought of him, bad or good. Mother would wonder, "What will people think?" but he would say, "Never mind what they think." We saw that Walt had different ways about him. I don't say, mind you, that we thought Walt *greater* than the rest, but *different*.

I do not remember his ever going to church. His mother went, but she was not a regular church-goer. She went almost anywhere. She pretended to be a Baptist. Father did not go to church at all. They all leaned towards the Quakers. Father was a great admirer of Elias Hicks. He would go to hear Hicks—did hear him often. Walt, too, as everybody knows, admired Elias Hicks. That was about all there was of the Quaker in him. I do not remember that Walt went to church even in his younger days. There were, of course, no religious exercises or observances in the family at all. Walt would no doubt go to hear fellows like Father Taylor and Hicks, whom he considered geniuses, but men like Spurgeon or Beecher or Brooks he would not go to hear, even if the chance came up. There was something about preachers as a rule which seemed to repel him.

Walt was always a great opera-goer, but there was nothing in opera for me. I would go to the Bowery or some other theater. Not that he was not friendly and all that. He would often ask me, but I hardly went once.

I was not at home when Emerson called. I do not remember

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that Walt said anything about Alcott and the others, though they came a number of times.

It would be hard for me to say anything in connection with his public speaking. I never heard him speak at a political meeting. In fact, at the time he was making political speeches I was too small. Besides, I rather think he was then boarding in New York—I don't think he was at home.

When "Franklin Evans" was published I could not have been more than nine or ten years of age. I have heard it said that copies are scarce—in fact, you are saying it now—but I feel quite sure that I have seen a copy within the last five or six years. Yet I do not know of anybody who has a copy. Walt never made anything of it himself. Probably there is some mystery about it, but it is quite positive that Walt did not at that time, any more than at any time since, say anything to his family to indicate that he took any pride in it. Quite the contrary, in fact. He rather disliked or laughed at the mention of it.

Walt had very few books. He was not a book collector. But he spent a good many hours in the libraries of New York. He cared little for sport. As for gunning, he would have nothing to do with it. He would fish now and then, but was not carried away with it. He was an old-fashioned ball-player and entered into a game heartily enough.

Long ago we lived on a farm. Walt would not do farm work. He had things he liked better—school-teaching, for instance, and writing. He taught an ordinary district school, and only continued at it a year or so—perhaps three or four years. I myself went to school to him. It was said at the time that Walt made a very good schoolmaster. His own education was gained in the Brooklyn schools.

Altogether, Walt's life was uneventful, containing no startling events, so far as I know.

I think he became a Republican when Fremont came up. Previous to 1856 he was a Free Soil Democrat. In the case of slavery he was always for the slave, but he was not as far ad-

vanced as Gerrit Smith, Wendell Phillips and that class of men.

At the time "Leaves of Grass" was printed—the 1855 edition—Beecher was neither friendly nor unfriendly. Later on Walt and he were quite thick.

I suppose I might go on talking in this way, but you would find in the end that I had not added greatly to your information about Walt. But some things said here, simple and superfluous as they may seem, should be kept in mind and set down as history. For there have been charges made and doubts expressed on points on which charges are unjust and doubts have no excuse. And as these are features on which I can speak by some authority, my silence might be construed as confession.

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A WOMAN'S ESTIMATE OF WALT WHITMAN.*

By ANNE GILCHRIST.

June 22, 1869.—I was calling on [Mr. Madox Brown] a fortnight ago, and he put into my hands your edition of Walt Whitman's poems. I shall not cease to thank him for that. Since I have had it, I can read no other book: it holds me entirely spell-bound, and I go through it again and again with deepening delight and wonder.

June 23.—I am very sure you are right in your estimate of

* *London, Nov. 20, 1869.*

The great satisfaction which I felt in arranging, about two years ago, the first edition (or rather selection) of Walt Whitman's poems published in England has been, in due course of time, followed by another satisfaction—and one which, rightly laid to heart, is both less mixed and more intense. A lady, whose friendship honors me, read the selection last summer, and immediately afterwards accepted from me the loan of the complete edition, and read that also. Both volumes raised in her a boundless and splendid enthusiasm, ennobling to witness. This found expression in some letters which she addressed to me at the time, and which contain (I affirm it without misgiving, and I hope not without some title to form an opinion) about the fullest, farthest-reaching, and most eloquent appreciation of Whitman yet put into writing, and certainly the most valuable, whether or not I or other readers find cause for critical dissent at an item here and there. The most valuable, I say, because this is the expression of what *a woman* sees in Whitman's poems—a woman who has read and thought much, and whom to know is to respect and esteem in every relation, whether of character, intellect, or culture.

I longed that what this lady had written should be published for the benefit of English, and more especially of American readers. She has generously acceded to my request. The ensuing reflections upon Whitman's poems contain several passages reproduced verbatim from the letters in question, supplemented by others which the same lady has added so as more fully to define and convey the impression which those unparalleled and deathless writings have made upon her.

W. M. ROSSETTI.

(41)

Walt Whitman. There is nothing in him that I shall ever let go my hold of. For me the reading of his poems is truly a new birth of the soul.

I shall quite fearlessly accept your kind offer of the loan of a complete edition, certain that great and divinely beautiful nature has not, could not infuse any poison into the wine he has poured out for us. And as for what you specially allude to, who so well able to bear it—I will say, to judge wisely of it—as one who, having been a happy wife and mother, has learned to accept all things with tenderness, to feel a sacredness in all? Perhaps Walt Whitman has forgotten—or, through some theory in his head, has overridden—the truth that our instincts are beautiful facts of nature, as well as our bodies; and that we have a strong instinct of silence about some things.

July 11.—I think it was very manly and kind of you to put the whole of Walt Whitman's poems into my hands; and that I have no other friend who would have judged them and me so wisely and generously.

I had not dreamed that words could cease to be words, and become electric streams like these. I do assure you that, strong as I am, I feel sometimes as if I had not bodily strength to read many of these poems. In the series headed "Calamus," for instance, in some of the "Songs of Parting," the "Voice out of the Sea," the poem beginning "Tears, Tears," etc., there is such a weight of emotion, such a tension of the heart, that mine refuses to beat under it—stands quite still—and I am obliged to lay the book down for a while. Or again, in the piece called "Walt Whitman," and one or two others of that type, I am as one hurried through stormy seas, over high mountains, dazed with sunlight, stunned with a crowd and tumult of faces and voices, till I am breathless, bewildered, half dead. Then come parts and whole poems in which there is such calm wisdom and strength of thought, such a cheerful breadth of sunshine, that the soul bathes in them renewed and strengthened. Living impulses flow out of these that make me exult in life, yet look longingly towards "the superb vistas of Death." Those who admire this poem, and don't care for that, and talk of formlessness, ab-

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sence of meter, etc., are quite as far from any genuine recognition of Walt Whitman as his bitter detractors. Not, of course, that all the pieces are equal in power and beauty, but that all are vital; they grew—they were not made. We criticise a palace or a cathedral; but what is the good of criticising a forest? Are not the hitherto-accepted masterpieces of literature akin rather to noble architecture; built up of material rendered precious by elaboration; planned with subtle art that makes beauty go hand in hand with rule and measure, and knows where the last stone will come, before the first is laid; the result stately, fixed, yet such as might, in every particular, have been different from what it is (therefore inviting criticism), contrasting proudly with the careless freedom of nature, opposing its own rigid adherence to symmetry to her willful dallying with it? But not such is this book. Seeds brought by the winds from north, south, east, and west, lying long in the earth, not resting on it like the stately building, but hid in and assimilating it, shooting upwards to be nourished by the air and the sunshine and the rain which beat idly against that,—each bough and twig and leaf growing in strength and beauty its own way, a law to itself, yet, with all this freedom of spontaneous growth, the result inevitable, unalterable (therefore setting criticism at naught), above all things vital,—that is, a source of ever-generating vitality: such are these poems.

"Roots and leaves themselves alone are these,

Scents brought to men and women from the wild woods and from the pond-side,

Breast sorrel and pinks of love, fingers that wind around tighter than vines,
Gushes from the throats of birds hid in the foliage of trees as the sun is risen,
Breezes of land and love, breezes set from living shores out to you on the living sea,—to you, O sailors!

Frost-mellowed berries and Third-month twigs, offered fresh to young persons wandering out in the fields when the winter breaks up,

Love-buds put before you and within you, whoever you are,

Buds to be unfolded on the old terms.

If you bring the warmth of the sun to them, they will open, and bring form, color, perfume, to you:

If you become the aliment and the wet, they will become flowers, fruits, tall branches and trees."

And the music takes good care of itself too. As if it *could* be otherwise! As if those "large, melodious thoughts," those emotions, now so stormy and wild, now of unfathomed tenderness and gentleness, could fail to vibrate through the words in strong, sweeping, long-sustained chords, with lovely melodies winding in and out fitfully amongst them! Listen, for instance, to the penetrating sweetness, set in the midst of rugged grandeur, of the passage beginning,—

"I am he that walks with the tender and growing night;
I call to the earth and sea half held by the night."

I see that no counting of syllables will reveal the mechanism of the music; and that this rushing spontaneity could not stay to bind itself with the fetters of meter. But I know that the music is there, and that I would not for something change ears with those who cannot hear it. And I know that poetry must do one of two things,—either own this man as equal with her highest, completest manifestors, or stand aside, and admit that there is some thing come into the world nobler, diviner than herself, one that is free of the universe, and can tell its secrets as none before.

I do not think or believe this; but see it with the same unmistakable definiteness of perception and full consciousness that I see the sun at this moment in the noonday sky, and feel his rays glowing down upon me as I write in the open air. What more can you ask of the words of a man's mouth than that they should "absorb into you as food and air, to appear again in your strength, gait, face,"—that they should be "fibre and filter to your blood," joy and gladness to your whole nature?

I am persuaded that one great source of this kindling, vitalizing power—I suppose *the* great source—is the grasp laid upon the present, the fearless and comprehensive dealing with reality. Hitherto the leaders of thought have (except in science) been men with their faces resolutely turned backwards; men who have made of the past a tyrant that beggars and scorns the present,

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hardly seeing any greatness but what is shrouded away in the twilight, underground past; naming the present only for disparaging comparisons, humiliating distrust that tends to create the very barrenness it complains of; bidding me warm myself at fires that went out to mortal eyes centuries ago; insisting, in religion above all, that I must either "look through dead men's eyes," or shut my own in helpless darkness. Poets fancying themselves so happy over the chill and faded beauty of the past, but not making me happy at all,—rebellious always at being dragged down out of the free air and sunshine of to-day.

But this poet, this "athlete, full of rich words, full of joy," takes you by the hand, and turns you with your face straight forwards. The present is great enough for him, because he is great enough for it. It flows through him as a "vast oceanic tide," lifting up a mighty voice. Earth, "the eloquent, dumb, great mother," is not old, has lost none of her fresh charms, none of her divine meanings; still bears great sons and daughters, if only they would possess themselves and accept their birthright,—a richer, not a poorer, heritage than was ever provided before,—richer by all the toil and suffering of the generations that have preceded, and by the further unfolding of the eternal purposes. Here is one come at last who can show them how; whose songs are the breath of a glad, strong, beautiful life, nourished sufficiently, kindled to unsurpassed intensity and greatness by the gifts of the present.

"Each moment and whatever happens thrills me with joy."

"O the joy of my soul leaning poised on itself,—receiving identity through materials, and loving them,—observing characters, and absorbing them!

O my soul vibrated back to me from them!

O the gleesome saunter over fields and hillsides!

The leaves and flowers of the commonest weeds, the moist, fresh stillness of the woods,

The exquisite smell of the earth at daybreak, and all through the forenoon.

O to realize space!

The plenteousness of all—that there are no bounds;

To emerge, and be of the sky—of the sun and moon and the flying clouds,
as one with them.

O the joy of suffering,—
To struggle against great odds, to meet enemies undaunted,
To be entirely alone with them—to find how much one can stand !”

I used to think it was great to disregard happiness, to press on to a high goal, careless, disdainful of it. But now I see that there is nothing so great as to be capable of happiness ; to pluck it out of “each moment and whatever happens ;” to find that one can ride as gay and buoyant on the angry, menacing, tumultuous waves of life as on those that glide and glitter under a clear sky ; that it is not defeat and wretchedness which come out of the storm of adversity, but strength and calmness.

See, again, in the pieces gathered together under the title “Calamus,” and elsewhere, what it means for a man to love his fellow-man. Did you dream it before ? These “evangel-poems of comrades and of love” speak, with the abiding, penetrating power of prophecy, of a “new and superb friendship ;” speak not as beautiful dreams, unrealizable aspirations to be laid aside in sober moods, because they breathe out what now glows within the poet’s own breast, and flows out in action toward the men around him. Had ever any land before her poet, not only to concentrate within himself her life, and, when she kindled with anger against her children who were treacherous to the cause her life is bound up with, to announce and justify her terrible purpose in words of unsurpassable grandeur (as in the poem beginning, “Rise, O days, from your fathomless deeps”), but also to go and with his own hands dress the wounds, with his powerful presence soothe and sustain and nourish her suffering soldiers,—hundreds of them, thousands, tens of thousands,—by day and by night, for weeks, months, years ?

“I sit by the restless all the dark night ; some are so young,
Some suffer so much : I recall the experience sweet and sad.
Many a soldier’s loving arms about this neck have crossed and rested,
Many a soldier’s kiss dwells on these bearded lips :—”

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Kisses, that touched with the fire of a strange, new, undying eloquence the lips that received them! The most transcendent genius could not, untaught by that "experience sweet and sad," have breathed out hymns for the dead soldiers of such ineffably tender, sorrowful, yet triumphant beauty.

But the present spreads before us other things besides those of which it is easy to see the greatness and beauty; and the poet would leave us to learn the hardest part of our lesson unhelped if he took no heed of these; and would be unfaithful to his calling, as interpreter of man to himself and of the scheme of things in relation to him, if he did not accept all—if he did not teach "the great lesson of reception, neither preference nor denial." If he feared to stretch out the hand, not of condescending pity, but of fellowship, to the degraded, criminal, foolish, despised, knowing that they are only laggards in "the great procession winding along the roads of the universe," "the far-behind to come on in their turn," knowing the "amplitude of Time," how could he roll the stone of contempt off the heart as he does, and cut the strangling knot of the problem of inherited viciousness and degradation? And, if he were not bold and true to the utmost, and did not own in himself the threads of darkness mixed in with the threads of light, and own it with the same strength and directness that he tells of the light, and not in those vague generalities that everybody uses, and nobody means, in speaking on this head,—in the worst, germs of all that is in the best; in the best, germs of all that is in the worst,—the *brotherhood* of the human race would be a mere flourish of rhetoric. And brotherhood is naught if it does not bring brother's love along with it. If the poet's heart were not "a measureless ocean of love" that seeks the lips and would quench the thirst of all, he were not the one we have waited for so long. Who but he could put at last the right meaning into that word "democracy," which has been made to bear such a burthen of incongruous notions? —

"By God! I will accept nothing that all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms!" —

flashing it forth like a banner, making it draw the instant allegiance of every man and woman who loves justice. All occupations, however homely, all developments of the activities of man, need the poet's recognition, because every man needs the assurance that for him also the materials out of which to build up a great and satisfying life lie to hand, the sole magic in the use of them, all of the right stuff in the right hands. Hence those patient enumerations of every conceivable kind of industry:—

"In them far more than you estimated—in them far less also."

Far more as a means, next to nothing as an end; whereas we are wont to take it the other way, and think the result something, but the means a weariness. Out of all come strength, and the cheerfulness of strength. I murmured not a little, to say the truth, under these enumerations, at first. But now I think that not only is their purpose a justification, but that the musical ear and vividness of perception of the poet have enabled him to perform this task also with strength and grace, and that they are harmonious as well as necessary parts of the great whole.

Nor do I sympathize with those who grumble at the unexpected words that turn up now and then. A quarrel with words is always, more or less, a quarrel with meanings; and here we are to be as genial and as wide as nature, and quarrel with nothing. If the thing a word stands for exists by divine appointment (and what does not so exist?), the word need never be ashamed of itself; the shorter and more direct, the better. It is a gain to make friends with it, and see it in good company. Here, at all events, "poetic diction" would not serve,—not pretty, soft, colorless words, laid by in lavender for the special use of poetry, that have had none of the wear and tear of daily life; but such as have stood most, as tell of human heart-beats, as fit closest to the sense, and have taken deep hues of association from the varied experiences of life—those are the words wanted here. We only ask to seize and be seized swiftly, overmasteringly, by the great meanings. We see with the eyes of the soul, listen with the ears of the soul; the poor old words that have served

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so many generations for purposes, good, bad, and indifferent, and become warped and blurred in the process, grow young again, regenerate, translucent. It is not mere delight they give us,—*that* the “sweet singers,” with their subtly wrought gifts, their mellifluous speech, can give too in their degree; it is such life and health as enable us to pluck delights for ourselves out of every hour of the day, and taste the sunshine that ripened the corn in the crust we eat (I often seem to myself to do that).

Out of the scorn of the present came skepticism; and out of the large, loving acceptance of it comes faith. If *now* is so great and beautiful, I need no arguments to make me believe that the *nows* of the past and of the future were and will be great and beautiful too.

“I know I am deathless.

I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass.

I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august,

I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood.”

“My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite:

I laugh at what you call dissolution,

And I know the amplitude of time.”

“No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and death.”

You argued rightly that my confidence would not be betrayed by any of the poems in this book. None of them troubled me even for a moment; because I saw at a glance that it was not, as men had supposed, the heights brought down to the depths, but the depths lifted up level with the sunlit heights, that they might become clear and sunlit too. Always, for a woman, a veil woven out of her own soul—never touched upon even, with a rough hand, by this poet. But, for a man, a daring, fearless pride in himself, not a mock-modesty woven out of delusions—a very poor imitation of a woman's. Do they not see that this fearless pride, this complete acceptance of themselves, is needful for her pride, her justification? What! is it all so ignoble, so base, that it will not bear the honest light of speech from lips so gifted with “the divine power to use words?” Then what hateful, bitter

humiliation for her, to have to give herself up to the reality! Do you think there is ever a bride who does not taste more or less this bitterness in her cup? But who put it there? It must surely be man's fault, not God's, that she has to say to herself, "Soul, look another way—you have no part in this. Motherhood is beautiful, fatherhood is beautiful; but the dawn of fatherhood and motherhood is not beautiful." Do they really think that God is ashamed of what he has made and appointed? And, if not, surely it is somewhat superfluous that they should undertake to be so for him.

"The full-spread pride of man is calming and excellent to the soul,"—

of a woman above all. It is true that instinct of silence I spoke of is a beautiful, imperishable part of nature too. But it is not beautiful when it means an ignominious shame brooding darkly. Shame is like a very flexible veil, that follows faithfully the shape of what it covers—beautiful when it hides a beautiful thing, ugly when it hides an ugly one. It has not covered what was beautiful here; it has covered a mean distrust of a man's self and of his Creator. It was needed that this silence, this evil spell, should for once be broken, and the daylight let in, that the dark cloud lying under might be scattered to the winds. It was needed that one who could here indicate for us "the path between reality and the soul" should speak. That is what these beautiful, despised poems, the "Children of Adam," do, read by the light that glows out of the rest of the volume: light of a clear, strong faith in God, of an unfathomably deep and tender love for humanity,—light shed out of a soul that is "possessed of itself."

"Natural life of me faithfully praising things,
Corroborating for ever the triumph of things."

Now silence may brood again; but lovingly, happily, as protecting what is beautiful, not as hiding what is unbeautiful; consciously enfolding a sweet and sacred mystery—august even as the mystery of Death, the dawn as the setting; kindred gran-

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deurs, which to eyes that are opened shed a hallowing beauty on all that surrounds and preludes them.

"O vast and well-veil'd Death!"

"O the beautiful touch of Death, so hling and benumbing a few moments, for reasons!"

He who can thus look with fearlessness at the beauty of Death may well dare to teach us to look with fearless, untroubled eyes at the perfect beauty of Love in all its appointed realizations. Now none need turn away their thoughts with pain or shame; though only lovers and poets may say what they will,—the lover to his own, the poet to all, because all are in a sense his own. None need fear that this will be harmful to the woman. How should there be such a flaw in the scheme of creation that, for the two with whom there is no complete life, save in closest sympathy, perfect union, what is natural and happy for the one should be baneful to the other? The utmost faithful freedom of speech, such as there is in these poems, creates in her no thought or feeling that shuns the light of heaven, none that are not as innocent and serenely fair as the flowers that grow; would lead, not to harm, but to such deep and tender affection as makes harm or the thought of harm simply impossible. Far more beautiful care than man is aware of has been taken in the making of her, to fit her to be his mate. God has taken such care that *he* need take none; none, that is, which consists in disguise, insincerity, painful hushing-up of his true, grand, initiating nature. And, as regards the poet's utterances, which, it might be thought, however harmless in themselves, would prove harmful by falling into the hands of those for whom they are manifestly unsuitable, I believe that even here fear is needless. For her innocence is folded round with such thick folds of ignorance, till the right way and time for it to accept knowledge, that what is unsuitable is also unintelligible to her; and, if no dark shadow from without be cast on the white page by misconstruction or by foolish mystery and hiding away of it, no hurt will ensue from its passing freely through her hands.

This is so, though it is little understood or realized by men. Wives and mothers will learn through the poet that there is rejoicing grandeur and beauty there wherein their hearts have so longed to find it; where foolish men, traitors to themselves, poorly comprehending the grandeur of their own or the beauty of a woman's nature, have taken such pains to make her believe there was none,—nothing but miserable discrepancy.

One of the hardest things to make a child understand is, that down underneath your feet, if you go far enough, you come to blue sky and stars again; that there really is no "down" for the world, but only in every direction an "up." And that this is an all-embracing truth, including within its scope every created thing, and, with deepest significance, every part, faculty, attribute, healthful impulse, mind, and body of a man (each and all facing towards and related to the Infinite on every side), is what we grown children find it hardest to realize, too. Novalis said: "We touch heaven when we lay our hand on the human body;" which, if it mean anything, must mean an ample justification of the poet who has dared to be the poet of the body as well as of the soul—to treat it with the freedom and grandeur of an ancient sculptor.

"Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse, I say
the Form complete is worthier far."

"These are not parts and poems of the body only, but of the soul."

"O, I say now these are soul."

But while Novalis—who gazed at the truth a long way off, up in the air, in a safe, comfortable, German fashion—has been admiringly quoted by high authorities, the great American who has dared to rise up and wrestle with it, and bring it alive and full of power in the midst of us, has been greeted with a very different kind of reception, as has happened a few times before in the world in similar cases. Yet I feel deeply persuaded that a perfectly fearless, candid, ennobling treatment of the life of the body (so inextricably intertwined with, so potent in its influence on the life of the soul) will prove of inestimable value to

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all earnest and aspiring natures, impatient of the folly of the long prevalent belief that it is because of the greatness of the spirit that it has learned to despise the body, and to ignore its influences; knowing well that it is, on the contrary, just because the spirit is not great enough, not healthy and vigorous enough, to transfuse itself into the life of the body, elevating that and making it holy by its own triumphant intensity; knowing, too, how the body avenges this by dragging the soul down to the level assigned itself. Whereas the spirit must lovingly embrace the body, as the roots of a tree embrace the ground, drawing thence rich nourishment, warmth, impulse. Or, rather, the body is itself the root of the soul,—that whereby it grows and feeds. The great tide of healthful life that carries all before it must surge through the whole man, not beat to and fro in one corner of his brain.

"O the life of my senses and flesh, transcending my senses and flesh!"

For the sake of all that is highest, a truthful recognition of this life, and especially of that of it which underlies the fundamental ties of humanity,—the love of husband and wife, fatherhood, motherhood,—is needed. Religion needs it, now at last alive to the fact that the basis of all true worship is comprised in "the great lesson of reception, neither preference nor denial," interpreting, loving, rejoicing in all that is created, fearing and despising nothing.

"I accept reality, and dare not question it."

The dignity of a man, the pride and affection of a woman, need it too. And so does the intellect. For science has opened up such elevating views of the mystery of material existence that, if poetry had not bestirred herself to handle this theme in her own way, she would have been left behind by her plodding sister. Science knows that matter is not, as we fancied, certain stolid atoms which the forces of nature vibrate through and push and pull about; but that the forces and the atoms are one mysterious, imperishable identity, neither conceivable without the

other. She knows, as well as the poet, that destructibility is not one of nature's words; that it is only the relationship of things—tangibility, visibility—that are transitory. She knows that body and soul are one, and proclaims it undauntedly, regardless, and rightly regardless, of inferences. Timid onlookers, aghast, think it means that soul is body—means death for the soul. But the poet knows it means body is soul,—the great whole imperishable; in life and in death continually changing substance, always retaining identity. For, if the man of science is happy about the atoms, if he is not balked or baffled by apparent decay or destruction, but can see far enough into the dimness to know that not only is each atom imperishable, but that its endowments, characteristics, affinities, electric and other attractions and repulsions—however suspended, hid, dormant, masked, when it enters into new combinations—remain unchanged, be it for thousands of years, and, when it is again set free, manifest themselves in the old way, shall not the poet be happy about the vital whole? shall the highest force, the vital, that controls and compels into complete subservience for its own purposes the rest, be the only one that is destructible? and the love and thought that endow the whole be less enduring than the gravitating, chemical, electric powers that endow its atoms? But identity is the essence of love and thought—I still I, you still you. Certainly no man need ever again be scared by the "dark hush" and the little handful of refuse.

"You are not scattered to the winds—you gather certainly and safely around yourself."

"Sure as Life holds all parts together, Death holds all parts together."

"All goes onward and outward; nothing collapses."

"What I am, I am of my body; and what I shall be, I shall be of my body."

"The body parts away at last for the journeys of the soul."

Science knows that whenever a thing passes from a solid to a subtle air, power is set free to a wider scope of action. The poet knows it too, and is dazzled as he turns his eyes toward

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"the superb vistas of death." He knows that "the perpetual transfers and promotions" and "the amplitude of time" are for a man as well as for the earth. The man of science, with unwearied, self-denying toil, finds the letters and joins them into words. But the poet alone can make complete sentences. The man of science furnishes the premises; but it is the poet who draws the final conclusion. Both together are "swiftly and surely preparing a future greater than all the past." But, while the man of science bequeaths to it the fruits of his toil, the poet, this mighty poet, bequeaths himself—"Death making him really undying." He will "stand as high as the highest" to these men and women. For he taught them, in words which breathe out his very heart and soul into theirs, that "love of comrades" which, like the "soft-born measureless light," makes wholesome and fertile every spot it penetrates to, lighting up dark social and political problems, and kindling into a genial glow that great heart of justice which is the life-source of Democracy. He, the beloved friend of all, initiated for them a "new and superb friendship;" whispered that secret of a god-like pride in a man's self, and a perfect trust in woman, whereby their love for each other, no longer poisoned and stifled, but basking in the light of God's smile, and sending up to him a perfume of gratitude, attains at last a divine and tender completeness. He gave a faith-compelling utterance to that "wisdom which is the certainty of the reality and immortality of things, and of the excellence of things." Happy America, that he should be her son! One sees, indeed, that only a young giant of a nation could produce this kind of greatness, so full of the ardor, the elasticity, the inexhaustible vigor and freshness, the joyousness, the audacity of youth. But I, for one, cannot grudge anything to America. For, after all, the young giant is the old English giant,—the great English race renewing its youth in that magnificent land, "Mexican-breathed, Arctic-braced," and girdling up its loins to start on a new career that shall match with the greatness of the new home.

WALT WHITMAN.

"THE good gray poet" gone! Brave, hopeful Walt!
He might not be a singer without fault,
And his large, rough-hewn rhythm did not chime
With dulcent daintiness of time and rhyme.
He was no neater than wide Nature's wild,
More metrical than sea winds. Culture's child,
Lapped in luxurious laws of line and lilt,
Shrank from him shuddering, who was roughly built
As cyclopean temples. Yet there rang
True music through his rhapsodies, as he sang
Of brotherhood, and freedom, love and hope,
With strong, wide sympathy which dared to cope
With all life's phases, and call nought unclean.
Whilst hearts are generous, and whilst woods are green,
He shall find hearers, who, in a slack time
Of puny hards and pessimistic rhyme,
Dared to bid men adventure and rejoice.
His "yawp barbaric" was a human voice;
The singer was a man. America
Is poorer by a stalwart soul to-day,
And may feel pride that she hath given birth
To this stout laureate of old Mother Earth.

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THE MAN WALT WHITMAN.

By RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE.

How many a man whose lot has been cast in these current days has wished that his life might have been passed cotemporary with some historic character for whom he is possessed of an especial admiration. With the wise Socrates, for instance ; or Aristotle, " *Il maestro di color che sanno* ;" or Plato, " whose language," says Shelley, " is rather that of an immortal spirit than a man ;" or Paul, reckoned by Comte, " *le vrai fondateur du Christianisme* ;" or Mohammed, " the inspired Arab ;" or Luther, Danté, Bacon, Swedenborg ; or the almost divine Francis D'Assisi, that he might have seen and conversed with the great spirit then upon the earth ; while all the time, entirely unconscious of the fact, he has been living side by side with one perhaps as great as the greatest of these.

Just so did the contemporaries of these glorious ones carelessly jostle them on the street, sit opposite them at table, talk with them and hear them talked about ; stand by, perhaps, while one of them was being driven forth from Florence ; hear another preach, witness the lamentable disgrace of a third, see one fleeing through the desert from his enemies, listen to the subtle discourse of another in street or market place, note a certain religious innovator pleading for the new ideas at Antioch, Athens, or Corinth—pass among them, and then return to his daily round of occupation unimpressed, most likely discontented at the absence of interesting persons and events in his age and land.

We see what we have it in us to see. Around each of us is spread out every day and night the infinite universe, illimitably extended, peopled with innumerable worlds and unimaginable spirits, infinitely various in infinite ways, infinitely complex, in-

finitely beautiful—against all of which we oppose an infinite stolidity, and with infinite assurance demand something in which we can feel an interest.

We believe in supremely great men in the past, and most of us believe in evolution, but we fail to realize that these two beliefs imply the existence of still greater men, in all departments, in the modern than in the ancient world. Our eyes are dazzled by the great historic names, and, if we would tell the truth, we should own that we are a little afraid to risk our own judgment, and that we would rather trust greatness that has been well endorsed than run the risk which attends the endorsement of new men.

Be this as it may, and with all due respect to the ancient and medieval heroes of Asia and Europe, these few pages are dedicated to the endorsement of a modern American.

Walt Whitman is a modern of the moderns, an American of the Americans. He says:

"My tongue, every atom of my blood, formed from this soil, this air,
Born here of parents born here from parents the same and their parents the same."

The writings of this man are both in matter and manner unlike any previous and cannot be judged by the current canons. They are throughout an immense, massive, exhaustive, subtle and profound autobiography such as until now the world has not seen:

"What am I after all but a child pleased with the sound of my own name?
repenting it over and over;
I stand apart to hear—it never tires me."

If we combined both parts of Goethe's "Faust" with his prose work, "Wahrheit und Dichtung aus meinem Leben," we should have a book strictly parallel to the volume containing the complete works of Walt Whitman; but the achievement of the great German, grand as it is, would still fall far short of that of the American poet.

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Whatever Walt Whitman's subject matter, whether he is ostensibly speaking of himself, of some other individual, of the animals, of something impersonal, he is always speaking really of himself—of himself treated as the typical man, and so treated not so much as being better than others but as seeing more clearly the divinity that is in every human being:

"I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume."

The man himself, the whole man, body and soul, including his relations to the material world about him and the practical and social life of his time, is faithfully mirrored in his book. The outward and inward experiences of a long life are vividly and truthfully briefed; nothing is omitted, the most trivial and the most vital equally finding place. The whole is done in a manner far removed from the usual direct autobiographic prose; in a manner, indeed, quite unusual, special, poetic and indirect. The result is such that future ages will know this man as perhaps no human being heretofore has been ever known either to his contemporaries or successors. The exposition of the person involving equally that of his environment gives us incidentally a photograph of America, 1850-90. The breathing man, Walt Whitman, in his surroundings, as he lived, is so faithfully reproduced, and with such vitality, that all must admit the justice of his final dictum:

"This is no book,
Who touches this touches a man."

The reader who should peruse "Leaves of Grass" as he would an ordinary book, for the thoughts which the words immediately express, and should rest there, would be like a child who, having learned the alphabet, should consider his education complete. The thoughts, feelings, images, emotions which lie directly behind the words constitute merely the façade of the temple, the introduction to the real object to be presented. That object, as has been said, is an embodiment of its author, Walt Whitman. This being the case, the value of the book will depend largely upon the sort of man he proves to be.

As pointed out over twenty years ago by John Burroughs, the author of "Leaves of Grass" occupies upon the broad and crowded canvas of the nineteenth century an unique position. His name is to-day almost as widely known as that of any man living; the man himself may be said to be known by none and to be approximately known to a few only. His writings are talked about (generally scoffed at) almost universally, looked into by merely a few thousand, partially understood by at most a few hundred. The books, pamphlets, magazine articles, newspaper criticisms and paragraphs written and published about him since the first edition of his book appeared in 1855 are uncountable. My own very imperfect collection, in English, French, Hungarian, German, Italian and Danish, foots up something like two thousand distinct pieces, each from a few lines to a volume in compass. He has been translated and commented upon in every country and language of Europe. The range of this comment and criticism is even more remarkable than either its copiousness or its geographical extent. It stretches the whole sweep of the gamut, from the dreadful verdict of the London (England) *Critic*, in 1855, which "declares emphatically that the man who wrote 'Leaves of Grass' deserves nothing so richly as the public executioner's whip," through phases less and less condemnatory, past the mean of indifference, into zones more and more laudatory, until we reach a considerable band of writers, including Dowden, Rolleston, Joaquin Miller, Sarrazin, Buchanan, F. W. Walters, W. S. Kennedy, John Burroughs, Freiligrath and W. M. Rossetti, who place this author's name beside the names of Homer, Danté and Shakspeare. In fact, recognition soars even above this height, until, by such writers and thinkers as Mrs. Anne Gilchrist and W. D. O'Connor, Whitman is placed in the last and highest rank, with the social and religious reformers and founders, beside Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus. Time alone can arbitrate between such diverse judgments as these.

Meanwhile, it may be urged that if this man is what his contemporaries think him, if he is even what the coldly indifferent or moderately friendly believe, he could hardly be ranked, as we see he is, by such onlookers as those above named.

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The present writer may say, by way of indicating the ground work of the faith that is in him, that he has had unusually good opportunities of studying the problem here presented. He has been a careful reader of "Leaves of Grass" and all other writings by the same author for over twenty-five years. He has been on terms of personal intimacy with the poet the greater part of that time, and has known for many years a large number of his closest friends. He has for at least twenty years made himself acquainted, as far as it has been possible, with everything that has been published about the man and his writings.

As Walt Whitman wrote a book, and as the writing of it has been in one sense the work of his life, and as the book on the face of it appears to be a philosophical poem, though of an original and somewhat singular sort, so it has followed that this man has been chiefly considered and written about with reference to his position in the world of art and letters—that is, as a poet and thinker. But this is certainly a false point of view; he never intended to write poetry in the ordinary acceptance of that word, and assuredly he never meant to write philosophy. Upon all such points as these we can get full and reliable information by going to Walt Whitman himself, as the man is set forth in his own words. He tells us in what sense he is and is not a poet, and he disclaims explicitly the title of philosopher. He says:

"No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair,
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy."

What he did aim at is characteristically expressed in the next line:

"But each man and woman of you I lead upon a knoll."

He says he will lead each one of us upon an elevation, upon higher ground.

Until thirty years of age and upwards Walt Whitman, though in health, features, build, physique generally, exceptionally endowed, was spiritually, as far as appeared, on a par with ordinary men, and what he wrote up to that time was not by any means

distinguished by extraordinary qualities. But after attaining, at the usual age, the average mental status of his time and land, he did not rest there, but, urged forward by an invincible impulse of growth and expansion within, he attained a mental level unprecedented, as I believe, in the history of humanity.

Think, if one of our primitive Aryan ancestors, far back behind Homer, the Vedas and the Zendavesta, had been

"Laid asleep in some great trance,
The ages coming and going all the while,"

and should awaken now. Would not the men of the civilized nations of to-day seem to him superhuman? and their deeds, thoughts, feelings, if he could understand them, preternatural?

Walt Whitman, by mere growth, passed simply and naturally beyond the generation into which he was born, and is to us to-day what we should be to the supposed sleeper awakened.

There is nothing supernatural, unprecedented, nor even very singular about this. All advance, whether in the human or in the organic world, is made by just such fitful, seemingly uncaused, spurts and starts. So came, and doubtless will yet come, among plants and animals, new varieties and species; and, in the world of men, new religions, philosophies, politics, social arrangements. Thus came that splendid outburst of artistic and intellectual pre-eminence in periclean Athens, invoiving a race or sept, instead of being confined, as is more usual, to an individual or family.

My point of view then is that Walt Whitman's teaching, his example, his religion, are not founded on make-believe, speculation or sentiment, but, like the eternal rocks themselves, are solid, genuine, inevitable, and are, to use his own words, established by "undeniable growth."

"As he sees the farthest he has the most faith,
His thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things."

In the language of the Veda:

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"Who sees further than others; he who has learned to mark the Eternals, and in the course of nature to perceive their might and wisdom."

Usually, in the case of a so-called great man the rise above the level of his time is in one, or at most two or three, mental departments. Aristotle, for instance, and Newton, are great by the intellect; Sophocles by intellect and artistic genius; Mohammed had creative religious as well as supreme artistic instinct; the author of the Shakspearean dramas was a philosopher, poet, scientist, but did not possess the higher religious emotions and aspirations, nor had he what may be called prophetic insight. If these plays proceeded from Bacon, then he, Leonardo da Vinci and Goethe were of all men the most universally endowed with great qualities—yet they all came short, judged by the last and highest standard.

In the case of Walt Whitman the advance beyond the limits of his time and race was not confined to any one function or group of functions—it was universal, along the whole line. His intellect, had it stood alone, was great enough to have entitled him to rank among the foremost thinkers of the race, as witness, among a hundred other proofs, his comprehensive vision and acceptance of evolution in both the inorganic and organic worlds before Darwin published the "Origin of Species" or Spencer began his cyclopædic treatise. But, exceptional as is his intellect, the moral and emotional side of his mind is still more developed. His capacity for affection and sympathy is, I believe, unprecedented, and his sterner moral qualities—courage, firmness and resolution—are as strongly if not more strongly marked. And along with these he has prophetic vision, religious assurance, aspiration and insight of the highest order, and, furthermore, creative imagination by which to embody them in new ideals.

Putting aside his exceptional intellectual and moral status as shown in his writings, his advance beyond the past and present levels of humanity is attested in every part and aspect of his organization—in his build, stature, his exceptional health of mind and body, the texture and tint of his skin, the size and form of his features, his cleanliness of mind and body, the grace of his

movements and gestures, the grandeur, and especially the magnetism, of his presence, the peculiar charm of his voice, his genial and kindly humor, the simplicity of his habits and tastes, his freedom from conventions, the largeness and beauty of his manners, his calmness and majesty, his charity and forbearance, his entire unresentfulness under whatever provocation, his liberality, his universal sympathy with humanity in all ages and lands, his broad tolerance, his catholic friendliness and his unexampled faculty of attracting affection.

And still far from all has been said, curious, interesting and suggestive points being still to note; the extraordinary perfection, namely, of his senses, and his universality from the point of view of physiognomy.

The color sense, the sense of musical harmony, the sense of fragrance, are each, perhaps, only a few thousand years old, and are still in process of development. In Walt Whitman the senses of fragrance and harmony, and, I believe, of color also, are far beyond the usual standard, while his ear for ordinary sounds is almost preternaturally acute:

"I hear bravuras of birds, *bustle of growing wheat*;"

and elsewhere he speaks of hearing the grass grow and the trees coming out in leaf. Then note this passage on fragrance:

"There is a scent to every thing, even the snow. No two places, hardly any two hours, anywhere exactly alike. How different the odor of noon from midnight, or winter from summer, or a windy spell from a still one."

All his senses, so far as I have been able to discover, are developed to the same degree, so that he sees, hears, feels, in his mere physical surroundings, phenomena and qualities inappreciable to others; while in spiritual affairs—the corresponding faculties being developed harmoniously with the rest—he has an instinct, sense, intuition, illumination, or whatever it may be called, in comparison with which the psychic vision of the average man is mere blindness.

Then, as to the other point. An English expert in physiog-

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nomny, while on a visit to America, called on the poet at the instance of the present writer, to whom he wrote that while most people have one, two or three of the four recognized temperaments (choleric, phlegmatic, sanguine, melancholic), Walt Whitman possesses all four of them—a rare and remarkable combination.

Upon such ample and stable basis, and of such various materials, was built this exceptional character—symmetrical, proportioned; each human faculty—the highest as the lowest, and the lowest as the highest—fully represented, with a result almost preterhuman in its typical humanity. To use Emerson's prophetic phrase: "He stands among partial men for the complete man, and apprises us not only of his wealth but of the commonwealth."

This breadth and symmetry of development, and the extent which it covers in all directions, bringing this man into exceptional rapport with the universe, is the distinguishing mark of Walt Whitman, and is our guarantee of the truth of the message he brings us. For in virtue of his special organization he "has a new thought; he has a whole new experience to unfold; he will tell us how it was with him, and all men will be the richer in his fortune."

And beyond all other messages, and as warrant for the rest, he brings to each man and woman that of a noble life, evidencing that it has been lived and may be lived—a life free from pettinesses, greed and sordid care; from hates, envyings and jealousies; from resentments and meannesses; from conventionality and pretense; from remorse and regret; from fear and complaint; from fault-finding, wrangling and querulousness; from prostrations, superstitions and supplications—a life copious, vehement, spiritual, bold—a life of grand acceptations in a grand spirit: acceptance of pain, sorrow, loss, sickness, old age, death—a life of freedom, of love and of content—a life of friendship, sympathy, forbearance, kindness, helpfulness and devotion—a life which freely takes and enjoys its patrimony, the divine universe—a life which knows its own continuity and immortality—a life of unlimited struggle and aspiration—a life of reality;

self-esteem, definiteness, elevatedness. This is the lesson he sets America and the world.

On all points his book and his life are at one. He once said to the present writer: "I have imagined a life which should be that of the average man, in average circumstances, and still grand, heroic." So he lived, and such a life he pictured in his book. What his writings teach he teaches with still stronger emphasis in his actual, ordinary, daily life. As in this he was simple, unaffected, unpretending, so in his book he is always downright, plain and straightforward. Never an insincere line or word. The most commonplace and the most profound sayings side by side, the one uttered as truthfully and moderately as the other. Blending every-day sights and experiences with glimpses into the profoundest depths of his spiritual consciousness. The one as much a plain matter of fact as the other. For instance: all through the "Leaves," will be found such contrasting passages as the two which follow:

"Lumbermen in their winter camp, daybreak in the woods, stripes of snow
on the limbs of trees, the occasional snapping,
The glad clear sound of one's own voice, the merry song, the natural life
of the woods, the strong day's work,
The blazing fire at night, the sweet taste of supper, the talk, the bed of
hemlock boughs and the bearskin."

"There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know it is in me.
Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body becomes,
I sleep—I sleep long:
I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word unsaid,
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.
Something it swings on more than the earth I swing on,
'Tis it the creation is the friend whose embracing awakes me,
Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines! I plead for my brothers and sisters.
Do you see O my brothers and sisters?
It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is eternal life—it is
Happiness."

See how fervently he expresses in his book, and over and over again repeats his faith in (might I not say his knowledge of?) immortality. His private, unpoetic, every-day assurance is neither

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more nor less than there set down. I asked him one day when we were alone together whether he believed in the personal, conscious immortality of the soul. He answered: "Yes, I do." I said: "But perhaps you believe in it as so many do—as something that is more likely than not, and not as something certain. Are you sure," I continued, "that you will retain individuality and consciousness after death?" He paused a moment before replying, and then said, earnestly: "Yes; I am sure of it."

In "Leaves of Grass" he declares:

"I call to the world to distrust the accounts of my friends but listen to my enemies as I myself do."

So accusations and allegations such as were flung at him almost daily (for as it is written of such as he: "he must stand for a fool and a churl for a long season") he would meet by the remark (when he noticed them at all) that he deserved the worst that could be said of him, and if that particular story did not happen to be true, he had no doubt committed other acts that were worse. He never seemed to feel the least aggrieved or injured by the tales told about him; looked upon them as natural, and in a sense justified—incidents to be looked for, expected. I was much annoyed, on one occasion, when a certain person manifested strong disapprobation and dislike of him and his writings, and I spoke to him about it. "Why," answered he, rather sharply, "who would want the world all made up of sweets?"

All who know anything of "Leaves of Grass" know how the author deals with death. For instance:

"My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite:
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time."

"The joy of death,
The beautiful touch of death soothing and benumbing a few moments for reasons."

"Come lovely and soothing death."

"Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death."

But when his time came, how then? I watched for years, with my own eyes and the eyes of others, in his sick-room, when from day to day and from month to month his life was scarcely worth a week's purchase, and he knew it well; and I learned there for the first time in what spirit a truly heroic soul confronts death. Equally removed from fear and bravado; maintaining absolute equanimity; patient and forbearing; at times suffering intensely but never complaining—so far from it, indeed, that he would rarely acknowledge he was in pain—for many weary, lingering months he awaited with calmness and resignation the inevitable end, never for a moment losing (not even, in short intervals of delirium) the sweetness and charm of his habitual manner, manifesting throughout neither exaltation nor depression, maintaining the mental attitude of a child who starts on a journey to a foreign land of which it knows nothing but in charge of some one in whom it has complete trust. Being spoken to one day, when supposed to be dying, by a devoted and intimate friend, and mention being made of his condition and the little hope there was of any improvement, he answered, in his usual cheery, pleasant tone: "Oh, well, Mary; it is all right anyhow."*

As in this crucial case, so in all others. In his book he despised riches, in his actual life he probably never gave up one day to the pursuit of them. In his book the ideal man gives alms to every one that asks; in actual life the man, Walt Whitman, gave his days and nights, his labor, his love and sympathy, his time and strength, and at last his splendid health, to those who needed help and a friend. The ideal man in "Leaves of

* Since these pages were written I have witnessed another long and more painful sickness, ending with the poet's death. The words written stand good still, and, in fact, fail to represent the heroism of the man. I do not add more here because Horace L. Traubel will some day give the world what must prove an authoritative history of Walt Whitman's last months.

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Grass'' is a lover of his kind in a new and higher sense—affection, devotion, faith, pride, all the lofty passions, are in him developed to an unprecedented degree. Those who know the actual flesh and blood Walt Whitman can bear witness that the living man fell not an iota short of his pen and ink prototype.

Was he, then, perfect? Yes; perhaps as perfect as any man ever was. But see what, in one edition after another, over and over again, he repeats of himself:

"Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,
I am he who knew what it was to be evil,
I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,
Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd,
Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,
Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant,
The wolf, the snake, the hog not wanting in me,
The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not wanting,
Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none of these wanting."

Moreover, he cautions us:

"Nor do those know me best who admire me and vauntingly praise me."

On the other hand, his claims are as colossal as his confessions. For instance:

"Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems."

"I know I am august."

"I myself would expect to be your god."

"Divine am I inside and out and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd from."

And again:

"Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself;
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)"

After all, are not evil and good, perfection and imperfection,

matters largely, if not entirely, of point of view? To those who love us enough are we not each perfect? And to those who dislike us how very imperfect!

To himself every wise man is a mixture of good and evil. "Why callest thou me good?" asked Jesus; "there is none good but one, that is God."

Each man is a maze of inexplicable contradictions. But do not all qualities serve? Has not each function and faculty, however seemingly useless or base, its value and purpose in the great scheme? How would it all look from the highest vantage ground? It is said that, surveying and summing up his total creation, "God saw *everything* that he had made, and behold it was very good."

Our supposed primitive Aryan, waking up to-day the same man he was when he fell asleep, would have (if any at all) only the most rudimentary sense of musical harmony, of fragrance, of color; his intellect, moral nature and spiritual intuitions being proportionately undeveloped. What use to talk to him of the beauty of the plumage of birds, of the tints of the petals of flowers? What use to take him to hear the *Götterdämmerung*? The funeral march for Siegfried would be to him so much noise. A rose garden would have no more fragrance than a potato field. The philosophy, science, art, poetry, religion, the higher social virtues, of to-day, would all be to him as if they were not; he would be utterly unable to see, feel or in any way realize them. Many things in the new world about him would seem by comparison with those in the old world that he would remember, nonsensical, immoral, coarse, extravagant, foolish, affected, irreligious—for he would have his own ideas of religion, morality and of the social proprieties. Doubtless, at the same time, he would dimly recognize the (to him) striking, preterhuman qualities in the men about him. But if he could be made, all at once, to see and hear, feel and know, in the modern sense, of those terms? What an awakening would that be!

Let us wake up! Let us open our eyes and see the new world as revealed and illustrated by this man. Let us realize, if we can, who and what he is who so long has labored for and among

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us ; who has so much aspired, achieved, enjoyed and suffered for and with us ; and who, in calmness and confidence, awaits now the change he has so long and well prepared for.

Such a man as Walt Whitman could not in the nature of things be understood and appreciated by the world at large during his lifetime. As Emerson says of the ideal poet : "Thou shalt be known only to thine own, and they shall console thee with tenderest love."

Nothing but the intense affection he has aroused in certain hearts could have led even to his partial recognition by the few who now imperfectly feel and see the beauty and majesty of his character. But as surely as the earth continues to revolve around the sun and mankind to live upon it, so certainly will the day come when he will take his place with the greatest and best of those who have led the race of man onward and upward toward spiritual freedom and light.

PROF. DOWDEN'S *Westminster Review* article last fall made us all pleased & proud. He and I have since had some correspondence, and I have come to consider him, like yourself, fully as near to me in personal as literary relations.

I have received word direct from Mrs. Gilchrist. Nothing in my life, or my literary fortunes, has brought me more comfort and support every way—nothing has more spiritually soothed me than the warm appreciation of friendship of that true, full-grown woman—(I still use the broad, grand old Saxon word, our highest need).

I have twice received letters from Tennyson—and very cordial and hearty letters. He sends me an invitation to visit him. . . .

I deeply appreciate Swinburne's kindness and approbation. I ought to have written him to acknowledge the very great compliment of his poem addressed to me in "Songs before Sunrise," but am just the most wretched & procrastinating letter-writer alive. If I should indeed come to England I will call upon him among the first, and personally thank him. . . .

I received some time since a most frank & kind letter, and brief printed poem, from John Addington Symonds, of Bristol, England. The poem "Love and Death," I read and re-read with admiration.

I received Roden Noel's "Study" in *Dark Blue* for October and November last, and appreciate it—and also a letter from himself.

Walt Whitman to William Michael Rossetti, 1872.

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LETTERS IN SICKNESS : WASHINGTON, 1873.

By WALT WHITMAN.

[The letters which follow have great autobiographic value. They form one cut out of a long series, covering almost the entire period of Walt Whitman's stay in Washington, written by him to his mother, and found at his death carefully preserved, in bulk, among his papers. They give without circumlocution or ornament an effective chapter which shaped and colored the remaining twenty years of his life. There has been no intention or effort to edit the letters into accustomed literary forms, or in any way to depart from or apologize for their curious and delicious simplicity. In nomenclature and all else they have been left as they were written.— THE EDITORS.]

Jan. 26, 1873, Sunday afternoon.—Dearest mother, I have been not well for two or three days, but am better to-day. I have had a slight stroke of paralysis, on my left side, and especially the leg—occurred Thursday night last, & I have been laid up since—I am writing this in my room, 535 15th st as I am not able to get out at present—but the doctor gives me good hopes of being out and at my work in a few days—He says it is nothing but what I shall recover from in a few days—Mother you must not feel uneasy—though I know you will—but I thought I would write & tell you the *exact truth—neither better nor worse—*

I have a first rate physician Dr. Drinkard—I have some very attentive friends, (& if I have occasion can & will telegraph to you or George—but do not expect to have any need)—

I have had no word from St Louis or any where by letter for some days—The weather here is mostly stormy and cold the last week—I rec'd your last letter with Jeff's—it is ½ past one—Lizzie the servant girl has just brought me up some dinner, oyster stew, toast, tea, &c, very good—I have eaten little for two days, but am to-day eating better—I wrote to Mat early last week—

Later--I have been sitting up eating my dinner--Love to you dearest mother, and to George and Lou. I will write again middle of the week.

Jan. 27, Monday afternoon, 1/4 past 3.—Dearest mother, fearing you might worry about me I write to say I am doing very well indeed—(I understand the papers are making me out very sick indeed—It is not so,)—I wrote you Sunday which I suppose you rec'd—I may not write again for two or three days.

The doctor has just been here—says I am getting along first rate—will probably be out, and about as well as usual in a week—It is a heavy snow storm here to-day—I have many callers, but they are not admitted—as I don't care to see them—I write this sitting on the side of the bed, after 4—Don't be frightened should you may-be see or hear of any thing in the papers—you know they killed me off once before—it is just sunset—the sun is shining out bright at last.

Jan. 29, 535 Fifteenth St., Wednesday afternoon.—Dearest mother, I am writing this lying in bed—the doctor wishes me to keep as much in bed as possible—but I *have* to keep in, as I cannot move yet without great difficulty, & I am liable to dizziness & nausea, at times, on trying to move, or even sitting up—But I am certainly over the worst of it, & *really*—though slowly—*improving*. The doctor says there is no doubt of it—yesterday afternoon I eat something like a meal for the first time—boiled chicken, & some soup with bread broken up in it—relished it well—I still have many callers—only a few particular ones are admitted to see me—Mrs. O'Connor comes & a young woman named Mary Cole—Mrs. Ashton has sent for me to be brought to her house, to be taken care of—of course I do not accept her offer—they live in grand style & I should be more bothered than benefited by their refinements & luxuries, servants, &c.

Mother I want you to know truly, that I do not want for *any* thing—as to all the *little extra fixings* and *superfluities*, I never did care for them in health, & they only annoy me in sickness—I have a good bed—a fire—as much grub as I wish & what-

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ever I wish—& two or three good friends here. So I want you to not feel at all uneasy—as I write Peter Doyle is sitting by the window reading—he and Charles Eldridge regularly come in & do whatever I want & are both *very helpful* to me—one comes day time, & one evening—

I had a good night's sleep last night—My mind is just as clear as ever—& has been all the time—(I have not been at all down hearted either)—(My January pay is due me, & as soon as I get up I shall forward you your \$20).

Dear sister Lou—Your letter came this morning & was very pleasant to get it—I shall be getting well soon—am on a fair way to it now—

—*Latest ½ past 4.*—I have just set up & had my bed made by Pete—I am already beginning to feel something like myself—will write in 2 days.

Jan. 31, Friday noon.—Dearest mother, I write this lying in bed yet—but I sit up several times during the day, now, for a few minutes at a time—am gradually gaining the use of my left arm & leg—(the right side has not been affected at all)—think I shall be able to move round a little by Sunday—The Doctor has just been—he says I am doing very well—

John Burroughs is here temporarily—he comes in often—Eldridge and Peter Doyle are regular still, helping & lifting & nursing me—but I feel now that I shall soon be able to help myself—I slept quite well last night—It has been very cold indeed here, they say—but I have not felt it—as I write, it looks pleasant and bright, the sun shining in real cheerful—I see by sister Lou's letter that you had no news from St. Louis—poor, poor Mat, I think about her often, as I am lying here—I have not written to Han since I had the paralysis—Mother you might send one of my letters to her, Han, when you next write—(this one, or any)—Say I sent my love, & I will be up before long—

Well Mother dear, and Sister Lou and Brother George, I will close for the present, for this week—will write Sunday—but I understand the mails are a little irregular this weather.

Feb. 2, Sunday afternoon, ½ past 3.—Dearest mother, I am sitting up on the side of the bed writing this. Every thing is going on as well with me as I could expect. I rec'd your letter dear mother—you may rest assured that I write the *exact facts* about my sickness—I am not gaining very fast, but it is sure—I am on the gain every day a little—I still have a good deal of distress in the head—the quieter I am left by general visitors the more comfortable I am—I slept fairly last night—& eat quite a nice breakfast this morning—(dinner I left mostly untasted)—I have all the attention I need, & food &c.

I will write toward the middle of the week—Write whether this and the money come safe.

Love to you dear mother, & George & Lou—& don't be uneasy about me. I have been up by the window looking out on the river & scenery—it is beautiful weather now—they have sent over & paid me my January pay—all are very kind.

Feb. 4, Tuesday afternoon, 3 o'clock.—Dearest mother, I wrote you Sunday enclosing the \$20, which I suppose you rec'd all safe.

I am still anchored here in my bed—I am sitting up now on the side—Mrs. O'Connor has just been to see me—I was glad to see her—I am still improving, but slowly—the doctor did not come yesterday, which I suppose is a good sign—I expect him this afternoon or evening—he evidently thinks I am on the gain—Pete has just come in, & will take this to the p. o. for me—Love to you dear mother, & to all.

Feb. 7, Friday afternoon, ½ past 2.—Dearest mother, I am still anchored here—sit up some, but only for a short spell at a time—I am feeble, and have distress in the head—these are the worst features—but am gradually regaining the use of my left limbs—very, very slowly, but *certainly gaining*—Doctor only comes now every other day—

As I write Mrs. O'Connor is sitting here in the room, mending some stockings &c for me—She has brought me some nice

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Mother dear I rec'd your letter, acknowledging the money—I have written a short letter to Hannah, & also one to Jeff—which they must have rec'd by this time—

I keep up my spirits very well—do not need for anything—Love to you, & all dearest mother.

I have tacked your picture up on the wall at the foot of the bed—the one I like—it looks as natural as can be—& is quite company for me—as I am alone a good deal, (& prefer to be).

Feb. 9, Sunday afternoon, 4 o'clock—Dearest mother, I suppose you have rec'd word from Jeff that poor Mat was sinking, & you might expect to hear of her death at any moment—that she was a very great sufferer when he wrote. I got his letter dated Feb. 5th, yesterday,—he said he was writing to you same time—He wrote very serious but calm—Mother I will not write much to-day—I feel so bad about Mat—I am still improving—but slowly though I realize some improvement every day—my head is easier to-day.

Feb. 10, Monday afternoon, 3 o'clock—Dearest mother, I send you Jeff's letter, rec'd this morning, as it may possibly be later than any you have—I had a very good day yesterday, & the best night last night I have had for a week—Doctor Drinkard has just been in—he says I am progressing the very best—In a day or two more I think I shall get out—or to the front door, at any rate—

Dear sister Lou, I rec'd your letter this morning—I will see how I feel, when I get better—about coming on—Don't think of such a thing as George's coming on here for me—You may be sure I shall be with you all in as good health as ever, yet—& before very long—to-day I have been sadly pestered with visitors—every thing goes well with me, except the *slowness* of my improvement.

Feb. 13, Thursday night, 8 o'clock—Dearest mother, It is a dis-

mal winter snow storm outside, and as I write I am sitting here by a good wood fire in the stove—have been alone all the evening—I sit up as much as I can, especially evenings—as I sleep better afterwards—I rec'd a letter from Jeff to-day, Matty was as well as at last accounts—about the same—no worse—I also rec'd a letter from Heyde—he said Han was well as usual.

I have been sitting up nearly all day—& have less distress in the head than I have had,—which is a great gain—

I had a letter from Mrs. Price to-day—she invites me to come and stop awhile there, as soon as I can journey—

Mother it is kind of *company* to write to you—it is very lonesome to sit here all the evening in my room—about 9 Charles Eldridge comes in & assists me to soak my feet in hot water, & then I turn in—(I have my trousers on this evening, first time in 3 weeks).

Friday noon, Feb. 14.—Mother I am sitting up again to-day—passed a comfortable night, & as soon as it is favorable weather I shall try to get *started* for outside—first, to get down stairs—& then perhaps across the street.

3 o'clock—I have just got a letter from Jeff, which I enclose as it is the latest—Mrs. O'Connor has just been to see me—brought a basket of nice things—Mother dear I hope you will have a pleasant Sunday—I send you Harper's and Frank Leslie's—I am having a very fair day to-day—it is moderate & pleasant here, but mostly cloudy—I have been quite occupied writing several letters about business—have sat up all day, with the exception of an hour—

Love to you dear mother.

Feb. 17, Monday afternoon, ½ past 3.—Dearest mother, I have been down stairs, & out on the street this afternoon—it is such fine weather, (after the bad storm of yesterday)—I got along very slowly, & didn't go far—but it was a great thing after being kept in for over three weeks—

I rec'd a short letter from Jeff again to-day dated 13th—nothing different with Mat. I rec'd your letter Saturday—I hope now to improve in walking, & then I shall begin to feel all

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Dear mother I hope this will find you feeling well. Love to all.

Feb. 19, Wednesday afternoon, 3 o'clock.—Mother dear I suppose you got a letter from me telling you that I had been down stairs & out on Monday—it was more exertion than I could bear, and I have not been so well since.—I got two letters from Jeff to-day, the last one dated the 16th—Mat had rested well the night before—poor, poor Mat, I am ready to hear of her departure any day—it seems terrible—

Things are going on as well as could be expected with me, but slowly—I overdid the matter day before yesterday and am now waiting—I am sitting up by the stove alone writing this. Love to you dearest mother, and to all—

Feb. 20, Thursday afternoon.—Well mother its over at last with dear Matty—I got a dispatch of her death on the evening of the 19th—I suppose you have too, of course—It must have been a relief from very great suffering, as Jeff's letters of late described it—poor dear sister, she has many *real mourners*—I have just written to Han about it—I am about the same—rather better.

Feb. 21, Friday afternoon.—Dearest mother, I am about the same to-day, rather on the improve—have not tried to get out any more—feel pretty much depressed about Mat's death, (but it has been to her no doubt, a relief from great pain)—Have just written a few lines to Jeff—Wrote yesterday to Han—Mother you must not get gloomy,—Feel better as I write—I am sitting up by the stove.

Feb. 23rd, Sunday afternoon, ½ past two.—Well mother dear here I sit again in the rocking chair by the stove—I have just eat some dinner a little piece of fowl & some toast and tea—my appetite is good enough—& I have plenty brought to me—I

have been sitting up all day—have some bad spells, but am decidedly gaining upon the whole—think I have fully recovered where I was a week ago, and even a little better—went down stairs yesterday and out for five minutes into the street—& shall do so again this afternoon—as I think it did me good yesterday—though I was very tired, on returning—as I have to go down and up 4 flights of stairs—The doctor comes every day—(I must tell you again I have a first-rate doctor, I think he understands my case exactly—I consider myself very lucky in having him)—Mother yesterday was a very serious day with me here—I was not so very sick, but I kept thinking all the time it was the day of Matty's funeral—Every few minutes all day it would come up in my mind—I suppose it was the same with you—Mother your letter came Friday afternoon—it was a very good letter, & after reading it twice I enclosed it in one to Han—she must have got it Saturday night—There are great preparations here for 4th of March,—inauguration—if you & I had a house here, we would have George & Lou come on & see the show, for I have no doubt it will be the finest ever seen here—(but I am in hopes to be able to get away for all that)—

$\frac{1}{2}$ past 4.—Mother I have just been down & out doors—walked half a block—& have come back—*went all alone*—(got a little assistance at the steps) this is the most successful raid yet—& I really begin to feel something like myself—Hope this will find you all right dearest mother—

Feb. 26, Wednesday noon.—Dearest mother, I am getting along real well, upon the whole—I went out and over to the office yesterday—went in & sat down at my desk a few minutes—It was my greatest effort yet, and I was afraid I had overshot the mark again, as I felt dizzy and tired last night—But to-day I feel getting along all right—I am going out a little to-day, but not much—I feel now over the worst of my fit of sickness & comparatively comfortable.

Poor Martha—the thoughts of her still come up in my mind, as I sit here a great deal of the time alone—Poor Jeff, & poor children too—

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I have received a letter from Lillie Townsend,—Aunt Sally is still living and well as usual, & nothing very new—I have just got a second note from Mrs. Price—Mother I shall try to get out, & get my Feb. pay, I have to get it from the old office & then I will send you your \$20.—(I hope within a couple of days, or three at most)—I expect Mrs. Burroughs here probably to-day with a carriage to take me out riding—so you see I am beginning to sport around—

Everything here now is *inauguration*—& will be till the 4th of March is over—for my part I want to get out of the way of it all—

Love to you Mammy dear, & to Georgey & Lou & all.

March 7, Friday afternoon, 2 o'clock.—Dear mother I got your letter yesterday—I was glad to hear all the things you wrote—every thing, however little, is interesting, when you are kept in nearly all the time—I have rec'd a very good letter from Hannah this morning—she writes in good spirits, & wants you & me to come up there next summer—says Heyde thinks of going off then to the Adirondacks on a trip—

To-day is very pleasant indeed—the cold spell seems to be over for the present—I have been out about noon quite a while—Mrs. O'Connor came to visit me, & as I was all dressed, & it was so pleasant, I went out,—she convoyed me—I didn't go far, but stopt in at one or two places, near by—have now returned, have just eat a bite of lunch, and am feeling quite comfortable—sit here now alone writing this—as I told you in my last, I am getting along well, but it is very, very slow—I cannot begin to apply my brain to regular work yet—though, for all that, I have written two or three little poems for the *Graphic* a N. Y. daily evening paper just commenced—(one of them was in the number for last Wednesday)—they pay me moderately—I was glad you got a letter from Mary—if you write tell her I am improving—John Burroughs is just in to see me, having returned for a while to Washington— Well, mother dear, I will bid you good bye for this week—Love to you & to Brother George & Sister Lou & all.



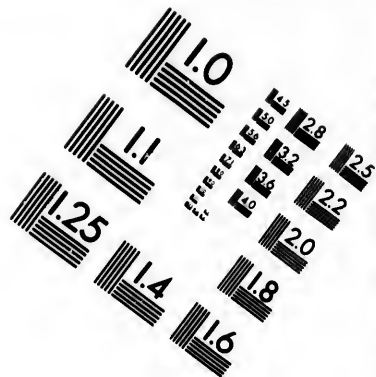
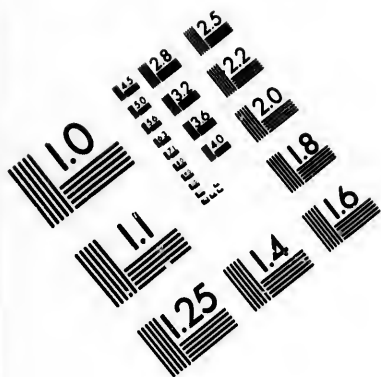
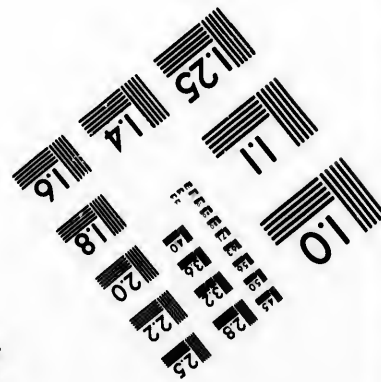
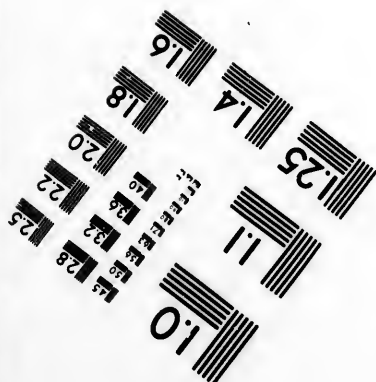
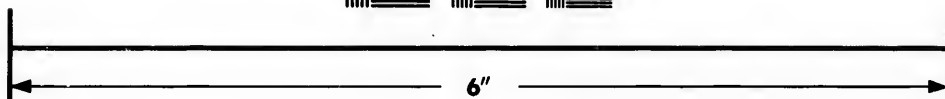
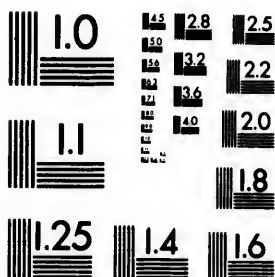
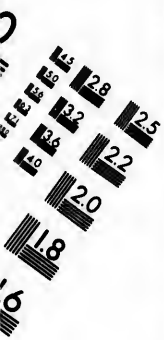


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WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503



March 9, Sunday afternoon, 5 o'clock.—Dearest mother, I will not write much to-day, as I have just come in from being out over two hours, & I feel quite tired. I cannot walk any to speak of, but I have been out taking a ride in the cars, and sitting in the parks a little while. Peter Doyle has been with me. It is as pleasant and warm as summer here to-day. I have not rec'd any letters for the last two days—I suppose you got my letter Saturday—I have been out more to-day than any day yet, as it has been so warm and fine—Love to you Mama dear & to all.

Mother write me what envelopes you would like to have me direct, & enclose you—I have not been over to the office yet, except that one time ten or twelve days ago.

March 13, Thursday, 2 o'clock p. m.—Dearest mother, I wrote you a short & very hurried letter last night, only a few minutes before the mail closed—To-day Mrs. O'Connor has just paid me a pleasant visit—& I have been eating my lunch of a roast apple & biscuit—I am feeling about the same—I suppose you are most tired, & perhaps a little suspicious of hearing I am "*about the same*"—Well I am quite tired myself, & want much to get out, & go to work, & go about—But I just have to make the best of it, & console myself with realizing that disagreeable as it is, it might be a great deal worse—& that I am feeling free from pain & comparatively comfortable, & that it cannot be *very long* before I shall have the good use of my limbs again—So I just try to keep patient & wait—& you must too, dearest mother—

I got a good letter from Hattie to-day, dated March 9—she says she was writing to you—so I suppose you have one too—They seem to like it at Mr. & Mrs. Buckley's.

Mother I got your letter of Monday and Lou's of Sunday—it is an affection of the leg from the knee downward, partially helpless—but the principal trouble is yet in the head, & so easily getting fatigued—my whole body feels heavy, & sometimes my head. Still, I go out a little every day almost—accompanied by Peter, or some one—sometimes spend an hour out, but cannot walk, except a very little indeed, very slowly indeed—

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Mother in *my looks* you would hardly know the least thing had been the matter with me—I am neither pale nor thin in the least—

March 14, Friday forenoon.—I am sitting here in my room—it is very pleasant out apparently—I generally go out a little between two & three, and shall probably get out a little this afternoon—

John Burroughs has been on here again—he is trying to sell or let his house, & does not succeed very satisfactorily—he left here again by the train last evening & returned north—his wife is here—Mother I send the Harper's Weekly—that picture gives a very good idea of the Capitol, (what they call the east front)—in the extra is a picture of the inauguration ball—very good, they say—you must look over them Sunday.

Well mother dear it is now after 12—I expect to get out a little from 2 to 3—Love to you & to Lou & George & all.

March 17, Monday afternoon.—Well mother dear I feel quite well to-day considering—in good spirits, & free from any pain—I suppose you got my letter Saturday last—The doctor has been here to-day, first time in three days—(so you see he don't think me a very critical case). We have had real March weather here for two or three days, strong & sudden winds, & dust—but it is pleasanter to-day—it is now about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 1—I have had my lunch & Mrs. O'Connor has come in for a few moments—I have a little piece in the N. Y. *Graphic* of Saturday afternoon, March 17—it is a daily afternoon paper—I write for it, so far—they pay moderately—

Mother, I feel to-day as if I was getting well—(but my leg is *so clumsy* yet—& my head has to avoid much talking or being talked to)—I hope this will find you all right, dearest mother—I think about you much—

Mrs. O'Connor wishes me to give her love to you.

March 21, Friday noon.—Dearest mother, I am still feeling on the gain to-day—I go out a little every day, & think I shall try to make a beginning at work in the office Monday or Tues-

day—beginning by degrees—I got a letter from Jeff yesterday, very good—they seem to like Mr. & Mrs. Buckley's—Jeff has some extra work, making plans for new water works for Kansas City, Mo.,—it is all the better—Mother I suppose you got the letters I wrote Monday & Wednesday, this week—

It was dark and rainy here yesterday, but is pleasant to-day—I am going out a little this afternoon—I send you some more papers, to-day—mother do you get the papers I send. Already you can see the grass looking green here, on the south side of buildings, & the willow trees are budding out slightly—Spring will soon be upon us—It is now noon, & I am sitting here in the room—Mrs. O'Connor has come in, first time in three days—Mammy dear I hope you will have a pleasant Sunday—Love to you and Georgie & Lou & all.

March 29. Saturday afternoon, ¼ to 3.—Dear mother, I have come over this afternoon to the office, & am now writing this at my desk. I did not succeed in working any—was not well enough the past week,—although I have not gone behindhand—but as I sit here this afternoon, it appears to me I shall be able to make a commencement next Monday—for, though feeble, I feel just now more like work than any time yet—We have had real blowy March weather here to-day, sudden & fitful showers & heavy clouds & wind—& now it is quite clear and pleasant—I cannot walk around yet but feel in good spirits—am pleased to feel as well as I do, & get along as well as I do—Mother I do not show any sickness in my looks, in flesh or face, except very little perhaps—

I will finish to-morrow or next day.

Sunday night—8 o'clock—I still feel as well as yesterday, & have been out twice to-day, riding in the cars & walking a little—I get in the cars right at my door, & am brought back there again—It has been a beautiful day—I am now sitting in my room, by the stove, but there is hardly need of a fire—Peter Doyle is here for a couple of hours—he is reading—the doctor has been in to-day—he says I am getting along very well—

Monday afternoon, 1 o'clock—Mother, I am over at my desk

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in the office again, writing this. I have rec'd your letter that the money came safe. I have just written a letter to Jeff, & enclosed Josephine's & yours in it—I am feeling on the gain, but still very slowly. I am taking some medicine, to restore strength—yesterday was perhaps my best day—though I feel middling to-day—I have not sent the Graphics containing my pieces as I have not had but one copy, & sometimes not that—I send papers to-day—Mother you write me what envelopes you want directed to any of them, & I will send them—

It is gusty here but quite pleasant—I am feeling quite comfortable, & shall soon be walking around I feel confident—

I want to come on to Camden, but wish to get a little more able to move around first—Love to you & all, Mother dear.

April 1, Tuesday afternoon, 2 o'clock.—Dearest mother, I am writing this over at the office—I have made a sort of commencement of my work to-day—I have rec'd this note (enclosed) from Lillie Townsend—Mother I believe I will write them a few lines, soon—(What is Aunt Sally's name—is it *Sarah Pintard*)—when you next write tell me—I am feeling quite well,—(only easily put out with my head). I have been in the office nearly three hours to-day, & have got along comfortable—I can only move slowly yet—cannot walk any—at least any distance—

April 2, Wednesday.—Mother I am over at the office—feel rather slim to-day—but the weather is so pleasant, I shall feel better I think—your letter has just come, & I am glad as always to hear from you all—you say George's house is commenced, the cellar begun—I like to hear all about its progress—

I see in the papers this morning an awful shipwreck yesterday night—seems to me the worst ever happened, a first-class, big steamship from England, went down almost instantly, 700 people lost, largely women and children, just as they got here, (towards Halifax)—what misery, to many thousand relatives and friends—Mother I send you the Graphic—the pictures are amusing—(I thought I would write a line to the Townsends, mostly on Aunt Sally's account, as it may humour her)—

Well mother, I believe that is all to-day—I hope this will find you feeling well & in good heart, dearest mother—Love to Brother George & Sister Lou—

April 4. Friday afternoon.—Dearest mother, I rec'd your letter to-day, and I also rec'd your letter of Tuesday, (as I wrote Wednesday)—I will write a few lines to Lillie, (mostly for Aunt Sally Mead)—

I got a good letter from Jeff yesterday,—Mother Jeff is evidently feeling composed & well,—of course he feels Matty's death very seriously, but I think he has recovered from the shock, and attends to his business as well as ever—They seem to be well situated at the Buckley's—Jeff writes quite a good deal about you—he writes about Mat's death—about her wishing to see us before she died—

I am writing this seated at my desk in the office—I come over to the office about 12—I do not feel very well, most of the time, but have spells when I feel much better, generally evening—I think the sun affects me—

Mother we—I and the doctor—have talked much of the electric battery treatment—but as long as the head is affected, (the brain & nerves) they say it must not be applied, for it will do more harm than good, might cause convulsions—My doctor, Dr. Drinkard, says he will use it as soon as he feels it will do good—but the time has not come yet—I believe I told you I am taking iron, strychnia and quinine to give strength—

I wrote to Jeff yesterday—I send you Harper's Weekly, to-day, mother it is quite interesting—I still hold my mind about getting a house here & *shall certainly do so*—At present my great hope is to get well, to get so I can walk, & have some use of my limbs—I can write, pretty well, and my mind is clear, but I cannot walk a block, & have no power to do any thing, in lifting or moving any thing in my room, or at my desk—Still I keep good spirits, better far than I would have supposed myself, knowing that I shall get all right in time—I know *how much worse* things might be in my situation than they are, & feel thankful enough that they are as well as they are—Mother I was

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glad to get your letter of Tuesday, April 1.—I have been reading the wreck of the *Atlantic* April 1st,—I think it the saddest thing I ever read—

Well mama dear, I will close—I hope you will have a pleasant Sunday—Love to you dear mother, & to all—it is now about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 1 Friday afternoon—I wrote to you Wednesday 2d April, which I suppose you got.

April 6, Sunday evening.—Dearest mother, I will commence a letter to you, though there is nothing particular to write about—but it is a pleasure even to write—as I am alone a great deal yet in my room. It is about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8, and I am sitting here alone—I have been out to-day twice, riding in the cars—it is a change—the weather here is very pleasant indeed—if I could only get around I should be satisfied—

I expect Peter Doyle in yet this evening, to stay an hour or two—he works every night except Sunday night—

April 7, Monday noon.—Well mother dear I am now finishing my letter over at the office seated at my desk—I do not feel very well, my head is still so feeble—I suppose I ought to be satisfied that I do not go behindhand—I send you quite a bundle of papers to-day—One of the Graphics with one of my pieces in—the spring seems to be opening here, the grass is quite green, & the trees are beginning to bud out—it looks very pleasant—

Love to you mama dear & all.

April 16, Wednesday noon.—Dearest mother, I have had one or two quite good spells—but am not feeling well just now—have got over to the office, & am now sitting at my desk—it is a rainy day here, not very cool—

Mother I have nothing particular to write to-day either—but thought I would send just a few lines, as you might like to get something—The season is quite advanced here—pleasant the past few days, I have been out in the cars every day. I have not written very lately either to Jeff or Hannah—Well Mammy dear, how are you getting along at Camden—& how are Lou and

George—I often wish you were here, mother dear, as it would be such a relief to me to have you where I could see you, & talk a while—

I think there is no doubt that, take the time right through, I gain steadily, though very slowly indeed—but I get many tedious spells, both of head & limbs—there seems to be great deal of paralysis—I hear, or read of cases, every day. One man here to-day told me of his father, who had a very bad stroke at 70 years of age, but got over it after all, and lived 17 or 18 years after, by great care—So I hear of many cases, some good, some unfavorable. As to myself, I do not lose faith for a moment, in my ultimate recovery,—though, as I said, I have some bad hours,—sometimes very bad. Well mama dear I have scribbled out this sheet nearly, such as it is—I sent you a letter last Monday—I have changed the address on the envelopes to you, mother, as you see—is it right?

I am feeling better—my head is some easier—Love to you dear mama, & all.

April 19, Saturday.—It is now about noon, & I have just come over to the office, and have put up the window for a few moments, to stand & get the fresh air, & then put it down again. Right opposite the window—in the President's grounds a man in his shirt-sleeves is raking up the grass that has been already cut on a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre patch—so you can see spring has advanced here—the trees are quite green—

Mother, I have had the second application of electricity to-day, quite a good application by Dr. Drinkard—he rubs the handles over my leg & thigh, for perhaps twenty minutes—the shock is very perceptible—it is not painful at all, feels something like pressing a sore—I feel as I said before, that it will be beneficial to me, (though there are different opinions about it)—I feel better to-day than yesterday—I think, mother dear, there is no doubt at all that I progress surely though very slowly, (& with an occasional bad spell)—

Did you read in the morning papers to-day about the fight with the Modocs out in California—& Col. Mason—I think

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(but am not sure) it is Jule Mason—it is quite interesting—I am going to work for a couple of hours now at my work in the office books—I am feeling quite comfortable this afternoon.

April 21st, Monday, 1 o'clock afternoon.—Mother, I am decidedly improving—feel more like myself the last three days—I walk very clumsily yet, & do not try to get around by walking—but I think I am stronger now, & my prospects are better than any time yet. The doctor has applied electricity again to-day, making the third application—So upon the whole I think I am doing real well—

I have rec'd a letter from Priscilla Townsend—She speaks of you, says that Aunt Sally, always wants to hear from you—She speaks of Sarah Avery's calling there, & of M's. Tripp, & all—nothing very new—

I am writing this over at the office—It is pleasant here, but cloudy & coolish—Mother I suppose you got my letter Saturday last—How is Sister Lou getting along—when you write tell me about her—George I suppose is full of business—Well I believe it is better for a man to have plenty to do, if he is well & active—Well mamma dear I have written you quite a rambling letter—Tell me when you want envelopes & I will send them—write whenever you can—I think I shall be able to soon give a good account of my improvement.

April 30. Wednesday afternoon.—Mother dear I suppose you got the letter Tuesday—I am about the same—I have not gone over to the office to-day, & am writing this in my room—Mother I send you \$15 in this—will send the other 5 in my next—Write and send me word, soon as convenient, after you get this—I have not been feeling so well this forenoon, but feel better now—As I said before I have ups and downs—but steadily advance, quite certain, though very slowly—I seem to have a bad cold in my head—I am going to try to go out in the car, as the day is so pleasant and bright.

Love to you & all, mother dear.

May 7. Wednesday noon.—Dearest mother, I have just rec'd

your short letter of yesterday—Mother I feel so bad, you are not well, I don't know what to do—Will not rest, and some food that suits, be good remedies?—An old person wants the most favorable conditions, to get over any thing. Mother, I will come on about the 1st of next month—I am getting along favorably, they all say, but have frequent distress in my head, & my leg is clumsy as ever—I am writing this in the office at my desk—I send some papers to-day—nothing particular in them—but I think the English paper, the *Sunderland Times*, good reading—Mother write, if perfectly convenient, either Friday or Saturday, as I am anxious about you—

Good bye dearest mother, & keep up a good heart.

May 11, Sunday forenoon.—Dearest mother, Well mother dear, I am certainly getting well again—I have made a great improvement the last three days, & my head feels clear and good nearly all the time—& that, the doctor says, will bring my leg all right in a little while—

Yesterday was a beautiful day, & I was out a good deal—walked some, a couple of blocks, for the first time—Peter Doyle convoyed me—This morning I have had my breakfast, & have been sitting by my open window looking out—it is very pleasant and warm, but cloudy—we have heavy showers here nights—too much rain indeed—still spring is very fine here, & it looks beautiful from my windows—I am writing this in my room—I am feeling just now well as usual in my general health—part of the time just as well as ever—but of course I expect a few setbacks before I get well entirely, & supple in my limbs—It is remarkable how much paralysis there is—cases occur here, every few days—& in other cities—There is quite a time here about the burial of Mr. Chase, his body is at the Capitol to-day, & he is buried to-morrow—Mother the paper I send you has a picture of a railroad depot they are building here—it is for the road Peter Doyle works on—you will see a piece in that paper about the Beecher and Tilton scandal—it is very coarse—I think Beecher a great humbug, but I don't believe there is any truth in that piece—(but of course don't know)—

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I am still having electricity applied—the doctor applied it yesterday—I am certainly getting along better the last few days—feel better—feel more like myself—I shall come & pay you a visit the first part of next month—shall write before I come, the time, &c.—Mother I hope this will find you feeling better—I shall be anxious to hear—write a line or two, Tuesday—

As I sit by the window this forenoon looking out, I wish you could take a look at the prospect, it is so fine, the trees & grass so green, and the river & hills in the distance—it does one good to look at it—

Mother I shall feel anxious until I hear from you—

May 13, Tuesday afternoon.—Dearest mother, I suppose you got my letter Monday 12th (written Sunday,)—I am still improving—(I don't feel quite as well to-day as for some days past—but it is a great advance on what I have been)—& am in good spirits—

Dear mother, I feel very anxious about you—it is very distressing to have the nervous system affected, it always makes one feel so discouraged, that is the worst of it—Mother I am afraid you are more unwell than you say—I think about it night & day—the enclosed letter came to me yesterday—Jeff sent it to me, by mistake (maybe one for me has gone to you)—I got another letter from Jeff to-day—all are well—Jeff too is anxious about you—Mother try to write a line soon after you get this—I am writing this in the office—Mother I shall come on.

May 16, Friday forenoon.—Dearest mother, I am sitting in my room waiting for the doctor—Mother you are in my mind most of the time—I do hope as I write this you are feeling better dear mother do not get discouraged—there is so much in keeping good heart, (if one only can)—I think that is what has kept me up, & is bringing me through—I think I am still on the gain, though it is very slow—my breakfast is brought up yet, has been this morning—I don't go out till about noon—then I hitch over to the office, & stay there for a couple of hours—then I hitch out & get in the cars & take quite a long ride, (sometimes

jolting pretty lively, as the track is bad—but I don't mind it much)—I don't eat any dinner, only a light lunch, as I find it is much better for me—I certainly don't get behindhand any, that's pretty clear, & I count on time bringing me all right—the only thing I think of now is you, dear mother, & about you getting well and strong as usual—I got your letter yesterday (Thursday) I suppose you got mine yesterday—I sent Hattie a late "Graphic" & one to Han also—(the same as the last one I sent to you).

It is singular how much nervous disease there is—and many cases of paralysis & apoplexy—I think there is something in the air, for a year past—last summer especially—Fortunately, it seems as if most people got over it—

Friday afternoon—1 o'clock.—I am over at the office—Have got a letter from Sister Lou written Thursday morning, which gives me great relief, as it says that Sunday was your worst day, & that you have got relief now—Dear, dear mother, I hope you are still getting better—you must try to feel good courage—I shall come on soon, probably about the 1st of June— I have got a letter from John Burroughs this morning—he & wife are both a little homesick for Washington—they had got a nice home here—but he is going to sell it—& settle up there—he does better there—but he was doing well enough here, & was very comfortable. My head troubles me to-day, but I am over here at my desk, at office—Mother if convenient write me a line Sunday, so I will get it Monday.

Lou writes a very good, feeling letter, about you—was very unhappy Sunday.

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WALT WHITMAN AND HIS RECENT CRITICS.

By JOHN BURROUGHS.

SHORTLY after Whitman's death a friend of the poet arranged with one of the press-clipping bureaus to send him all the newspaper notices (American) of the poet's life and works which his death called forth. In a short time upwards of a thousand clippings flowed in upon him, when he grew alarmed and cried stop, stop! The scissors said they could easily have furnished a few hundred more. Much of this matter I have had the curiosity to look over. Of course the bulk of it is of little value or interest, being of the usual hasty, momentary newspaper character. Some of it is simply slanderous and abusive. The irreverent coarse-mouthed ribaldry of it comes from the south and west; the cool polished venom and insult from the east. Hearty good will and appreciation comes in plenty from all parts of the country, notably so from New England. More affection and appreciation is shown for the man than for the book; he is easier understood, though the book is a remarkable analogue of the man. But the poems have an urge and a strenuousness that the man did not show. In his daily life and habit Whitman was at ease in Zion. Then we are all better judges of men than we are of books, and strange to say, the more a book is like the live man the less able we are to judge it. We are bewildered when we find the natural where we expected the artificial.

The droll American humor occasionally crops out in these clippings. One writer says Whitman was too well up in physiology for the popular taste. Another says "he cast his eye in every direction and quoted everything he saw above par." The New York *Herald* had said, "he struck his lyre with his fist at

times, instead of his finger tips." A western editor hastened to say that was the best way to strike a liar.

Of real insight into our poet's methods and aims, or attempt at insight, these clippings show a painful lack. Now and then a man seems to grapple with him for a moment as if determined to penetrate him, but he is apt to quickly slide off into some cheap generality.

The average newspaper editor and book noticer of this country is none too sure of himself when he has only a third or fourth rate work to deal with. Think then what a fist he will make of it when suddenly called upon to pass judgment upon a great primitive poem, as Thoreau called "Leaves of Grass." Think too what atmosphere of welcome and preparation there is likely to be for such a work in a great, crude, sprawling, mammon-worshipping, political-jobbing, newspaper-beridden country like ours!—a work that makes no account at all of our school-book culture, our bric-a-brac art, and our social refinements and distinctions, and that must be judged as we judge real things, real men and women, real scenes and processes of nature,—a kind of judgment which we are totally unprepared for in literature.

Even Walt Whitman the man was not always appreciated. One of the noblest, most impressive, most benignant, most lovable figures ever seen in this country, perhaps altogether the most so, and yet a Philadelphia editor only saw in him a rather vulgar old man crossing the Camden ferry. If the average editorial eye sees only this in the man, what will it see in the book?

Now and then in these clippings one falls upon a streak of unmistakable venom and hatred, as in the review in the *Nation* and the editorial comments in the *Independent* and the *Times*. One had reason to expect better things of the *Times*, around which the luster of great names and high service still lingers; but the other two journals have always been the avowed enemies of Whitman, and his death gave the opportunity for the final and crowning insult. "A man," says our poet, "is a summons and challenge," and the challenge is quickly taken up by all who feel aggrieved by his manliness. A great many readers seem to

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have been aggrieved by Whitman's aggressive out-spoken manliness, and they have retorted upon him in ways and in a spirit proper to them. The rank individual flavor of his poems—their *al fresco* qualities—fairly throw the dilettante into convulsions. Men who are too large and too strong for their age generally excite much more hostility than those who are inadequate, or who are simply out of joint with it. We disregard the small man, we laugh at the crank; but the giant who goes his own way, regardless of the lookers-on, we are apt to follow with envy and hatred.

In politics, in religion, in literature, the exceptionally bold and strong character, accompanied as it usually is with exceptionally strong faults, always puts our sense of manliness to the test. The death of Walt Whitman has tested the manliness of our literary circles, and our power to deal with original first-class work, as they have not before been tested in this generation.

It is easy to see that the general current of these clippings has been a good deal influenced by the high opinion held of Whitman in England and on the Continent. This opinion always seems to have one of three effects upon the American reviewer: if he is favorably inclined toward the poet it strengthens and confirms his good opinion; if not, it dazes and bewilders him, or else irritates and embitters him. It has had this last effect upon the writers in the *Nation* and the *Independent*. That Tennyson and Rossetti and Freiligrath and many others should see in Whitman a great man and poet fairly makes pie of many well-settled editorial opinions. Some of them seem to question themselves whether or not after all Tolstoi may not be a novelist? Ibsen a dramatist? and the author of the "Leaves" a poet?

Whitman's breadth, his absolute independence, his unshaken determination to go his own way in the world, is, if it must be confessed, more English than American. It is also pretty certain that the strong undisguised man-flavor of his work, the throb and pressure in it of those things which make for the virility and perpetuity of the race, are more keenly relished in Britain than in America, so thoroughly are we yet under the spell of the refined and the conventional.

The British press has first and last had its spiteful flings at Whitman, one of the latest at least, that of Theodore Watts (whoever he be) in the *Athenæum* betraying an aggressive specimen of the dirty thick-witted cockney blackguard. A cur is never more a cur than when he lifts up his leg over the carcass of a dead lion; and did cockney criticism ever appear more currish and contemptible than when in the person of this man Watts it made haste to defame and dishonor the memory of our poet?

But, on the whole, the notices of Whitman by the British journals show a much higher range of insight and appreciation than our own. Especially did all the organs of the great body of the working people, and of young England, speak brave and stimulating words on the occasion of the poet's death. I quote this passage from "Seed-time;" "One wants to say of Whitman that nature seemed personified and made absolutely friendly to man in him. There is a blending of rude force and tenderness here. The immense vitality of nature combines with a certain mild and precious humanness that is singularly rare and effective."

One of the Chicago dailies had a symposium upon Whitman, in which twelve persons took part,—three poets, two clergymen, four editors, and three prose writers. The poets were against him by a two-thirds majority, as is usually the case. When a first-rate poet like Tennyson is for him a lesser poet will be mildly against him, while a poetling will be furiously against him. There is no stickler for the rules and precedents like the amateur. Our racy and rollicking singer, James Whitcomb Riley, has wrestled with him, but with very poor results he says. Maurice Thompson sees nothing in him whatever. The man whom Emerson, Thoreau, Tennyson, Ruskin, Carlyle, Symonds, Freiligrath did see something in, the Crawfordsville singer finds quite barren of all valuable poetic qualities. Whitman says there is no "object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe" (I suspect here is the origin of Dr. Holmes' famous "hub"), and who knows but Crawfordsville may yet be the hub of our poetic cycle?

Mr. McGovern repeats what he said of Whitman in his "Golden Legacy," namely, that "Leaves of Grass" is the

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"hoarse song of a man—not the animal man, male and female, but the character man, of whom woman in her heart is proud—the man anti-feminine, gross, living, ecstatic." A central shot, Mr. McGovern. Joseph Cook apprehends that the so-called indecencies (clergymen almost always fix their eyes upon these passages) will drag the book down to oblivion: twelve lines drag down and swamp over twelve thousand! But the man in the Chicago symposium who saw deepest and truest into the subject was "Uncle Remus," great hearted Joel Chandler Harris. Men of broad and deep sympathies invariably have the pass-word to Whitman. What some of us only arrive at after years of study "Uncle Remus" reaches quickly and easily. "In order to appreciate Whitman's poetry and his purpose," he says, "it is necessary to possess the intuition that enables the mind to grasp in instant and express admiration the vast group of facts that make man—that make liberty—that make America. There is no poetry in the details; it is all in the broad, sweeping, comprehensive assimilation of the mighty forces behind them—the inevitable, unaccountable, irresistible forward movement of man in the making of this republic."

And again: "Those who approach Walt Whitman's poetry from the literary side are sure to be disappointed. Whatever else it is it is not literary. Its art is its own, and the melody of it must be sought in other suggestions than those of meter . . . Those who are merely literary will find little substance in the great drama of Democracy, which is outlined by Walt Whitman in his writings,—it is no distinction to call them poems. But those who know nature at first hand—who know man—who see in this Republic something more than a political government—will find therein the thrill and glow of poetry and the essence of melody. Not the poetry that culture stands in expectation of, nor the melody that capers in verse and meter, but those rarer intimations and suggestions that are born in primeval solitudes or come whirling from the vast funnel of the storm." How admirable! how true! No man has ever spoken more to the point upon Walt Whitman.

A remark of the *Boston Globe* is in a similar vein: "If there

is any excellence in his writing it is a higher excellence than literary excellence."

One of the contributors to the Chicago symposium complains, in the current slang, that Whitman does not always "get there,"—does not develop his own idea and give a finished result. This complaint is a very general one. The critics do not see that this is deliberate and intentional on the poet's part—that he does not aim to finish, but only to start—not to work out a theme, but to wake up the mind. "I finish no specimens," he says, "but shower them by exhaustless laws fresh and modern continually." "To elaborate is no avail; learned and unlearned feel that it is so." The one word he keeps before him is suggestiveness. A well-known musical composer told me that Whitman's poems stimulated him, and set him to work, in a way the highly wrought poems like those of Tennyson did not. These last left nothing for him to do.

The critical opinion of Philadelphia upon our poet, as shown by these clippings, is mixed and of little or no value, save in two instances. A writer in the *North American* puts his finger squarely upon one of Whitman's merits. After pointing out wherein he was lacking, the writer says: "But that he had power of some kind the controversies which his writings have provoked are sufficient in themselves to demonstrate, and his power will probably prove to have been the power of a vigorous and intensely vital personality, expressing itself with perfect fearlessness of utterance and absolute sincerity of sentiment. Men and women are interested in nothing so much as they are in each other, and this interest is constantly being baffled by the various disguises and concealments of which civilization is prolific. It is not only the body that is artificially hidden and covered up; the mind and heart and soul, the mysterious something by which one individuality is distinguished and separated from every other, are habitually concealed beneath the spoken or acted trappings of our social conventionalities. It was Walt Whitman's merit, the secret source of his attraction, that he tore these trappings away and showed the real man without adornment or disguise. His writings, bare of ornament, devoid of the

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verbal graces by which the author is more often concealed than expressed, produce the effect of a mental nudity. The writer, like our first parents in the Garden of Eden, is naked and not ashamed, and it is this moral and intellectual nakedness of his that makes his verse unique. Thus considered, the high esteem in which it is held by men living in the very hotbeds of culture, which is so often spoken of with surprise, is intelligible enough, for it is precisely to men so situated that this primitive naturalness of Whitman's would most strongly appeal, and by whom it would be most appreciated. But every reader who does not insist upon looking in Whitman's books for what is not there, will be struck by it, and it is this element of plain, unvarnished humanity that is likely to make his verse enduring."

Walt Whitman's "heroic nudity" (the phrase is from the *London Times*) is certainly one of his chief traits, a trait we could not endure in a drawing-room or fireside poet, because it would be at war with our domestic and social instincts, but in a poet on the Whitman scale, who substitutes cosmic emotion for domestic emotion, who launches his utterance from a point of view where all artificial and accidental distinctions are lost sight of, where modesty or immodesty are not, and where all the parts and functions of the human body are contemplated in the light of universal nature—no other course was open to him.

Again in the *Philadelphia Press* I find the following admirable statement: "The question which always must be asked of each new poet is not whether his form agrees with the accepted canons of the schools, but whether his message carries a new revelation of life. Negative criticism and neglect may be, after all, but the failure to see. A single seeing witness is worth all the closed eyes in the world when a new sun rises in the heavens."

"Inevitably, the larger and more original the light which bursts on letters the longer will old eyes be in adjusting themselves to the new illumination."

A curious diversity of opinion is revealed about Whitman's language. One critic who shows much appreciation of him says his English is simple but "absolutely ineffective." On the other hand, a western writer speaks of his "absolute use of

words ; " which is in the spirit of Col. Ingersoll's remark that he "uttered more supreme words than any other writer of our century." Ruskin is reported to have said, there were words and phrases in him that were like rifle bullets. Only careless readers can pronounce his language ineffective. It never has the air of being studied ; on the contrary his more striking lines seem like lucky hits, and I think it is Robert Louis Stevenson who says he often stumbles upon just the right words in just the right order ; the poet has covered up his tracks well, when he makes us think that his "supreme words" come by chance, or that he stumbles upon them.

As a matter of fact, his friends know how long and patiently he searched for the right word. He once told me he had been searching for twenty-five years for the word to express what the twilight note of the robin meant to him. In "Halcyon Days," meaning old age, he speaks of the apple that hangs "indolent-ripe on the tree." "You waters," he says in another poem, "I have finger'd every shore with you," "Every keel that dents the water" is another happy phrase. Indeed they can be found everywhere, but they never court attention and seem all unconscious of themselves. He fulfills the promise in this respect which he early made in the preface to his first poems, "to speak in literature with the perfect rectitude and insouciance of the movements of animals and the unimpeachableness of the sentiment of trees in the woods and grass by the road-side." His absolute use of words is well seen in such phrases as these : "the huge and thoughtful night," or the "teeming spiritual darkness," "the slumbering and liquid trees," "bare-bosom'd night," "magnetic nourishing night," and in such lines as the one in which he says the great poet "judges not as the judge judges, but as the sun falling round a helpless thing," and in entire poems, such as the one called "A Leaf of Faces." Whitman's power to use words can no more be questioned than the greatest of the antique masters. I will give one more sample—from "A Broadway Pageant :"

"The Originatress comes,

The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems, the race of eld,

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Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with passion,
 Sultry with perfume, with ample and flowing garments,
 With sunburnt visage, with intense soul and glittering eyes,
 The race of Brahma comes."

The power to use words was in Whitman's eyes a divine power,
 and was bought with a price.

"For only at last after many years, after chastity, friendship, procreation,
 prudence and nakedness,
 After treading ground, and breasting river and lake,
 After a loosen'd throat, after absorbing eras, temperaments, races, after
 knowledge, freedom, crimes,
 After complete faith, after clarifyings, elevations and removing obstructions,
 After these and more, it is just possible there comes to a man, a woman,
 the divine power to speak words."

One critic asks, "Was he not strong rather than great? Was
 that magnificent physical energy of his adequately matched by
 spiritual energy? Will not his work affect the future rather as a
 passion than a power?" The opinion of the *London Times*,
 certainly a not over-friendly authority, is that Whitman was a
 man of power. I should say unhesitatingly that his work be-
 longs to the poetry of power as that of our other poets belongs
 to the poetry of sentiment. He is strong, but he is more than
 that, if we are to make the distinction indicated; he gives one
 a sense of magnitude and power beyond all other current poets.
 He is not intense, he is calm, far-reaching, transforming, with a
 quality about him that goes with the crest and summit of things
 —with the day at its full. One is astonished to hear a Pennsyl-
 vania country paper say, "He is either a great original genius,
 one of the few historical figures of literature, or he is nothing."
 An editorial writer in the *Christian Union* said his "imagination
 was so great that, compared with most contemporary American
 verse-makers, he is as the mystery and vastness of the forest to
 the birds which break its silence with their solitary notes." His
 power in this respect is often shown in single lines, as

"The moon that descends the steeps of the soughing twilight."

"The sound of the belch'd words of my voice loos'd to the eddies of the
 wind."

"I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun."

"Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me."

"Where sun-down shadows lengthen over the limitless and lonesome prairie."

"Where herds of buffalo make a crawling spread of the square miles far and near."

"The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing."

Any, any number of others that might be quoted.

Quite a general view of his poetry is that it will undergo a sifting and winnowing process by time—like that of many other poets—and the fittest in it survive. But Whitman belongs to a new genus of poets. We can of course cull out favorite passages and whole poems from the mass of his work, yet the distinctive value of his book is not in its finished specimens of verse, its poetic selection and artistic elaboration, as in other poets, but in the vital and masterful personality which it holds. We cannot sift or carve a man, we must take him entire, and the mass of Whitman's work must survive, or all perish. His quality as a man and his power as a spirit fills it all.

Some of the newspapers have seriously discussed the question whether or not he was a poet at all. I quite agree with a writer in the *Nineteenth Century* a few years ago, that we need not be at all zealous to claim this title for him, and with "Uncle Remus" that it is no distinction to call his writings poems. But if we give up the word poet, it must be for a designation that means more, instead of less, as bard, prophet, seer, apostle. "Leaves of Grass" is primarily a gospel and is only secondarily a poem. Its appeal is to the whole man and not merely to one set of faculties, as the æsthetic. It cannot be too often said that the book is not merely a collection of pretty poems, then: so elaborated and followed out at long removes from the personality of the poet, but a series of *sorties* into the world of materials, the American world, piercing through the ostensible shows of things to the interior meanings, and illustrating in a free and large way the genesis and growth of a man, his free use of the world about

him, appropriating it to himself, seeking his spiritual identity through its various objects and experiences, and giving in many direct and indirect ways the meaning and satisfaction of life. There is much in it that is not poetical in the popular sense, much that is neutral and negative and yet is an integral part of the whole, as in the world we inhabit. If it offends, it is in a wholesome way, like objects in the open air.

Whitman was *unartistic* rather than *inartistic*. His orb of song was modelled after a certain other orb with which we all have at least a limited acquaintance. His long lists and enumerations, page after page of scenes, actions, trades, tools, occupations, have their purpose; they give weight and momentum; they supply negative elements and backgrounds which are just as important in his poetic scheme as the positive and select elements. For clues to his poetic methods read the poems called "Laws for Creation" and "To the Sayers of Words."

Gabriel Sarrazin, Whitman's Parisian critic and admirer, declares, that "overcrowded and disorderly as it may be, if heroic emotion and thought and enthusiasm vitalize it, a work will always be of perfect beauty." The question of "good taste" does not come in in discussing Whitman, because his final appeal is not to taste, but to the reader's power to deal with real things.

"The learn'd, the virtuous, the benevolent, and the usual terms;
A man like me and never the usual terms."

If we are to make anything of this poet at all, it must be upon terms that sound strange in current criticism. The interest is shifted to new grounds—from the theme to the man, from art to nature, from skill of workmanship to power of initiative.

"Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity,
When I give I give myself."

This is his supreme distinction: he gives us a man and not a statue; he imparts to us living impulses and not intellectual formulas, or artistic symbols; and if we are to make anything of him at all, it must be upon the basis of the primary universal

human attributes and qualities. His work is an utterance from the will, the affections, the personality, of a strong, original man, rather than from his intellect, or his scholarship, or his skill as a verbal poet. It is a personal revelation, and has more or less the character of a gospel, as have all primary human utterances from out the abysmal man.

So far as our culture and civilization tend to the bleached, the dainty, the depleted, Walt Whitman is the remedy. His work is rich in the qualities that make man man and that make life masterful. If you want the qualities that make the scholar, or the verbal poet, or the conventional gentleman, look for them elsewhere. If you want sweets rather than tonics, look for them elsewhere. If you want to be soothed and lulled rather than aroused and dilated, go elsewhere. If you are too delicate for the open-air, keep in-doors. If Whitman is too strong for you, stick to Holmes and Longfellow. I have not a word to say against those poets; they are what they are, sweet and skillful singers of the domestic sentiments. But if you want to breathe the atmosphere of a sentiment, not of houses and rooms, nor of books and pictures, nor of family and fireside, but of a teeming continent, or of the globe swimming through space, go to Whitman. He will familiarize you with great thoughts, out-door thoughts, cosmic thoughts, and with impulses that sway races and found empires. His poems are rank with the very sweat and odor of humanity. The daintiness and fastidiousness of the art poets are not here.

The whole drift of his work is to get rid for once of the artificial, and to bring to bear upon the reader's mind real nature, often rude abysmal nature. He cuts under the artificial and conventional in everything, in manners, in morals, in religion, in verse. To have used the highly wrought and elaborate poetic forms would have been at war with his purpose in this respect. He strips the soul bare, the mind bare, the conscience bare, the body bare. He strips from the muse all her customary trappings and finery. He will have no gags, or veils, or disguises of any sort. He lets the air and light into every corner and recess of

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the heart and mind. What man thinks and feels, his base and wicked thoughts as well as his good, shall come out.

"Come I am determined to unbare this broad breast of mine, I have long enough stifi'd and chok'd."

"Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale, nor discarded,
I see through the broadcloth and gingham whether or no,
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and cannot be shaken away."

One rather friendly critic says Whitman chose to live in the wilderness of the human mind and that out of that wilderness he at times brings us something very fresh and tonic. Well, there is something in this wilderness suggestion: he lived in close contact with primitive nature undoubtedly, but he did not shut himself up in any part or corner; he was free and makes others free of the whole. The reader that does not see it is Man universal that speaks here does not see very deeply. Convict Whitman of any narrowness or partiality whatever and you strike him a fatal blow. The one thing he *must* be, to make good his claim, is, to be all-inclusive of humanity. In his main poem, the "Song of Myself," he sweeps through the whole orbit of human experience, he sounds every depth of joy and suffering, of being and doing, of knowing and intuition; he delves into the past, he revels in the present, he soars into the future, he identifies himself with every type and condition of man, he sweeps over the continent, he touches upon every phase of the life and manifold doings of this diverse, widespread complex people, and says all "these tend inward to me and I tend outward to them."

"And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,
And of these one and all I weave the song of myself."

"I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,
Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and stuff'd with the stuff that is fine."

"A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfullest,
 A novice beginning yet expert of myriads of seasons,
 Of every hue and cast am I, of every rank and religion,
 A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,
 Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest."

A Boston critic of Whitman complained that his poetry was not noble, because it celebrates pride and does not inculcate the virtues of humility, self-denial, etc.,—thus reading the poet by the letter, rather than by the spirit. The charge that Whitman's poetry celebrates pride is fully met by the fact, that it also celebrates and bears along in equal measure the antidote of pride; namely, sympathy. Its sympathy, its love, is as broad and all-inclusive as its pride is erect and positive. Whitman was aware, from the outset of his career, how important this fact is; for he said in the preface to the first edition of his poems, in 1855, that the soul of the great poet "has sympathy as measureless as its pride, and the one balances the other, and neither can stretch too far while it stretches in company with the other. The inmost secrets of art sleep with the twain. The greatest poet has lain close bewixt both, and they are vital in his style and thoughts."

To complain of the urge, the pressure, the strenuousness of the body of Whitman's work, seems to me very much like complaining of a ship under full sail, or of an express train at the top of its speed. It may not always fall in with one's mood, but the poet is not studying one's mood; he would fashion the mood to suit the verse. "Leaves of Grass" is unrestrained in the sense that great action, great power, or the forces and processes of Nature, are unrestrained. Is a man, then, never to let himself out, never to assert himself, never to give full swing to what there is in him, by reason of the beauty of the law of obedience, of self-denial, of self-sacrifice? Here we touch upon ethical considerations, here we touch upon the rule of life. How does this rule apply in art, in literature? Certainly not by checking effort, by thwarting originality, by denying genius. The poet's life may be full of self-renunciation; but he must not deny himself to his reader,—he must not withhold that which

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defines him and makes him what he is. He may give way to others in life; but he must not give way to others in his book. If he gives us Tennyson or Browning instead of himself, we feel defrauded. "Consciousness of power, entirely self-centred, exults in manifestation." Why should it not? Would we have it deny itself, and refuse the manifestation? Why, then, do we protest against it in Whitman's case? Not because it contravenes some other law, but simply because it is too strong for us. Whitman's page, especially in his earlier work, has that pristine, unconventional quality of things and life in the open air,—an elemental force and *insouciance* that we cannot always stand; we long for the art and bric-a-brac and cosiness of indoors.

One *motif* of Whitman's work is to exalt and glorify man as he is, in and of himself, apart from all special advantages and acquisitions, and to bring the physical or animal part flush with the spiritual and intellectual. A British essayist says of him: "Whitman represents, for the first time since Christianity swept over the world, the re-integration, in a sane and whole-hearted form, of the instincts of the entire man; and therefore he has a significance which we can scarcely overestimate." It is this entire man which Whitman stands for and celebrates. Christianity, or the perverted form of it which has prevailed in the world, has belittled man, has denied and degraded his physical part and made light of the world in which he is placed. Science belittles him; it goes its own way, and finds man but an accident, the ephemera of an hour; democracy belittles him by sinking the one in the many; the individual is nothing, the masses everything. Whitman offsets all this in the most determined and uncompromising manner. The man, the individual, is everything; the whole theory of the universe is directed to one person, namely, to You. All bibles, all literatures, all histories, all institutions, grow out of you as leaves out of the tree. Much might be said upon this point; this thread runs all through the poems.

"Whoever you are! you are he or she for whom the earth is solid and liquid,

You are he or she for whom the sun and moon hang in the sky,
For none more than you are the present and the past,
For none more than you is immortality, "

Whitman was the poet of the great cosmic forces as they appeared in man, in personality, in the state, in races, and in Nature; and the sweeping mass movement of his verse is in keeping with these things. The only restraint suggested and the only restraint required is that of the rifle-bullet that goes to its mark. The corset of rhymed and measured verse no doubt improves and helps bring into shape the muse of many a poet; but why should we insist upon this particular restraint being imposed upon every poetic spirit, and charge those with lawlessness and disobedience who repudiate it?

The law of life of great poetry or great art is, he that would lose his life shall find it, he that gives himself the most freely shall the most freely receive. Whitman merged himself in the thought, in the love, of his country and of his fellows; he identified himself with all types and conditions of men; he literally made himself the brother and equal of all. He thought of himself only as he thought of others in and through himself. In his life he was guilty of no self-seeking; he deliberately put by all that men usually strive for—immediate success and applause, wealth, honors, family, friends—that he might the more fully heed the voice from within. He chose the heroic part in his poetry and in his life. When the supreme hour of trial came to his country, he served her as he was best able to serve her, by ministering to her wounded and dying soldiers out of the abundance of his sympathy and love.

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WALT WHITMAN AT DATE.

By HORACE L. TRAUBEL.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS has recently said: "'Leaves of Grass,' which I first read at the age of twenty-five, influenced me more, perhaps, than any other book has done, except the Bible; more than Plato, more than Goethe." A confession so frank, clothing so exalted an estimate, avowed by such a man, commands attention. For as values are here distributed, it is not in voice or echo of actors long dead, or of prophets remembered for special and temporary reasons of race or creed, but from a man the selected flower of our modern democracy, an American—a great, robust, often decried, but always far-seeing American—that the amplest single message so far known in literature is heard. "Except the Bible," it is held; but the Bible is a mosaic, complex in range and approach, evoked of many hands, out of we know not what varied conditions, to except which is to make no exception at all.

If the judgment of Symonds is to be confirmed or its correctness is even suspected, a stream of incalculable ramifications has been set free in the modern world. And it is to some of the flowers along the way and the wood that drifts with the tide that these notes are dedicated. We need not—as we cannot—get away from the man to the book, or from the book to the man, but we can indicate by touches rightly bestowed how man and book run on together, and become in their way vocative of democracy and its future.

While the world knows Walt Whitman by name, or from the controversies he has aroused, it is often strangely ignorant of the direct principles for which he stands as a writer, of the gifts which distinguish him as a person, and of the splendid courage

with which he has passed triumphantly through a generation of abuse and misunderstanding. My purpose here is mainly to depict what passes for his average daily life. How stands he among his friends and in the street, how is his philosophy lived out, into what runs the red flood of his everyday life? We have known him showered with defamation on the one hand, and on the other hand ignored. Yet he has always proved to be a man with whom a policy of avoidance was not wise, and a policy of brutality futile. His great friend O'Connor loved to describe, as on a memorable day to me not long before his death, the simple power that Whitman asserted in the merely casual deeds of his life in Washington. O'Connor would tell of the unstudied majesty of his physical port—of its betrayal in the carriage of the head, the swing of the body, the ease and confidence of the step. He would say that some looked to applaud, some to disdain, but that all looked, and all were indefinably moved by the imminence of an unusual personality.

There have been discussions of the form of Whitman's work, of his dislike for hampering traditions, of his philosophy as developed in religious, political or other directions. Critics have doubted his art, questioned his integrity, stood aghast at his "impurity," been dismayed by his hasty first-hand power, and shaken wise heads over the alleged downward tendency of his realism. Yet the earlier shock yields in almost every vigorous person to steadying influences. There is no quality of his individuality without a similar history, running the thread of enmity to conquest and unswerving loyalty. Some to whom at this moment he stands pre-eminent for poetic genius were not long ago prepared to deny that such a guerilla could meet the first trial of poetic virtue. Worshipers of old standards are friends of new. Victim is transformed to victor. It is from this change of feeling, and the quality of the many who have come in touch with the poet and his work, that there appear reasons for desiring to know the habits and humors of the man.

With Lincoln, Emerson and Walt Whitman as positive factors in the turbulence of its first century, America has no need to turn apologetically to the older countries and to past times,

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When I once asked Whitman what three or four names of absolute greatness he thought America had so far offered, he answered interrogatively: "What would you say to Washington, Lincoln, Grant, and Emerson?" I have frequently heard from him the highest mention of Cooper in the same connection. To these, or to any others which might be insisted upon, I do not hesitate to add his own name.

The aureola circling Lincoln, Emerson, Whitman, satisfies the present and foretells the future glory of our national life. For nearly a quarter of a century the fame of Lincoln has been gathering its shadows and laughter into the evidence of a marvellous character rooted in universal soils. Already is Emerson current in every stream, serene in every area of spiritual performance. Whitman, the last of the triad, threading still the ways of this mortal life, living a new youth in old age—laboring, believing—clear of soul, prophetic, losing neither sweetness nor sanity as troubles multiply and the future puts on somber robes, completes and cements the chain.

But abating here all question of greatness, I wish to jot roughly something of Walt Whitman, the man, as I know him in these later years. I assume that he is eminent, and that as time absorbs these details of days, these throbs of passing loss and gain, in their more general effects, what "Leaves of Grass" signifies, and, furthermore, what color the daily life of the poet has worn, will be increasingly questions of interest and demand.

Walt Whitman came to Camden in 1873, and I have known him ever since. It is one of the pleasant mysteries of our intercourse how our ways first crossed, for neither of us has even a faint or dulled remembrance of an introduction or a start. "We simply grew into each other," said Whitman—"perhaps always were part and parcel of one influence." The history of the years preceding this change of habitat are well known or easily accessible. Whitman's life has now covered seventy-one years. From 1819 to 1855, at which last date "Leaves of Grass" achieved its first public expression, Whitman's experience had been most varied, always in the line of the preservation of those primary rugged qualities which are the necessary background of

great events or great persons. He had been builder, type-setter, reporter, teacher, editor; and through the associations thus brought had penetrated with uniform subtlety the shallows and deeps of American character. Losing any part of these, of travels North and South, of contact with class and mass, would have meant not only a loss of factors vital to the life of the great poem, but equally a shock and draft upon its prevailing spirit. If you speak to him about these potent contributions, he will speak to you of the importance of things which history ignores or forgets.

Whitman's immediate touch with our democracy in the making must be remembered, if any picture of the man is to be gained.

When Whitman was born (1819), Walter Scott was at the meridian of his fame; "Ivanhoe" was just out, and not long after "Quentin Durward" appeared—"both of them masterpieces of historic and literary emotional narrative," as Whitman expresses it in a note just put in my hands. Scott has been throughout a great and attractive character to Walt Whitman, especially in his personality and in his "Border Minstrelsy" ballads. Whitman has been fed, as Dr. Bucke has remarked, first on Long Island scenery and the real seashore, then on New York and Brooklyn city life, superadding the southern journeys, the secession war, and western travel. But books have had not a little to do with his initiative as well as with the growths of later years; curiously, those "Border Minstrelsy" ballads were the first start of all, pointing definite ways which became the common order and safety of his future.

He has said to me that "the special designs, either of the artist to make a fine work from æsthetic or poetic or imaginative or intellectual points of view, or of the moralist or religious from his, sinks into quite a subordinate position," in the scheme of "Leaves of Grass."

Walt Whitman is often spoken of as a man of details; but, after all, "Leaves of Grass" is a spirit, not a statistical rehearsal, as nature is a spirit and not a count of the leaves of her forests. It certifies to heaven and earth, as having roots in each.

Out of a so expansive life—a life which, while careless of sub-

tleties, has turned unfailing reverence upon the play of sympathy in man—came the giant figure known in Camden these sixteen years past, and with which my own fortunes have been so tenderly entwined.

My earliest memory of Whitman leads me back to boyhood, when, sitting together on his doorsteps, we spent many a late afternoon or evening in review of books we had read. I am quite clear about the dread I experienced in the face of his subtle questions. Once I took him my copy of Castelar's "Lord Byron and Other Sketches," which he read with joy and warmly applauded. He had already imbibed a genuine love and admiration for the great Spaniard, and to this sentiment he is still faithful. These were my first years with Emerson, and the questions provoked by my confession of this fact would startle me by their directness. At this time he lived with his brother, Colonel George Whitman. The house they occupied was capacious—of plain brick, finely shadowed at the front with trees. It was Whitman's habit in milder weather to spend the early evening out of doors. I often happened upon him as he sat there in the shade enjoying his word with those who passed. His living-room was in the third story front, which faced south. But I was as apt to meet him strolling along the street, or on the boat, as at his home. On cold days he wore his long gray coat; in very hot weather he might be observed on his way without coat, vest, or suspenders, distinguished from afar by the glimpse of a spotless white shirt, open always at the throat. I recall many such approaches. My nebulous impression then was of a large man, of generous nature, magnetic beyond speech. All my earlier views tended to recognize him as man rather than as prophet—as a summing-up of singular personal power. Although I was not ignorant of his books, or inclined to underestimate their gravity, what he had written seemed dwarfed by the eminent quality of this human attractiveness. He rarely spoke to me of his work. Copious in narrative, frank and clear in comment upon current affairs, especially lingering upon the details of the lore of the streets, Whitman's spoken word or speechless presence was to

me a high and incessant resource. He lifted my common experience into biblical sanctity, and impelled my whole life to expanding issues. I can recall how vividly he would touch upon the then more recent hospital experience. He had not the least arrogance of speech: his attention when I spoke, his curiosity to grasp the pith of what I said, was unfailing. "There's a something—oh! so deep, deep!—in every man, worth travelling to, waiting for—to be seen, absorbed, respected,—yes, revered."

I have been fortunate to hear Whitman describe with multifarious detail the circumstance of his sickness and certain consequences of it which led to his settlement in Camden. It appears that while in Washington, from 1864 to 1870, he suffered several partial paralytic attacks, the influence of which he succeeded in temporarily throwing off, partly by medical counsel, but mainly by drafts upon that private reserve of wisdom which in all later perils has secured him. He thus stayed what afterwards was proved to be an inevitable, if impeded, tide. But finally, after 1870, a culminating severe spell, in the form of the rupture of a small blood vessel at the back of the head, prostrated him. The trouble was complicated by the death of his mother and a sister. He had seemed to be recovering, but the sad conflux of sorrows produced a relapse. Furthermore, the hot weather was approaching. His doctor, W. B. Drinkard, of whose wisdom and noble manhood Whitman frequently speaks, peremptorily ordered a change of *locale*. Starting for the New Jersey seacoast, he broke down badly in Philadelphia. He was taken to Camden. His friends and family, hardly less than Whitman himself, anticipated an early and fatal termination. Nevertheless, in a few months he again rallied, going off into the country as soon as able, staying there under plain conditions, having no conference with doctors nor welcome for medicine, making love with open-air influences, and healing himself by intuitions that superbly suited method to man. Thence back to Camden and permanent settlement. The years since have been marked by acute physical trials. "I have closely grazed death more than once," he says. Back of repeated recoveries stands the fact of his great rock-ribbed heredity and constitution. He had planted

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his birthright in eternal seasons. Drinkard wrote from Washington to a Philadelphia doctor, in detailing Whitman's case, that here was a man with "the most natural habits, bases, and organization" he had "ever met with or ever seen." Dr. Bucke, whose authority is grounded both in friendship and professional insight, lays stress upon Whitman's exceptional physical qualities—his stature, his build, the nobility of his form and features, his splendid constitution, the remarkable acuteness of his senses—as well as upon the depth of his moral intuition, and the subtlety and truth of his instincts.

Whitman at times describes the subtler phases of his trouble with a master's trick—with more than the surgeon's candor and the artist's grace. His prostration arose from a poisoned wound in the right hand, received while assisting at the amputation of the gangrened limb of a Virginia Union soldier, to whom he was much attached. Hand and arm inflamed and swelled, the vessels under the skin showing like red snakes running up to the shoulder. Though seemingly bettered or cured, the excessive labors and worriments of that period, with the saturation of hospital malaria, through those hot summers, no doubt in a measure sapped even his almost perfect organization. Some people ask after his sacrifice. Why should he have deemed it his part to submit to the axe? "Nothing overmuch" had in earlier times been his self-counsel. But in the presence of a great necessity, such barriers must be thrown to the winds. He once said to me: "Perhaps only one who has seen the fearful suffering and wholesale deaths of those days, for men's lack of care and aid, can understand or sympathize with my impulses and acts." He ministered to fully a hundred thousand persons, cheering all, making no distinction of North or South, alleviating where he could the red overflow of discord and dismay. All his speech upon this topic is subdued. He never vaunts his choice and participation. He never sets up for sainthood. He rather protests his evil with his good. This chapter, as any other that goes to portray him, must be read in the light of the necessity that inspired its faith. It is to be neither welcomed nor rejected in any spirit of lusterless display or vulgar modesty.

I will not linger upon this earlier history. The transition through the first years of our acquaintance to the later intimacy was gradual and never broken. Since it has become known that I enjoyed this connection, the questions put to me vocally and by letter have been multitudinous. What I say here is largely in response to such items of this curiosity as now recur to me.

Walt Whitman is a large man, six feet in height, broad of build, symmetrical, with an ineffable freedom evident even in these days of his broken physical fortunes. In years of health he weighed fully two hundred pounds. His head and face betray power and fortitude in high degree.* I have a picture before me as I write, a rare one, taken in Washington in 1863, which reveals phases discoverable in no later portraits. The beard, cropped rather close, and the head, with its elevation and unshadowed energy, express immense virility, mingled with the most delicate evidences of emotion and sympathy. His complexion, while still fine, is nowadays somewhat paled; and yet it has the same marvellous purity and transparency which of old showed its unpolluted origin. The rosy pink tint of the skin, of body as of face, and the skin's peculiar softness and richness of texture, are unlike similar features of any man I have known. His eye is dull—one realizes how dull when he is seen sitting face to face with his friend Dr. Bucke, who has an eagle's orb. Twenty years, with their history of physical disaster, have dimmed and troubled his sight and not infrequently, through painful symptoms, aroused a suspicion of impending eclipse.

His voice has been strong and resonant. Full of music—a rich tenor—it charms ear and heart. It has high tones not so sweet. In ordinary talk it may reflect the faults, with the virtues, of monotone. But for depiction of event or repetition of poetic line or prophetic utterance it is equal to curious and exquisite modulations. Its range is simple, like the simplicity of the language

*His head, phrenologically considered, may be a study to many. The chart of an expert, who was probably in his day the best in America, taken at Clinton Hall, New York, July, 1849, furnishes curious evidence. Whitman was then in his thirty-first year, and was already beginning to put his "Leaves" in shape. The substance of the examination may be consulted on page 25.

*This portrait was
given to Melrose
in the month
of 1863.*

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itself. He would say, nature has her few elements and works these into infinite combinations. This is the text-thought of his art, whether manifested in tone, word or song. I have heard him raise his speech in argument till it was as shrill and imperative as a bugle, and talk to babes in tones that cooed like a cradle song. His gestures are few and effective. He has an extraordinarily large ear, set at an unusual line. His hand is the hand of laborer and scribe, large in bone and sinew and shaped for strength and beauty. In all the years of my knowledge of him he has been lamed below the hips, so that I have never seen him in halcyon vigor. His paralysis from the first deprived him of effective locomotive power, and the sad strokes of 1888 almost utterly removed the old certainty of support. The severest loss has been on the left side. Apart from the right arm, which still maintains some actual vigor, his physical energies have declined and departed.

It is almost superfluous to add that "the good gray poet" is no misnomer; the silvered hair and beard, the customary suit of gray, the wide-brimmed gray wool hat, combining to preserve the integrity of the term.

Whitman does not, either at first glance or finally, suggest the intellectual type. He never overwhelms by a show of the knowledge which the schools propound. He suggests power, mass, repose—carrying a train of qualities which might be called Greek. I went to him once with William M. Salter. On our exit the visitor exclaimed: "What a beautiful face! and his voice, too, how grand! I have never before realized such a presence." And here is in fact the word which better than any other compasses Whitman—*presence*. To read him in print, to observe him by his familiar fire-side, is all one. Everybody I take there is first of all moved by the mere port and odor—the magnetic mystery—of his person. They seem effected as by new airs—breezes from uplands unknown. I never heard any one remark initially his brains, smartness, erudition, as they infallibly do of others, though these qualities, too, are unmistakably present. Group him with the happiest selection of men, and he easily looms above them, however in special ways any

one might be regarded as his superior. I have been present under such circumstances, in his bedroom and elsewhere, when he was conversationally and pictorially the central figure by right which no one could dispute.

In his parlor, one cold night, I said: "You are an open-air god—this does not seem your place! It is as if we plumped an oak down in-doors, and said, 'There—get life!'" He laughed and said: "However I ought to be, here I am—here is the oak!" But the oak keeps its grandeur, outspreading threshold and roof-tree to the latest day.

Whitman's first years in Camden were spent boarding with his brother and sister-in-law in Stevens street. The Boston persecution (the threatened lawsuit against the Osgood edition) for a year or two excited the usual curiosity-sale of his books. The resultant income, combined with certain generous and accepted tenders of George W. Childs, enabled him to purchase the little wooden house in which he has now for eight years dispensed a modest hospitality. It is a plain, box-like building, with two simple stories and a slanting loft, divided into six rooms and a bathroom. Up to June, 1888, the parlor was both work-room and reception-room, though it may have occurred at times that he wrote or read in the room above. Of late the latter has received all the honors of occupancy. It is but rarely that he goes down-stairs during the day. All his meals are eaten in his "workshop." Special visitors are received in the parlor. In the evening he will in some seasons sit at one of the lower windows, often after his trip in the wheeled chair, often if not going out at all. He will wave his hands to friends as they pass. With hat and coat at careless ease, and hair stirred by gentle breezes, he haloes the spot. Not infrequently will he remain an hour or more in his chair out on the sidewalk. Strangers will stop and talk. Children will approach him and make their playful feints. There is no chance that any chapter in the shifting tale of the street will escape him. "This is a good enough throne for any man: I bring all things to my door."

There have been long periods since June, 1888, during which he has not left his room except for the bath. Self-helpful, gently

forbidding even minor attentions, he is yet infallibly cautious. The trips he takes about the house are possibly more painful and tedious to those who watch than to him. The wheeled chair was one outcome of the dinner fund in 1889, in addition to a surplus in cash. It has been a great boon. The horse and buggy—the historic gift of a group of loving friends—were sold in 1888, in the conviction that they would never be needed again. They had been a lease of larger life. Daily the drives, daily the refreshment, daily the new earth and new sky. Sometimes he was willing to be attended, sometimes he would prefer to be alone. He would cover good stretches of the surrounding flat but fertile country, and delight in every evidence of thrift and prosperity. Though often in Philadelphia, his main driving was done on the good pikes running out of Camden. The landscape, the farms, the crops were a never-failing exhilaration. I have lounged by his carriage on the boat, and had his greeting as he passed me on the road, the head erect and beard floating on the wind. His salute on a crowded street liberated my heart from its commercial shadows. I remember how one recognition impressed me in the bustle of Philadelphia life, a summer's day, years ago—the contrast of his serenity with the impatience of everything about him. But he says: "I like best to brush up against all this bustle and noise—then run away from it . . . I respect its necessity—all that it does and means . . . but my old head grows dizzy in its midst."

Whitman's birthday in 1888, May 31, was marked by a reception tendered him at Thomas B. Harned's residence. It was a simple, domestic occasion, which he much enjoyed. A supper, the dropping-in of a few friends, informal talk, a little music, congratulations, filled up the festive hour. That night I took him the first proofs of "November Boughs." Thenceforward, our daily intercourse, for work or friendly enterprise, was unbroken. Within the few days that followed, June 2d and 3d, occurred those several slight paralytic shocks which left such serious results. He was with us at Harned's for dinner on Sunday, June 2d. In the afternoon, Dr. Bucke surprised us. We had supposed him in Canada, but he had come unannounced into the

States with a sanitary delegation. Later, when Whitman's carriage drove up, he apologized to Clifford, "I had intended giving you this trip," and went off with Dr. Bucke, who had but a brief space to remain. After driving about miscellaneously he left Bucke at the ferry and hastened off, now alone, into the country, northward, to what is called Pea Shore. Here his horse was urged into the water, and Whitman—the haughty Delaware at his feet, a speckless sky overhead—spent what he described as an unspeakable hour in contemplation of the sunset. Whether this may have been incautious, or because of some slumbering, now aroused, tendency, he suffered a chill, attended with signs of paralysis, in the evening. Stricken thus in his room when alone, and in the midst of his sponging off, he stubbornly refrained from calling assistance. But for what followed we should never have known that here, in his privacy, he had met with a critical experience. He told us subsequently that he had determined to fight the battle out single-handed. The next forenoon early he sustained another shock, and toward noon a third. I had come over that day with proofs, to find him upon the lounge in the parlor, Harned and Mrs. Davis present, at his side, and he endeavoring in vain to recover his impaired speech. Though he had suffered many similar blows in years gone, heretofore articulation had been in no way affected. I suppose twenty minutes elapsed before he regained self-control. To Mrs. Davis' inquiries he responded that he would soon be better, but if he were not it would be all right. Yet his resilience was so prompt that before I left he looked cursorily at all the proofs, and answered all my questions. The ensuing week was a bad one, but he was down stairs every day and would duly talk proof with me in the evening. On Saturday night, when Bucke went with Harned and with me to Mickie street, Whitman appeared to be swept to the border line of collapse, and there were hours on Sunday when we all felt that he had come near his end. At this juncture Dr. Osler, of Philadelphia, was called in for consultation. It was readily seen that Whitman was in no condition to live. But the application of drastic measures produced a marked change in the night. Monday,

therefore, brought us nearer an unclouded hope. Bucke had to go home without further tarrying. I shall never forget his departure—the solemn conviction, on my side as on his, that some near recall was inevitable. Recovery from this attack was tedious and never absolute. Whitman always attributed his release to Dr. Bucke's presence and "affectionate exercise of experience and skill." He called it "pulling safely from a close call."

The whole of that year had its shadows and doubts—fresh assaults, fresh recoveries. Whitman assured me: "We may go down any day. The old ship cannot last for many more voyages at the best. But the flag is still up—I am still at the wheel!"

In the mean time we proceeded with our schemes, producing "November Boughs" and the thousand-paged autograph edition of his complete works. In 1889 we printed an edition of "Leaves of Grass," in celebration of his birthday. "November Boughs" was slow in the making. Spells of illness made continuous work impossible; but he heroically persevered. I left proof with him each evening on my return from Philadelphia, and he would examine it the following day. He thoroughly respected my autonomy, never once crossing my transactions with printer or binder. He had a keen eye for mistakes in the types, his corrections were always clear, and his determination to have things his own way was absolute.

"November Boughs" contained both prose and verse, the latter grouped as "Sands at Seventy" and so arranged as to be incorporated with all later editions of "Leaves of Grass." I remember our discussion of this headline at Harned's table, one Sunday previous to Whitman's illness. Whitman had an alternate, and then an alternate for the alternate—and we voted for the words he adopted. There was plan and plan until the last touch was secured. I never found him reaching out at random or throwing his work together. Neither did he build in any formal sense. He set his streams free and let them find their natural union. Stedman classes Whitman's Lincoln poem with Lowell's ode—but there is every difference between them, as between a cloud or a brook that floats or flows in the humor of freedom, and a stately arch that is deliberately built.

Whitman likes a handsome page. He hates to have a chapter close at the end of a page; would rather cut off a precious paragraph, as he did in "A Backward Glance," than leave the eye offended. So, too, would he accommodate poem to circumstance. A line too much or too little did not worry him. He never quarrelled with necessity—made it, rather, his agent, supplicating his approval. His insertions were circumspect and left no jar on the ear. His blue-pencilled excisions were made without compunction. The little poem, "Memories," was written on the margin of a proof sheet, to fill up a page. He always had a noble line ready. His verbal ear was exact and exacting. Two or three of the poems were written in this time of his great illness, to run in on page 403.

"I always know what I want before I get through," he laughingly assures me, "but I do not always see all the details clear at the beginning. . . . I feel about for the lay of the ground." And yet he is quick to flash out approval on occasion. He says he is "discovered" by intuitive people—that he finds he really has no secret plan or thought which somebody does not detect.

To remember "Now Precedent Songs, Farewell," and "An Evening Lull," with the footnote they trail in their wake, is imposed upon any student of Whitman who realizes how profoundly man and work run one into the other: as Ingersoll would put it, how all points to the book, or the person, called "Leaves of Grass."

Whitman was most patient with the printers. None beyond the first and always fleeting shades of irritation appeared at any time. When anything pleased him, he always wished to send some book or coin or portrait, in recognition—for instance, to the boy who took his proofs, to the foreman who anticipated his desires and realized his taste, to the binder who forecast or confirmed his design. "How much I owe to that man Mirick, who bosses the composing-room, and Downs—you say his name is Downs?—the proof-reader, I could not tell. . . . They anticipate, they more than fulfill me, my wishes. . . . I have been mainly fortunate in my bookmakers—but I never fell

into better hands than these. . . . So you must treat them well—give them my love—in nothing hide our feelings. . . . I always have a suspicion that these print-fellows anyhow crown all the rest."

His caution is a quality to be duly understood and remembered. I never knew him to do anything in a hurry. The printer could not get a snap "yes" or "no" on any question. He would insist on full time to weigh every problem. He never let go his task. Whatever the difficulties or delays, he held fast to the native call. "Better me for mine than any other for me," he would answer when expostulated with. Some of his friends thought he ought to give the books into other hands. He would not do it. He liked counsel well, but liked better the privilege to refuse it. But he was always gentle. His ways were sweeter than the ways of other men. I always felt free to give my opinions. Sometimes he would adopt them, sometimes not, but whether yes or no, never with flourish. He had such a fascinating way of following his notions, after having listened to all that could be said in criticism, that you were not sure he had not absorbed your own. The doubts, dismays, to me almost tragic anxieties, out of which "November Boughs" was born, gave it warrant of fire. This book threw up numerous questions. One of them attached to the fate of the essay on Elias Hicks. It was only after much persuasion, and after the development of the fact that our book was to lack in bulk, that he decided to include it. The piece was not really finished, was not all that he intended it to be, but he patched it together, smoothed the rough joints, wrote a prefatory note, and let it go. When I remarked, "Its proud merit arches the book," he responded, "Can it be? Can I have won my battle after all? . . . It has been in me for many a year to say the best that may be said of Hicks." Though Walsh had expected it for *Lippincott's*, the events detailed hurried it into this volume. While it had not been made complete, the insecurity of his tenure, and the desire to supervise its production, had disposed him to feel excused in launching it without addition or elaboration.

We followed this volume with the "complete" Whitman, con-

taining all in poetry or prose to that day printed. The "Note at Beginning" and "Note at End," in the big volume, and the title page, were new, and were the subject of much debate. Both notes were quite impromptu. We approached and pursued the new task under much the same anxiety. Whitman was vigilant, however much it cost his body. Errors that had passed into earlier editions, caught by him or his friends, trifles of punctuation or spelling, were duly adjusted. He continued to demand proof till the last letter seemed in right joint. Whitman always keeps copies of his books, in which to indicate the discoveries of successive readings. With each new edition he makes some change. He always says that, though the earlier volumes may have a "curio" value, the latest have the only full, intrinsic worth. He owns the plates of "Leaves of Grass" and "November Boughs." The plates of "Specimen Days" belong to McKay. But the "complete" Whitman and the birthday edition appear without the name of a publisher. Whitman sells them from time to time, either through McKay or direct from the box in his room to the customer. Orders come from the most distant points, in Europe and America, in Australia and Asia. Usually, in sending off a book, he writes to ask the purchaser to acknowledge its arrival.

He enjoys the idea that a writer might (in his case very often does) deal direct with his public. He is generous with his friends. The quantity of books conferred upon them without calculation, the question of immediate return never argued, would seem preposterous, but for the fact that these friends have practically and abstractly espoused his work through sacrifices for which no mere volume could compensate, and that Whitman knows and frequently speaks of it in that light. You cannot convince him that the debt is all on one side, or that in any strict sense there is a debt owing him to them or them to him. "It is all one in the end—effort, victory, immortality, is yours as it is mine. . . . Who will ask to have merits counted when the day is done?" And so he offers his simple evidences of remembrance, respect, sympathy, love. Every inscription in every book has its own color, shading this way and that from demonstrations

of great warmth of attachment to the casual love offered the stranger. Books and portraits are sent in numbers for his autograph. A copy of the first edition of "Leaves of Grass" recently came all the way from Glasgow. He signed it without question. Yet subsequently he remarked: "I am not sure but all this is overdone, . . . and it is queer, anyway, to face the new situation. Once they would not have the book on any terms. Now they would not surrender it on any terms. It almost seems as if we had won our battle." He is certainly as generous as he ought to be in complying with these requests.

Whitman loves children, though at first contact they seem in these later days to shrink from him. John Burroughs recites one memorable instance in which Whitman inspired confidence from the beginning, and which would seem to show that what I note may not always have been true. He can be pained at the repulse of a child. "But I always win them before we are through." The great figure and long, shaggy beard are formidable obstacles to immediate intimacy. But his voice, gestures and touch are quick to reassure; and once children know him, they never fear again. He will reach for them as they pass him in the street, will place them on his knees when they come to see him, will question them as gently as a mother—and when they go will give them banana or apple or flower or any little token which the moment yields to his hand. I recall the incident of a visit paid him by Clifford with his little girl, who much feared the formidable man at the start, but will tell to-day of the apple which "dear old Walt," as she always called and calls him, drew from his pocket and sent her away chewing upon. This simple response to the life of children characterizes his contact with all occasions and personalities. Age, fame, wealth, poverty, do not seem to affect his demeanor. He is king in the presence of kings, mechanic with mechanics—he is always himself, accommodating his life to the shifting hues of circumstance. He absorbs all situations; he surrenders to none. The same dress that carries him to the shop, fits him for the reception.

He does not like to be questioned, yet is himself much given

to questioning others. He desires the vivid event and terminology of industrial enterprise, the minutiae of banks, the inside facts of great enterprises—those intimate, significant minor streams which vivify and explain the hour. He likes to talk to theatrical men, to reporters, to editors. He is interested in invention, discovery, new pictures, the development of what he calls the democratic arts. I have never seen him embarrassed. He is the only person I know of whom I can say this. I have never seen him put on a show of knowledge or seem ashamed to confess an ignorance. Obvious facts will prove somehow to have escaped him, and he will inquire after them without the least sign or notion of shame. His phraseology is never complex, nor commonly as the schools go. He daringly imputes new meanings to words, calmly adopts new words, serenely illustrates by peculiar combinations. He is justifiably proud of his "Presidentialiad" and thinks it belongs in the Century dictionary. Will it be accounted to the honor of this noble work that among other virtues it had not the courage and penetration to consult or quote him with any deference, if at all? He is quick to concede the use of slang, apprehending what of value it contributes to the fund of expression. He has collected data for years, industriously and faithfully, which furnishes the groundwork of his essay appearing in "November Boughs." Similar material he duly keeps together, in such shape as to be ready for use. If he chances to be looking up a special subject, he will cut out a couple of pasteboard covers, label them, and thenceforward tie between the cards all the MS. notes he makes and all the printed matter he collects which bear upon the problem.

Even casual visitors perceive that Whitman's simplest talk issues from a generous background. He has his reserves. Vulgar familiarity would never be essayed with him. Literary foppishness is never welcome. Men or women who go to interest him in special causes, philanthropies, to debate with him, to persuade him to read their books or listen to their theories, find him cold and untalkative. People who take advantage and would stay too long or vociferate too much, discover by and by that he has retired within himself and can hardly be drawn to say a word.

Those who have tact accept the lesson; others wonder or are angry. Reporters will ask, "What are your politics?" and he will reply, "I should be glad to have you tell me;" and will retort in kind to questions that touch his religion. I have been frequently asked if Whitman in his recent affliction makes any show of relenting from his radical notions; and when I say that his affirmations are as strong and serene as ever, some go away disappointed and some rejoicing. He does not like controversy, yet will on occasion fling out the most unmistakable rebuttals. His intentness as listener will at times persuade an over-eager applicant that his application is endorsed. He has decided impressions of things, rather than "views," and never hides them. His hospitality to the thought of others is warm. He will listen patiently to an opposing opinion, and be quite likely to admit that "there is much to be said for it,"—at the same time conditioning his concession, as if to protect his private integrity: "But back of that is another and another fact, and to them I appeal." He shows deference to knowledge and theory for what their integrity and weight intrinsically suggest rather than because they come well introduced. Hence his attention is respectful to prophet and to laborer, to word of authority or the lower note of apology, to those who rule and those who are ruled—in short, to life, to truth, simply, in and for itself.

He likes free people, incidents fresh from man's instincts, principles that leave man unhampered, governments and systems that put on no shackles. He is an ultra free-trader. His way of stating himself is, that the common classes of all civilized countries are essentially one in their prosperity and means of development, and that inter-trade, mails, travel, commerce, should be free, and that America especially, standing for all the demands of freedom, should legislate and act accordingly. He likes William Legget's formula, that "the world is governed too much." He insists that *noblesse oblige* is not only a good motto for superior individuals, but for nations, and, above all, for America.

He condemns the anti-Chinese law, dislikes restrictions of whatever character put upon the masses, and is positive as to the

evils which result from labor contracts made abroad. He faces every threat to our civilization—every quoted danger—yet presents an unmoved faith. He thinks our age and the United States full of bad elements, but full of good, too, affording ampler eligibilities ("eligibility" being one of his special words) to the good and for the lower classes than have been heretofore known. "Our ship," he says to me, "is the best built possible, and has all the charts of seas, and is the best manned that can be. Are we to go through some bad weather? No doubt. But we'll get through. It will have to be pretty tough to be worse than the storms behind us; and here we are, better than ever."

He condemns the restrictive tendencies and low standards of the churches. The moralism of the Sunday school, he says, has become trite and bloodless. The splendid outbursts of human passion—the master impulses of civilization—find authority and utterance elsewhere. When I said the other day, "Institutions curb and betray—freedom releases and saves," he exclaimed, "That will remain true as it has been true. 'Leaves of Grass' stands off with the lesson of freedom, the individual."

The spontaneity he would exact of society at large he exemplifies in himself. All his habits are informal. One Sunday evening, at Harned's table, when an unusually large group of us were gathered, I happened to make some allusion to Fitz Greene Halleck. This attracted Whitman, who said he had known and liked Halleck, and that more than once they had sat together over their wine. Some impulse led from this to his vigorous quotation of the opening lines of "Marco Bozzaris." His fork was half-raised to his mouth; a bit of bread and meat were nicely balanced on the fork; and now, as the first lines seemed to take down all barriers, he recited the whole poem, with infinite fire, to the joy of us all. When he was done the fork and its burden completed their voyage. I have heard him recite, under similar circumstances, the one poem from *Murger* of which he is so fond. Sitting opposite a picture of Lincoln, he would often raise his glass, "Here is to you," once or twice on special days inviting the whole table to pay this reverence. He so toasted once when Thomas H. Dudley, Felix Adler, John H. Clifford, and S. Burns

Weston were present. Dudley and Whitman got into a debate on the tariff, Adler sharing in Whitman's support. At the table, Whitman said: "Our talk should have been reported—it was too good to be wholly lost. . . . And as for you, Dudley,—I am sure I have never heard your side so plausibly put before." He had a way of spending at least a part of his Sundays with the Harneds—(Mr. Harned married Miss Traubel, my sister)—if not appearing for dinner, coming in the wind-up of a drive in the afternoon, to tea. Many men, distinguished and obscure, met him on these visits. He was a guest thus for some years, till the calamity in 1888—and Harned's is the only strange house at which a few exceptional meals have since been taken. I remember a Christmas dinner which Ernest Rhys, one of Whitman's London admirers, shared. Whitman's appetite was invariably good; but his eating and drinking were alike temperate. "Say that I have an incidental fondness for champagne," he advises me. He always talked easily at Harned's, whether in the parlor or at meals. The children discovered in him a natural companion.

In his aversion to drugs and regimen, Whitman is as positive to-day as in days of best health. He will concede that he loses here and there from his adherence to an old principle—"or is it a prejudice?"—but will contend that he has more than compensating gains. He has never used tobacco in any form, is only a moderate partaker of good wines and whiskies, and is studiously abstemious with coffee and tea. His daily bathing, his habitual rubbing, his careful regard for the remote previsions of the person, are vital. No professional prescription could in these things do for him what his constant watchfulness and calm effect.

He is famous for his skilful preparation of toddies. War memories, old instincts preserved, his conviction of its medicinal efficacy, maintain the drink in his respect. With unwearied hand he dispenses the potion among his sick neighbors. One night he offered the mixture to Harrison Morris—taking the water from the stove, the whiskey from a bottle, using a big mug and a spoon, out of the last tasting the consistency of the liquor from time to time. Morris had not expected a stiff drink. With interesting humor, Whitman, who saw his wry face, smiled

and asked: "What is it? Does it need more whiskey?" But his taste in foodstuffs is exact and his knowledge of what his condition imposes perfect. Dr. Bucke thinks he is not on particular points sufficiently careful as to his diet, but admits that on the whole he exercises wonderful judgment.

It was the night of Washington's birthday, 1887, that Whitman appeared before the Contemporary Club, in Philadelphia. I conveyed the invitation to him weeks previous, and I remember his consent as he sat by the winter fire in his parlor. We tried to get him to write some few brief notes or passages which he might read and then let go (a precious historic manuscript) into the archives of the Club; but while he never refused our suggestion, and even spoke of it as "a good idea," he never acquiesced, and in the end no word was written or obtained.

Professor Brinton came over to see me one evening, and we went down to Whitman's together. He happened to be in the kitchen talking to Mrs. Davis, and there received us, neither apologizing nor offering to take us elsewhere. Some chance question in the course of our talk caused his digression to Greek art and poetry; and his confident comment flowed without stint, and in tones pure as the nature he described. I walked to the ferry with Brinton, who said as he was leaving me: "That was a great talk. Why shouldn't he go over just such ground for the Club? It is the very thing we want." Next day I repeated this to Whitman, who asked in wonder: "What did I talk about? I don't remember a word of it."

The night of the meeting I had a carriage ready and made the trip over with him. Cold as it was, he threw every window open. He saluted all the ferrymen, had quite a talk with one of the deck hands, was soon on easy terms with our driver. The stars were so clear, the air so racy, he said at one moment: "It is like a new grant of health and freedom." When we reached Girard street (the meeting was in the New Century Club rooms) half a dozen cabmen who stood about offered to help him. He was readily got up-stairs, into the already crowded and not capacious room. We took off overcoat and hat. On first entering, he sat among the irregular clusters of members and their friends.

There was a platform raised about a foot at one end of the room. Would he take that? He responded, "I am in your hands now," adding, "but, first, can't we get more air into this room?" He was helped to the platform. The scene was unique and impressive. The contrast of his simple, massive exterior—his voice, élan, and smile—with the literary, intellectual, often social pomp of the group about him, was great. Some of us sat along the edge of the platform at his feet, others stood behind him. He was practically surrounded. But whatever the contrast, the doubt, the critical feeling, his own bearing shamed all antagonistic assertion. His freedom and spontaneity were, in fact, almost exasperating. He would not, for instance, talk of poetry, of philosophy, of art, or of anything which would inaugurate controversy. Subtle inquiries were advanced and passed. He took some printed sheets from his breast-pocket, reading "The Mystic Trumpeter" and "A Voice from the Sea," repeated Murger's "Midnight Visitor," and answered one or two of the more innocent questions that were put. One response, dealing with the idea of procedure and system—"Method does not trouble me, my own method or that of others, provided I or they 'get there'"—excited much amusement. His reading was solemn and impressive. There was some further program, in which he apparently took little interest. He chose his own time to whisper to me his desire to go. On the way down-stairs he took a sip or more of tea or coffee. He was led out as he had been led in. On the step he turned to me—I had one arm—and made some remark about the glory of the stars and how good it was to be free with them again. The drivers here all circled him again, offering congratulations and help.

The Contemporary Club has since given him a second reception—April 15th, 1890. This time he read his Lincoln address. He volunteered it, through me, casually, one night. He had missed 1889 because the early months of that year were full of doubt and disaster. But now he felt able to venture and inspired to speak. He was prompted by what he described as a sentiment of religious duty. There was that in his love for Lincoln which made this sad task welcome. But in the mean-

time he suffered a return of the grippe, and for a few days it seemed that it would be impossible for him to get out. Our Club committee were deeply concerned. Whitman himself seriously doubted the issue. He wrote to Dr. Bucke almost positively predicting a surrender. Yet he did not incline to any premature negative. The fifteenth was a Tuesday. I went to him questioningly on the Thursday and Friday that preceded, both times finding him in bed. Personally, I rather urged denial. I meant that he should assume all risks. Would it not be as well to realize the impossible? But no! Could the cards be held until Sunday? Let them be held, then: he would hope to the last. This was an extra Club meeting: the regular meeting had been the Tuesday just passed. Saturday came; he was little, if any, better. But he still persisted. I had promised the President and Secretary that I would communicate with them definitely Sunday forenoon. I reminded Whitman of this. He held out one last ray of hope: "Let it go still; come down in the morning." When I traversed the way again in the morning he was still in bed. But he looked at me with his assuring smile. He said to me a number of times: "I hate to give this up—hate to be balked; none of my friends, not you, not Dr. Bucke, know the full measure of my stubbornness." But the Tuesday night was in every respect auspicious, and four of us went over in the carriage together. Whitman afterward described this voyage in an unsigned note to the Boston *Transcript*. He laughingly described it to me as having all the features of a violent rebellion against a sick-bed. The ride was very much as the previous one had been. But the exertion of ascending a long flight of stairs, which he insisted upon, nearly overcame him. He was led to the platform, read his new introductory words, and got along without great difficulty. His voice was melodious, almost as strong as years before. He would not be introduced, saying to the President or to some others that he desired no preliminaries. His manner was indefinably easy. He wore his glasses, often gesticulated appropriately, now and then left his manuscript to add a sentence, or to look across the room, or to repeat some significant turn of phrase or thought.

There were passages in the recital of which he threw his great body back in his chair, spoke with great vehemence, raising head and tone and eye in perfect accord. He patiently remained until Dr. Furness had finished his remarks, and then retired as unostentatiously as he had come. He said laughingly the next day, "The victory was that I did not 'flunk' altogether." The victory was, likewise, that he had again borne testimony to the one of two or three men, or the one single man, in America with whom he recognized a consanguinity of nature.

Though these details of special events may seem tiresome, regarded simply in and for themselves, they serve important ends if the invariable democracy of Whitman's manner, under whatever pressure of literary or social display, is to be understood. And while upon this topic I might add that he is the only honorary member of the Contemporary Club.

I have been asked whether Whitman does not lack humor, whether his manners are not uncouth, and kindred things, of which the absurdity is apparent to any one who meets him face to face. Especially am I asked whether he laughs, or knows a joke when he reads or sees it, or appreciates the flash of wit and the passage of story. It has been so often said of his book that it fails in humor, that the world of readers suppose Whitman must be a gruesome companion. But his laughter is like his grief—it is a deep sea, travelled by ships of mighty draft. Whitman's composure is usually perfect. Dr. Bucke attributes his recovery from his last severe sickness, such as it has been, to his moral strength and calmness—to the fact that in seasons of crises he has never been mastered by, but has always mastered, all depressing emotions. I have known incidents which would have angered or aroused the laughter of any other man, to pass by him unnoticed.

An actor rang the bell one afternoon while we talked together, sent up his card, and was given audience. He begged several autographs for Steele Mackaye and some others, which were given him. Whitman explained that he had always kept a warm heart for stage-players, and that the English actors especially had in various ways responded with a noble friendship. The young fel-

low was disturbed by this comparison. Why was America not entitled to these superior honors? It is certain this passed through his mind. He awkwardly scratched his head, nervously moved about the room, and exclaimed at last, after an evident search for conclusive assurances—"Ah! yes! Mr. Whitman. I know; they *love* you; but we—we *adore* you!" I felt troubled to suppress my own laughter, but there was Whitman, a king on his throne, not a smile visible. And when the young man went on to relate that he had come from certain New York actors to offer Whitman a benefit, Whitman replied with the same calm air, though now with an increase of feeling.

I have never seen his composure upset but once, and that was under extraordinary circumstances which no righteous man would extenuate. His passion, when it explodes, has a Lear-like intensity. He seems equally frank in welcome of praise or condemnation. Persons come to him with the deliberate purpose to debate, either about his work or theirs. He shows no deference to such an intention, no matter in whom. But courtly and noble welcome, under all proper conditions, never fails. He will rarely debate his own work even with his intimates. But he is always disposed to assert his right to question. After he publishes a piece, he will ask: "Is it clear sailing?" or, "Is it up to standard?" or introduce some similar inquiry which does not commit him, and yet elicits the frank judgment of the person addressed.

I know that many people come, trespass beyond the time he feels he ought to give them, are with more or less decision rebuffed, and go their ways angry that he fails in conversational powers, or is reserved, or is cold, or has not the geniality claimed for him. The visitor rarely looks in himself for an explanation of these apparent discrepancies, and yet it is only thus that he would find the supposed incongruity made plain.

Whitman told me that he had been familiar and well used in the various departments of a New York daily paper, and that one of the men at one time during his illness came on to see him, to bear back authentic word as to his condition. "Give them all my best respects and love," said he, on the emissary's departure.

"Tell them I still hold the fort, after a sort. Tell them my spirits are good; I eat, drink, assimilate, sleep, and digest pretty well. I remember every one of them perfectly, and would like to be with them this moment." I have carried many such messages to printers, mechanics, writers, men in all occupations. "Tell them the fires are not all out, though they burn with less vehemence . . . and tell them that my love holds on without stint, abatement, denial."

He always has a good word and welcome for Southerners. He has lived much in the South, from Virginia to Texas, and might in ways be taken (and sometimes has been taken) for a Carolina or Alabama planter. He deploras much of the current vulgar sectional animosity. To him there seems a new era entered upon in which we may commonly join hands, any State with any other. He likes visitors who bring laughter and joy, cheer and good nature, thinking the latter quality the best, the most promising, the most national, of all that distinguish our democracy. He is never a man to set the star of another man's individuality. All he asks is that the other bring with him his genuine self.

No man more delights in revelations of revolt against rigid rules, in spontaneity and individuality. Even in strangers he detects all pretense, penetrates all disguise. "We want men—not puppets, echoes." Whitman, as I have said, has a way of lapsing when a stranger becomes obtusive. He will retire within himself, close the door, emit not a word except in indefinite monosyllables. If the visitor have tact, he will penetrate the cover, say his good-day and go. Whitman will give his own farewell: if he is weary, will extend his hand, make a natural transition, saying, perhaps, "Well, good-by! I am glad you came; when you get back to New York give my love to the boys,"—the dismissal accomplished in the gentlest way, so that the stranger may take it as a compliment rather than a rebuke. I have known Whitman to use this defence with men of distinction as frankly as with obscure and ignorant persons.

He has a habit of regarding himself objectively. He will speak of his work as if it were another man's, will see his principles

as a cause, will use "we" in place of "I," as signifying that others participate in his purposes and achievements. He frankly owns mistakes. His hospitality and love know no abatement with the years. "If I were to write my 'Leaves' over again," he says, "I should put in more toleration and even receptivity for those we call bad, or the criminal."

His frankness has opened him to all sorts of attacks. There are pestilential reporters—I have at least two particular offenders in mind—who have repeatedly misrepresented him, violating friendship and common honor in their private interest. A column of "Sayings" purporting to be Whitman's, and signed by C. Sadakichi Hartmann, recently appeared in the New York *Herald*. It was full of idiotic falsehood, and Stedman and Holmes were among the victims. One note in particular, in caustic disparagement of Stedman, between whom and Whitman there is the happiest affection, was brutally false. It throws interesting light on the autocratic non-ethical spirit possible under journalism, to know that the *Herald* would not print a denial of Hartmann's infamous inventions, though such a disclaimer was sent by Dr. Bucke in Whitman's own words. Whitman himself was disturbed and angry. Any one who knows Whitman knows that detraction or bitterness in criticism is impossible to him. Woodbury's recent "Talks with Emerson," and Edward Emerson's book about his father, contain most inexcusable thrusts at Whitman. He lets all these things take their course. He will not go into the prints with denials, nor will he counsel his friends to do so. He feels that his position makes the evil almost inevitable, and that his books—set in such frank background and relief—must at last assure him a right understanding. Nevertheless, he appreciates the peculiar animus of certain attacks made upon him, and for the sake of those whom they injure—their authors—resents their interjection and impertinence. "Emerson's son might spare his father, for it is the father who is hurt." And so, with august patience, he meets all the shafts of vicissitude.

I am often asked, "Is Walt Whitman a reader?" Some serious literalists have got the notion that he does not read at

all, or despises books. We know well how familiar he is with the Bible, Homer, Shakspeare, copies of which are always kept within reach. I know also, that there is a cluster of other books frequently consulted. A random remembrance takes in Felton's "Greece," a large volume containing all of Walter Scott's poetry, Ellis' old metrical abstracts, Hedge's "Prose Writers and Poets of Germany," Voltaire's Dictionary, volumes of George Sand, Volney, Virgil, Tennyson, the eleven volumes of Stedman's "Library of American Literature," Emerson, Ingersoll, Ossian, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Ticknor's "Spanish Literature," various translations of the classics, Danté, Hafiz, Saadi, Omar Khayjam, Symonds. This is to mention only a part. Yet he has no collection except of what he terms "usable books."

He reads the papers. Avoiding discussions of religion and politics, he seeks those items which out of the daily history of a time are sifted for permanent uses. He still gets the *Long Islander*, his own child, continuing since about 1839. I notice that a copy of this paper looks us in the face from the confusion of his workroom, as photographed by Dr. Johnston. He reads the Camden local papers, the *Critic*, the great dailies of the chief cities, and fugitive foreign and domestic sheets. But he does not read in long stretches or read books that bore him. His friends everywhere forward matter which they think will be of interest. He enjoys the illustrated papers and appreciates what they are doing to democratize art. He likes to examine all periodicals. If I go there with a magazine under my arm, or a paper in my pocket, he is quite likely to ask me to show it to him or to leave it for a day. Any choice bit that I happen upon anywhere in my reading it seems to give him joy to hear about and look at for himself. His printer's eye is as fresh as in its morning, and his heart responds to all effective pictures. He reads current books. He likes to look into all that appears about his special favorites—Carlyle, Emerson, Ingersoll, and a few others. He does not read Ruskin. Religious and political controversy he almost wholly eschews. Religious newspapers and books of a theological character are ignored. Yet he will sometimes read significant things in religious contro-

versy—for example, Ingersoll's discussion with Gladstone, or Huxley on the Pentateuch. "I wish the Colonel every success in his battle with the theological giants. . . . They are strongly entrenched, but he will bring them all down. . . . He is a mighty force in this modern world—this America." He has had varied impulses for and against Tolstol. He thought "Sebastopol" a masterpiece, while the introspection of "My Confession" and "My Religion" offended him. The "Kreutzer Sonata" elicited his applause. Amiel he speaks of as a sin-hunter. He has read in Ibsen somewhat, but does not find him attractive. He admits that the meagerness of his knowledge of Browning prevents judgment. He speaks of special portions of Browning's work and credits them with power and native right. There his criticism stops. Though he reads stories and novels least of all, he is frank and young even with these, and perfectly willing to try a new light. He is not set in any tradition whatever. He likes to hear of new books, new actors, new artists. He looks upon himself as only a forerunner, at the best. Why, therefore, may not any day be the day of best arrival? He is a new-old man in the greatest sense. His boyhood still commands, and his enthusiasms ascend the dizziest heights. He never will discuss a book save as it asserts a human apotheosis and serves human ends. He sees no literary greatness but through the vision of the race. No man has a more penetrating eye for shams. John Burroughs once told me that he thought Whitman the best critic in America. I know myself the marvellous complexities of style and subject through which he will pierce a straight path to the central purpose. He always expresses admiration for the great jurists, who cannot be distracted by multitudes of detail. How many fledgeling poets send their songs to him! I find he cuts a few pages—enough to free the first evidences of music, if there be any—and that pause and silence tell the rest. He looks enough at the poetry of magazines to perceive its prevailing lack of flavor and conviction. What real art, he will ask, but flows in red blood, from love to lover, to unite and consecrate undying days? Yet he is never harsh in special criticism. He is vehement in his general principles, but his forgive-

ness and affection for individuals are boundless. He loves books from the side of the mechanic. He delights in the simple honest face of the picas, enjoys and commends the printer who is generous with his ink, discovers and dwells upon any felicitous or skillful (if not sensational) arrangement of page or cover. In short, the integrity of a book throughout is, he claims, an important mark in the history of an age. He rather affects English printing, and on the whole will not admit that the art has yet given America all its secrets and success all its laurels. He appreciates Ingersoll's vivid picture of the average book—"On the title pages of these books you will find the imprint of the great publishers—on the rest of the pages, nothing." If a book have not brains or love it may have good paper and honest binding. These are consolations which he accepts and communicates with rare humor. No one who came upon him frequently and was a witness of all his tastes and moods could fail to perceive and acknowledge his catholicity.

Whitman is a great reformer—is in everything non-conventional—yet never reads "reform" books. "Leaves of Grass" epitomizes a thousand philosophies. All the modern reformers find themselves reflected in "Leaves of Grass," and each reformer thinks his the only reflection, and Whitman therefore specialized. But, including all—anarchist, socialist, democrat, aristocrat—Whitman eludes the claims of all. He does this in his person as in his books. Men are angered because no label will stick to him. A distinguished Irish clergyman came in one summer evening, and his very preliminary—that he had travelled three thousand miles to question Whitman about certain philosophies in "Leaves of Grass"—was an offence, and made the interview ridiculously brief. Whitman knows little or nothing of the detail of industrial movements—of special reforms and social ideals—yet there is to day no more sympathetic appeal than his, spoken freely at all times to his rich as to his poor friends, for the sanctity and elevation of the fireside, for the meting of justice to the masses, for all possible extinction of the tyranny of circumstance. Great capital, emphasis placed upon possession, the *éclat* of social trappery, invite and receive his disgust. He recognizes the

vicious tendencies of our monopolistic civilization, and with a free hand sketches its dangers. "What we need is a race enjoying just harvests—not a special few grabbing up the whole product of the field."

Whitman never forgets his debt, and that of his ancestors, to Elias Hicks. He abounds in reference to George Sand, a paper-covered translation of whose "Consuelo," belonging to his mother, is an object of abiding resource and affection. He commends the scientific spirit, seeing in Darwin and typical men of his character the clearest eyes of our generation. His whole life is elevated to such covenants. He makes truce with every man for the best that is in him. He meets laborer, railroader, clerk, merchant, lawyer, artist, on his own ground, and always with keen, inquisitive inspiration. His slightest reference to motherhood is a picture of household, babe and man. His friendships have been the greatest. The valorous history of O'Connor remains yet to be told in that sure outline and full color which it demands. Whitman repeats again and again that, whatever his receptivity, that of O'Connor, at least in literature, was vastly greater. There are warm personal relations between him and Tennyson, though they have never seen each other. I remember a letter from Tennyson, surrounded by its rib of black, redolent with savor of wind and water, a strain of poetry in itself, which Whitman for a long time carried in his vest pocket. What he has been to John Burroughs, that writer has often told; but what John Burroughs has been to him, in years of national and personal war and peace, is unwritten history. New years bring new lovers. Dr. Bucke, whose book was published about 1883, Dowden, Symonds, Kennedy, Sarrazin, and Bertz are regular or occasional correspondents. The eloquent voice and pen of Ingersoll have been potent for Whitman on more than one occasion. Whitman writes them his postals or brief letters in a style simple, frank, and full of affection. These messages abound in the gentle cadent confidences of love—in flashes of poetic feeling and glowing peaks of sunny thought; but they are never epigrammatic. He is not in the least demonstrative, never excessively applauding, never making superfluous calls for devotion.

He never apologizes. He is not afraid to discuss the weaknesses of his friends, and never slow to point out "the much that Walt Whitman must answer for." He treats his household as by a holy law. Mrs. Davis, his housekeeper, never finds him indifferent, condescending, or morose. His spirit ignores all petty household worries. Warren Fritzinger, who attends upon Whitman, and is provided for through a fund steadily replenished by a group of Whitman's lovers, and who finds his service a delight, attests that in whatever hour or necessity, Whitman's most intimate humor is to the last degree composed and hopeful. In his relations with his neighbors, Whitman, while homely and affectionate, always stops short of familiarity. He sends the sick among them offerings of fruit, or of reading matter, or any minor commodities which brighten afflicted days. One of his delights is in the liberal distribution of the papers, pamphlets and books that so plentifully arrive. To England, to Germany, to Australia, to our own West, to institutions of charity, to Bucke, to Burroughs, to Kennedy, to Mrs. O'Connor, go the informal reminders of his remembrance—always the particular paper to the one in whom he thinks it will find the best response. I have a large collection of papers, manuscripts and letters which he has at different times given me. I am often the bearer of gifts to the "boys" in Philadelphia. He will get his magazine pieces duplicated, in order that he may send copies to his family; and he will similarly use large numbers of newspapers containing significant references to himself. Thus he is saved the burden of a large correspondence, since his friends will understand by such tokens that he has them near at heart, however the labors of letter-writing may, in these days, go unperformed.

Whatever the clouds that gather, the spiritual Whitman remains undisturbed. There is no fall in sweetness, no diminution of vital affection, no reduction in will. His criticism is as keen as when it spoke its first word. He remarks a break in visual clearness, that his memory has recently been less faithful, and that his hearing has lost in delicacy. The quality of his work defies the charge of deterioration, but he can by no means do as much, or work with the same fire and intensity, as in the past.

Application wearies him. Yet he is occupied the larger part of every day. Though he outlines and discusses many unaccomplished plans, I notice that the defect is not in his plans but in their issue—that the body will not readily respond. He is taken out regularly in his chair, perhaps to the outskirts of the town, where he may scan the free sky, the shifting clouds, watch the boys at base-ball, or breathe in drowsily—"for reasons," he would say—the refreshing air; or he is guided to the river, with its boats and tides and revelation of sunset. In winter his sensitiveness to the cold is apt to house him, or force his goings-forth into the earlier hours, near mid-day. There was a time when he spent many noons and evenings on the ferry-boats, but he is disinclined in these later times to face crowds and confusion and questioners, and therefore seeks less-travelled ways.

Whitman's life is practically spent in one room of his house. I have already alluded to it: a second-story room, about twenty feet square, facing north. He likens it to "some big old cabin for a kinky sailor—captain of a ship." We see there two old tables—one a Whitman heirloom, having more than a hundred years of history, and another made in Brooklyn by his father. Scarcely one piece of modern furniture appears. There is a wood stove, in which he keeps up a rousing fire in cold seasons; a solid, uncreaking bed, plain and old; some heavy boxes, in which he stores copies of his own books; an ample rattan-seated chair with timber-like rockers and arms, large as ship's spars, with a wolf-skin thrown over its back when winter appears. He sits here—reads, scribbles, ruminates. His writing is always done on his knee, a tablet being his constant companion. Around him are the books which have been named and others, spread upon chairs, tables, and floor. Letters, papers, magazines, manuscripts, memoranda slips, are scattered in greatest confusion. There are certain volumes here of which he says he "reads lingeringly and never tires." His tables are never without flowers. As he can walk only by the aid of furniture, cane, and wall, he has abandoned any attempt at apparent order and what strict housekeepers would call neatness. But he likes his room well ventilated. His tastes, habits, looks, show more plainly in

old age his farmer and Holland ancestry, with their unartificial and Quaker tendencies.

He constantly asserts that no sketch of him would hit the mark that left out the principal object of his whole life, namely, the composition and finish of his *magnum opus*, the poems, consistently with their own plan. This has been his aim, work and thought from boyhood, and the proper rounding of it has become the joy and resolve of his old age. All the later writings show how unflinching this purpose controls. Read the concluding poems in "November Boughs," which we thought would be the last, then "Old Age's Ship and Crafty Death's," "To my 71st year," "The Voice of Death," and latest and perhaps most wonderful of all, "To the Sunset Breeze," as indicating how this giant man, sitting here in the freedom which no physical disorder can destroy, is establishing a very heaven of purposeful stars. He has pictures of his friends about him. The mantelpiece, the walls, even the tables, have these reminders. Several pictures of Whitman, made in oil, by Sidney Morse, are, or have been, upon the walls. Dr. Johnston took one of them home with him to England. In the hall are copies of the two Morse busts. Upon the door, or sofa, against the wall, on nails and under papers, is his clothing. An elegant, never-used, dusty, brass lamp is set in the corner. His evening light is either from the broken-chimneyed drop on one of the tables, or from a gas-jet in another part of the room. The room adjoining, in which his attendant sleeps, has likewise its loaded bookshelves and overflowing boxes. Friends are surprised to find him living in such simplicity. But this room, with its homely liberty, gives him all there is of household sacredness and content. There is probably no other study like it in the world. It is rather the *den* of a newspaper office—the odd and end of a household—yet a royal chamber, too, such as this world cannot companion to-day. Here is the field which invites the rally of friends. He is on no throne. But his dignity and placid courtesy possess all who approach. The world seeks him in this spot, to forget instantly all the environing humbleness, and to know the soul by which the place is inhabited.

All the features of Whitman's face suggest inception and amplitude. Hence the failure of Alexander to make of his pinched and formalized Whitman anything which can have value. Hence the explanation why Eakins, in that glorious head found in Whitman's parlor, expressed by so many hints the life of the man. But even Eakins seems to me to have caught Whitman rather as he said, "I have said that the soul is not more than the body," than as he said, "I have said that the body is not more than the soul." Whitman has been photographed as often perhaps as any public man who ever lived, and the photographs are in the main better than any oil or crayon portrait. The Gutekunst picture reproduced by the *New England Magazine* is the very latest (taken within a year), and satisfies Whitman as fully as the best. Morse's clay, uniting what Eakins caught with something more, has noble power and faithfulness. There are a couple of crayons, the work of my father, which are strongly handled. Whitman is generous with the artists, giving them all the sittings they desire. All that picture can do for any man has been done for him.*

Whitman is eminently loved as a man. He keeps on gaining friends, and these friends are marked men. He has unceasing messages from devoted supporters in Australia. A group of Lancashire disciples has just been discovered. One of the group has within a few months paid him a visit, made a series of photographs of dwelling, street, room, and nurse, passed a night in the house in which Whitman was born, visited Gilchrist at Centreport, Long Island, and Burroughs at West Park, on the Hudson—and has since his return published an account of his novel pilgrimage.

The dinner given Whitman on his last birthday had remarkable features apart from Ingersoll's great speech, which Whitman thought the most powerful extempore utterance he had ever known or of which there is any record. The later lecture by Ingersoll on Whitman was also significant. The noble motive

* Dr. Bucke has what is practically a complete collection of Whitman portraits. Their number and range are enormous. Almost every photographer of note in the East has been tempted to make some trial.

which gave it background, its realization, the splendid proportions of its benefit, Ingersoll's unhesitating generosity, are hidden factors of which few know. The utterance itself Whitman regards as in many respects the most significant in the stormy career of "Leaves of Grass." Symonds always addresses him as "Master," and writes him the warmest letters. The host of his callers is great—every day some. John Burroughs comes down once a year, in the fall, from his estate, to spend several days in Camden. Whitman's family are all more or less distant. He has a sister in Vermont, another on Long Island, a brother, George, in Burlington, New Jersey. His brother "Jeff," who recently died in St. Louis, was an engineer of note, dear to Whitman, who travelled with him in earlier years. Records may be found in "Specimen Days" in mention of "Jeff," to whom Whitman has just written loving and memorable words of tribute for an engineering journal.

Whitman has instinctive reverence for women, always addressing and approaching them with gentle courtesy. And women reciprocate the tender respect. Women, who are first to wonder at his gospel of sex, are first to accept it, too, and least willing of all to yield its sacred import. And with their intuitions awake and sensitive, they early realize how Whitman's concrete act reflects the word he has spoken. No man is so loved of strong women. It is happiness to hear him talk of "the mothers of America"—how our future is involved with their symmetrical development and high faith.

His atmosphere breathes composure, power, sweetness, reverence, the background of all moral force. He rarely speaks of morality, yet is profoundly moral in all that he does and says. He puts the brightest face on all he sees. His discussion of current vices is strong and denunciatory—yet unfailing in its look forward. I never know him to strike a note of despair. His darkest pictures leave a spot for hope—issue a sunniness and assurance. As between the final poetic utterance of Whittier and Tennyson he rather preferred the first, as having a more unquestionable atmosphere of joy.

Whitman is often spoken of as "queer" or "eccentric." He

is neither, except in the sense that must always distinguish individuality. He delights in free speech, gravity and purity. He has the clean instincts which prevail over and explain grossness and squalor, whether of life or voice—evil narrative or cheerless philosophy. He delights to tell and to hear stories. His sense of the humorous is strong. He discusses his contemporaries with the utmost freedom, yet with the utmost sweetness. Any just report of his conversation would reveal the simple power and lambent reach of his thought.

I know no great event to pass by him unnoticed. All the world's affairs are his affairs. He loves the transactions of big conferences—of scientists, mechanics, laborers, engineers. He enjoys all that tends to enlarge the scope of man's hope, anything that adds to the generosity of our national example, anything that in religion or society or politics is for breadth and solidarity. He is intensely attracted toward the expanding movements of labor and the serious outcome they seem to invoke. He disdains patriotism in the common sense—looks to America to lead new ways rather than to halt till all are ready to come. He is lame, he suffers pain and physical decadence, he knows that by gradual retreats life is leaving him; yet his light that burns on the height, and his loving and capacious dream and carol for America and for the world, are strong as in youth, and seem sustained from exhaustless deposits. His amenity is invariable. His respect for man as man is infinite. It is the first note and the last of his song—its dawn and sunset.

Day by day he sends forth some new message to the world—some poem, some bit of penetrating prose—written on the oddest pieces of paper utilized in the history of literature. These are leaves of immortal life. He writes a large hand, uses a mammoth Falcon pen, will dip in none but the blackest ink; he will not punctuate by the rule of schools, will not adopt the phraseology of taste, will not rhyme like the poets, will not perfume and carpet his study, will not accept household and architecture as substitutes for virtue and freedom; he will not reverence the mechanic in man more than the king in man, but the man in man, be his dress or titles what they may; he will not confuse

uses with ends, will not repulse the criminal and invite the saint, will not defer to the humor of magazinists, will not minimize his nature in order that convention may profit, will not travel the polite earth for fame or gain.

These denials are thick, every one, with affirmation: for all that Whitman denies is denied out of respect for that primal self which to-day utters scripture and to-morrow will pulse in the life of the race. What men need to know of him is his wonderful simplicity and capaciousness—that manuscript, house, room, nurse, pen, chirography, friendships, speech, all point to impulses, means, and ends, unusual and great. It is the mark of a new entrance upon the stage. It is the sign of man to men that they must come from the cover of goods—that the hideous mockeries of society carry death and dishonor in their plausible splendor—that the summoner himself is the first to demonstrate that possessions, which the world mistakes for the necessity of power, are simple leaves on the wind when a strong man arrives.

Whitman is not America except as America is universal. He is democracy—and democracy has no geographical word. He has taught literature that it is not to tell a life but to be one; and when priest and prophet, editor and lawyer, mechanic and tradesman, have learned this lesson, equity will prevail, and the now obscured stars in the moral heavens will stand forth in honor of the restoration.

WALT'S strong points are his broad, free, flowing discourse of life; his command over large prospects of life; his vigor; his striking down to deep standards; the roll of some of his grand old lines, some of them holding more than volumes.

There is much imperfection in his work. In fact, but little is perfect. Let us say it while there is yet opportunity. A time will come when Walt Whitman—the so long ignored (except by a few, among whom were those who scorned, insulted, persecuted him), afterwards the butt of the irrepressible witling:—nay, perhaps the day is coming fast when it will be heresy, presumption, folly, to suggest that this Walt Whitman is not perfect and complete.

The man or woman who would read Walt Whitman and carry away evil is worthy only of pity.

The question of morality is not dependent on the yea or nay, or the boldness of address, or discreet abstentions, of the author. Cant, sycophancy, stagnation, weak fiber, are worse evils than freedom of speech. There is no virtue in emasculation, and sometimes little enough in mere prudence.

We wear the very garb of philosophers after reading Spencer, we are more vigorous after Carlyle, more healthy in reading Walt Whitman.

Arthur Lynch: "Modern Authors,"

"THE GOOD GRAY POET:" SUPPLEMENTAL

By WILLIAM DOUGLAS O'CONNOR.

[This unpublished letter by the late William Douglas O'Connor, found among his papers at his death, was dated January 23, 1866, and was evidently written in the heat of the controversy that was aroused by his famous pamphlet of the previous September, in which for the first time and by his hand Whitman appeared as "The Good Gray Poet." The Harlan episode referred to in the letter is too generally known, and too frequently referred to in this volume, to need repetition here. O'Connor's pamphlet is to-day accessible in Doctor Bucke's *Life of Walt Whitman*, in which volume it is printed as an independent chapter, in connection with an introductory letter, marked by the same power and character, contributed supplementally in 1883. The letter herewith given was written to the *Boston Transcript*. For reasons of which we are not cognizant it was never printed.—THE EDITORS.]

YOUR notice of "The Good Gray Poet," which I have only recently received, appears to be duly impressed with the fact that I did not try to cast my pamphlet in that placid style of Addison which, I see, the latest high Oxford criticism in the person of Matthew Arnold considers superior to the style of Jeremy Taylor. Your notice is also obviously penetrated with the conviction that I am one of those tasteless and extravagant beings who to the vindication of an august poet, long and deeply wronged, bring nothing of that Attic tranquillity of spirit whose highest triumph perhaps appears in the perfect composure of the *Price Current*. Levity aside, however, I thank you for what you say of my little work. Doubtless you praise it far more and censure it much less than it deserves.

But I cannot feel an equal satisfaction at the cold and slighting, almost justificatory, tone in which you treat the action of the Secretary of the Interior, and as the opinion of the *Transcript* is valued by me, permit me in all kindness and courtesy to

observe, that I do not think that your apprehension of my position in respect to his conduct, is either clear or fair. Let me tell you why.

The main view my pamphlet takes of this matter, directly and I think justly connects it with the interests of intellectual liberty and the rights of authors in this age. It is an age when the dark spirit, born of the narrow mind and rotten heart, which so often compelled the richest and boldest meanings of the great literature of medieval Europe to skulk in enigma and innuendo, and which followed thought everywhere with the rack, the fagot and the axe, no longer fronts its victims in the robes of the inquisitor or the bloody jerkin of the torturer, but wears the respectable black coat of the dull divine or the office-jacket of the ass reviewer. Hegel denounced as "an obscene bird of the night," and made odious by critical interpretation; Kant mud-balled with epithets, and his thought screened thickly with lies; Swedenborg, with purity as of the darkling dawn, assailed as the apostle of lechery; Voltaire confined in slander; Humboldt labelled "infidel;" Fourier advertised into abomination as the high priest of anarchy and brothelery—these are triumphs almost worthy of the bolder hour when, livid with hatred, that spirit of the pit tore handsfull of pages from hundreds of copies of Montaigne, shrieked through the Puritan at Shakspeare or through the Papist at Rabelais, and gave Campanella to the rack and Bruno to the fire. What for his only too bounded but all-noble thought, turns out old Comte from his professor's chair to subsist on the charity of scholars? What for a historic speculation on the gentle god of old Judea, sends forth Renan amidst a howl of priests from the French University? What assaults with printed yells Colenso, Parker, Maurice, Strauss, Buckle, Powell, Darwin, Lyell, Huxley, Lecky, Mill? What gives a gratified audience to the hammerer of tin foil from gold proverbs, as he maligns Goethe and defames Emerson? What derides as a crazed fanatic Wendell Phillips, scholar, statesman, the chevalier of our politics? What treats with social dishonor the highest heart, the subtlest intellect, this day in England, the noble and gracious lady who wrote "*Romola*?" What draws

infamy like a curtain across the fame of the first woman in France, great as Sophocles, George Sand? What poisons public opinion against every noble thinker who aims to greatly benefit mankind? The operations of that dark Janus, still strong on earth, bigot on one side and on the other prude! All thought, all life, suffers from it. Here is the cancer we so gingerly call "The Great Social Evil"—ghastly, mournful, perilous to society; and you know that such is the mental narrowness and nasty nicety of the times that it cannot even be discussed, though discussion must precede remedy. What publisher would undertake the Shakspeare Drama, if written in our age? Under the terror of our literary and social conventions, what writer could dare project upon the mind a figure so great, so real as Sancho Panza? Literature is dwarfed, degraded: under the spell of "intelligent criticism," "public opinion," "good taste," the author is no longer man, but mannikin. I will not offend by pointing at our own writers, but look at Dickens. With genius enough to have rivalled Cervantes, warned back, he shrinks from his possibilities, shrinks from verities, portrays all manners except those Shakspeare dared to portray; will tell you in conversation all about the devil lusts of the original of Quilp, but in the book never puts one touch to the character that reminds you of the grand and absolute fidelity to truth of the hand that created Cloten, or Thersites, or Caliban. Contrast as a presentation of a man possessed with passion, Bradley Headstone in "Our Mutual Friend" with Claude Trollo in Hugo's "Notre Dame." Which is real? Which is true? What influence forbade the English novelist to give to his creation the life-like reality, the fiery flesh and blood of the archdeacon of Hugo? Look at Thackeray, born a giant satirist, gifted with the divine power to make villains tremble; the charmed circle of convention is drawn around him; he shrinks under the fatal magic into a burly pigmy; drops the tremendous knout of great satire for a gentleman's riding whip; flinches, spares, moderates; never strikes any vices, any crimes, that one may not decently name, though these are the worst; turns away from the dreadful massed miseries and wrongs and shames of England; becomes a beater

of dogs not merely dead, but rotten, like the Georges—a beater of poodle lords and wiffet flunkys—but a sparer of the huge, powerful, cruel, bloody bull dog—British government and society; and at last, when all is done, is nothing but the admirable melancholy broken torso that might have been the English Juvenal. Look at Tennyson; restrictions are put upon him, and with the highest endowments, he submits to them; he deserts the mighty revolutionary ideas of the nineteenth century for verbal color and music; while America is locked in the death-grapple of civil war for them all, and the noblest minds of England are one with her cause, and Lancashire starves in silence lest her banner should stagger in the battle, he, a poet, sits behind his roses at Farringford, a secessionist. And as a poet, yielding to the imposed conditions of his time, he who should be one of the brave breed that make men in love with liberty turns from the actual, rude, incomparable beauty of Nature in its totality, to mirror in his verse a selected and assorted universe; becomes the poet of the garden instead of the globe, becomes the poet of the gentleman and the lady instead of the man and the woman; and, in fine, is only saved by the necessities of his genius from being merely the prince of confectioners. Nearly every great book expurgated—Eschylus, Juvenal, Tacitus, Lucretius, Shakspeare, Plutarch, Danté, the Bible, accused—yes, actually accused this very month by gentlemen who undertake in the public journals to shove aside Aristotle and Longinus and teach me criticism—accused of “loose writing,” of “improprieties,” of “indecent,” and expurgated:—the artistic, the moral unity of their impression thus destroyed, the educational purpose and power, the liberating and enlarging influence, residing just as much, I insist, and every thoughtful man knows, in their “indecent,” as in their “decent” passages, thus frustrated. Man, nature, society, things as they are, fearlessly reported no longer; letters warned into omission, hiatus, concealment, silence, forbidden to afford any rich or ample lesson; the *arriere pensee* on every page; thought limping in shackles; a mean moralism supplanting science; the writers dwarfs and fops and slaves; the few who dare covered with obloquy; literature on all sides en-

couraged to please rather than serve, and bidding fair to sink to the uses of candy—this is the picture! You know, I presume, the recent angry mutter that flew around your own city when Ticknor & Fields ventured to print the superb *Gulistan* of Saadi without expurgation. The very lexicons are expurgated; Roget's *Thesaurus: the Dictionary* (incubus). Now at such a time as this, when "good taste," "public opinion," "intelligent criticism" have contrived, one would think, sufficient discouragements and obstacles to the free action of conscience and genius—when literature is deprived of the conditions necessary to develop it into greatness—the head of a great Department of Government in America, taking one step further, sets the bold example of direct persecution. French tyranny vacating the chairs of Comte and Renan; English theologic bias trying to push Colens from his bishopric, vile acts as they are, have yet a certain propriety. For as respects such places, it is tacitly understood that orthodoxy is the condition of occupancy. But the utter impertinence, the audacity and novelty of the Secretary of the Interior's action, promotes it to be captain of all opinions and acts that affix penalties to authorship. A poet, acting as an exemplary public officer, is deprived of his employment as a punishment for his poems. Poetry, if it attempts to rise above conventions to the freedom of the great masters, is a penal offence. That is Mr. Harlan's position. And you seem to think this a trifle—the "mere loss of an office"—not connected with intellectual interests or the rights of authors—not worth making a stir about. Suppose widening from a solitary act it becomes the general rule. Tell me now how free letters will fare when authors are punished for freedom! Or does an act only become censurable when it becomes general? Do you deal with the thief when he has picked one pocket, or do you wait till he has picked fifty? Suppose this infamous invasion of the liberty of literature had been made on the person of Longfellow. Mr. Editor, you think my pamphlet excessive—extravagant; but in such a case, you would exhaust the capacities of language to denounce the outrage! You know you would!

The second view my pamphlet presents is this:

Here is Walt Whitman—a man who has lived a brave, simple, clean, grand, manly life, irradiated with all good works and offices to his country and his fellow-men—intellectual service to the doctrines of liberty and democracy, personal service to slaves, prisoners, the erring, the sick, the outcast, the poor, the wounded and dying soldiers of the land. He has written a book, welcomed, as you know, by noble scholars on both sides of the Atlantic; and this, for ten years, has made every squirt and scoundrel on the press fancy he had a right to insult him. Witness the recent editorial in the *Chicago Republican*. Witness the newspapers and literary journals since 1856, spotted with squibs, pasquinades, sneers, lampoons, ferocious abuse, libels. The lying jabber of the boys, drunkards and libidinous persons privileged to control many of the public prints, has passed as evidence of his character; the ridiculous opinions of callow brains, the refraction of filthy hearts, have been received as true interpretations of his volume. All this is notorious. You know it, I suppose, as well as I. And finally after the years of defamation, calumny, private affronts, public contumely, my pamphlet refers to—after the social isolation, the poverty, the adversity which an evil reputation thus manufactured for a man and following him into every detail of his life, must involve—Mr. James Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, lifting the charge of autorial obscenity into the most signal consequence, puts on the top-stone of outrage by expelling him from office with this brand upon his name. The press spreads the injury. It was telegraphed from Washington to the Eastern and Western papers. It was made the subject of insulting paragraphs in some journals and of extended and actionable abuse in others. Now all this, too, you seem to consider of little or no importance. You think ten years of injurious calumny crowned with this conspicuous outrage, offers no “fit occasion for such an apotheosis of the victim.” I undertake to say that if any Chadband plus McSycophant had been Managing Director of the India House when Charles Lamb was a clerk there, and had expelled the gentle Londoner for the alleged “indecentcy” of his published defence of the licentious plays of Vanbrugh and Wycherly, there would have been a hum-

ming time that day through Temple Bar and all around St. Paul's, and literature to this hour would be in commotion about it. And if Allan Cunningham, or any other friend of Lamb, had chosen to embalm the subject in a pamphlet, considering the offence as a culmination of the malice of the "scoundrel reviewers," as De Quincey calls them, from whom even Lamb suffered; treating it in its proper relation to the rights and uses of letters; extolling the delicate brilliance of his friend's genius, as I have the grandeur and immensity of mine; and flinging back upon the monkey malignity of the defamers the glowing record of those virtues which cast the light that never was on sea or shore on Elia's grave,—I don't believe Coleridge would have thought it "no fit occasion for such an apotheosis of the victim," or coldly belittled the act of the insolent official who had violated every propriety of the administration of a public office, and trampled on the rights of thought and the liberties of authors, that he might punish a writer for his writing.

Pardon my frankness. I do not mean to be rude, but I cannot help some warmth of feeling on this matter. Here, in this city, from persons of the highest station, from the bench, from the bar, from members of Congress, from private citizens, I have heard Mr. Harlan's act spoken of only with amazement and utter condemnation. It has been the same everywhere. When I was in New England in October, no person with whom I conversed on this matter manifested other than astonished and indignant feeling. When in Ticknor & Fields' parlor, I mentioned it to a gentleman, one of your personal friends and of your own immediate circle, I remember how he changed color and sat down, like one incredulous of the tale. He could hardly believe that such a thing had been done. This is a fair specimen of the just and honorable emotion which the knowledge of this act has everywhere excited. I cannot therefore but feel surprised at your treatment of it.

What is thought of "Leaves of Grass" is of comparatively little moment. To you, the book may be even below criticism. To me, it is one of those great works which only the brave can undertake, which only the few can comprehend, but which,

nevertheless, penetrate nations and ages, inform them with their own life and make them remembered. But whatever its rank, its author deserves the equal treatment due to every writer of an honest book, and any wrong done to him in his autorial character concerns every true member of the literary guild. In no sense can I allow this to be a matter of small importance. If you put it on personal grounds, let me remind you that to a poor, unpopular and almost proscribed poet, what you call the "mere loss of an office" might be of the utmost worldly consequence, involving even the plunge into utter penury or want. But I scorn to rest the case even on a consideration so grave as this. Admitting that this were a little thing, a man, high in place, has wantonly violated the great principle of intellectual liberty, and the violation of that principle can never be a little thing. The infraction of a noble doctrine is not to be measured by the smallness of the circumstance, and half the battles of liberty have raged around events trivial but for their connection with some great cause. If this Methodist Secretary had expelled a clerk for being an Episcopalian, no one would think of reducing it to the character of an ordinary dismissal, speak of it as the "mere loss of an office," or in any way consider it of slight importance. It would be deemed, and justly deemed, a public violation of the sacred principle of religious liberty. The right of an author to publish an honest book without being deprived of his bread, is at least of equal sanctity with the right of a man to worship free of penalty at an Episcopalian temple. That right, simple and commonplace as it is, has been bought by centuries of agony and struggle, by the toil of the learned and the blood of the brave. Never while I live, if I can help it, shall it be violated in the person of the humblest man or woman that holds a pen. Never shall I consider its violation as else than an outrage, demanding the most serious and general public attention and the most signal condemnation. Not one word, therefore, of the claim you deride, do I abate. I say to-day, I say to-morrow, I shall say forever, that this act of Mr. James Harlan—the disgraceful expulsion of a noble author from the employment which gave him the means of life, solely and only for the publi-

cation years ago of a volume of verse—is a violation as gross and audacious as it is novel, of the doctrine of liberty which it is the main purpose of the American polity to enshrine and defend. As such, it rises to the dignity of a public concern. As such, undulled by apathy, undaunted by ridicule, again I commend it to every one who guards the freedom of letters and the liberty of thought throughout the civilized world. It is the first time in America that an author has been punished for his authorship: as far as I can have it so, it shall be the last.

IN 1881, T. W. Rolleston sent Walt Whitman his translation of the *Encheiridion* of Epictetus. In the front of the small book, under date 1888, Whitman has written: "Have had this little volume at hand or *in* my hand often all these years—have read it over and over and over." The following are a few of the numerous passages strongly marked and underlined by him:

"It is not things in themselves, but the opinions held about them, which trouble and confuse our minds."

"Wish not ever to seem wise, and if ever you shall find yourself accounted to be somebody, then mistrust yourself. For know that it is not an easy matter to make a choice that shall agree both with external things and with nature, but it must needs be that he who is careful of the one shall neglect the other."

"In going about, as you are careful not to step upon a nail or twist your foot, even so be careful that you do no injury to your own essential part. And if we observe this we shall the more safely undertake whatever we have to do."

WALT WHITMAN.

By GABRIEL SARRAZIN: Translated from the French by HARRISON S. MORRIS.

At the moment when, in western Europe, the educated and literary classes are allowing themselves to become inoculated with the subtle poison of pessimism; when, in Russia, a nation of so grand a future, the Slav spirit gropes in the midst of utopias and contradictions, mingling tendencies toward conquest and supremacy with the idea of a mission at once humanitarian and mystical—at the self-same moment a triumphant voice is raised on the other side of the Atlantic. In this chant of a lasting and almost blinding luminary, no hesitations, no despairs; the present and the past, the universe and man, free from all concealment, confront with a serene superiority the bitter smile of the analyst. There is no need for us any longer to search for ourselves, because we have found ourselves; and from the midst of its period of development one nation at least points to its coming puissance reflected in the mirror of the future. The man who thus announces himself—himself and his race—brings at the same time a word absolutely new, a form instinctively audacious, novel, overstepping all literary conventions. He creates a rhythm of his own, less rigid than verse, more broken than prose—a rhythm adapted to the movement of his emotion, hastened as it hastens, precipitated, abated, and led into repose. At times he will utter almost an Hebraic chant, quitted anon as he enlarges or abandons himself to the theme. But, as he freely uses the forms of others as well as his own, the habitual employment of the artifices of literary writing is, to him, entirely unknown. If he makes literature, it is, openly and without shame, as an author ignorant of research and artistic vainglory. The:

word *litterateur*, in the sense it assumes amongst the older civilizations, cannot in any manner be applied to him. His writings come forth glowing and direct, with an immediate significance and as if spoken. As those of the ancient prophet poets his words are addressed to the assembled people.

The man with whose biography we design to terminate this study (*La Renaissance de la Poésie Anglaise, 1798-1889*) is a Yankee named Walt Whitman. Not only is he not illiterate, but he has read all that we have. He has seen, besides, more than we have, and more distinctly; he has travelled in the Union, and his poet's eye has marvelled at the thousand details of virgin nature and a young civilization. Lectures and spectacles have been but a leaven, a suggestion; they have only stimulated and nourished the vast synthesis, instinctive and philosophic, whose germ lay in his original mind. It is that synthesis of the Cosmos, framework and substance of his entire work, which we essay to outline in our first chapter. The second will be devoted to his views purely American and patriotic. The third will give an idea of the astonishing freshness of the book, and, lastly, the fourth, in recounting the history of this masculine life and personality so simply epic, will bring into view conceptions and horizons which, resembling in no wise those we are familiar with in Europe, are none the less large and comforting.

I.—PANTHEISM.

The poetry of Walt Whitman proclaimed at the outset complete pantheism, with no extenuation, and with all its consequences (see "Song of the Universal"). At first there was an outcry. Shelley himself had dreamed of sanctifying evil—had declared it the necessary brother of good and its equal. One may perhaps be permitted to say that evil envelopes good as the fertilizer encloses and nourishes the germ of the flower; but to place the pedestal of Satan next that of the Divine—what spirit escaped from the nether regions has committed that audacity? And worst of all, most incomprehensible of all, the heart of the miscreant whence springs this blasphemy seems to

have wings, joyous, light, which palpitate in ecstasy. In brief, and with the condition that one possesses an idea of the sentiment of the sublime, the explanation was simple enough, and to understand it one had but to regard the love of the great Yankee for the Cosmos—that love at once pious, profound, overflowing, ecstatic, strong as an intoxication and as a possession. Neither in the dawn of civilizations in the Orient, that region of mysticism, nor amongst the most exalted Catholics of Spain and Italy, has a spirit ever more profoundly lost itself in God than has Walt Whitman's. For him, Nature and God are one. God is the universe, or, to speak more exactly, the mystery at once visible and hidden in the universe. Wholly unlike Carlyle, who has been thought to possess traits of resemblance with Walt Whitman, but who, before the unknown divinity, could only prostrate himself and tremble with a holy terror, Walt Whitman, in his confident and lofty piety, is the direct inheritor of the great Oriental mystics, Brahma, Proclus, Abou Saïd. In Europe he may be compared with the German metaphysicians, disciples and developers of Spinoza; more than one trait unites him to Herder, to Hegel, to Schelling—above all, to the bizarre, chaotic and sublime Jean Paul. From these to him—Jean Paul apart, and noting that Whitman differs from Richter by a total lack of humor—there is still all the distance from the philosopher to the poet, the doctor to the dervish: more candid and more intense than they, the Yankee bard abandons himself with ecstasy into the adored hands of the Universal Being. Living in happy harmony with all the aspects of the Cosmos, even the most sombre, he exclaims at the close of "Leaves of Grass," his great collection of poems: "And henceforth I will go celebrate anything I see or am, . . . and deny nothing." And then, in effect, he says: God being in all things and everywhere, how can I help loving Him in all things and everywhere; and because the unbeliever dares judge of Him from seeing a part of one of His faces, should the believing heart follow the pitiful example? Jacob Boehm held evil to be the promoter of good—the good of strife and victory. But this position is always open to dispute, and Walt Whitman never disputes.

Let us open at hazard "Leaves of Grass" and quote:

"Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all
the argument of the earth,
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my
sisters and lovers,
And that a kelson of the creation is love."

"I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the
wren."

"I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-
contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning
things,
Not one kneels to another . . ."

"And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God,
(No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about
death.)

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the
least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment
then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the
glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's
name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever."

" Ah more than any priest O soul we too believe in God,
But with the mystery of God we dare not dally."

" As for me, (torn, stormy, amid these vehement days,)
I have the idea of all, and am all and believe in all,
I believe materialism is true and spiritualism is true, I reject no part."

And finally, in a piece particularly significant, which has been remarked by all readers of the poet, after having opposed in a violent fashion Ormuzd to Ahriman, they giving, in two long stanzas, their sentiments and the developments of their rôles, the first whispers the burden :

" My charity has no death—my wisdom dies not, neither early nor late, and my sweet love—"

and the second the reply :

" Aloof, dissatisfied, plotting revolt, comrade of criminals, . . . equal with any, real as any, nor time nor change shall ever change me or my words"—

until, at last, they are reconciled in the final synthesis :

" Santa Spirita, breather, life,
Beyond the light, lighter than light,
Beyond the flames of hell, joyous, leaping easily above hell,
Beyond Paradise, perfum'd solely with mine own perfume,
Including all life on earth, touching, including God, including Saviour and Satan,
Ethereal, pervading all, (for without me what were all? what were God?)
Essence of forms, life of the real identities, permanent, positive, (namely the unseen,)
Life of the great round world, the sun and stars, and of man, I, the general soul,
Here the square finishing, the solid, I the most solid,
Breathe my breath also through these songs."*

Surely, I repeat, as regards thought this pantheism is not new, and we have but to examine it a little closer to recognize under

* See still other passages of absolute pantheism : that which pp. 46-47 begins with " What blurt is this"—in the *Song of Myself*—and read to section 23; and the piece entitled *All is Truth*, p. 361.

the mystic tide of words the theory of the identity of contradictions announced by Hegel, the greatest of philosophers according to Walt Whitman, ("Specimen Days," pp. 174-177.) Advocating the same theory, we have M. Renan. With Hegel the conception appears to me but a cold light, and with M. Renan only an *ignis fatuus*. Likewise with Goethe and Spinoza, I find little enough of the flame: the second pleases himself with deductive demonstration, and the first with a plastic marble, a definitive expansion of the idea. It is never so with Walt Whitman. He is like the old prophets, a living spirit that talks with the greatest of the gods; an independent soul who does not incline to the idea of dissolving, after death, in the universal. This point is certainly one of the most original in his metaphysics. Instead of allowing that the cosmic sea is to absorb the drops of water of his life, and that his soul is to be rendered into the general soul, the Yankee poet defends his individuality. Of a truth the passages wherein he indicates his personal immortality are sufficiently obscure. He has doubted often, he owns it himself,* and his affirmation never reaches a perfectly clear formula.

"What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?"

They are alive and well somewhere,
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
And if ever there was it led forward life. . . ."

"The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me,
O life!

Answer.

That you are here—that life exists and identity,
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse."

"I swear I think now that every thing without exception has an eternal soul!
The trees have, rooted in the ground! the weeds of the sea have! the
animals!

I swear I think there is nothing but immortality!"

Immortality of all or of the individual? Without doubt one

* "Leaves of Grass," *Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances*, p. 101.
See also, *Yet, yet, ye Downcast Hours*, p. 341.

would be justified in saying that the affirmation is not explicit; but such as it is, it is buttressed with the idea that each being carries into the future life the conscience of the past life, and there is no other sense to give to the word identity which occurs constantly throughout "Leaves of Grass." There is neither mystery nor anxiety attendant upon him as he goes onward, by way of love, in serene hope.

It must not be thought that his definitive optimism is free from crises; numerous are the traces of meditative sorrows, of his bitternesses as thinker and patriot. He knows that the ordinary course of the world is pitiable, and that terrors lie in wait for the solitary muser.* But faith supports him and the pride of feeling, with all other beings, his brothers, the eternal manifestations of Eternal Thought. From this flows that mighty and sacred joy which laughs through the whole book, joy such as one imagines of some antediluvian colossus, lashing the resplendent waves, and breathing out enormous water-spouts in the face of the earliest suns. From this his song, so to speak, pre-Adamic of the flesh; his worship of forms and of colors; his appetite for sexual embracements; his adoration of the body and the act of generation! When all is full of the Spirit, when all is divine, what evil is there in the fact that the source of life lies in bubbling passion and frenzy! Naturally enough, the whited sepulchres of America and England madly cry: "The hideous voice of rottenness denounces the august shamelessness of Walt Whitman. Reflect: an echo of the Phallic cult fills the air; Bacchus, the conqueror, comes anew on his car surrounded by nymphs and fauns and bacchanals. Hearken: again an appeal for the naïve sensuality of primitive civilizations; the old rites are brought forth and the sacramental orgies!" So cry in defiance, with affront upon their faces, the fainting depravities and secular Sodoms! Phariseeism never pardons the poet. A Secretary of the Interior, Mr. James Harlan, peremptorily, in 1865, deprived Walt Whitman of a

* See *I Sit and Look Out*, p. 215. See also *Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances*, p. 101, and *Yet, yet, ye Downcast Hours*, p. 341.

modest office which he filled in the Department at Washington, because he "was the author of 'Leaves of Grass.'" He met with many discouragements at the end of the Secession War, during which he had cared for the wounded with an unparalleled devotion, and bore himself like a veritable hero of humanity.

If his pantheism celebrates the flesh, which he holds as part of the spirit—as the most innocent and primordial part—and if he proclaims joy—the drunkenness of the world-fête—he nevertheless does not fail to love and to tenderly salute endurance, now put to torture, now fallen into the lowest depths. I have already said, and it cannot be too often repeated, because it is the key to the book, that in the light of thought all things are necessary, because divine—all, even vice and crime, however inexplicable this last may seem. Let no one mistake these words, however: there is no more impetuous idealist than Whitman, nor a more indefatigable preacher of truth, of good, and of beauty. He holds that the evil will disappear, and before the ecstatic vision of the perfect and radiant future raises a long cry of triumph.* Yet is not that very hope a dogma of the dogmas? No, we cannot judge of evil, because that would be to judge God, and how can the lover judge that which he loves? Evil is a mystery, perhaps the most sacred of all mysteries, because it is the least comprehensible, because it may be the expiatory victim offered to good, the holocaust always smoking on the altar. Immense is the pity of Whitman for the degraded and miserable, as vast and tender as that of Shelley, of Hugo, of Tolstoi, of Dostoievsky—great spirits who bring back to our days the teachings of the purer heroes of Buddhism and Christianity, and who, from forth their march into the future, turn toward the past cycles and reach a hand to Sakya-Mouni, to Jesus of Nazareth, to Francis of Assissi, to Saint Theresa, to Vincent de Paul, to Fénelon, to Saint Jean de Dieu, to Jean d'Avila. Whether

* See these magnificent pieces: *The Mystic Trumpeter*, p. 356; *As I Walk These Broad Majestic Days*, p. 369; *So Long!* p. 380. See also *Roaming in Thought*, p. 216.

whole peoples in distress, or the crushed and broken individual, are concerned, or simply the ordinary and middling humanity, I do not know any amongst all these who has surpassed in charity, in pity, in devotedness, in love, him who gave at the same time his words and his actions, and while caring for his fellow-creatures, dying or sick, wrote the following pieces which I cite among so many others: "The Base of All Metaphysics," "Records Ages Hence," "Calamus," "Salut au Monde," "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" "Old Ireland," "O Star of France," "To Him that was Crucified," "To a Common Prostitute," "The City Dead House." This last, above all, is poignant and might have been written by Dostoievsky.

II.—THE NEW WORLD.

This system of metaphysics, in appearance composite yet indissolubly amalgamated, which unites across the ages elements the most hostile and most remote, binds together the teachings of Jesus and Spinoza, brings into union Brahmins and Encyclopædists, Lucretius and Fichte, Darwin and Plato, founds upon a single solid ground ecstasy and science, and, if one accuses it of contradictions, responds haughtily, "It is possible, 'I am large, I contain multitudes'" ("Leaves of Grass," *Song of Myself*, p. 78)—this system, to him who has felt and created it, is but a watch-tower erected over the New World. It is a world of activity, peopled by a race once old and become new from contact with a new soil; a race invigorated by an enormous influx of blood; a race of which the muscular force (actually incommensurable, but too often hindered by the intrigues of Yankee politicians and their creatures) buttressed behind this unclean front, founds, overthrows, pierces, works, invents machines, peoples deserts and throws immense iron cities on the shores of rivers and lakes. The poet appears anew. He extols in exact terms the famous material conquests of the American world. His utterance is that of a realist who has himself seen and wrought and touched with his fingers the details, who knows the manipulations and technical names. As for the metaphysical,

scientific, psychologic and moral accessions of Europe, he strives only to adapt and utilize them for America. In short, it is not the word of the poet or dreamer merely, but of the man of practical and mechanical action, which he sends forth.

"Leaves of Grass," indeed, is not purely poetic, at least in the sense of the older literatures. It is useless to seek here the refinement and impeccable virtuosity of a Tennyson. Walt Whitman is not an artist; he is above art. Not only do the words of his verse fail of being the most choice, but he laughs at proportion and composition. He is charged with affecting the rude, the overcharged, the encumbered. The religious and barbaric lyricism which Anglo-Saxon poetry possesses in common with the Bible is in "Leaves of Grass" interspersed with a multitude of prosaic images, infinity of detail and minute enumerations of all points of view. Our Latin genius soberly prunes down inequalities and knows nothing, ordinarily, of such lawless modes of expression. It takes them for chaos, and there commits the gravest of errors. Without wishing to defend exuberance or to oppose good taste, it will be permitted me to say that this last should only dominate writings which aim at pure art, where form is so paramount in importance as to relegate substance to the background. Where these larger works are in question, however—works wherein all external appearances and human masses precipitate themselves; where, at the same time, battalions of sensations, sentiments and ideas enter the breach; where science and morality and æsthetics are fused—where such creations are concerned, the horizon widens strangely. There are no other rules save those of nobility and strength of spirit, and these suffice amply to create a most unlooked-for and grandiose aspect of beauty. Though the reader may encounter what is difficult and distasteful, it will not alter the easily verified fact that, if the author has sprinkled through his work a throng of touches at first sight prosaic, yet that in reality these touches contribute to the poetry of the *ensemble*. Take any of the great pieces haphazard, and remove such details as seem superfluous; you will perceive immediately that life and truth have vanished from the picture, and that it is

now traversed only by great and monotonous sweeps of condor wings. (In revenge—one or two books apart—you can strike out all or nothing from our naturalistic romancers and neither more nor less will remain, because in their productions is neither sentiment, poetry, pity, nor moral conscience.) For, overcrowded and disorderly as it may be, if emotion and thought animate it, a work will always be of perfect beauty. But models fashioned of cinder and mud, though they be miracles of chiselling, will always remain cinder and mud.

Let us, then, return to the subject of the chapter. From the special point of view we have assumed it is difficult to make choice among the "Leaves of Grass": each page exhales the odor of the earth. I would distinguish particularly, however, several long and significant pieces, from which I will take extracts: "Song of the Broad-Axe," "Song of the Exposition," "By Blue Ontario's Shore," "Thou Mother with thy Equal Brood." These contain the outlook of contemporary America and a vision of the future America, as well of that America whence the ideal and heroic humanity must be evolved. In Walt Whitman, as in all the true and great poets, the simplest view of the object awakens an infinity of images and ideas. Poet of the outside world as well as of the soul, he does not, however, refrain from noting, by means of expressions often as simple as those of a precise conversation, the thousands and thousands of appearances which take his eye. He evokes correspondences and re-establishes all the links in a chain seen only through spiritual eyes. With an axe for touchstone he resuscitates the past, paints the actual hour, creates the future, because he has seen instantly that that steel instrument plunges and cuts into the roots of the tree of history—that it is the constructor of all civilizations past, present, and to come—and the following is what gives rise to the list, infinitely extended, of actions which compose its functions:

"Weapon shapely, naked, wan,
Head from the mother's bowels drawn,
Wooded flesh and metal bone, limb only one and lip only one,
Gray-blue leaf by red-heat grown, helve produced from a little seed sown.

Resting the grass amid and upon,
To be lean'd and to lean on."*

Then come the infinite series of transformations of the axe :

"The log at the wood-pile, the axe supported by it,
The sylvan hut, the vine over the doorway, the space clear'd for a garden,
The irregular tapping of rain down on the leaves after the storm is lull'd,
The wailing and moaning at intervals, the thought of the sea,
The thought of ships struck in the storm and put on their beam ends, and
the cutting away of masts,
The sentiment of the huge timbers of old-fashion'd houses and barns,
The remember'd print or narrative, the voyage at a venture of men, families,
goods,
The disembarkation, the founding of a new city,
The voyage of those who sought a New England and found it, the outset
anywhere,
The settlements of the Arkansas, Colorado, Ottawa, Willamette,
The slow progress, the scant fare, the axe, rifle, saddle-bags;
The beauty of all adventurous and daring persons,
The beauty of wood-boys and wood-men with their clear untrimm'd faces,
The beauty of independence, departure, actions that rely on themselves,
The American contempt for statutes and ceremonies, the boundless im-
patience of restraint."†

* "Leaves of Grass," *Song of the Broad Axe*, p. 148 :

"Arme belle, nue, pâle,
Tête tirée des entrailles de la mère,
Chair de bois, os de métal, d'un seul membre et d'une seule lèvre,
Feuille gris-bleu faite par la chaleur rouge, manche né d'une petite graine,
Tu reposes dans l'herbe et sur l'herbe,
Pour t'appuyer et qu'on s'appuie sur toi.

† "Leaves of Grass," *Song of the Broad Axe*, p. 149 :

"La bûche à la pile de bois, et la hache dessus,
La hutte forestière, la vigne qui ombrage la porte, l'emplacement dégagé
pour un jardin,
La chute irrégulière de la pluie sur les feuilles, l'orage une fois apaisé,
La plainte et le gémissement par intervalles, la pensée de la mer,
La pensée de vaisseaux frappés dans l'orage, renversés sur leurs côtés, leurs
mâts rosés,
Le sentiment des énormes charpentes des maisons et des granges de l'ancien
temps,

It is useless to insist, is it not true? You know as well as I do this sort of imagination; and, doubt not, in turning the page together we may be deluged now with one part, now with the other, to the confines of the farthest future. And, in truth, it is in the future that this "Song of the Broad-Axe" will be developed. Only, since in the last verses cited we are in America, let us establish ourselves there to the end of the chapter.

It would be difficult to find elsewhere than in Walt Whitman such words as follow: rude and democratic as they appear, they still attest a spirit if not new, nevertheless renewed and truly free. To recover the thread of their origin it is necessary to go beyond the Christian era, and to resurrect certain of the apostrophes of the Agora and the Forum. But in modern Europe all the invocations to cities, which affect the form of poetry or of oratory, whether they pour forth in imposing periods or thunder in peals of the tribunal, have always, even the most convincing of them, an indescribably artificial and theatrical air. One feels that they strain after the idea they would express, and that they are far from arising out of the ambient atmosphere with the natural expansion and simplicity of such a passage as this:

"A great city is that which has the greatest men and women,
If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole world.

L'imprimé ou le récit qu'on se rappelle, le voyage à l'aventure des hommes,
des familles, des biens,
Le débarquement, la fondation d'une cité nouvelle,
Le voyage de ceux qui cherchèrent une nouvelle Angleterre et la trouvèrent,
le début n'importe où,
Les établissements de l'Arkansas, du Colorado, de l'Ottawa, du Willamette,
Le progrès lent, la maigre clière, la hache, le rifle, le bagage de selle,
La beauté de tous les gens hardis et aventureux,
La beauté des enfants des bois et des hommes des bois, avec leurs francs
visages incultes,
La beauté de l'indépendance, du départ, des actions qui comptent sur elles-
mêmes,
Le mépris américain pour les statuts et cérémonies, l'impatience illimitée
de l'entrave."

The place where a great city stands is not the place of stretch'd wharves,
docks, manufactures, deposits of produce merely,
Nor the place of ceaseless salutes of new-comers or the anchor-lifters of the
departing,
Nor the place of the tallest and costliest buildings or shops selling goods
from the rest of the earth,
Nor the place of the best libraries and schools, nor the place where money
is plentiest,
Nor the place of the most numerous population.

Where the city stands with the brawniest breed of orators and bards,
Where the city stands that is belov'd by these, and loves them in return and
understands them,
Where no monuments exist to heroes but in the common words and deeds,
Where thrift is in its place, and prudence is in its place,
Where the men and women think lightly of the laws,
Where the slave ceases, and the master of slaves ceases,
Where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected
persons,
Where fierce men and women pour forth as the sea to the whistle of death
pours its sweeping and unript waves,
Where outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside
authority,
Where the citizen is always the head and ideal, and President, Mayor,
Governor and what not, are agents for pay,
Where children are taught to be laws to themselves, and to depend on them-
selves,
Where equanimity is illustrated in affairs,
Where speculations on the soul are encouraged,
Where women walk in public processions in the streets the same as the
men,
Where they enter the public assembly and take places the same as the men;
Where the city of the faithfulest friends stands,
Where the city of the cleanliness of the sexes stands,
Where the city of the healthiest fathers stands,
Where the city of the best-bodied mothers stands,
There the great city stands." *

* "Leaves of Grass," *Song of the Broad-Axe*, pp. 152-153:

"Une grande cité est celle qui possède les plus grands hommes et les plus
grandes femmes,
Ne fût-elle que de quelques grossières huttes, elle serait encore la plus
grande cité du monde.

Walt Whitman would not be the vast spirit he is, did he not know that the great democratic city of the future is the fruit of the present and of the past, the definitive result of all human labor ; if he did not bend, with a respect which our European

L'endroit où se dresse la grande cité n'est point l'endroit où s'étendent les
quais, les docks, les manufactures, simples dépôts des produits,
Ni l'endroit des saluts sans fin des nouveaux arrivés ou des partants qui
lèvent l'ancre,
Ni l'endroit des plus hauts et des plus précieux édifices ou des magasins qui
vendent les marchandises du reste de la terre,
Ni l'endroit des bibliothèques les plus complètes et des meilleures écoles, ni
l'endroit où l'argent abonde,
Ni l'endroit de la population la plus nombreuse.
Là où la cité se dresse, avec sa génération la plus robuste d'orateurs et de
bardes,
Là où la cité se dresse qu'ils aiment par dessus tout, qui paie leur amour
de retour et les comprend,
Là où les héros n'ont de monuments que dans les propos et faits publics,
Là où l'économie est à sa place, et la prudence à sa place,
Où les hommes et les femmes n'ont que faire des lois,
Où l'esclave cesse, et le maître de l'esclave,
Où le populaire se lève d'un bond contre l'audace incessante des personnes
élues,
Où des hommes et des femmes farouches se répandent comme au sifflet de
la mort la mer répand ses vagues d'un seul bloc qui balaient tout,
Où l'autorité extérieure passe toujours après l'autorité intérieure,
Où le citoyen est toujours la tête et l'idéal, et où le Président, le Maire, le
Gouverneur, et je ne sais quoi ne sont que des agents salariés,
Où l'on apprend aux enfants à être leurs lois à eux-mêmes et à compter sur
soi,
Où, dans les affaires, on fait preuve d'égalité d'âme,
Où l'on encourage les spéculations sur l'âme,
Où, dans les processions publiques, les femmes marchent les égales des
hommes,
Où elles entrent dans l'assemblée publique, et, les égales des hommes, y
prennent place ;
Là où se dresse la cité des plus fidèles amis,
Là où se dresse la cité de la propreté des sexes,
Là où se dresse la cité des pères au beau sang,
Là où se dresse la cité des mères au beau corps,
Là se dresse la grande cité."

democrats might well emulate, before the Titanic effort with which it is compacted cycle by cycle, with a strength never slackened by lassitude, by the arms of anterior generations: an effort which has even yet only vanquished a moiety, and will one day scale the heavens:

"Sail, sail thy best, ship of Democracy,
Of value is thy freight, 'tis not the Present only,
The Past is also stored in thee,
Thou holdest not the venture of thyself alone, not of the Western continent alone,
Earth's *résumé* entire floats on thy keel O ship, is steadied by thy spars,
With thee Time voyages in trust, the antecedent nations sink or swim with thee,
With all their ancient struggles, martyrs, heroes, epics, wars, thou bear'st the other continents,
Theirs, theirs as much as thine, the destination-port triumphant;
Steer then with good strong hand and wary eye O helmsman, thou carriest great companions,
Venerable priestly Asia sails this day with thee,
And royal feudal Europe sails with thee."*

And where does this vessel go? Toward the shores of the West—there, where the strife with antagonists such as the old

* "Leaves of Grass," *Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood*, p. 348:

"Vogue, vogue à pleines voiles, vaisseau de la Démocratie,
Tu portes un précieux chargement, ce n'est pas le Présent seul,
Le Passé aussi est ton fret,
Tu ne contiens pas que ta pacotille personnelle, ni que celle du continent de l'Ouest,
Sur ta quille, ô vaisseau, flotte un résumé de la terre, et tes mâts le maintiennent,
Avec toi le Temps voyage en confiance, avec toi plongent ou nagent les nations antérieures,
Avec toutes leurs anciennes luttes, martyrs, héros, épopées, guerres, tu portes les autres continents,
Oui, la fortune des autres autant que celle du tien, le port de destination triomphant;
Gouverne d'une main solide et d'un œil avisé, ô timonier, tu portes de grands compagnons,
La vénérable Asie sacerdotale fait voile en ce jour avec toi,
Avec toi fait voile la royale Europe féodale."

landlords of the ancient world no longer exists ; where not only the modern brain can conceive its thoughts in liberty, but where the modern arm finds itself freed from the old prejudices of European life ; where action is truly the sister of dreams ; and where, under imposing palaces of glass, marvels of industrial workmanship lift themselves daringly toward the skies :

" Around a palace, loftier, fairer, ampler than any yet,
Earth's modern wonder, history's seven outstripping,
High rising tier on tier with glass and iron façades,
Gladdening the sun and sky, enhued in cheerfulest hues,
Bronze, lilac, robin's-egg, marine and crimson,
Over whose golden roof shall flaunt, beneath thy banner Freedom,
The banners of the States and flags of every land,
A brood of lofty, fair, but lesser palaces shall cluster. . . .
Not only all the world of works, trade, products,
But all the workmen of the world here to be represented."*

Here follows an enumeration of the splendors of human genius in their apogee. In the course of his work Walt Whitman reiterates constantly, and in striking résumés, the glorious synthesis of the future of humanity. Among these diverse concentrations of light separated by commas, we prefer the following :

" Thee in thy future,
Thee in thy only permanent life, career, thy own unloosen'd mind, thy
soaring spirit,

* " Leaves of Grass," *Song of the Exposition*, p. 160 :

" Autour d'un palais plus élevé, plus beau, plus ample qu'aucun encore,
Merveille de la terre moderne, surpassant les sept merveilles du monde,
Élançant, étage sur étage, ses façades de verre et de fer,
Réjouissant le soleil et le ciel, rayonnant des couleurs les plus gaies,
Bronze, lilas, œuf de rouge-gorge, marine, et cramoiisi,
Au-dessus du toit doré duquel flotteront, sous ta bannière, Liberté,
Les bannières des États et les drapeaux de tous les pays,
Une couvée de hauts, de beaux, et cependant de moindres palais se-
groupera.

Non seulement le monde des œuvres, du commerce, des produits,
Mais tous les ouvriers du monde y seront représentés."



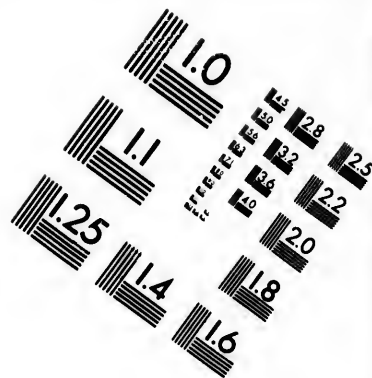
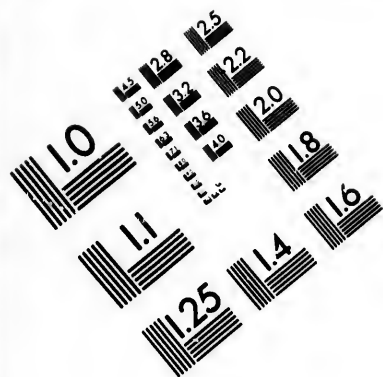
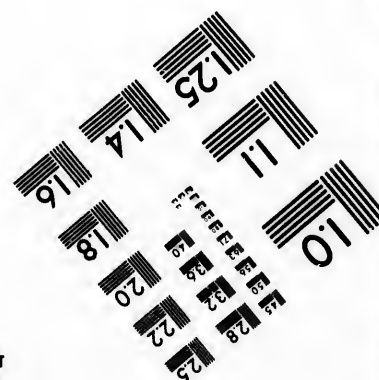
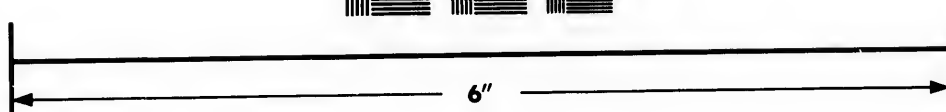
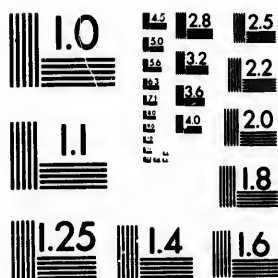


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Thee as another equally needed sun, radiant, ablaze, swift-moving, fructify-
 ing all,
 Thee risen in potent cheerfulness and joy, in endless great hilarity,
 Scattering for good the cloud that hung so long, that weigh'd so long upon
 the mind of man,
 The doubt, suspicion, dread, of gradual, certain decadence of man;
 Thee in thy larger, saner brood of female, male—thee in thy athletes,
 moral, spiritual, South, North, West, East,
 (To thy immortal breasts, Mother of All, thy every daughter, son, endear'd
 alike, forever equal,)
 Thee in thy own musicians, singers, artists, unborn yet, but certain,
 Thee in thy moral wealth and civilization, (until which thy proudest material
 civilization must remain in vain,)
 Thee in thy all-supplying, all-enclosing worship—thee in no single bible,
 saviour, merely,
 Thy saviours countless, latent within thyself, thy bibles incessant within
 thyself, equal to any, divine as any,
 (Thy soaring course thee formulating, not in thy two great wars, nor in thy
 century's visible growth,
 But far more in these leaves and chants, thy chants, great Mother!)
 Thee in an education grown of thee, in teachers, studies, students, born of
 thee,
 Thee in thy democratic fêtes en-masse, thy high original festivals, operas,
 lecturers, preachers,
 Thee in thy ultimata, (the preparations only now completed, the edifice on
 sure foundations tied,)
 Thee in thy pinnacles, intellect, thought, thy topmost rational joys, thy love
 and godlike aspiration,
 In thy resplendent coming literati, thy full lung'd orators, thy sacerdotal
 bards, kosmic savans,
 These! these in thee, (certain to come,) to-day I prophesy.*

Here the entire circle is run. As we have seen the poet gather and concentrate into his large utterance all metaphysics,

* "Leaves of Grass," *Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood*, pp. 349-350:

"C'est toi dans ton futur,

Toi, dans ta vie permanente, dans ta carrière, ton esprit libre d'entraves, au
 vol sublime,

Toi comme un autre et nécessaire soleil, radiant, en flammes, à la rapide
 lumière fécondante,

Toi montée à l'apogée de la gaieté et de la joie dans la grande hilarité
 sans fin,

so, likewise, has he succeeded in enclosing herein the many-colored throngs that attend the baiting places of the social march. About his race, as center, he groups all the actions, and all the speculations of Europe; and it seems eminently natural that the most penetrating view of the future should come to us from one of the sons of the youngest, the most hardy, and the most emancipated of civilizations. Over there the blood is pure and strong and the earth is virgin: it is there, and in the Oceanic colonies

Dissipant pour notre bien le nuage qui pendant si longtemps pesa sur l'esprit de l'homme,

Le doute, le soupçon, la crainte d'une graduelle et certaine décadence de l'homme;

Toi dans ta plus grande et plus saine progéniture d'hommes et de femmes, —toi dans tes athlètes, moraux, spirituels, au Sud, au Nord, à l'Ouest, à l'Est,

(A tes seins immortels, ô Mère de Tous, chaque fille, et chaque fils également cher, et l'un pour toujours l'égal de l'autre)

Toi dans tes musiciens, tes chanteurs, tes artistes, encore à naître, mais certains,

Toi dans ton opulence morale et ta civilisation morale (jusque-là ta plus orgueilleuse civilisation matérielle est en vain),

Toi dans ton culte qui supplée tout, enferme tout,—toi, non dans une seule bible, un seul sauveur,

Car tes sauveurs sont innombrables, en toi latents, et en toi tes bibles incessantes, égaux à tous autres sauveurs et bibles, et divins,

(Toi formulant ta course audacieuse, non dans tes deux grandes guerres, non dans la croissance visible de ton siècle,

Mais bien plutôt dans ces feuilles et chants-ci, tes chants, grande Mère!)

Toi dans une éducation née de toi, dans tes maîtres, études, étudiants, nés de toi,

Toi dans tes fêtes démocratiques en masse, dans tes grands festivals originaux, opéras, conférenciers, prédicateurs,

Toi dans tes ultimata (c'est à peine si les préparations sont achevées, l'édifice assujéti sur des fondations sûres),

Toi dans tes fates, intellect, pensée, dans tes joies rationnelles à la cime, ton amour et ton aspiration divines,

Dans tes resplendissants littérateurs à venir, tes orateurs aux puissants poumons, tes bardes sacerdotaux, tes savants cosmiques,

Ces choses! c'est ces choses en toi (certaines de naître) qu'aujourd'hui je prophétise."

of England, before we are ourselves delivered—should that deliverance ever arrive—that the ideal Democracy will attain, degree by degree, its splendid realization, and, crowned supreme, come to wreath the brow of humanity.

III.—LEAVES OF GRASS.

This chapter will be composed simply of three or four quotations, because we cannot find a better means of illustrating the scope of Walt Whitman's work, and of bringing into relief one of his most natural characteristics. Leaving to our quoted examples the duty of more fully indicating this, we may still express it in a word: there is in "Leaves of Grass" a freshness almost physical, and from one end to the other the reader breathes that odor of open air and earth, wholesome and refreshing, such as overtakes and invigorates one who has long been shut within the walls of the city and at last goes forth into the ample fields. For example:

"Others may praise what they like;
But I, from the banks of the running Missouri, praise nothing in art or
aught else,
Till it has well inhaled the atmosphere of this river, also the western
prairie-scent,
And exudes it all again."*

Again:

"As a strong bird on pinions free,
Joyous, the amplest spaces heavenward cleaving,
Such be the thought I'd think of thee America,
Such be the recitative I'd bring for thee.

* "Leaves of Grass," *Others May Praise What They Like*, p. 304:

"Que d'autres louent ce qu'ils veulent;
Moi, des rives du Missouri, je ne louerai rien en art ou autre chose
Qui n'ait inhalé l'atmosphère de ce fleuve, ainsi que la senteur de la prairie
de l'ouest,
Et ne les ait exsudées."

The conceits of the poets of other lands I'd bring thee not,
 Nor the compliments that have served their turn so long,
 Nor rhyme, nor the classics, nor perfume of foreign court or indoor library;
 But an odor I'd bring as from forests of pine in Maine, or breath of an Illinois prairie,
 With open airs of Virginia or Georgia or Tennessee, or from Texas uplands,
 or Florida's glades,
 Or the Saguenay's black stream, or the wide blue spread of Huron,
 With presentment of Yellowstone's scenes, or Yosemite,
 And murmuring under, pervading all, I'd bring the rustling sea-sound,
 That endlessly sounds from the two Great Seas of the world." *

Always in the same strain :

" By broad Potomac's shore, again old tongue,
 (Still uttering, still ejaculating, canst never cease this babble?)
 Again old heart so gay, again to you, your sense, the full flush spring returning,
 Again the freshness and the odors, again Virginia's summer sky, pellucid blue and silver,
 Again the forenoon purple of the hills,

* "Leaves of Grass," *Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood*, p. 347 :

"Comme un grand oiseau aux ailes libres,
 Joyeux, fendant les larges espaces du ciel,
 Tel serait le penser que je voudrais penser de toi, ô Amérique,
 Tel serait le récitatif que je voudrais t'apporter.

Je ne t'apporte point les affectations des poètes des autres terres,
 Ni les compliments qui ont fait l'affaire si longtemps,
 Ni la rime, ni les classiques, ni le parfum des cours étrangères et des bibliothèques;
 Mais une odeur semblable à celle des forêts de pins du Maine, l'haleine de la prairie de l'Illinois,
 Le plein air de la Virginie, de la Géorgie ou du Tennessee, ou des plateaux du Texas, ou des clairières de Floride,
 Le noir courant du Saguenay, ou la large étendue bleue de l'Huron,
 Les scènes du Yellowstone, ou du Yosemite,
 Et murmurant au-dessous, pénétrant tout, je t'apporte le son bruissant de la mer,
 Le son qui sonne éternellement des deux Grandes Mers du monde."

Again the deathless grass, so noiseless soft and green,
Again the blood-red roses blooming.

Perfume this book of mine O blood-red roses !
Lave subtly with your waters every line Potomac !
Give me of you O spring, before I close, to put between its pages !
O forenoon purple of the hills, before I close, of you !
O deathless grass, of you ! " *

In the same strain again, we extract from the third part of the section entitled " Calamus " these delicious lines :

" Scented herbage of my breast,
Leaves from you I glean, I write, to be perused best afterwards,
Tomb-leaves, body-leaves growing up above me above death,
Perennial roots, tall leaves, O the winter shall not freeze you delicate leaves,
Every year shall you bloom again, out from where you retired you shall
 emerge again ;
O I do not know whether many passing by will discover you or inhale your
 faint odor, but I believe a few will ;
O slender leaves ! O blossoms of my blood ! I permit you to tell in your
 own way of the heart that is under you." †

* " Leaves of Grass," *By Broad Potomac's Shore*, p. 366 :

" Près du bord du large Potomac, encore, vieille langue,
 (Toujours proférant, toujours émettant des paroles, ne cesseras-tu jamais ce
 babillage ?)
Encore, vieux cœur si gai, vous aurez encore, votre sens aura le plein éclat
 du printemps qui revient,
Encore la fraîcheur et les odeurs, encore le ciel d'été de la Virginie, au bleu
 transparent et d'argent,
Encore la pourpre matinale des collines,
Encore l'herbe immortelle, si silencieusement douce et verte,
Encore les roses en fleur, rouge comme du sang.

Parfumez ce mien livre, ô roses rouges comme du sang !
Potomac, baignez-en délicatement chaque ligne avec vos eaux !
Donnez-moi de vous, ô printemps, avant que je ferme, pour mettre entre ses
 pages !
O pourpre matinale des collines, avant que je ferme, donnez-moi de vous !
Et vous, ô immortelle herbe, de vous ! "

† " Leaves of Grass," *Scented Herbage of My Breast*, p. 96 :

" Odorant herbage de ma poitrine

And lastly the "Warble for Lilac-Time:"

"Warble me now for joy of lilac-time, (returning in reminiscence,)
 Sort me O tongue and lips for Nature's sake, souvenirs of earliest summer,
 Gather the welcome signs, (as children with pebbles or stringing shells,)
 Put in April and May, the hylas croaking in the ponds, the elastic air,
 Bees, butterflies, the sparrow with its simple notes,
 Blue-bird and darting swallow, nor forget the high-hole flashing his golden wings,
 The tranquil sunny haze, the clinging smoke, the vapor,
 Shimmer of waters with fish in them, the cerulean above,
 All that is jocund and sparkling, the brooks running,
 The maple woods, the crisp February days and the sugar-making,
 The robin where he hops, bright-eyed, brown-breasted,
 With musical clear call at sunrise, and again at sunset,
 Or flitting among the trees of the apple-orchard, building the nest of his mate,
 The melted snow of March, the willow sending forth its yellow-green sprouts,
 For spring-time is here! the summer is here! and what is this in it and from it?
 Thou, soul, unloosen'd—the restlessness after I know not what;
 Come, let us lag here no longer, let us be up and away!
 O if one could but fly like a bird!
 O to escape, to sail forth as in a ship!
 To glide with thee O soul, o'er all, in all, as a ship o'er the waters;
 Gathering these hints, the preludes, the blue sky, the grass, the morning drops of dew,
 The lilac-scent, the bushes with dark green heart-shaped leaves,

Je vous cueille ça et là des feuilles, ce que j'écris sera mieux étudié après moi,
 Feuilles de la tombe, feuilles de mon corps qui croîtront sur moi, au-dessus de ma mort,
 Racines éternelles, feuilles hautes, oh! l'hiver ne vous gèlera pas, délicates feuilles,
 Chaque année vous reprusserez, et de votre retraite réémergerez,
 Je ne sais si de nombreux passants vous découvriront et respireront votre faible odeur, mais quelques-uns le feront,
 O feuilles élancées! ô fleurs de mon sang! vous parlerez à votre façon du cœur qui sera sous vous."

Wood-violets, the little delicate pale blossoms called innocence,
 Samples and sorts not for themselves alone, but for their atmosphere,
 To grace the bush I love—to sing with the birds,
 A warble for joy of lilac-time, returning in reminiscence." *

* "Leaves of Grass," *Warble for Lilac-Time*, pp. 293-294:

"Gazouillez-moi maintenant pour la joie du temps du lilas, (de retour en réminiscence)

Réunissez-moi, ô ma langue et mes lèvres, pour l'Amour de la Nature, des souvenirs du plus précoce été,

Recueillez les signes bienvenus (comme font les enfants avec des billes ou des coquillages enfilés qui résonnent,

Faites-y entrer avril et mai, les rainettes coassant dans les étangs, l'air élastique,

Les abeilles, les papillons, le passereau avec ses simples notes,

L'oiseau bleu, et l'hirondelle qui part en flèche, n'oubliez pas le high-hole, dont l'aile dorée étincelle,

La tranquille brume ensoleillée, la fumée qui s'accroche, la vapeur, le scintillement des eaux poissonneuses, l'azur au-dessus,

Tout ce qui est joyeux et miroitant, les ruisseaux qui coulent,

Les forêts d'érables, les jours grésillants de février et la fabrication du sucre,

Le rouge-gorge qui sautille, œil brillant, poitrine brune,

Avec son clair appel musical au lever du soleil, et à son coucher,

Ou encore volant à travers les pommiers du verger ou lorsqu'il bâtit le nid de sa compagne,

La neige fondue de mars, le saule poussant ses jets jaunevert,

Car voici le printemps ! voici l'été ! et quoi encore en eux, et d'eux ?

Toi, mon âme délivrée—l'inquiétude après je ne sais quoi ;

Viens, ne nous attardons pas ici, en route, en haut et au loin !

Oh ! si l'on pouvait voler comme l'oiseau !

Oh ! s'échapper, et faire voile !

Glisser avec toi, ô âme, sur tout, en tout, comme un navire sur les eaux ;

Recueillir ces lueurs, ces préludes, le bleu ciel, l'herbe, les gouttes de rosée du matin,

Le parfum du lilas, les buissons avec leurs feuilles noirvert en forme de cœur ;

Les violettes des bois, les petites et délicates fleurs pâles appelées innocence,

Échantillons et assortiments non pas seulement pour eux-mêmes, mais pour leur atmosphère,

Pour embellir le buisson que j'aime—pour gazouiller avec les oiseaux

Un chant pour la joie du temps du lilas, de retour en réminiscence."

IV.—WALT WHITMAN.*

"WELL, HE LOOKS LIKE A MAN."—*President Lincoln on Walt Whitman.*

"Give me the pay I have served for,
 Give me to sing the songs of the great Idea, take all the rest,
 I have loved the earth, sun, animals, I have despised riches,
 I have given alms to every one that ask'd, stood up for the stupid and crazy,
 devoted my income and labor to others,
 Hated tyrants, argued not concerning God, had patience and indulgence
 toward the people, 'aken off my hat to nothing known or unknown,
 Gone freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young, and with
 the mothers of families,
 Read these leaves to myself in the open air. tried them by trees, stars,
 rivers,
 Dismiss'd whatever insulted my own soul or defiled my body,
 Claim'd nothing to myself which I have not carefully claim'd for others on
 the same terms,
 Sped to the camps, and comrades found and accepted from every State,
 (Upon this breast has many a dying soldier lean'd to breathe his last,
 This arm, this hand, this voice, have nourish'd, rais'd, restored,
 To life recalling many a prostrate form ;)
 I am willing to wait to be understood by the growth of the taste of myself,
 Rejecting none, permitting all." †

* In order to make this essay on Walt Whitman complete, it would be necessary to follow the third chapter, on "Leaves of Grass," with another entitled *Drum Taps*, where we should seek to give an idea of the epic movement which animates all that part of the book called by that name. We fear to prolong the essay too much, however, and find now that it is too late to remedy the omission. If my readers desire to see with what power Walt Whitman has described war, with what a graphic pen he has seized it during the civil strife, and fixed it, palpitating and sinister, on paper, like a soldier who pierces his enemy—he may refer to the study published in the "Revue des Deux Mondes" in 1872 by one of our distinguished essayists and romancers, who is at the same time one of the most accomplished women of French society—I refer to Madame Th. Bentzon.

† "Leaves of Grass," *By Blue Ontario's Shore*, p. 273:

"Donnez-moi la paye pour laquelle j'ai servi,
 Donnez-moi à chanter les chants de la grande Idée, prenez tout le reste,

Have you ever read anything greater in any book? But re-read it carefully, and let the sound of the words penetrate you. There are few things nobler; and who among us can render such testimony? Yes, he is a man. Free citizen of America and satisfied with the title, he has stood covered before all, simple, dignified, cordial, caring naught for honors, vanities, vacuities. Son of a farmer, who became a barn and house builder, he has passed part of his life at manual labor, as printer, teacher, tiller of the soil, carpenter, journalist, and was always the associate of the healthy, solid, and laborious classes. As a writer, he has not abandoned himself to the pursuit of literary vainglory; he has sought only to do his assigned task, and has neither been beguiled by praise nor baffled by sneers. As Democrat he recognizes the grandeur of the masses—has discovered their higher inspirations, and reprobated their vices—and notwithstanding frequent objection, has persisted to the last in his faith in the ideas of progress and perfectability. He was a patriot after the pattern of Abraham Lincoln, inflexible under de-

J'ai aimé la terre, le soleil, les animaux, j'ai méprisé les riches,
J'ai donné des aumônes à qui demandait, me suis levé en faveur des stupides et des fous, ai consacré mon revenu et mon travail aux autres,
Hai les tyrans, n'ai point disputé de Dieu, ai usé de patience et d'indulgence à l'égard des gens, n'ai ôté mon chapeau à rien de connu ou d'inconnu,

Ai librement lié compagnie avec les tempéraments puissants et incultes, et avec les jeunes, et avec les mères de famille,

Me suis lu à moi-même ces feuilles en plein air, les ai mises à l'épreuve près des arbres, sous les étoiles, sur le bord des fleuves,

Ai renvoyé tout ce qui insultait mon âme ou souillait mon corps,

N'ai rien réclamé pour moi que je n'aie eu soin de réclamer pour les autres,

Ai couru aux camps, y ai trouvé et accepté des camarades venus de chaque État,

(Sur ma poitrine plus d'un soldat mourant s'est appuyé pour rendre le dernier soupir,

Ce bras, cette main, cette voix ont nourri, relevé, rétabli,

Rappelé à la vie plus d'une forme prostrée;)

Et maintenant j'attends volontiers que se développe, pour qu'on me comprenne, le goût de ma personnalité,

Ne rejetant personne, admettant tous."

feat, and did not despair of the Union even after Bull Run. A Christian truly evangelical, he has preached by example; not content to teach with words alone, he has exhorted his fellow-creatures to love and aid one another, to elevate their voices in favor of the weak, the disinherited, the suffering, the proscribed, to salute the oppressed or vanquished nations, and, faithful in all points of the doctrine of the Divine Master, to deny no one, and to gather into their universal love even the prostitutes and criminals of the earth. He has himself, and in the fullest sense of the word, practiced fraternity. During the Secession War he cared for and assisted, dressing their wounds and cheering their spirits, more than a hundred thousand of the wounded or sick. Commanding genius that he is, he has rendered homage to his brother possessors of genius—Poe, Bryant, Longfellow, Thoreau, Whittier, Emerson, Lincoln.

Though still believing, he has never ceased to adore the Kosmos; mobile, ecstatic and joyous, his hymn nestles in the bosom of Divinity. As a poet he has disdained the atmosphere of the salon; he has taken the grand route open to all in the wide spaces of the Union, across the cities, the streams, the prairies, the forests, the mountains; he has abandoned himself to the life of nature; has proclaimed the innocence and sanctity of the flesh; has drunk, eaten, loved; has grown intoxicated with the odors of grass and flowers; has bathed in the sea; has taken the tan of the sun. Oh, yes, in truth, this is a man!

I will go no further with his life, because he has himself continued it in the passages quoted; but for those who are curious about the smaller events on which it bears, here are some pages of biography:

Walt Whitman was born on the 31st of May, 1819, at a farm in West Hills, Long Island. In taking a survey of that interior we may easily see that its inhabitants are of the middle class of America, such as it was at the commencement of this century. Both sexes worked at manual labor. Twelve or fourteen slaves came and went, giving to the place a patriarchal air. The house was long, built of strong oaken beams, and was a story and a half high. A vast kitchen, containing a huge chimney, occupied one

end of it, and there clustered were the young darkies, sitting on the floor in a circle, eating their supper of Indian pudding and milk. There was no luxury of furniture, neither carpet nor stoves—only a great wood-fire to cheer the inmates. The fare was wholesome and substantial; pork in abundance, veal, beef, vegetables, cider—no coffee—tea and sugar only for the women. Few books were present. The annual almanack was a rare treat, and lectures during the winter nights a relish long to be remembered. They travelled on horseback in those days, and on upland roads could have a view of the sea, whither the household often went for amusement and bathing, or, now and again, the men on more practical expeditions, to cut salt hay or to fish.

These were the scenes amid which our poet passed his earliest years, under the eye of excellent parents. His father, Walter Whitman, was a placid and serious man, kind to children and animals. His mother, Louisa van Velsor, daughter of an old family of Hollandish mariners, was noted for the goodness of her heart, her equable cheeriness, her good sense, physical health and household industry—briefly, she was the true type of a wife and mother.

What wonder if from such a stock sprung the strong and genial branch which is called Walt Whitman? He came into the family at the moment when his father was about to change his business of farming for that of builder of houses at Brooklyn. I have already said that the family was numerous; it was necessary that each one should provide for himself as soon as possible.

At sixteen years Walt (he was so called to distinguish him from his father, Walter) set out to learn typography, but each year he found means to go back to his birthplace or pass the summer outside of the city. He taught in families or in country schools, and began to send articles to the newspapers. One of these, ("Death in the School-Room,") inserted in the *Democratic Review*, occasioned some remark. From 1837 to 1848 we find him fixed in New York City, where he worked at journalism, mingling with politicians and speaking at meetings.

But, above all, he plunged into the full current of life, experimenting with it on his own account, at the same time that he studied it as a spectator, sounding its passions, pleasures, intoxications. Characteristically, the company he continued to prefer was that of the ordinary classes, those people whom the "snobs" of all countries denominate "the common people," pilots of the harbor, farmers, fishermen, workingmen, the omnibus drivers on Broadway—for which last he had always a notable predilection. In 1849 he began his travels through the States, crossed the Alleghenies, descended the Mississippi in a steamboat, visited New Orleans, where he remained a year and edited a newspaper; then travelled again to the North, and penetrated as far as Canada. On his return to Brooklyn he resumed his old life: was now a compositor, now a journalist and now a builder, as before.*

At last, in 1855, there appeared in the windows of a Brooklyn book-store a little quarto volume of a hundred pages, badly printed and apparently destitute of the services of an editor. The title was "Leaves of Grass." Naturally enough it received

* This American facility in passing from one occupation to another shocks our old European prejudices and conservative veneration for careers the most strictly hierarchical, bureaucratic and conventional. We adhere to our course, as to many others essentially narrow, and fail to see that a variety of aptitudes give to a man an enlarged social value. Once out of his rut, a European finds nothing else to his taste and, in most cases, is good for nothing. The American, however, is far more flexible, and the two volumes which an engineer of the navy, M. Grasset, published upon men and things in the Secession War, have given us ample proof of the fact. General Frémont, who was much renowned in his day and was a rival in ambition with Lincoln, was at different times, or at once, scholar, soldier, professor, industrial administrator, politician, explorer, engineer, writer. Sherman, before becoming the admirable general of cavalry he is known to have been, was successively engineer and banker at San Francisco and gave testimony of real abilities as a financier. Before proving his worthiness to become general of the army and President of the Union, Grant himself sold in the neighboring markets the wood from his farm; then associated himself with a collector of rents. The Archbishop of New Orleans, Leonidas Polk, a rich proprietor of slaves, took service with the rank of general in the Confederate army and continued to discharge at the front a double office of priest and soldier.

no attention, and weeks passed before a single copy was sold. The principal journals were furnished with copies, but none of them noticed it. Several of the distinguished persons to whom it was sent returned it with insulting pencil notes on the margins. All at once there was a sensation. Emerson had read the book and pronounced it a work of genius, and "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed." Upon this the battle began. While the retrograders and Pharisees accused the great poet of libertinism, impiety, atheism, and the conservative and timorous durst not pronounce for him, all the spirits of the van, and among them some of the greatest names of contemporary Anglo-Saxon letters, ranged themselves on his side. But the issue of the conflict was not long in doubt.

The young persons of America, on whom he began to exercise a veritable fascination, to-day take sides with the author of "Leaves of Grass," "Democratic Vistas" and "Specimen Days." From this time forth, through the tranquil and colossal attitude of his work, Walt Whitman becomes an astonishing and even pre-Adamic figure—a figure ancestral and patriarchal. He seems to rise, after the manner of a bard, a whole head above the other American poets, his brothers. His portrait has been painted many times, and it well completes his moral physiognomy. Of full height, head absolutely oval and perfectly symmetrical, the eyebrows widely arched, a large and straight nose, long beard and hair, tranquil blue eyes on which the lids droop voluntarily—so he is depicted by his friend, John Burroughs. In taking a sea-bath with him, Moncure D. Conway noticed, "that the sun had put a red mask on his neck and face, and that his body, equally of a fair redness, was remarkable for its beautiful curves and for that grace of movement, the flower of noble forms." In his social intercourse he is genial, of an equable humor, modest, questions little and voluntarily gives up the lead, and is without literary or philosophical pretensions.

We arrive at the heroic period of his life, the great American crisis, the Secession War. His brother, Colonel George W. Whitman, having been wounded in the face by a piece of shell at

Fredericksburg, in 1862, the poet went down to take care of him, and profited by the occasion to remain in the service of the wounded and sick. He maintained himself by correspondence with Northern journals, and stationed in Washington, now become a vast hospital, or among the flying ambulances which followed the army, not only did he labor through a number of years in the post which he had assigned himself, but up to 1867 he continued his offices at the hospitals each Sunday and frequently during the week to the mutilated of the dreadful war. Thus as an attendant and worker on the wounded and sick soldiers, North and South, Walt Whitman, indeed, has passed into a tradition. "Here his character culminated," says John Burroughs, and continues: "An army surgeon who at the time watched with curiosity Mr. Whitman's movements among the soldiers in the hospitals has since told me that his principles of operation, effective as they were, seemed strangely few, simple, and on a low key: to act upon the appetite, to cheer by a healthy and fitly bracing appearance and demeanor, and to fill and satisfy, in certain cases, the affectional longings of the patients, was about all. He carried among them no sentimentalism nor moralizing; spoke not to any man of his 'sins;' but gave something good to eat, a buoying word, or a trifling gift and a look. He appeared with ruddy face, clean dress, with a flower or a green sprig in the lapel of his coat. Crossing the fields in summer he would gather a great bunch of dandelion blossoms, and red and white clover, to bring and scatter on the cots, as reminders of out-door air and sunshine.

"When practicable, he came to the long and crowded wards of the maimed, the feeble, and the dying, only after preparations as for a festival—strengthened by a good meal, rest, the bath, and fresh underclothes. He entered with a huge haversack slung over his shoulder, full of appropriate articles, with parcels under his arms, and protuberant pockets. He would sometimes come in summer with a good-sized basket, filled with oranges, and would go round for hours paring and dividing them among the feverish and thirsty.

"I would say to the reader that I have dwelt upon this portion

of Walt Whitman's life, not so much because it enters into the statement of his biography, as because it really enters into the statement of his poetry, and affords a light through which alone the later pieces, and in some sort the whole of his work, can be fitly construed. His large, oceanic nature doubtless enjoyed fully, and grew all the larger from, pouring out of its powerful currents of magnetism; and 'this is evident in his pieces since 1861.

"The statement is also needed with reference to the country, for it rises to national proportions. To more than a hundred thousand suffering soldiers was he, during the war, personally the cheering visitor, and ministered in some form to their direct needs of body and spirit; soldiers from every quarter, west, east, north, and south—for he treated the rebel wounded the same as the rest.

"Of course there were plenty of others, men and women, who engaged faithfully in the same service. But it is probable that no other was so endowed for it as Walt Whitman. I should say his whole character culminates here; and, as a country is best viewed by ascending some peak, so from this point his life and book are to be read and understood."

The hardships of such campaign labors caused him to fall sick in 1864, and when in about six months he was restored, to recompense him for his conduct, the then Secretary of the Interior, James Harlan—we desire to record the name that it may be locked in the pillory—discharged him from the small position under the Government he had obtained in Washington, which, in assuring him a fixed revenue, permitted him still to continue his assiduous work in the hospitals at that city. In vain a friend of Harlan essayed to have the poet reinstated. The Secretary of the Interior responded that "the author of 'Leaves of Grass' should never be an employé of his Department." The poet was immediately revenged, however, by receiving from another official a place which was fortunately in his gift. At this post Walt Whitman remained until his retirement from the service.

Some time after the incidents we have mentioned, which doubt-

less the poet sufficiently disdained, an event of quite another order overwhelmed him. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. This was for Walt Whitman a blow the more violent in that he considered the President not only one of the noblest political characters of modern times, but the ideal embodiment of America. But grief soon gave place to enthusiasm. Exalted by the tragic splendor of such a death, he wrote the piece entitled "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," a poem full of solemn and sublime sadness and the noblest homage the tomb of a hero ever received. Many an American throat swells with tears over it, invigorating though it be and inspiring as some full organ chant.

"When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love. . . ."

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared-
heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the somber faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and
solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you
journey,
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you O sane and-
sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
 O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
 But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
 Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
 With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
 For you and the coffins all of you O death.)" *

* "Leaves of Grass," *Memories of President Lincoln; When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, p. 255-258:

"Quant les lilas fleurirent dans le jardin,
 Et qu'au coucher du soleil la grande étoile s'affaissa dans le ciel de l'ouest,
 Je pleurai, et pleurerai encore à chaque éternel retour du printemps.

Chaque éternel retour du printemps m'apportera cette trinité certaine,
 Lilas fleurissant éternels et l'étoile qui s'affaisse à l'ouest,
 Et la pensée de celui que j'aime. . . ."

Cercueil qui passez par les ruelles et les rues,
 De jour et de nuit avec le grand nuage enténébrant la contrée,
 Avec la pompe des drapeaux, avec les cités drapées en noir,
 Avec l'apparat des États debout, semblables à des femmes voilées d'un long crêpe,

Avec les longues processions qui tournent et les flambeaux dans la nuit,
 Avec les innombrables torches allumées, avec la silencieuse mer des visages
 et des têtes découvertes,

Avec le dépôt qui attend, le cercueil qui arrive, et les sombres visages,
 Avec les chants funèbres dans la nuit, et les mille voix qui s'élèvent fortes
 et solennelles,

Avec toutes les voix de lamentation des chants funèbres versés autour du
 cercueil,

Les lumières allumées sous les voûtes obscures des églises et les orgues qui
 frissonnent partout où vous passez,

Où vous passez avec le glas perpétuel des cloches,

Ici, cercueil qui lentement passez,

Je vous apporte mon rameau de lilas.

Non pour vous, non pour vous seul,

Mais des fleurs et des branches vertes à tous les cercueils j'apporte,

Car pour vous je veux chanter un chant frais comme le matin, ô mort saine
 et sacrée.

Partout des bouquets de roses,

O mort, je vous couvre de roses et des premiers lis,

And further on he takes up the tone of the andante : *

"O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved ?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone ?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love ?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till there on
the prairies meeting,
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love." †

We would desire to speak of the admirable piece which he dedicated under the title "O Star of France" to our disheartened country in 1870, but as our biography can at most be only a summary of indispensable details we must close it here. Infirmities and old age have latterly enfeebled Walt Whitman's body. He is partially paralyzed. But nothing can impair his mind, and in his sufferings he exhibits the serenity of the sages of ancient days. He never complains, Dr. Bucke tells us, and keeps an even and patient temper, more beautiful to see in his waning years than in his robust youth and magnificent middle age.

And since it is so perhaps it is better so. Trial, the neces-

Mais surtout à cette heure du lilas qui fleurit le premier,
J'en apporte en abondance, je brise les branches des massifs,
Les bras chargés j'arrive, et les répands pour vous,
Pour vous et pour tous vos cerceux, ô mort."

* See also the admirable piece entitled *O Captain! My Captain!*

† "Leaves of Grass," *Memories of President Lincoln; When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, p. 255-258 :

"Oh ! comment modulerai-je pour le mort ici que j'aime ?
Comment parer mon chant pour la grande et douce âme qui s'en est allée ?
Et quel sera le parfum dont je parfumerai la tombe de celui que j'aime ?
Vents de mer qui soufflez de l'Est et de l'Ouest,
Qui, soufflant de la mer de l'Est et soufflant de la mer de l'Ouest, vous rencontrez sur les prairies,
Avec vos souffles et avec l'haleine de mon chant,
Je parfumerai la tombe de celui que j'aime."

sary complement of every great life, is come to fix about that venerable brow its supreme and touching halo. To-day the consecration is absolute; the poet, carried onward by the hero, is perfected by the stoic and is crowned in him. So embodied, he stands an adequate type for the sculptor's chisel. Like his brother in genius, who, seeing his worth at a glance, called him "a man," whom he called in his turn "captain" and the death of whom he chanted in immortal melodies, he has an indescribable masculinity, serenity simple and epic, absent since the great citizens of the ancient republics departed. In a word, he appears as a specimen, rare in the modern world, of those powerful and flexible organizations which rose in the antique cities of the golden age, anxious to cultivate numberless aptitudes and tending instinctively toward the incarnation of a complete manhood.

DUTCH TRAITS OF WALT WHITMAN.

By WILLIAM SLOANE KENNEDY.

ANCESTRALLY, Walt Whitman, who makes so much of motherhood and fatherhood, comes himself meandering from a blended tri-heredity stream of Dutch ("Hollandisk") and the original Friends (Quakers) and Puritans of Cromwell's time. His mother was of pure Netherland descent, and his maternal grandmother was a Quaker in religion. I believe the Dutch element dominates the Quaker in him. He "favors" his mother, *née* Louisa Van Velsor—inherits her to the life, emotionally and in physique. She was a person of medium size (a little *plus*), of splendid physique and health, a hard worker, bore eight children, was beloved by all who met her; good-looking to the last; lived to be nearly eighty. Dr. Bucke's book about Walt Whitman has quite a good portrait of his mother at seventy. No tenderer or more invariable tie was ever between mother and son than the love between her and Walt Whitman. No one could have seen her and her father, Major Kale (Cornelius) Van Velsor, of Cold Spring, Queen's county, N. Y., either in their prime or in their older age, without instantly perceiving their plainly-marked Hollandesque physiognomy, color and body build. Walt Whitman has all of it. He shows it in his old features now, especially in his full face and red color. The rubicund face in the oil portrait of him by Hine, the New Yorker, or Eakins, the Philadelphia artist, looks amazingly like one of Rubens's or Teniers's Dutch burgomasters; as also does one of Cox's photographs (the one with hat on head thrown back which W. calls "the laughing philosopher"). Tacitus, Taine, Motley, all speak of the rose-colored skins, blue eyes, and flaxen (almost white) hair of the Hollanders. The Romans related that the children of the Nether-

lands had the hair of old men. Perhaps the turning of Walt's hair almost white before he was thirty may have to be ascribed to this Dutch peculiarity. His pink-tinged skin is unmistakably Dutch.

For some reason, there is no fitting record, either in portraiture or literary text, of very grand women of Holland, although that country produced the choicest specimens of the earth. It was a type and growth of its own; a noble and perfect maternity was its result.

Whitman, as his friends know, is fond of reviewing in conversation the history and development of the Low Dutch, their concrete physiology, their fierce war against Philip and Aiva, the building of the great dykes, the shipping and trade and colonization—from 1600 to the present—and their old cities and towers and soldiery and markets and salt air and flat topography and human physiognomy and bodily form, and their coming and planting here in America and investing themselves not so much in outward manifestations as in the blood and breed of the American race; and he considers his "Leaves of Grass" to be in some respects understood only by reference to that Hollandesque interior of history and personality. To this hour he has never forgiven Washington Irving for making the foundation-settlers of New Amsterdam (New York city) so ridiculous and stupid.

One likes to think of Whitman, the first Democrat of the New World, as sprung from far-off Holland, the cradle of liberty in the Old World. It must be plainly said, however, that Walt Whitman is monumentally neither an Englishman nor a Dutchman nor a Quaker: he is an American pagan, an aboriginal creation, fresh-minted, *sui generis*. Nevertheless, the Hollander and the Quaker are plainly discernible in the background of his being—like the Pyncheon ghost in Alice's necromantic vision. Every man is really a sort of palimpsest, and his mind and body are superimposed upon a series of some hundred million erasures by the hand of Nature. Your ancestors or mine, footing it back only to the time of William the Conqueror, actually number three or four millions. A typical poet is the summing up of a

race, its perfect flower, containing not only its richest perfume, but the germs of its coming vital thought. To Walt Whitman, as, in many respects, the voice and type of the American-born Dutch race, may be applied the old Hollandisk couplet:

"De waarheid die in duister lag,
Die komt met klaarheid aan den dag."

("The truth that lay darkling now leaps to the light.")

"Leaves of Grass," and their author too, are much like a great mass of dark-rolling gray clouds, looking at first impassive enough, but surcharged full with chain lightning.

Not the Scotch-Irish stock itself, or the Jewish, is more dourly and stubbornly prepotent in the ocean of human society than is this Dutch strain in America. These original stocks tinge and saturate the billows of humanity through generations, as great rivers debouching into the deep carry their own color in haughty flow far out on the high seas. Few realize how the Dutch element has percolated through our population in New York and Pennsylvania. As late as 1750 more than one-half of the inhabitants of New York State were Dutch.* The rural Dutch today almost always have large families of children, and form in every respect the solidest element in their community. In New York city and in Brooklyn and Albany it is superfluous to say that to belong to a Dutch family is to belong to blue blood, the aristocracy. Besides Whitman, the American Dutch have produced such intellectualities as Wendell Phillips, the orator, and the scientist and wit Oliver Wendell Holmes—descended from the Wendells of Albany on his mother's side. It is stated by recent savans that there are cogent reasons for believing that the origin of our public-school system is traceable to the wisdom of the citizens of New Amsterdam. (See Mr. Elting's paper, just mentioned.) "The first universities," says Max Müller, "which provided chairs for the comparative study of the religions of the world, were those of little, plucky Holland."

* Irving Elting, "Dutch Village Communities on the Hudson River," in Johns Hopkins University "Studies," etc., Series 4, Vol. I., p. 65.

The Dutch are very practical and materialistic, and are great money-makers, but are yet "terribly transcendental and cloudy, too," writes Walt Whitman to me. "More than half the Hollandisk* immigrants to New York bay," he writes, "became farmers, and a goodly portion of the rest became engineers or sailors."

The English and the Low Dutch are so much alike in basic traits that it is difficult to unthread these in Whitman's make-up, and say, "So much is English and so much Dutch." But I think his tremendous stubbornness, the inexorable firmness of his phlegmatic nature, are inherited from the heroic defenders of Haarlem, Leyden and Alkmaar. His endurance, practicality, sanity, thrift, excessive neatness and purity of person, and the preponderance of the simple and serious over the humorous and refined in his phrenology, are clearly of Dutch origin. Taine, in his rare little study, "The Philosophy of Art in the Netherlands," speaks of the phlegm of the Dutch and the passivity of their features. They love silence and absorption of mind; are collected, calm, patient, long-planning, and prefer depth to shining surfaces. Their soft and sluggish atmosphere produces in them a measureless content and a great disposition to sensuousness. All this applies remarkably to the Hollandesque-American poet. Remember, too, the prosaic realism of Whitman—his deep-rooted hankering after details, enumerations—and tally it with the minute finish of the pictures of Van Eyck, Teniers, Rubens. In love of power and glowing-exuberant life Whitman seems to me strongly to resemble Rubens. Like him, too, in his deep affection for his mother and in his generous treatment of his contemporaries. Though the topping fact forever separating Walt from all those Old-World Netherlanders is his profound spirituality, his soaring, never-absent mystical philosophy. The transcendentalism, or profound determination upon the religious, of the American-born Dutch

* A word of his own coining. "About the best word to nip and print and stick to," he states. His word suggests to me "Hollandesque," which I prefer, I believe, though "Hollandisk" is more vigorous.

(and it is undoubted) is not found among the Continental Hollanders—at least in their art. Ruskin, speaking of the materialistic side of the Dutch character, caustically remarks that their only god is a pint pot, and all the incense offered thereto comes out of a small censer or bowl at the end of a pipe. But this is only a peevish artist's persiflage. It leaves wholly untouched the massive and splendid moral qualities of the Dutch. In America the Netherlanders have evidently not only blended with and colored the English stock, but have themselves been perceptibly Americanized, have assimilated a measure of the Puritan qualities of spirituality, philosophy and idealism, that seem to thrive in our intense, thought-sharpening climate, and among the New England people by whom the American Dutch have continually been surrounded both on Long Island and in New York State.

As for Whitman's imaginative genius, I have sometimes wondered, did it not come in, perchance, through a Welsh crevice? His maternal grandmother was a Williams, and almost all Williamses are Welsh. After all, Walt Whitman may be a Celtic geyser bursting through a Flemish mead.

ONE thing strikes me about every one who cares for what you write—while your attraction is most absolute, and the impression you make as powerful as that of any teacher or *rates*, you do not rob the mind of its independence, or divert it from its true direction—you make no slaves, however many lovers.

You have many readers in Ireland, and those who read do not feel a qualified delight in your poems—do not love them by degree, but with an absolute, a personal love. We none of us question that yours is the clearest, and sweetest, and fullest American voice. We grant as true all that you claim for yourself. And you gain steadily among us new readers and lovers.

Edward Dowden to Walt Whitman, 1871.

I LIKE well the positions & ideas in your Westminster article—radiating from the central point of assumption of my pieces being or commencing "the poetry of Democracy." It presents all the considerations, which such a critical text and starting point require, in a full, eloquent, and convincing manner. I entirely accept it all & several, and am not unaware that it affords perhaps, if not the only, at least the most likely gate, by which you, as an earnest friend of my book, & believer in it, and critic of it, would gain entrance to a leading review. Then finally I think the main point you exploit is really of the first importance—and perhaps too all the rest relating to my book can be broached through it as well as any way.

Walt Whitman to Edward Dowden, 1872.

WALT WHITMAN : POET AND PHILOSOPHER AND MAN.

By HORACE L. TRAUBEL.

I.

AFTER the storms and perils and superficial reverses of more than three decades, Walt Whitman remains the one unique influence developed in the literature of our Western democracy. Greeted with almost universal laughter, neglect, or scorn, he has lived to see all trivial objections thrown into disrespect, all traditions and hypocrisies more or less questioned, and much of even the popular opposition yielding to inevitable applause. This is the history of all daring genius of the first order. But our modern lives are lived so compactly—the years crowd so fast one upon another—that the justice which anciently came only for the memory of greatness may now crown its gray hairs. There are many proofs in the case of Walt Whitman that his foothold is gained and that he forecasts new religious and political revelations. Not for hair-splittings or professional displays or simple ends of art or merely to dally with the edge of life had he come and had his summons excited custom and prejudice to alarm. Whitman is an American. In the large sense he is a child of the republic. In him democracy first found unapologetic voice. Through his book have swept all airs out of the free heavens, gushed all streams aromaed by the wild earth. The grave problems of our youthful history find in him solace, judgment, and exit. What has he done to justify the declaration? How is his book greater than a thousand books of his time? Wherein is his individuality majestic above the majesty of other men who have had their hour of speech or song, of philosophy or story? Walt Whitman is the first man to utter the message of our de-

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niocracy, the first to indicate by other than hints and signs the future to which it tends, the first to show that America is important in the measure of its ability to make all lands co-inheritors of its opportunity, the first to prove that man is complete even in his incompleteness, the first to put standard, Ojeda-like, into the Pacific of iniquity and to claim it as virtue's own, for ends not less certain because obscure. These facts impose upon us a peculiar obligation to understand the word he has spoken, the demeanor which has distinguished him, the issue that he involves.

II.

Whitman's life from its start was rebellious to all formal lines. His father possessed a free individuality, and his mother was distinguished by the abundance of her optimism. In Whitman himself these cardinal factors combined to produce the most exalted effects. Whether he writes or speaks, he tenderly credits all the claims of ancestry and soil—the Quaker element in his spiritual cosmography, the Dutch and English brawn and brain, the sacred potent mother-light that flashed peace and content into all moods and seasons, the pauseless sea from whose musical lips he caught the first pulse and rhythm of song. He had heroic history back of him. Members of the line had participated in the Revolution. His grandfather had known Thomas Paine and was in positive friendly relations with Elias Hicks. His father was a builder of houses, and was reputed in his trade to be a man of marked and peculiar integrity. The common schools gave Walt Whitman his only technical instruction. By happy gradation he was printer, country school-teacher, writer for newspapers and magazines, participant in the largest practical activities of natural culture—the wholesome air of immediate experience. As a boy of nineteen, he established *The Long Islander* in Huntington, his native town. After celebrating its golden birthday, this weekly journal is still a regular visitor. Follow him in the drift of his joyous freedom, as he absorbs the great cities, and passes not only unscathed and unsoiled, but with astonishing spiritual increase, through their barbarisms—as he accepts the significance of all

their horror, squalor, injustice, equally with their populousness, beauty, splendor, and virtue—their light and shade, placidity and storm. No spot in this measureless garden went untouched; the good and the bad were equally his demesne—perhaps the evil his more incessant companion, attracting him by the very bitterness of its necessity. We are told that his magnetism was as full and round and potent then as in his more mellow old age; that he rescued and elevated the degraded and oppressed; that no political, social, religious aspiration, no matter what its color, nor whether his literal agreement could be given to it, went altogether without his friendly examination and respect; that he accepted the tribute of libraries and museums, of books and pictures and curios and antiques; that he loved Homer, Shakspeare, Ossian—would pay his respects to reviews, improvising books from leaves which contained cherished essays, so as the more easily to provide reading-matter for his travels afoot; that he affected pilots, deck-hands, transportation men, almost in mass the creatures of *movement*, serving on cars, boats, in the postal service, who symbolized the flowing and creative character of our racial life. The peculiar genius of "Leaves of Grass" was prepared for and birthed in the midst of these shifting scenes, so that when in future years pen and paper became Whitman's agents of communication it was not his part to set out on an expedition into strange territory, but to revoyage—to reflect old experience, not to make or form anew. He shared in the political life of the pre-war times, after an appropriate non-partisan fashion. He was a born lover of the drama and of music. All through his writings and speech are scattered allusions to the actors and singers. What he describes as his debt to Alboni and the elder Booth almost transcends belief.

In 1847 and thereabouts we find him editing the *Eagle*, in Brooklyn. Two years later, accompanied by his young brother Jeff, he entered upon his Southern tour, working and writing, observing the current life, responding to the impress of man and scene. He returned to Brooklyn in 1851, where he started and for a year controlled the *Freeman*. Again a twist in the fates, again a change of occupation—now to take up an ancestral

line: to become carpenter and builder. He was highly successful in this choice, which, he says, threatened to make him rich; but he eventually abandoned all its glittering prospects for two reasons, these being, first, his deep-rooted distaste for material accumulation, and, second, the fact that "*Leaves of Grass*" was at last coming into practical mental consistence and required his immediate application. Now the book: the year 1855, the poems only twelve, the public derision and outcry everywhere tremendous. He had scarcely expected a greeting in such terms: he had rather anticipated inattention. But he deliberately resolved to persevere.

In 1862 his brother George was wounded at Fredericksburg. Walt hastened thither, found the injured man in no serious condition, lingered about the camp, went to Washington with some wounded Brooklyn soldiers, whom he nursed, and without design, but by natural sympathy and easy transition, found himself occupied with the army hospital work which has become an immortal integer of his fame. It is matter of interest no less than of amusement to observe how studiously Whittier (to quote but one name) speaks of Whitman's concern and affection and labor for the soldiers and ignores "*Leaves of Grass*."

The detail of the years from 1862 to 1873 has been much exploited both by writers upon Whitman, and by Whitman himself in "*Specimen Days*" and in detached prose articles. Dr. Bucke quotes samples of Whitman's correspondence at this period. Some day, when the yellowed letters now fastened together by odd pieces of tape in Whitman's room are given to the world, there will be presented the rarest portraiture of our war possible outside of "*Drum Taps*."

Whitman had a preliminary physical break-down in 1864, but a trip north, away from the anxious and malarious scenes of the hospitals, effected a temporary return to health. About this time he was given a clerkship in the Interior Department. It was no misfortune that the head of the department happened to be a narrow pietist and politician who summarily ejected Whitman upon discovering that he was the author of "*Leaves of Grass*." But for this coupled stupidity and injustice, we should never have

had O'Connor's magnificent eulogium and philippic—which is to imagine the world bereft of what Whitman refers to as “in respects” its choicest combination of passion and learning and perfect prose. Instantly appointed to a clerkship in the Attorney-General's Office, Whitman remained without further change till 1873, from which year of paralysis he has never been able to pursue any continuous daily imperative task.

While in Washington, Whitman at first sustained himself by correspondence for Northern papers, Henry J. Raymond being particularly friendly. Much of his income from the clerkships, along with various Northern contributions, went into the service of the army patients.

Whitman's near intimacies during the decade in Washington were with Burroughs and O'Connor. He had close friendly association with Peter Doyle, a railroad-man, who had neither professional nor scholarly interests. I have known no richer treat than an hour's talk with O'Connor or Burroughs when either was in the humor to review the remarkable comradeship they shared in Washington.

The paralytic attack of 1873 proved really the culmination and summing-up of many encroaching previous attacks, and was the fruit of Whitman's hospital labors, too long persisted in, over a period of four strenuous years. He was on his way to a resort on the New Jersey sea-coast, when, suffering a severe reverse in Philadelphia, he was conveyed to Camden, where he took up his residence. His health there has been fluctuating. But after the first two or three years he resumed and maintained a certain vigor and strength which, until 1888, protected him against the more painful sacrifices of freedom and labor. At different times he issued forth from this Camden nest for long or short flights—into the pines, down to Timber Creek, west as far as Denver, north into the Canadas, to Long Island, to New York City. He went to Boston in 1883 to supervise the issue of the Osgood edition of “Leaves of Grass.” He has lectured sundry times upon Lincoln, and written at intervals for magazines and papers. His life has been quiet, undisturbed even by literary tempests in teapots. He has published additions to his books—his latest,

"November Boughs"—and has collected and is prepared to issue a further, perhaps final volume, a poetic and prose *mélange*, within the next six months.

These crude glimpses of Walt Whitman's career on its statistical side serve to show the expansive structure of his genius. He has never been content with what one class or one sect or one party or merely superficial power and knowledge may show. He has met with and possessed America on the side of her cohesion and unity. In the early years a dweller in town and city, on sea-shore, farm, and street, a teacher in common schools, a writer on journals, a dreamer with books, a companion of low and high, a wanderer in untrod ways, North and South, he compassed the full circle of active factors which belong to the making of this new nation. Unlike most of the poets, he has never had a professional chair, never enjoyed the repose and ease of a study, never been a stay-at-home or a man oracular of proprieties and forms. Comprehend these features, remember the appellant and sacred character of the hospital years, take in the patient faith of the long period of his physical disability, trace with sufficient confidence the inspirations which have haloed his passage, and the purpose and courage of his history become manifest.

III.

But if Whitman's life has expressed a peculiar flavor and drawn its meanings from other than the usual swim and courtesies of affairs, it must be that his is a creative individuality. And he in fact initiates a peculiar type. Regard introductively the breadth of his manhood. Physically, morally, spiritually, he is and has been large and free. His corporeal two hundred pounds is tallied on every side by the posture of person and spirit. In days of perfect health he must have been of superb stature, for even now the indication of symmetry is without flaw. His head has a noble weight, ease, and repose. To unite such strength and mass with such control and movement implies exceptional adjustment. The always-opened shirt-front discloses the neck and breast. Hand and arm are large and well formed. I have never known an artist to leave him disappointed in any one of these

physical features. Constructively, they answer to an almost ideal standard. It is true, the lameness of recent years has served to detract from the emphasis of the first impression, but a brief stay in his room, and the silent witness which reminiscence everywhere throws out in voice and gesture, speedily convince. I have yet to find one among the strangers I have taken to see Whitman who has not confessed that he realized the presence of subtler forces which haunted him in after-days. The long hair and beard, the large dreamy eye, the nose and lips, a voice which plays with all shades of tone and color—the breeze and tempest and rainbow of speech—everything artless and unschooled, unite to the disaster of criticism. Here, too, are traits of great sweetness. Critics in earlier days of "Leaves of Grass"—and the echo of these accusations is not altogether lost—were very specific in description of the rowdyism of its author. Walt Whitman, they said, being what he was—a consort for loafers and prostitutes, and no more—could scarcely be expected to rise above himself in his books. Now that we honor him for his universal associations, no gibe can be other than a further note to his merit. It was the necessity of the man that he should proffer this sunny hospitality. So far as body will bear the strain, all are welcome at his door. But pretence, or glitter, or fame, pride of name or place, need at no time expect a special salutation. If the laborer from the street or the beggar or the criminal bring the true message of self, secreting no honest trait in an effort to impress or attract or overawe, Whitman will respond with word and act. For the moment this true sinner will confuse all the false saints in the calendar of pilgrims. Here, then, is the open door—the secret passage, which after all has no mysteries but to the veiled and the blind. His is the way of vigorous individuality: to hail all with infinite patience and affection; to utter no harsh words to friends whose service about him may halt or stumble; to discuss contemporaries with freedom, yet to save at all times the hyper-censuring phrase; to endure pain with resignation, to confront show with simplicity, to win hate by love, to give his cause fire and impersonality. What can rebuff a faith which defies school and creed in the interest of that

nature without which scholars and priests, whatever their gaudy possessions, would go houseless forever? Whitman has always delighted to roam the streets. As long as strength remained he went afloat on that hastening sea. Driven to chair and attendance, he still enjoys what air and river and the lives of cities bestow.

Whitman vindicates the declaration that in all the essentials of culture nature provides the profoundest resources. School, church, social respectability, were but the minor, almost forbidden, elements to his making, except as they stream unheralded into him and, in common with the whole area of life and phenomena, are adopted in his philosophy. His teacher has been the joy and despair, the calm and passion, the belief and denial, the love and hate, the virtue and vice, the purity and squalor, of peace and war. New York, Washington, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Quebec, Boston, Denver—these, with their unity and contrariety, have passaged and tilled the field. America—the essential America—that is, the toilers, soldiers, sailors, railroadmen, laborers, all artisans, equally with classes called learned and professions called respectable—has mentored and sustained, and finally will confirm him. Such tuition has gathered about no other man. No college would have done other than injure him. No perpetual lien laid by a single calling would have spared or softened his ruin. He belongs to city and prairie, to opera and brothel, to jail and prison, to years before war, to war, to after-suffering, to labor and to the pen, to boats that sail, to movement, to liberty. If Whitman is in any manner set apart from puppetry, from echoes lost in their last refinements, it is by virtue of this inherent genius which went straight through all cries of sect and model, past all danger-signs, across deepest streams and impenetrable fastnesses—the drag-way and wreck of mediocrity and sham—to primal spirit and law. This faithfulness elevates his old age as it inspired his youth. It blesses him with gentleness, fortitude, content; it passes into the folds of his dress, governs his appetite, connects the clean body and the clean soul; it presides over his reverence for ancestry, his love of family and companions, his enduring hail and kiss for

outcast and victim ; it suggests morality, imposes cheer, restrains intemperance ; and, crowning the lofty summit, it honors man for the infinitude of the processes which have worked the mystery and darkness into love and dawn.

IV.

"Leaves of Grass" started in almost universal displeasure. It shocked literary and sex traditions. Two things, at least, in its own plane and theory, were necessary to its life. It needed to reflect the broadening spirit of our new age and new land. The rhyme, the convention, the formal measure, insisted upon by old literary codes, were unequal to the current conditions. Whitman made his own vehicle. His book was to get as close to nature as her reserves would permit. The natural was to reflect the healthy and the abiding. Sex, under this treatment, must reclaim its heritage. No middle-age monastic contempt could longer be visited upon motherhood, the body, or any corporeal functions. To dare so dire a thralldom, to strike so near the throne, seemed to be to dare everything. No anti-subjectivist could delight in "Leaves of Grass," for that one volume uncovers the frankest confession of life found in annal or story. Who touches this, the author himself teaches, touches not art nor intellect, but a man. Yet there was no sign, as in Amiel, of the disease of introspection. The whole work precipitates the manliest salutations.

"Leaves of Grass" has passed through about ten editions. "Specimen Days" appeared in 1883. But the whole force of protest has centered about the poems. They outrage so much that has been held sacred, they so invade the precincts of art with a natural equipment which art may hate but cannot destroy, that the conflict is not surprising and can have but one issue. As Whitman has added, period after period, to this volume, it could be perceived that he constructed upon a coherent plan. No chance-building was evident ; indeed, no building at all. Whitman simply reasoned that if "Leaves of Grass" was to reflect life, the prevailing quality of its utterance must be, not architecture, but spontaneity. I have been told by various in-

dependent scholars that they could think of no phase of American society missed from the circle of description. Nor is there a poem in the book which does not bear unmistakably upon and reveal the period of its composition. "Sands at Seventy," added in 1888, may easily be specified, along with the war poems, the early "Starting from Paumanok," "Song of Myself," "Children of Adam," and so on. The new pages will contribute the same evidence. No element is omitted from the transcript: all flows in happy sequence, in exposition of a typical person, moved by and moving, acted upon and battling with, the conditions of the dominant civilization and of each emergence. Through this person America, democracy, the future, summons and dispenses. The necessary completeness of our nature is repeated in marvellous illustration: as of its trial-voyagings in first years, as of its individuality in "Song of Myself," as of its sex in "Children of Adam," as of its comradeship in "Calamus," and so in special traits through the four hundred pages. To glorify sex, to attest identity, to enclose religions by religion, to bring near to man the circuitous forces which he may operate for great ends, in himself, in society, in star and sun, are fragments of the message.

V.

Was the new singer heard? Had this strange voice any vibrant call for its neighbors? There was no long wait ere Emerson had passed in his vital gift. Thoreau was quick to perceive that there was something high in the new note. At that moment few others were ready to speak. But one by one remarkable men gathered, read, inspected, enjoyed, glorified, the denounced prophet. Emerson and Thoreau several times visited him at his home in Brooklyn. O'Connor, Burroughs, Bucke, Ingersoll, Kennedy, are additions of later times. Mrs. Gilchrist was among the first to raise protest for him in England. The friendliness of Tennyson has been indicated by letter and message. Swinburne's original impulse was undoubtedly towards approval. "To Walt Whitman in America," is as warm as average or even more satisfying poetic fires ever burn. But his violent retraction confuses all attempt at explanation. Karl Knortz

and T. W. Rolleston have together made a translation of selected poems into the German. Rudolf Schmidt has rendered "Democratic Vistas" in the Danish. There have been fugitive French translations. Gabriel Sarrazin has written a splendid series of essays on English and American poets, in which Whitman is figured with glowing pride and power. I think Whitman regards this estimate, linked with what O'Connor and Ingersoll have said on our side of the water—not omitting Burroughs' and Bucke's biographies and Mrs. Gilchrist's early prophetic recognitions—as perhaps constituting to date the best and most adequate explanation of himself. Symonds, Forman, Rossetti, Rhys, Carpenter, in England, have done him all the offices of comradeship. Italy and Russia register partial translations. The list could be prolonged. Gradually, individuals, groups, periodicals, have passed from the stage of opposition to the plane of respectful attention. The Whitman parody no longer sits in judgment. There have been fragmentary translations into divers unmentioned tongues—certainly into the Spanish and Hungarian. In his darkest years—notably, 1873 to 1877—Whitman's best, most efficient, support came from England. The American magazines have been, with but few exceptions, substantially hostile. But in reviews, in literary discussions, among especially the thinking young people, women full as much as men, signs appear of the most spontaneous acceptance—an enthusiasm which unquestionably will give Whitman the future. The slow certainty with which this light penetrates unwonted spots proves its efficacy. Whitman has been willing to wait. Long ago he burned all his ships. His phrenology has "caution" marked at "6 to 7"—which is high—and he has never retraced a single step. The conviction which cradled the babe houses and pillows and sustains the old man. After the passion of darkness and war, during which he was harassed by enemies and co-operated with by as high devotion and valor as ever distinguished an heroic past, this Democrat, mounted on highest ground, the sunrise at last in his face, reaffirms the promised land.

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TO WALT WHITMAN.

YOUR lonely muse, unraimented with rhyme,
Her hair unfilleted, her feet unshod,
Naked and not ashamed demands of God
No covering for her beauty's youth or prime.
Clad but with thought, as space is clad with time,
Or both with worlds where man and angels plod,
She runs in joy, magnificently odd,
Ruggedly wreathed with flowers of every clime.
And you to whom her breath is sweeter far
Than choicest attar of the martyred rose
More deeply feel mortality's unrest
Than poets born beneath a happier star,
Because the pathos of your grand repose
Shows that all earth has throbbled within your breast.

Albert Edmund Lancaster.

QUAKER TRAITS OF WALT WHITMAN.

By WILLIAM SLOANE KENNEDY.

It is a curious fact that the three chief democrats of the New World should be immediately or remotely of Quaker ancestry—Whitman, Whittier, and Abraham Lincoln. Yet this need not surprise us; for from what does Quakerism historically spring if not from a deep-seated, quenchless passion for freedom? How strongly marked the Quaker traits are in Walt Whitman no one hitherto has noticed or at least set forth in print. His best traits, I believe, come through his dear mother—a woman of rare force of character and native sweetness of disposition; and her mother, Amy Williams, was a member of the Society of Friends.

Walt Whitman always falls back upon the *Inner Light*, the intuitions of the soul (a Quaker doctrine), as, *e. g.*, in his famous conversation with Emerson on Boston Common. It is, perhaps, the Quaker blood in him that makes him satisfied with the placid life of Philadelphia. Other Quaker elements in him are:

Self-respect.

Respect for every other human being. Quakerism is extremely democratic; any man or woman may be in direct communication with God; hence Whitman's basilar doctrine of comradeship, equality, love of the average man, and his exalting of woman to perfect equality with man.

His sincerity and plainness.

His placidity. Freedom from all passionate grief (though this comes partly from his paternal Dutch or Holländisch ancestry).

His silence. If he can't do what you want him to do, he doesn't say he is sorry: he simply is silent.

Unconventionalism. No bowing to audience; wears his hat in the house if he wants to (as do Quakers); neither takes nor gives titles of honor or respect.

Belief in the right of free speech.

Benevolence and friendliness.

Deep religiousness. The soul is his constant theme.

One cannot say that Quakerism has done more than to somewhat perceptibly *tinge* Whitman's writings. The dithyrambic fiber and superhuman strength of them are drawn from a deeper fount than that which welled forth from the soul of leather-breeched cobbler Fox. And so is the passion-flower bloom of Whittier's soul—the fiery attar of his rustic verse. In Whitman's case the Quaker survivals are chiefly visible in his personal habits and social temperament. But they are none the less interesting.

I think the Quaker traits in him grow stronger every year. The volcanic strength of mature manhood being passed, he reverts tenderly to the maternal teachings: they well up spontaneously now (a tenderer feeling, more Christlike spirit of benevolence, if possible). The sun's glare has left the landscape, and the myriad quiet lights of heaven come out one by one.

WALT WHITMAN.

*By KARL KNORTZ: Translated from the German by ALFRED FORMAN and
RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE.*

THE first volume of *Putnam's Monthly* contained a sympathetic Christmas Eve story, referring to the time of the American Civil War, which bore the title, "The Carpenter." In it was presented to us a family, assembled at the hearth on the festival of the holy evening, whose conversation turned principally on the terrors of the war and the conjectured plans of the generals. The youngest daughter of the house, who took no interest in this conversation, and whose thoughts were certainly more occupied with the anticipated gifts and the probable bringer of the same, interrupted suddenly the warlike conversation with the naïve question as to what trade Jesus really followed? When, now, the old farmer had answered this question, and the maiden had expressed the wish that she might some day see the Good Carpenter of Nazareth (for she would surely not be afraid of him), there suddenly entered the room a stranger—a man with gray beard and hair, but with a youthfully fresh face—who held out a plane which he had found by chance in the immediate vicinity of the farm house. They bade him welcome, directed him to a seat at the comfortable fireside, and inquired among other things as to his name and occupation—without, however, giving special attention to his answers, and without giving him an opportunity to be explicit, so that, since he had introduced himself as of that calling, they simply called him Mr. Carpenter. The maiden approached him trustfully and whispered in his ear that she knew who he was, and it appeared to every member of the family as if they had in their presence an old friend; accordingly, they all chatter with him unrestrainedly on important and unimportant private

matters. The stranger showed himself worthy of this trust by assuming the part of a wise counsellor, and secured anew by prudent means, which saved offence to either party, the threatened domestic peace of the family, after which, giving and receiving a blessing, he took his departure.

Every one who at the time cursorily read this story thought that its author merely intended to present in that "faithful Eckhart" the founder of the Christian religion upon his mysterious Christmas eve rounds. But whoever carefully examined the striking talk of that stranger—his constant use of unaccustomed and characteristic expressions, his sentences epigrammatically pointed and drenched with an original but sympathetic perfume of poetry—and who, at the same time, was sufficiently acquainted with American literature to know to whom these individualities of speech pointed before all other writers, became immediately convinced that it was a case of well calculated and adroit mystification. Those who so approached the picture would perceive that its author, W. D. O'Connor, so well known for his admirable literary style, was seeking here to erect a monument to his revered friend, the fiercely attacked author of "Leaves of Grass," and at the same time to characterize his humanitarian work.

In this "Carpenter" there is presented the poet Walt Whitman, to whose life and works we are now about to devote a portion of this evening. . . .

The fact that "Leaves of Grass" has been so variously judged—called by one critic the offspring of an unhinged brain, and by another one of the mightiest poetic works of all times—shows that the reading of it is anything but an easy labor, and that for its proper appreciation something much more than a superficial literary and philosophical preparation is imperatively necessary.

At first the form or formlessness of "Leaves of Grass" has a repelling effect, for Whitman declares energetic war against any received "ars poetica," which he scornfully designates as "poetic machinery;" and he says, not altogether without justification, that for the most part only mediocre poets hide themselves behind iambic, trochaic, and dactylic verse-measuring, in order to conceal their poverty of original thought by artful and

artificial rhymes. In his opinion, the time has come when the external difference between poetry and prose may be wiped out, and when the poet should be his own lawgiver and provide his original thoughts with a form corresponding to them.

The free lines which he uses, and which are to a Tennysonian poem as a symphony of Beethoven is to a song of Abt's, are at all events most fitting to his ideas, since the storm, for example, does not roar in regular time. But yet they are not altogether without rhythmic swing; when he pictures lofty emotions of the soul, his inborn speech-instinct forces him to a certain metrical form which exerts an irresistible spell upon the reader. When, on the other hand, he is ventilating ethical and philosophical problems, or when he (as he so often does) is enumerating the countries, rivers, and nations of the world in the manner of a concise hand-lexicon, ornamenting such catalogue here and there with the rich charm of expressive adjectives—such, for instance, as those with which Homer makes his long ship catalogue pleasing—his style is more prosaic even than the *cry of the grasshopper* or the cabalistic prose of the "*Æsthetica in Nuce*" of the "*Magus of the North*"—with which philosophy, moreover, Whitman has in common his obscurity of expression, predilection for nature, aversion to antiquated institutions, and much besides.

When Carrière, in his work, "The Essence and the Forms of Poetry," says that "poetic feeling and perception demand in their expression now rhymed and now rhymeless verse," and that "the question of male or female rhyme, of Sapphic or Alcaic Strophe, is by no means an indifferent one," and that "these things should be preconsidered," and that "no particular form should be either thoughtlessly rejected or arbitrarily applied," he acknowledges the received principle of our writers on poetics, in whose view the various ideas must allow themselves to be forced into definite rhythms by their originators. When, however, this æsthetic writer says, in the sentence immediately following, that in the true work of art the form grows out of the idea and is its organic outcome, he is in contradiction with himself, for he there asserts nothing else than that the form springs out of the idea, and that therefore, of necessity, there

must be as many forms as there are ideas—on which principle the practice of Whitman would be brilliantly justified.

When the impulse toward poetry first stirred in Whitman, he, likewise, paid his homage to rhyme. Later, however, when by study and meditation his spiritual horizon was widened, he shook off this fetter and wrote that rhythmical prose with which, for the rest, the reading world had already become familiar by means of the Psalms, Job, Ossian, as well as by Friedrich Schlegel's translation of the Ramayana.

Far more disturbing than the absence of regular meter is the presence of a number of Spanish and French expressions added to the scorn of grammar and the setting aside of its rules. Whitman orders himself as little after the prescriptions of the grammarians as the primitive forest does after the æsthetic principles of the landscape gardener. He very often transfers the office of the verb to the noun, or vice versa. The logical connection of the separate sentences one must find out for one's self—not always an easy task. Over and above this, the difficulty is increased by his sparse use of punctuation, so that it often seems as if we had sibylline sentences before us. Sometimes, when we believe that we have at last grasped the meaning of a passage and found the Ariadne thread of this labyrinth of thought, in the very next section of the verse we are met by new, almost insuperable, difficulties, so that we often doubt the sanity of our own judgment, or are inclined to reckon the poet a bewilderer of malice prepense. Whitman himself knows very well the difficulties that he prepares for his readers, for he says toward the end of "The Song of Myself:"

"You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fiber your blood."

And adds, so as not to frighten his reader away—

"Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I s.op somewhere waiting for you."

His wealth of words—especially, however, of adjectives—is astounding; but because he often gives to them a meaning other than the current one, new difficulties again spring up for the reader, and he who has abandoned himself to the illusion of having fully mastered the English language will often have to seek comfort in “Webster’s Unabridged.”

Uhland once made the remark that the roots of his poetry lay in love for the people, and that, therefore, to the people was it dedicated. Whitman makes a like claim for his poems, and says that they appeal chiefly to the moral feeling, and are constituted as though the average man had himself thought and shaped them. But here he is judging the capacity of others by his own; and this is one of the reasons—indeed, the principal reason—why he has not, so far, penetrated the people, has never become popular, and has found his disciples only among the cultured literary public. But even to these his words with respect to the understanding of “Leaves of Grass” are applicable:

“For these leaves and me you will not understand,
They will elude you at first and still more afterward, I will certainly elude
you,
Even while you should think you had unquestionably caught me, behold!
Already you see I have escaped from you.”

Every one who so far has ventured on the reading of “Leaves of Grass” has had the following experience: After the perusal of the first few pages it has seemed to him that the book must have been the work of a madman. Soon, however, he has been suddenly arrested by an original thought which has revealed to him the meaning of what he had so far read, and has irresistibly urged him to read further. He has found himself, then, in the condition of the magician’s pupil in Goethe’s ballad, who is unable to free himself from the spirits which he has called up. Whitman is himself well aware of this peculiar magic, for he says frankly and openly:

“I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me?
I follow you whoever you are from the present hour,
My words itch at your ears till you understand them.”

The reading of "Leaves of Grass" may be compared to the ascent of a mountain, where every laborious step is rewarded with new and fascinating views. The summit, however, of this spirit-mountain has never yet been reached, as is confessed readily by his most ardent worshippers and most industrious readers, who comfort themselves with the thought that as they have already conquered so many difficulties, the remaining secrets will be yet unveiled to them. When I once called the attention of Dr. Bucke, a Canadian physician, to some of the passages which I found absolutely unintelligible, and indulged in the hope that I might get what I lacked from that years-long intimate of Whitman, who was also the author of a book upon him, he naïvely answered: "Why, who can understand it? it will be a hundred years, perhaps, before any one understands it."

That, at all events, was honestly spoken. Nevertheless, Whitman's obscurity is not by any means to be excused, for the poet or philosopher who believes that he can bless the world with new thoughts should be careful to clothe them in such language as at least to make them intelligible to a moderately cultured, contemporary, man.*

In the New York *Graphic* of November 25th, 1873, an American writer narrates that it took him seven years to grasp the poetic import of "Leaves of Grass." During the first four years the book was for him a subject of merriment and an example of human perversity. During the next two years of his Whitman novitiate he occupied himself principally with the question as to whether behind this unusual, primeval, jungle-like speech no grain of poetry might be hidden. But only in the seventh year did he arrive at an understanding either of the rhythm or spiritual contents of "Leaves of Grass." Herewith he confirms our former judgment, that "Leaves of Grass" is not a reading for Sunday afternoon in a rocking-chair, or on the sofa, and that in spite of all initiatory discouragements we are irresistibly again drawn to it.

* Whitman's language, to my mind, is perfectly clear. The difficulty spoken of by me has reference to his meaning, which is often above (or beneath) the reach of the ordinary mind.—R. M. H.

For the proper appreciation, and for facilitating the study, of this book, Whitman has himself provided us with two commentaries—first, namely, his own life; and, secondly, his prose work, "Democratic Vistas," which contains, richly set in words and images, his political, philosophic and poetic articles of belief, the result of long and unintermittent meditation.

In his character of inspired American and uncompromising progressionist, Whitman demands that art, poetry, philosophy and education shall be penetrated with the democratic principle and work formatively on the future. For the solving of this problem he looks chiefly to the poet, on whom he makes the same preparatory demands as the "Nibelungen" poet Jordan comprehensively sets forth in his "Epic Letters." What, however, is it that the American poet has before him? An energetic, enterprize-loving, people which can at least point to astounding accomplishments in the regions of the practical, but which, for the rest, moves in such a dense atmosphere of habitual, almost avowed, hypocrisy, that genuine humanitarianism—for that is what Whitman understands by the democratic principle—has not yet really broken into view. Base money-grubbing has created a corruption that sanctions every crime. America, by the incorporation of new states, has not grown in soul; the mass, as regards politics, has become more fitted for self-government, but the moral, æsthetic, and literary results are exceedingly small. Where, asks Whitman, are the beautiful youths with noble manners?—where the women and men who correspond to our material grandeur? In business, in the church, on the street, vulgarity reigns; the young men are cunning, smart, precocious; the women are sickly, padded, painted and unfit for maternity; the men are *blasé* and dead long before they die. American society is lacking in moral vigor, and the aspiration to supply this is the task of the new literature, which therefore does not copy the old, nor order itself by what is called taste, but instructs and enables the men on the basis of the exact sciences and of actual life rather than on that of a perverted and sick fantasy; inspires the youths to humanitarian endeavors, and redeems the women from the bondage of millinery and frivolity. For his democracy, which

assures to every man and woman the same rights, he demands a race of uncompromising individualities without a set type of manhood, and he wishes that fatherhood and motherhood may be lifted to the level of the weightiest and noblest problems. A strong race is requisite for true democracy if it is to be successful and permanent. The youths must be brisk, lively, aspiring, emotional—they must seek danger, and defy it; the men must be characterized by courage, faith, self-control, reliability, sturdiness, robust health and calm earnestness—which last, however, must be capable of conversion into glowing hate. Every civic career and activity shall stand open to women, and everywhere shall they work, ennobling all they touch, as representatives of womanliness—though of a womanliness such as has never yet been nor could be pictured by poet or novelist. Cleopatra, Hernba, Brunnhild, Penelope, and the numerous other heroines of past ages are not ideals of democracy purified from feudalism. Since now democracy, in spite of its faults, manifested in practice, but easily cured, affords at all events the best opportunity for the unshackled growth of individuality, and the most effective school for the formation of patriotism, Whitman calls loudly upon the rising youth to occupy itself assiduously with political life—not to bow to the dictation of any party, but to give expression by the ballot to their own independent self-formed judgment.

This ideal it is the task of the poet, to whom Whitman in his democracy transfers the intellectual leadership, to hold continually up to the people and urge to its realization. He must nourish his inspiration on autochthonic circumstances, landscapes and institutions, and permit the Argonauts to rest in peace, the wrath of Achilles to evaporate, Tristram and Isolde in the love grotto, and Tannhäuser and Venus in the Hörselberg, to love on unmolested.

The literatures of Europe rest upon conditions which are injurious to the democratic principle of political and social equality of rights. Shakspeare, Scott and Tennyson cherish the spirit of caste which here, before all things, must be destroyed. The poet of America must be modern, and without ignoring the good and

the beautiful of his European colleagues, must stand upon his own feet. He must be the heaven which leavens at first the whole lump of his own nation, and afterwards all the world. He belongs to the people, who, without granting him privileges, readily acknowledge him as lawgiver and leader. . . .

Whitman is the poet of identity: he is the skillful pilot, the burned witch, the hunted slave, the marked fireman, in every criminal he is punished, and in every sick person suffers. The Brahmanical motto, "Tat Twam asi," is his.

With Marcus Aurelius he looks upon death as an entirely natural and terrorless act, but, unlike Marcus Aurelius, he does not lament the fleeting of life. Neither does he long, like our modern pessimists, for death as the end of the torment of existence. His body, he knows, will make good manure, but this does not offend his delicacy. He smells in advance the scent of the roses which will be born of it. Life he looks upon only as a clause; in the course of his monistic metempsychosis he has doubtless died more than ten thousand times. The "Song of Myself," borne on the pinions of a mighty, not to say bridleless, imagination, rich in bold and vivid thought, contains, *in nuce*, Whitman's political and ethical creed. He is quite aware that much in it will set timid minds in revolt, but he makes no excuse. "I am," he says, "not a bit tamed. I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world."

It is the poems entitled "Children of Adam" that have furnished the chief reason for calling Whitman a coarse and shameless sensualist, and therewith once for all had judgment passed upon him. Whoever reads, superficially, this section, will allow that the perfume of these verses is of the strongest; but when we take them in connection with the rest of the "Leaves," and bear in mind, at the same time, that Whitman, as the high priest of optimism, acknowledges nothing evil, but holds that in nature one thing in its place is as important as another; and when we further think of the holy earnestness which inspires these and all his creations—we shall soon do homage to another view and join in the defence of Whitman against the current charge of obscenity. . . .

Whitman, like Adam and Eve before their fall, uses no fig leaves. . . .

Conventional modesty has been by the disciples of the Christian religion, who stigmatize the human body—called by Luther “maggot sack”—as the originator of all sins, padded out into a meritorious quality; but now there comes a poet, penetrated with the spirit of Greece, who preaches the sublimity of the flesh and the holiness of all its acts. Whitman is the poet of the entire personality, and, from his solemn and ideal standpoint, celebrates not only death, but also birth, and the necessary foreconditions of it, without in the slightest degree making use of lewd or lascivious ambiguities. Without the admission of any compromise whatever he boldly faces the sickly prudery which would drape all the statues of the classical god-world, and demonstrates its hypocritical hollowness. In listening now and again to the tirades of our male and female moralists we are almost forced to conclude that the world is yearning for the realization of the Platonic myth of the union of the male and female principles in one individual, and is joining in the curse on Jupiter for having separated the two natures. Nay, according to the Sunday-school religion of our country, mankind, for decency's sake, and for the salvation of its soul, ought long ago to have become *generis neutrius*, or at least have become converted to the doctrine of the Shakers. Whitman, like the Greeks, revels in beauty of form and beholds the divine where others cast down their eyes. The combination of the highest beauty and strength in the human body is his ideal.

The poems, “Children of Adam,” are frequently, by Whitman's opponents, and even by those who admit his poetic talent and pure aims, called modern phallus songs; but they have really nothing in common with the customary Dionysiac jocularities of which Aristophanes, for example, in the drinking bout of the Acharnians, gives us a specimen. There is here no ribaldry, but simple actions, conditioned by nature herself, are exalted and glorified in unwonted strains. *Naturalia non sunt turpia*. Never anywhere in his writings is Whitman immoral or obscene; no-

where does he do homage to the conventional ties of society, nor ever consent to the abdication of his body or his reason.

If the definition which Marcus Aurelius gives of virtue is correct—that it consists in an enthusiastic sympathy with nature—then is Whitman one of the most virtuous men on the whole earth. Modesty and morality do not consist in drapery. Whitman celebrates the sexual life in the interest of human progress—in the interest of physical and moral well-being.

In the section, "Calamus," we find him in his own element, in free and open nature. Having, to the detriment of his style, thoroughly studied the works of the speculative philosophers of Germany, he there broods over "the terrible doubt of appearances" and the like metaphysical problems. It was no misanthropic whim that drove him into solitude, for it was there that his phenomenal feeling of brotherhood first stirred in him. Every one that he meets, even casually, he looks deep in the eyes and recognizes—he has grown up with him, he has sat with him at table and eaten and drunk with him, and is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. Then he says that he has been blamed for seeking to destroy institutions; but that what he seeks to found, without statutes, debates or officials, is a kingdom of love and brotherhood to embrace all the inhabitants of the earth. The poems in which he celebrates friendship are intense, candid and penetrative, standing alone in the literature of this subject. They contain no cheap tuneful and empty phrases. No, Whitman always speaks out of a full, faithful soul, and has proved by his life that he is ever ready to take the full personal responsibility of every one of his utterances.

Hesiod, in his creation doctrine, makes Eros the formative element and primary cause, the subjugator of chaos; Whitman lays a similar task upon love or friendship—he calls upon each to become a lover, and claims that therein lies the solution of every social, political, philosophical and ethical problem.

He envies no fame-crowned conqueror his laurels and no millionaire his wealth; but when he hears of a deathless friendship he becomes pensive, filled with the bitterest envy, for he would gladly be himself renowned as the truest of true friends. He has not, he

says, invented any machine, nor performed any deed of heroism, nor written any book for the center table; neither will he be able to leave behind any rich bequest for a hospital or public library; but he has, instead, breathed into the air some songs of brotherhood and love, and when these shall have found an echo in the hearts of his comrades (all mankind, namely), and thereby have fulfilled their true object, then will he be immortal, for he will then have accomplished what has hitherto been counted impossible, and will have solved every riddle.

The friendship of the present time depends upon similarity of character, opinion and taste; among the Greeks, as now between the sexes, physical beauty was accounted the pre-condition. The friendship between Achilles and Patroclus, which was the Greek model, was an heroic passion; the friendship between David and Jonathan had its foundations in equal age and noble-mindedness; the Whitmanic friendship, however, is genuinely democratic, for it embraces all men without exception. . . .

The section "Sea-Drift" contains the incomparable bird-idyl, "Out of the Cradle." Had Whitman written no single line besides, this poem, as long as hearts exist to whom poetry is a necessity, would assure him immortality. . . .

In the "Drum-Taps," which were written during the Secession war, and which celebrate scenes in it, Whitman gives energetic expression to his patriotic and philanthropic views. In them he preaches neither clemency nor conciliation, but storm and battle against those who in the land of freedom stood up for the disgraceful institution of slavery. His elegy on the death of Lincoln—"When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"—favorably compares with the greatest threnodies of Greece and Rome. . . .

The leading motives of Whitman's poetry are unchangeable brotherhood, untroubled joy, unhindered progress in all departments, loving dependence on nature and following of her precepts, and absolute equality of the rights of all mankind—women as well as men. But it is not written for the parlor, neither is it all fitted for public readings. . . .

We often hear it said that Whitman is no believing Christian. If, now, we ask Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, etc., for a definition of a believing Christian, we shall only get confused by their contradictory answers. We will therefore turn at once to the Bible, to whose authority the believers above specified appeal. In the Gospel of Matthew, towards the end of the twenty-fifth chapter, a poem occurs from which we select the following verses :

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink :

I was a stranger : and ye took me not in : naked, and ye clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal."

This poem is perhaps weightier on account of what it leaves unsaid than in what is said. The presiding judge, for instance, does not ask the people before him whether they had believed in the Immaculate Conception, the fall of Adam, the doctrine of the Trinity, or the fiery ascent of Elijah ; it also seems to be to him a matter of indifference whether they had subscribed to the Lutheran or reformed view of the holy supper ; nay, he does not even ask whether they were Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, Mormons, Buddhists, or anything else ; he simply calls as witnesses the weary and oppressed, and declares that what has been done to them has been done to him also, and thereupon bases his judgment.

Whitman, whose devotions for the most part consisted in free, natural acts, and who perhaps never dropped a cent into the collection box for the conversion of South Sea islanders or other aborigines, will be able to stand unabashed before that tribunal ; for he has visited and nursed the sick, has given his own coat to him that had none, and has been to every one a

faithful, self-sacrificing friend. If, however, in spite of all this, he is not to be called Christian, the denial certainly does not redound to the credit of the Christian religion. . .

Whitman is unquestionably a genius and as such his own law-giver. When a celebrated psychologist asserts that genius is not the friend on whose bosom we can find rest in grief and storm because its soul-moods are subject to fitful change, his observation has no application to the author of "Leaves of Grass," for he is perhaps a greater genius in the rôle of friend than in that of poet.

Whitman's importance in its full circumference was first acknowledged in England. The professors and literary historians—Dowden, Symonds and Clifford—published panegyrics upon him, and the so-called pre-Raphaelites, such as Swinburne, Rossetti, Morris, Buchanan and Oscar Wilde, no less than the art-critic Ruskin, have not only done their utmost to procure him a large circle of readers in England, but by considerable contributions they in his old age have assisted in relieving him from pressing pecuniary need.

In the *Nineteenth Century* for December, 1882, an English essayist asserts that the majority of Americans are still too narrow-hearted to understand and value a spirit like Whitman.

In Germany Freiligrath once broke a lance for him, without, however, being able to excite even a passing interest in "Leaves of Grass." The talented novelist Rudolf Schmidt, in Denmark, has interested himself in him with more success.

In America the press sought, first, to kill him with abuse, but, finding that abuse did not serve, it attempted to stifle him with silence.

The mere titles of the two poems, "A Woman Waits for Me" and "To a Common Prostitute," were sufficient to outlaw him with the puritan, although the Christian, according to Luther's declaration, ought to speak nothing but good of his calumniated neighbor, and it would have been easy enough to find plenty of good to say about Whitman. Instead of doing their duty by Whitman and the public in an impartial objective statement of his doctrine, his critics resorted to ridicule—a proceeding in

which even Bayard Taylor participated, without, however, ignoring Whitman's poetical gifts. One criticaster even asserted, in all solemnity, that Whitman at bottom was nothing but a conscious and calculating comedian, who had thoroughly studied his rôle and acted it out with admirable consistency. What a pity such actors are so rare!

The most stupid essay on Whitman appeared in 1884, in the *North American Review*, and it is a matter of wonder to me that the usually so-cautious editor of this monthly should have accepted such a manifest piece of botch-work. Its author, Walter Kenedy, has not the least capacity for the comprehension of a poet like Whitman. He dismisses him as if he had come out of a madhouse, and says that if once the "Leaves of Grass" were purified from the immorality contained in them, they would cease to find a single buyer. To Whitman's creative genius (now universally admitted) he devotes not a single word. And this is what passes for impartial criticism!

William Cullen Bryant, with whom Whitman was on intimate terms, and with whom he frequently took extended walking tours on Long Island, has to my knowledge never given public expression to his views upon "Leaves of Grass," but since the appearance of W. D. O'Connor, Dr. Bucke, Burroughs and Stedman, Whitman's following in America has slowly increased and every year adds to its numbers. Other poets are no doubt more generally read, but of none has there been more said and written of late years than of Whitman, nor has any found at the last such warm and devoted friends. The time for ignoring him is past, though, on the other hand, the time for his recognition and comprehension has not come. His world-salute has already been answered from every country in which homage is paid to poetry.

I have here sought to present him impartially and without bias, and have neither ignored nor palliated his weaknesses, oddities and idiosyncrasies.

As one who has sacrificed his health and fortunes to the needs of the poor, the wounded and the outcast, and has not, in spite of ample opportunity, made seasonable provision for his old age,

he may appear to us an unpractical dreamer. Our reverence, however, we cannot on this account withhold from him; as poet of the already-mentioned bird-idyl, as well as of the elegy on the death of Lincoln, we do not hesitate to condone his offences against the codes of so-called good taste, of meter and of grammar.

From the point of view of æsthetics his aim has been the beautiful; from that of philosophy, truth; from that of ethics, good; as democrat, he wills to all men freedom and joy. As genius Whitman is primitive-American — a self-rooted autochthonic Titan. He and his "Leaves" are one; they are his flesh and blood, his heart and soul. "Camerado," he says, in closing, "this is no book, who touches this touches a MAN."

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WALT WHITMAN, THE POET OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY.

By RUDOLF SCHMIDT: Translated from the Danish by R. M. BAIN (of the British Museum), and RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE.

AMERICAN literature has gone through precisely the same development (in spite of all differences) which can be pointed out in all modern literature, and which is based in a necessity raised above all external contraries. . . .

Walt Whitman's verses are arbitrarily divided into very different lengths. Sometimes it is undeniable that the rhythmic swing does not strike the ear at all, at others every line is marked by a rapid certainty and majestic force which can only be compared with the heaving breast of the ocean or the course of wind over the prairies. German, as well as Scandinavian, literature can certainly show poems in rhythmic prose, but the most casual comparison will establish the radical difference between them and those of Walt Whitman. The only thing which approximately reminds us of the American poet's mode of expression is the peculiar accent which is here and there discovered in our translation of the Old Testament or in one or two of H. Wergeland's unrhymed poems. In one of the prefaces in which Walt Whitman, at various times, has entered the lists with great vigor and superiority in defence of his own style of art, he expressly represents it as the object of the finished artist to approach nature herself, whose rhythm in its manifold expressions is ever present and yet never allows itself to be confined within any single regular pulse. There is no doubt that this idea of a new and peculiar form of art has (perhaps half-unconsciously) influenced the author in the choice of the general title, "Leaves of Grass," under which he continues to classify all his poems. For

it is the swaying, rocking, the never-interrupted, but constantly bending (rising and falling) of the grass which he strives to represent in language. The poet introduces himself at once to his readers as a widely travelled Odysseus, of whom it may well be said that he has seen manifold cities and understood their ways—but these are after all at bottom not essentially different one from another to him. . . . The immeasurable domain is everywhere to him one and the same thing—it is simply America, the home and hearth of freedom, the soil upon which the foundations of human truth and nobility are to be laid. It is not with the repose of contemplation, but with the everywhere vigorous joy of recognition, with the innate force of vitality, that he declares what he has seen. . . . That a poet in a spiritual manner should reproduce the impressions of the natural scenery of his country is certainly the main effect in which all the active powers of his genius should concentrate themselves, at least so far as regards a liberating, regenerating poetry. But when the reproduction is in itself an illumination, these initial impressions of nature may be presented to the reader in ways new and unexpected. The peculiar point of view of the author's imagination, the material which he had to work upon, already announced itself in the first edition of "Leaves of Grass" with strikingly typical peculiarity. The great introductory piece, which gave the keynote not only of this first outpouring of thoughts and moods, but also of the later editions which swelled to very much larger compass, had subsequently for its title "Walt Whitman."

"I celebrate myself"—thus begins this poem, striking at the outset the keynote of democracy. Downright self-glorification is nevertheless in itself such a dwarfing sentiment that one knows beforehand no true poetic inspiration can be born of it. In reality, the poet only takes his point of departure from himself in order to portray a type. "What is a man anyhow?" he says—"What am I? what are you? All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own, else it were time lost listening to me." But this facing about puts the matter in a new light, and shows that the poet is really possessed of the democratic idea in its depth and truth. It is in virtue of this general respect for

man that democratic equality emphasizes the rights of individuals, but it is impossible for the individual to insist on the right for himself without at the same time recognizing it in every other man. When, then, the poet strives to discover the leading trait in himself, it is after all only human nature which lies before him. This seeking in his own soul causes the poet a wonderful joy. "What am I after all," thus begins one of his lesser poems, "but a child, pleas'd with the sound of my own name? repeating it over and over; I stand apart to hear—it never tires me." But what he brings before us is not the accident of his own individuality, it is what is common, typical. The poem has fifty-two parts, which so far as outward form is concerned are not united together by any binding thread whatever. It is a world of ideas, figures and imaginative combinations cast forth higgledy-piggledy, often with an appeal to the sense of the reader of remarkably striking force, but also frequently entangled in obscurity to such a degree that it is impossible for the reader to get at his meaning. But in any case one always feels that these ideas and figures have their hidden explanation in the author's own soul, and the fact that they all are expressions of life from the same source constitutes the real unity of the poem. In the poem "Walt Whitman" is drawn the bold outline of a new departure in humanity—a man vigorous, with warm blood and fruitful brain, strong muscle, wealth of imagination healthily rooted in sensuous organic nature, and at the same time with a power of spiritual flight—able to attain the highest thoughts of the human mind.

The real hero of this poem is no individual man but the American people—the type of humanity that people represents. And of this type the poet is intimately persuaded that it comprehends, if not in actual reality at least in disposition and potentiality, the highest condition for the progress of all humanity. It has been said by the poet's admirers that the whole comprehensive collection of "Leaves of Grass," with all its manifold contents, should properly be regarded as a single poem, which at bottom is only a further development of that which bears as title the poet's own name. They would have the book regarded

as the great pioneer's epic, the poet himself constantly standing in the background, and the feeling of energetic humanity in his own soul giving a satisfactory explanation of each individual part. The never-before-heard words and sentences of this author, in which these images burst forth, thus become the outward sign of his calling as the forerunner of a regeneration of humanity. This is so far true that in the various parts into which the poems are divided there is found a transition which begins in the obscurity of nature's operations and ends in the clearest and surest certainty of the spirit. The first degree in this scale has the common title, "Children of Adam," and already shows in strong traits what a new and strange individuality the reader has before him.

The audacity with which the poet makes himself the spokesman of the immediate sensation of life—the mystic, attractive relations between man and woman—has nothing corresponding to it in modern times. There is sometimes something quite unhuman in it, but at the same time something very powerful. It sounds to one's ears almost like the roar of a wild beast in the rutting season, and the proportions are here so gigantic that petty objection in the name of injured decency is under the circumstances not the form which disgust, if excited, should assume. In the poet of the "Adamic Song," as Whitman calls himself, is to be heard as it were a re-echo of the Priapic hymns of Greek antiquity, and this reminiscence may be partly the cause of the disgust felt. However occult and mysterious the nature side of human life still continues to be, it has nevertheless become so much illumined by the light of science that this Bacchantic, fantastical apotheosis of the sexual relations has become an actual impossibility, for every gleam of a consciousness different from that with which humanity's infancy has heretofore looked upon these inevitable relations produces a change of impression which excites disgust.

The unavoidable working out of these modes of thought in the new-world poet is expressed in such a violent and unbridled manner that it has the appearance on the face of it of incomprehensible brutality, so long as one dwells on the details, and *this*

American criticism has done persistently. But if with regard to these outpourings one hits upon the idea of rebutting them with the same passion with which they obtrude themselves, then, indeed, this mode of regarding them as criterion for a sound judgment is clearly false and invalid. Curiously enough, it is a woman who, with the truthful instinct which so often guides her sex, here first expresses the opinion which does justice to the poet's intention, and by so doing makes a reconsideration of the question inevitable. An English lady (who after reading Walt Whitman's book became one of his enthusiastic admirers, for one of two things always happens—either one takes his part unconditionally or becomes his irreconcilable antagonist) wrote to the editor of the English selection of his poems, W. M. Rossetti, a long letter which he, under the title of "A Woman's Estimate of Walt Whitman," caused to be published in May, 1870, in the *Boston Radical*. This letter, which plainly reveals itself as the effusion of a perspicacious mind cultivated by manifold observation and learning, expressly insists that Whitman's expression of intoxication by the feeling of life is not to be taken by itself but as a phase of the poet's thought—"the primeval foundation of the race;" in consequence of which he praises the splendor of a perfect body and the rich productive powers of the unpoisoned sources of life. The authoress calls attention to this significant line of the poet: "Life of my senses and flesh, transcending my senses and flesh."

It is a poem of the body which the author wishes to make, but such a poem as is full of deeply felt truth, and not a poem in which the worship of beauty becomes the cloak for a carnally excited imagination. It is also readily perceived that it is no subjective erotic poet's pen which has produced these grotesque lines. There is cast over this grim falling foul of those things about which a moral instinct tells men to hold their tongues, a gust as it were of strong inspiration. The new departure, which at first had such a repulsive effect, now appears in any case as a fully conscious spiritual aim; and if a man cannot altogether get his mental habits reconciled to seeing the cymbal of a corybant clashed by a man whose clothes are sewn in a New York tailor's

shop, at least one gets to understand the poet as a characteristic expresser of his country and people. A few years ago the papers announced an exhibition of new-born children in an American town, and the mother of the strongest and healthiest of the little mortals was presented with a valuable prize. On the reception of this prize the triumphant matron with a loud voice undertook in the following year to win the prize that should be then set, and the assembly applauded rapturously. There are points of view from which such things look uncommonly low and brutal, but one would do better to be silent rather than deny that this is a sound and sensible path to be pursued. The same element in the nature of the American people which finds expression in this case has in the poet's mind condensed itself into wild, uncontrollable expression, and inasmuch as he seeks words for what lives within him in the deep layer of the language, without any mealy-mouthedness, he is not therefore an apostle of immorality who without shame substitutes for the well-known obsequious delicacy of European literature mere impudent audacity; he is simply the sober organ of the democratic mind.

The next division of the poems has as general title "Calamus." In one of these poems the author addresses the reader in the following words:

"Whoever you are holding me now in hand,
Without one thing all will be useless,
I give you fair warning before you attempt me further,
I am not what you supposed, but far different.

Who is he that would become my follower?
Who would sign himself a candidate for my affections?

The way is suspicious, the result uncertain, perhaps destructive,
You would have to give up all else, I alone would expect to be your sole
and exclusive standard,
Your novitiate would even then be long and exhausting,
The whole past theory of your life and all conformity to the lives around
you would have to be abandon'd,
Therefore release me now before troubling yourself any further, let go your
hand from my shoulders,
Put me down and depart on your way.

Or else by stealth in some wood for trial,
Or back of a rock in the open air,
(For in any roof'd room of a house I emerge not, nor in company,
And in libraries I lie as one dumb, a gawk, or unborn, or dead,)
But just possibly with you on a high hill, first watching lest any person for
miles around approach unawares,
Or possibly with you sailing at sea, or on the beach of the sea or some quiet
island,
Here to put your lips upon mine I permit you,
With the comrade's long-dwelling kiss or the new husband's kiss,
For I am the new husband and I am the comrade.

Or if you will, thrusting me beneath your clothing,
Where I may feel the throbs of your heart or rest upon your hip,
Carry me when you go forth over land or sea;
For thus merely touching you is enough, is best,
And thus touching you would I silently sleep and be carried eternally.

But these leaves conning you con at peril,
For these leaves and me you will not understand,
They will elude you at first and still more afterward, I will certainly elude
you,
Even while you should think you had unquestionably caught me, behold!
Already you see I have escaped from you."

It is not only that Walt Whitman departs so completely from every previous literary experience, but also that there is so much in him which is rather glimpsed than clearly expressed, and this makes him certainly often glide away from the reader in phrases which can with difficulty be brought under any regular and definite meaning. In any case it will always be possible to follow him through all his chief tendencies if one strives to see in these tendencies an impulse of the very thought of Democracy itself. It is not merely that the individual when in health and power demands free breathing room for its own self, respects the same right in other individuals, and is thereby led to an advantageous self-limitation; there is also a limitation of a more intimate and noble kind which the free self, precisely in the firm feeling of only following the law of its own will, may of spiritual necessity impose upon itself; it is that which lies in the demand

of love. The above mentioned division of "Leaves of Grass" idealizes friendship between men: the love of comrades.

"I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
 All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches,
 Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green,
 And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,
 But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near, for I knew I could not,
 And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,
 And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room,
 It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
 (For I believe lately I think of little else than of them.)
 Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly love;
 For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space,
 Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend a lover near,
 I know very well I could not."

But with the free bond of union which the poet designates in these words as his own soul's necessity he will now encircle the American States and bring about their true oneness.

"Come, I will make the continent indissoluble,
 I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon,
 I will make divine magnetic lands,
 With the love of comrades,
 With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America,
 and along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the prairies,
 I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other's necks,
 By the love of comrades,
 By the manly love of comrades.

For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you ma femme!
 For you, for you I am trilling these songs."

The politico-social freedom-equality doctrine, which through such long ages was so curiously split up among its European heralds, insomuch that first one then another side of it was exaggerated at the expense of the opposite side, has among the

Americans found the link of personal unity which first really holds it together. This whole section of the poem contains so many expressions of a large and warm heart that one gets to love the poet very dearly. This method of approach is precisely what Whitman himself, in the above named address to the reader, puts forward as the only key to a real comprehension of him.

And in the midst of all his egoism we can easily distinguish in him a longing that this key may be discovered.

"Now lift me close to your face till I whisper,
What you are holding is in reality no book, nor part of a book;
It is a man, flush'd and full-blooded—it is I—*So long!*
—We must separate awhile—Here I take from my lips this kiss;
Whoever you are, I give it especially to you;
So long!—And I hope we shall meet again."

Yet not even this current of thought in Walt Whitman have the American critics understood, although it touches the very heart-root of their people. The partiality for sailors, hunters, boatmen and pioneers, expressed in so many places by the poet, has in the very home of democracy been brought up against him as a vulgar penchant, which cannot but exclude him from the culture and nobility a man must necessarily have to work his way in literature. In this respect, however, it was reserved for Whitman, by his very deeds, to declare what his words meant, so that no mistake was any longer possible. His career in the camps and hospitals during the civil war, which followed the early editions of "Leaves of Grass," became the plainest commentary to his song of "love of comrades." But that we possess in Walt Whitman an individuality which has received once for all its impress and full idea of the public spirit prevailing in American and democratic society, is to be recognized, perhaps, most plainly, when we compare him with those poetic phenomena in European literature in whom a bursting forth of the national mind has occurred as if from the very depths of the nation itself. It follows of itself that we are not talking here about the common people in whom in every literature (here at home also) a brief interest has been awakened by means of a

skillful imitation of a poetry which has found its proper expression and exhausted its significance beforehand. . . .

Walt Whitman's poetry certainly brings about a remarkable feeling of life in the reader, and immediately operates as something absolutely original, which has its flow from nature's own source. But those qualities with which the simple popular poet so strangely masters his own mind he possesses in a lesser degree [*i. e.*, Whitman has in less degree than they the dominant characteristics of the popular poet, such as Burns and Koltsov].

In a somewhat old "Travels in America" I once read that the European fruit trees in the soil of the New World bore fruit of far fainter flavor, but, by way of compensation, of a far more considerable size, than in the Old World. Whether or no this be the case, we have here an analogy which is very edifying with regard to the relations between Walt Whitman and his European compeers. He has shot up from a spiritual soil still lacking in the juices which give to the fruits of the mind their peculiar aroma and fascinating sweetness, but the whole circumference is many times greater, and promises, when once the full ripening has come, productions of a far richer power and fulness. The European poets have glorified affection and friendship, as individual feelings. Whitman sings the attraction between the sexes as the healthy foundation of a new race, and men's affectionate devotion to each other as the true uniting energy of a free community. At the same time, his feeling of self and personality is so far from being less strong than it is in those other poets that on the contrary he, quite differently from them, has penetrated into the inmost qualities of self in such a way as lyric torch has never before illuminated. . . .

Whitman is a democratic poet, who has become the spokesman of a democratic people. The breadth of the continent is illustrated in his poems. . . .

There is in Whitman a mass of miscellaneous commonplaces—one might almost say of unsifted newspaper expressions; there is something abrupt, angular, raw, which repulses; but behind all this we observe, at the same time, the volatile mind which has not perished beneath, but works groaning through, the un-

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rhythmic and half-rhythmic combinations of words, which combinations, however, in his happier moments, he brings together so as to form surprising artistic effects.

The impression that we here stand before a new departure makes us again reverse our judgment, however tasteless, even disgusting, the details may have been to us. The feeling comes to one that the pure and perfect beauty with which our minds have been seized in reading Whitman may be attained by this road also and indeed reveal itself (through this style) with a hitherto unknown power and splendor.

Walt Whitman has his own way of computing time. He talks of the "seventieth" or "eightieth year of these states," he calculates by peculiar divisions, and refers to "the Presidentialds," as the old Greeks to the Olympiads. Sometimes the self-consciousness of the Americans assumes such an expression in him that no Yankee even of the most magniloquent sort would find it easy to go beyond him. But the very affection which expresses itself as a broader and wider popular feeling gives the poet the necessary corrective. There are expressions enough to be found in "Leaves of Grass" which guarantee that Whitman is by no means of the same kidney as that American citizen who looked through the papers for a school for his son where he could be exempted from the humbug history of those nations which have been dead and buried these thousands of years and were unable to show a single citizen "who could steer a steamboat or manage a hotel!" If it has hitherto been permitted to us Europeans to write and think as if the New World did not exist, a corresponding one-sided forgetfulness is quite an impossibility with an American poet. Even if his patriotic feeling makes him a citizen rather of a continent than of a country, nevertheless, in that very fact he has a constant reminder that on the other side of the great ocean there is the Old World where stood the cradle of humanity, where his forefathers lived, and where the culture on which he himself rests was founded. This reminder finds constant expression in Walt Whitman, who never lets it go; in his loftiest flights it still hangs over him, at once questioning and warning him.

"As I ponder'd in silence,
 Returning upon my poems, considering, lingering long,
 A Phantom arose before me with distrustful aspect,
 Terrible in beauty, age, and power,
 The genius of poets of old lands,
 As to me directing like flame its eyes,
 With finger pointing to many immortal songs,
 And menacing voice, *What singest thou ?* it said."

And even in places where the self-exaltation of the poet reaches its most extravagant height, as in the following apostrophe :

"I heard that you ask'd for something to prove this puzzle the New World,
 And to define America, her athletic Democracy,
 Therefore I send you my poems that you behold in them what you wanted."

Even this apostrophe is expressly addressed to foreign lands.

This recollection has also inspired Walt Whitman with one of his most remarkable poems, "*Salut au Monde*." The strong feeling of forming part of an all-comprehending world-wide solidarity—this feeling of being enriched by the life of the past and the manifold forms of human existence—finds in this poem singularly vigorous expression, and produces a series of images with the comprehensiveness and instantaneousness of a bird's-eye view. It is in reality a winged flight through all the ages and across all the world. As if in a lightning flash, which is kindled and expires in the same moment, we see the bloom and decline of nations, the clash of events, the might and ruin of civilizations, the peculiarity of climates and different modes of life, the seductions and terrors of nature, the whole dashed off in a few rapid lines, but often with so sure an intuition that the reader feels the image fastened in his soul as an abiding possession. There are undeniably long stretches of leaden prose in between. In passages like this—

"I am of Madrid, Cadiz, Barcelona, Oporto, Lyons, Brussels, Berne, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Turin, Florence"—

there is neither poetry nor rhythm ; yet the poet returns to simi-

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lar enumerations both here and in other poems with peculiar fondness.

The *North American Review* for January, 1867, has with scornful words twitted him with this peculiarity; far more correct, however, certainly is the critic of the *Westminster Review* when he insists that these lists, whether they serve to make the mental horizon wider and clearer, or whether they are purely fragmentary or occasional, always have the same feeling of intense vitality. His joy in human life and in the manifold phases of nature is consequently intelligible to us even in those cases where we cannot share it with him; we are carried along with him because we have observed and felt his full-born power elsewhere; and even when the poet's voice sounds hoarse and harsh to us, we nevertheless feel that he who here pours out his "barbaric yawn over the roofs of the world" is a spirit whose wings really have power to bear him everywhere. But this poem, "Salut au Monde," also shows the way to the last point of difference between Walt Whitman and the poets who in Europe spring spiritually from the very heart of the people. The poetry which begins with sexual glorification as an organic operation of nature, ends in boldly taking possession of the spirit of humanity and the whole content of history in a high note of warning as to the continuity of the American people. For such an eagle flight as this those other poet natures wanted both wings and desire. They were souls full of spiritual yearnings, motive powers of whole communities, capable of high aspirations but not of attaining the last heights. Walt Whitman is a soul who possesses all the great fundamental ideas, but he is only able occasionally to imperfectly let the contents of his mind blaze forth in thoughts which take on at their best in his verse the glowing beauty of newly-cast precious metals. His admirers regard him as being as great a thinker as poet; in reality, he is a heaving, restless combination of both. Upon him the great fundamental principle of Pantheism, as understood by German thinkers in the first three-quarters of the present century, has exercised the same power of enchantment that it seems bound to exert on every one who awakens to life in the higher realms of thought. The gradations

under which all the poems in "Leaves of Grass" so naturally seem to fall is in reality only the Americanized interpretation of the dogma of absolute philosophy of the unity of the world of spirit and nature. In a letter to the author of these lines Walt Whitman himself names Hegelianism as the undercurrent which fructifies his views of life. Thus pantheistic amalgamation agrees up to a certain point with the essence of democracy, but beyond that point it becomes altogether opposed to it; and this split is plainly recognizable in Walt Whitman. He plunges with the joy of a swimmer into the billows of the common life of the universe, where one form constantly proceeds from another as the expression of one and the same formative energy. He also joyfully takes up the grand thought of the impossibility of evil, and likes to look upon that which usually scandalizes men as an expression, lawful in its way, of life's energies. But there is a boundary line beyond which his instincts stubbornly refuse to be carried by this current upon which he has allowed himself so trustfully to be borne along. The Democrat who uttered the words "I celebrate myself" will not be satisfied in death with flowing back into the circle of universal being. He is determined to have his individuality, his own self, along with him, on the other side of the dark entrance. From moment to moment he lets his voice ring forth, questioning, into the gloom of death, and proudly marks how the vaulted distance echoes back the sound. Whitman's fancy rises in his addresses to Death to an unusual glow of color, and this exalted and religious feeling can be discerned perhaps most plainly in the brief, cold conclusion of the epigrammatic poem "Repondez:"

"Let the limited years of life do nothing for the limitless years of death!
(What do you suppose death will do, then?)"

If one asks, once for all, has Walt Whitman any peculiarly poetic gifts? the answer is, that the evidence of such is undoubtedly to be found in him, and now and then of a power and purity that has seldom if ever been surpassed. There are images that for simplicity and directness remind us of the Homeric pictures, and there are flights of fancy of marvellous grace and

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vivacity. Read, for instance, the following fragments of a poem which has for title the author's own name :

"A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than
he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff
woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and
remark, and say *Whose?*

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,
Growing among black folks as among white,
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive
them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them."

This fragment, moreover, points back to the constantly recurring title "*Grass*," which Whitman dwells upon everywhere with peculiar fondness as nature's Democracy—it being, as it were, the first child of the vegetable kingdom—the symbol of the new spiritual life which the poet very well knows is to proceed from himself. . . .

The scorn with which Walt Whitman and his followers constantly talk about "*dulcet rhymes*" is explicable when one has seen specimens of this sort of poetry and learns that a young and excitable community has been fed with such mental fodder from one year's end to the other without any remonstrance on the part of the critics. The periodical press in America, although on the whole able and often served by men who are by no means want-

ing in learning, can scarcely, either in spirit or tendency, be regarded as an æsthetic production. It presents everywhere one and the same uncertain imitation of European culture, and is without any essential accord with the life of the people whose spiritual growth it is supposed to judge and guide. What from the first go-off has lowered Walt Whitman in the eyes of these guardians of literature is his democratic origin. A self-made man in America is respected in American business life, politics, and society, but in the world of literature a free, self-acquired development makes one a grotesque and offensive figure. The superiority which lies in a vigorously lived life, with its manifold impressions, the critics have never been willing to recognize, although, from the first, it was pointed out to them by one of the strongest voices in American literature. In such expressions as these—

"Walt Whitman a cosmos, of Manhattan the son,
Turbulent, fleshy, and sensual, eating, drinking and breeding"—

they missed the point from the very first—a "cosmos" which points out clearly enough, in all conscience, that the author under his own name meant to express a type: the American democrat, namely, fully and vigorously equipped—the Adamic figure of the Nineteenth Century. So, without more ado, they regarded the audacious words as the unblushing personal revelations of a crude human creature. And although it is evident that Walt Whitman, in the course of years, has clarified the experiences of his life by reading and science of the most manifold description, nevertheless the whole numerous herd of critics, who themselves are not able to express a single word which goes to the very nerve of society, constantly look down upon a genuine and original poetic nature out of unshaken confidence in the superiority which a cut and dried method of exposition is presumed to give them. John Burroughs' book is like the stroke of an axe in this virgin forest of pettiness and wrong-headedness—it is written so boldly and ably. . . .

Walt Whitman's smaller prose works make a peculiar impression; they altogether lack the swing in representation which

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journals all over the world put such an extraordinary value upon. The poet of "Leaves of Grass" has no faculty for the sharp-spiced meats of modern journalism, and many things in these essays may be called insignificant from a literary standpoint. But he who has once come to love Walt Whitman will value even these small works. They will remind him of the Latin verse which says: "Clay vessels saturated with wine will preserve its fragrance even after they have been soused with water." . . .

"Drum-Taps" are more artistic than Whitman's former poems—the real poetic essence in the man's nature has here violently burst forth. . . .

That of Whitman's writings which leaves the strongest impression of an elevated and superior mind, a glancing with penetration upon all the events of its time and people, and the clearest judgment as to their meaning and tendency, is his little prose book, "Democratic Vistas." To say of this work that it is in its kind the most pregnant thing that has ever been written would not be a completely correct description, for the work is unique; it represents quite a new type of literary production. The fire of the poet and the lucidity of the thinker are here united with the marvellous foresight of the seer. The manifold elements in Whitman's nature are in this book woven together into a prose to which one may most truly apply an often misused expression, viz., that it resembles a stream of molten noble metals. And the simile becomes the more striking when we remember that the series of thoughts, although often in literary contradiction with the rapid course of words employed, nevertheless harmonize with each other so perfectly that they point to a hidden law of unity in the author's personality. The work is built upon the idea that public spirit is not created by institutions as our national liberals naïvely imagine, but that institutions themselves will infallibly grow rotten, like an old mill, if public spirit is not constantly at work propping them up and re-edifying them. What Whitman aims at is the individual—his principle and will. Whilst public opinion in America generally puts forward railway extension and technical invention as the immediate testimony of human progress, Walt Whitman, on the other

hand, insists as the condition of true advance on the necessity of a new race of poets, orators, folk-awakeners, who, born of the democratic spirit, shall lift the masses to the level of their own thought. Scarcely anywhere else in the world has the superficial democratic mental culture been submitted to such a scarifying criticism—the real democratic programme has never been placed before our eyes in its circumference and development with such a prophetic sureness.

There is scarcely a single movement in politics, social life and literature which the author does not touch with the finger of genius and bring under a surprising, hitherto unsuspected, illumination. Every fresh time that we take up the book it reveals to us new points of view and gives us an ever-growing impression of the depth and width of the thoughts contained in it. In this work, which in so many ways proclaims the renaissance of life, the poet's fancy makes itself felt, penetrated with the constantly recurring thought of Death also. To him the highest aim of democratic poetry is to write the "Song of Death," the conquest of which, to Whitman, is only another name for the victory of personality. . . .

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"LEAVES OF GRASS" AND MODERN SCIENCE.

By RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE.

WALT WHITMAN is not a scientist nor in any sense a teacher of science. There is no evidence that he has valued or studied technical knowledge in any of its numerous departments. His is the science of the seer or poet (but always of the modern seer), which comes not of study but of direct insight. It is not less exact than that of the scientist and is more comprehensive and vital. He is not informed (the inside of him is not formed) by books. He hears the stars of heaven whispering. The suns, the grassy mounds of graves, the eternal omnipresent and perpetual transfers and promotions of the objective universe, tell him the open secrets that so few ever discover, that none read in books.

Did he study mythology? Well, perhaps he did, if he ever studied anything. At all events, he has mastered it and has seen and taught more clearly, I think, than any predecessor, the central fact of it, viz., that all religions are really one, and one only. Merely different languages, each expressing the same thing. Exactly as "Ich weiss nicht," "Je ne sais pas," and "I don't know," all mean (are) the same. So in a truly scientific spirit he accepts all faiths as all equally divine—as all equally human—as all having sprung from the great heart of man—as all having been shaped by his inspired lips. Bibles and religions are, he says, divine, but they have all grown out of man and may grow out of him still. It is he that gives life to them, not they that give life to him.

He is not an Egyptologist, but has perhaps dipped as deep as

any man into the secret of the far back race that reared its obelisks on the banks of the venerable, vast mother, the Nile.

He probably knows little or nothing of technical physiology, but for all that in "Children of Adam" he has recognized and acted upon one of the deepest of all physiological truths (far too wide and deep to be set forth here), and in so doing has (on the supposition that his work will live) done more for the future of the human race than all the physiologists and doctors of this generation. Emerson made a strenuous attempt to divert Walt Whitman from his purpose as contained in these, the most vital and important of all his poems, but happily, and indeed inevitably, without success. The poet knew that this realm also belonged to him. That the forbidden and veiled voices had to be allowed and unveiled. That the indecent voices had to be transfigured, and the impure voices clarified, and that he, for his part, was not permitted to press his fingers across his mouth, but had to speak out and prove to a skeptic world that sexual organs and acts are not vile, but more than all else illustrious. This achievement of his is (if we will think of it) a result of profound, and at the same time practical (not so much "modern" as future), science.

Walt Whitman has never been (I suppose) a student of zoology, but before the "Origin of Species" was published—back in the early fifties—he knew why the animals reminded him of himself. That he had passed that way huge times ago, and had negligently dropped the human tokens that they exhibit, himself moving forward then and now and forever, infinite and omnigenous.

The so-called nebular hypothesis and the whole modern theory of evolution seem to have been present and familiar to his mind from the first. Did he get them from Laplace, Lamarck and the "Vestiges," or did he himself see evolution occurring? The nebula cohering to an orb? The piling of the long, slow strata? The vast vegetables and the monstrous sauroids? The latter view seems the more likely.

Without study, by mere observation of the life of the men and women around him, see the depth and scope of his political

and sociological teaching. Nothing short of absolute equality of surroundings—the abolition of individual ownership, the desuetude and contempt for all outward law (the inner taking its place), the perfect freedom and balance of the sexes, the recognition of the sacredness of each individual, faith in the ultimate salvation and perfection of all without exception—will satisfy him.

Note the field he covers. How he touches upon or dips into all conceivable subjects, and never (as far as I know) strikes a false note. Never of course covering or intending to cover the field, he equally never writes a line or word inconsistent with any part of the truth; his instinct is infallible; his insight never at fault; his intuition as direct and sure as gravitation.

If this be true where we can check him, how about those numerous passages in which we cannot check him? Does the inner light serve him so far and then abandon him? Or does it light his path in these obscure regions also? To me this is a question of questions; neither am I in doubt as to its answer.

Oct. 20, 1890: The prospect for the Ingersoll meeting to-morrow night looks well—Horace has worked like a beaver—Dr B is here—I feel in the midst of my best staunchest friends.

Oct. 22: Well the Ingersoll lecture came off last ev'g in Horticultural Hall, Broad st: Phila.—a noble, (very eulogistic to W W & L of G) eloquent speech, well responded to by the audience. There were 1600 to 2000 people (choice persons,) one-third women (proceeds to me \$869.45). I went over, was wheeled on the stage in my rattan chair, and at the last spoke a very few words—A splendid success for Ingersoll (& me too.) Ing: had a written, & read with considerable fire, but perfect ease.

Oct. 23: Have read (& been reading all through) the well printed complete essay of R G Ingersoll, "Liberty & Literature"—& it permeates & satisfies & explains itself splendidly to me, brain & heart—(after all, I want to leisurely read & dwell on any profound or first-rate piece—one thing is, my hearing is not to-day real good, & another thing probably is I am rather slow anyhow).

Walt Whitman's Journal.

LIBERTY IN LITERATURE.

By ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

[This lecture was delivered as a benefit to Walt Whitman, in Philadelphia, October 21, 1890. Whitman was present on the platform, and after Colonel Ingersoll had finished said: "After all, my friends, the main factors being the curious testimony called personal presence and face to face meeting, I have come here to be among you and show myself, and thank you with my living voice for coming, and Robert Ingersoll for speaking. And so with such brief testimony of showing myself, and such good will and gratitude, I bid you hail and farewell."—THE EDITORS.]

I.

In the year 1855 the American people knew but little of books. Their ideals, their models, were English. Young and Pollok, Addison and Watts were regarded as great poets. Some of the more reckless read Thomson's "Seasons" and the poems and novels of Sir Walter Scott. A few, not quite orthodox, delighted in the mechanical monotony of Pope, and the really wicked—those lost to all religious shame—were worshippers of Shakspeare. The really orthodox Protestant, untroubled by doubts, considered Milton the greatest poet of them all. Byron and Shelley were hardly respectable—not to be read by young persons. It was admitted on all hands that Burns was a child of nature of whom his mother was ashamed and proud.

In the blessed year aforesaid, candor, free and sincere speech, were under the ban. Creeds at that time were entrenched behind statutes, prejudice, custom, ignorance, stupidity, puritanism and slavery; that is to say, slavery of mind and body.

Of course it always has been, and forever will be, impossible for slavery, or any kind or form of injustice, to produce a great poet. There are hundreds of verse makers and writers on the side

of wrong—enemies of progress—but they are not poets, they are not men of genius.

At this time a young man—he to whom this testimonial is given—he upon whose head have fallen the snows of more than seventy winters—this man, born within the sound of the sea, gave to the world a book, "Leaves of Grass." This book was, and is, the true transcript of a soul. The man is unmasked. No drapery of hypocrisy, no pretense, no fear. The book was as original in form as in thought. All customs were forgotten or disregarded, all rules broken—nothing mechanical—no imitation—spontaneous, running and winding like a river, multitudinous in its thoughts as the waves of the sea—nothing mathematical or measured. In everything a touch of chaos—lacking what is called form as clouds lack form, but not lacking the splendor of sunrise or the glory of sunset. It was a marvellous collection and aggregation of fragments, hints, suggestions, memories and prophecies, weeds and flowers, clouds and clods, sights and sounds, emotions and passions, waves, shadows and constellations.

His book was received by many with disdain, with horror, with indignation and protest—by the few as a marvellous, almost miraculous, message to the world—full of thought, philosophy, poetry and music.

In the republic of mediocrity genius is dangerous. A great soul appears and fills the world with new and marvellous harmonies. In his words is the old Promethean flame. The heart of nature beats and throbs in his line. The respectable prudes and pedagogues sound the alarm, and cry, or rather screech: "Is this a book for a young person?"

A poem true to life as a Greek statue—candid as nature—fills these barren souls with fear.

They forget that drapery about the perfect was suggested by immodesty.

The provincial prudes, and others of like mold, pretend that love is a duty rather than a passion—a kind of self-denial—not an over-mastering joy. They preach the gospel of pretense and pantalettes. In the presence of sincerity, of truth, they cast down

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their eyes and endeavor to feel immodest. To them, the most beautiful thing is hypocrisy adorned with a blush.

They have no idea of an honest, pure passion, glorying in its strength—intense, intoxicated with the beautiful, giving even to inanimate things pulse and motion, and that transfigures, ennobles, and idealizes the object of its adoration.

They do not walk the streets of the city of life—they explore the sewers; they stand in the gutters and cry “Unclean!” They pretend that beauty is a snare; that love is a Delilah; that the highway of joy is the broad road, lined with flowers and filled with perfume, leading to the city of eternal sorrow.

Since the year 1855 the American people have developed; they are somewhat acquainted with the literature of the world. They have witnessed the most tremendous of revolutions, not only upon the fields of battle, but in the world of thought. The American citizen has concluded that it is hardly worth while being a sovereign unless he has the right to think for himself.

And now, from this height, with the vantage-ground of to-day, I propose to examine this book and to state, in a general way, what Walt Whitman has done, what he has accomplished, and the place he has won in the world of thought.

II.—THE RELIGION OF THE BODY.

Walt Whitman stood, when he published his book, where all stand to-night—on the perpetually moving line where history ends and prophecy begins. He was full of life to the very tips of his fingers—brave, eager, candid, joyous with health. He was acquainted with the past. He knew something of song and story, of philosophy and art—much of the heroic dead, of brave suffering, of the thoughts of men, the habits of the people—rich as well as poor—familiar with labor, a friend of wind and wave, touched by love and friendship—liking the open road, enjoying the fields and paths, the crags—friend of the forest—feeling that he was free—neither master nor slave—willing that all should know his thoughts—open as the sky, candid as nature—and he gave his thoughts, his dreams, his conclusions, his hopes, and his mental portrait to his fellow-men.

Walt Whitman announced the gospel of the body. He confronted the people. He denied the depravity of man. He insisted that love is not a crime; that men and women should be proudly natural; that they need not grovel on the earth and cover their faces for shame. He taught the dignity and glory of the father and mother; the sacredness of maternity.

Maternity, tender and pure as the tear of pity, holy as suffering—the crown, the flower, the ecstasy of love.

People had been taught from bibles and from creeds that maternity was a kind of crime; that the woman should be purified by some ceremony in some temple built in honor of some god. This barbarism was attacked in "Leaves of Grass."

The glory of simple life was sung; a declaration of independence was made for each and all.

And yet this appeal to manhood and to womanhood was misunderstood. It was denounced simply because it was in harmony with the great trend of nature. To me, the most obscene word in our language is celibacy.

It was not the fashion for people to speak or write their thoughts. We were flooded with the literature of hypocrisy. The writers did not faithfully describe the worlds in which they lived. They endeavored to make a fashionable world. They pretended that the cottage or the hut in which they dwelt was a palace, and they called the little area in which they threw their slops their domain, their realm, their empire. They were ashamed of the real, of what their world actually was. They imitated; that is to say, they told lies, and these lies filled the literature of most lands.

Walt Whitman defended the sacredness of love, the purity of passion—the passion that builds every home and fills the world with art and song.

They cried out: "He is a defender of passion—he is a libertine! He lives in the mire. He lacks spirituality!"

Whoever differs with the multitude, especially with a led multitude—that is to say, with a multitude of taggers—will find out from their leaders that he has committed an unpardonable sin.

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It is a crime to travel a road of your own, especially if you put up guide-boards for the information of others.

Many, many centuries ago Epicurus, the greatest man of his century, and of many centuries before and after, said: "Happiness is the only good; happiness is the supreme end." This man was temperate, frugal, generous, noble—and yet through all these years he has been denounced by the hypocrites of the world as a mere eater and drinker.

It was said that Whitman had exaggerated the importance of love—that he had made too much of this passion. Let me say that no poet—not excepting Shakspeare—has had imagination enough to exaggerate the importance of human love—a passion that contains all heights and all depths—ample as space, with a sky in which glitter all constellations, and that has within it all storms, all lightnings, all wrecks and ruins, all griefs, all sorrows, all shadows, and all the joy and sunshine of which the heart and brain are capable.

No writer must be measured by a word or paragraph. He is to be measured by his work—by the tendency, not of one line, but by the tendency of all.

Which way does the great stream tend? Is it for good or evil? Are the motives high and noble, or low and infamous?

We cannot measure Shakspeare by a few lines, neither can we measure the Bible by a few chapters, nor "Leaves of Grass" by a few paragraphs. In each there are many things that I neither approve nor believe—but in all books you will find a mingling of wisdom and foolishness, of prophecies and mistakes—in other words, among the excellencies there will be defects. The mine is not all gold, or all silver, or all diamonds—there are baser metals. The trees of the forest are not all of one size. On some of the highest there are dead and useless limbs, and there may be growing beneath the bushes, weeds, and now and then a poisonous vine.

If I were to edit the great books of the world, I might leave out some lines and I might leave out the best. I have no right to make of my brain a sieve and say that only that which passes

through belongs to the rest of the human race. I claim the right to choose. I give that right to all.

Walt Whitman had the courage to express his thought—the candor to tell the truth. And here let me say it gives me joy—a kind of perfect satisfaction—to look above the bigoted bats, the satisfied owls and wrens and chickadees, and see the great eagle poised, circling higher and higher, unconscious of their existence. And it gives me joy, a kind of perfect satisfaction, to look above the petty passions and jealousies of small and respectable people—above the considerations of place and power and reputation, and see a brave, intrepid man.

It must be remembered that the American people had separated from the Old World—that we had declared not only the independence of colonies, but the independence of the individual. We had done more—we had declared that the state could no longer be ruled by the Church, and that the Church could not be ruled by the state, and that the individual could not be ruled by the Church. These declarations were in danger of being forgotten. We needed a new voice, sonorous, loud and clear, a new poet for America for the new epoch, somebody to chant the morning song of the new day.

The great man who gives a true transcript of his mind fascinates and instructs. Most writers suppress individuality. They wish to please the public. They flatter the stupid and pander to the prejudice of their readers. They write for the market—making books as other mechanics make shoes. They have no message—they bear no torch—they are simply the slaves of customers. The books they manufacture are handled by “the trade;” they are regarded as harmless. The pulpit does not object; the young person can read the monotonous pages without a blush—or a thought. On the title pages of these books you will find the imprint of the great publishers—on the rest of the pages nothing. These books might be prescribed for insomnia.

III.

Men of talent, men of business, touch life upon few sides.

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They travel but the beaten path. The creative spirit is not in them. They regard with suspicion a poet who touches life on every side. They have little confidence in that divine thing called sympathy, and they do not and cannot understand the man who enters into the hopes, the aims, and the feelings of all others.

In all genius there is the touch of chaos—a little of the vagabond; and the successful tradesman, the man who buys and sells, or manages a bank, does not care to deal with a person who has only poems for collaterals—they have a little fear of such people, and regard them as the awkward countryman does a sleight-of-hand performer.

In every age in which books have been produced the governing class, the respectable, have been opposed to the works of real genius. If what are known as the best people could have had their way, if the pulpit had been consulted—the provincial moralists—the works of Shakspeare would have been suppressed. Not a line would have reached our time. And the same may be said of every dramatist of his age.

If the Scotch Kirk could have decided, nothing would have been known of Robert Burns. If the good people, the orthodox, could have had their say, not one line of Voltaire would now be known. All the plates of the French Encyclopedia would have been destroyed with the thousands that were destroyed. Nothing would have been known of D'Alembert, Grimm, Diderot, or any of the Titans who warred against the thrones and altars and laid the foundation of modern literature not only, but, what is of far greater moment, universal education.

It is not too much to say that every book now held in high esteem would have been destroyed if those in authority could have had their will. Every book of modern times that has a real value, that has enlarged the intellectual horizon of mankind, that has developed the brain, that has furnished real food for thought, can be found in the Index Expurgatorius of the Papacy, and nearly every one has been commended to the free minds of men by the denunciations of Protestants.

If the guardians of society, the protectors of "young persons,"

could have had their way, we should have known nothing of Byron or Shelley. The voices that thrill the world would now be silent. If authority could have had its way, the world would have been as ignorant now as it was when our ancestors lived in holes or hung from dead limbs by their prehensile tails.

But we are not forced to go very far back. If Shakspeare had been published for the first time now, those divine plays—greater than continents and seas, greater even than the constellations of the midnight sky—would be excluded from the mails by the decision of the present enlightened postmaster-general.

The poets have always lived in an ideal world, and that ideal world has always been far better than the real world. As a consequence, they have forever roused, not simply the imagination, but the energies—the enthusiasm of the human race.

The great poets have been on the side of the oppressed—of the downtrodden. They have suffered with the imprisoned and the enslaved, and whenever and wherever man has suffered for the right, wherever the hero has been stricken down—whether on field or scaffold—some man of genius has walked by his side, and some poet has given form and expression, not simply to his deeds, but to his aspirations.

From the Greek and Roman world we still hear the voices of a few. The poets, the philosophers, the artists and the orators still speak. Countless millions have been covered by the waves of oblivion, but the few who uttered the elemental truths, who had sympathy for the whole human race, and who were great enough to prophesy a grander day, are as alive to-night as when they roused, by their bodily presence, by their living voices, by their works of art, the enthusiasm of their fellow-men.

Think of the respectable people, of the men of wealth and position, those who dwelt in mansions, children of success, who went down to the grave voiceless, and whose names we do not know. Think of the vast multitudes, the endless processions, that entered the caverns of eternal night—leaving no thought—no truth as a legacy to mankind!

The great poets have sympathized with the people. They have uttered in all ages the human cry. Unbought by gold, un-

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awed by power, they have lifted high the torch that illuminates the world.

IV.

Walt Whitman is in the highest sense a believer in democracy. He knows that there is but one excuse for government—the preservation of liberty; to the end that man may be happy. He knows that there is but one excuse for any institution, secular or religious—the preservation of liberty; and that there is but one excuse for schools, for universal education, for the ascertainment of facts, namely, the preservation of liberty. He resents the arrogance and cruelty of power. He has sworn never to be tyrant or slave. He has solemnly declared:

"I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy,

By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms."

This one declaration covers the entire ground. It is a declaration of independence, and it is also a declaration of justice, that is to say, a declaration of the independence of the individual, and a declaration that all shall be free. The man who has this spirit can truthfully say:

"I have taken off my hat to nothing known or unknown.

I am for those that have never been master'd."

There is in Whitman what he calls "the boundless impatience of restraint"—together with that sense of justice which compelled him to say, "Neither a servant nor a master am I."

He was wise enough to know that giving others the same rights that he claims for himself could not harm him, and he was great enough to say: "As if it were not indispensable to my own rights that others possess the same."

He felt as all should feel, that the liberty of no man is safe unless the liberty of each is safe.

There is in our country a little of the old servile spirit, a little of the bowing and cringing to others. Many Americans do not understand that the officers of the government are simply the servants of the people. Nothing is so demoralizing as the wor-

ship of place. Whitman has reminded the people of this country that they are supreme, and he has said to them :

"The President is there in the White House for you, it is not you who are here for him,
The Secretaries act in their bureaus for you, not you here for them. . . .
Doctrines, politics and civilization exurge from you,
Sculpture and monuments and any thing inscribed anywhere are tallied in you."

He describes the ideal American citizen—the one who

"Says indifferently and alike 'How are you, friend?' to the President at his levee,
And he says 'Good-day, my brother,' to Cudge that hoes in the sugar-field."

Long ago, when the politicians were wrong, when the judges were subservient, when the pulpit was a coward, Walt Whitman shouted :

"Man shall not hold property in man.
The least develop'd person on earth is just as important and sacred to himself or herself as the most develop'd person is to himself or herself."

This is the very soul of true democracy.

Beauty is not all there is of poetry. It must contain the truth. It is not simply an oak, rude and grand, neither is it simply a vine. It is both. Around the oak of truth runs the vine of beauty.

Walt Whitman utters the elemental truths and is the poet of democracy. He is also the poet of individuality.

V.—INDIVIDUALITY.

In order to protect the liberties of a nation, we must protect the individual. A democracy is a nation of free individuals. The individuals are not to be sacrificed to the nation. The nation exists only for the purpose of guarding and protecting the individuality of men and women. Walt Whitman has told us that : "The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single individual—namely to You."

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And he has also told us that the greatest city—the greatest nation—is “where the citizen is always the head and ideal.”

And that

“A great city is that which has the greatest men and women,
If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole world.”

By this test maybe the greatest city on the continent to-night is Camden.

This poet has asked of us this question :

“What do you suppose will satisfy the soul, except to walk free and own no superior?”

The man who asks this question has left no impress of his lips in the dust, and has no dirt upon his knees.

He was great enough to say :

“The soul has that measureless pride which revolts from every lesson but its own.”

He carries the idea of individuality to its utmost height :

“What do you suppose I would intimate to you in a hundred ways, but that man or woman is as good as God?

And that there is no God any more divine than Yourself?”

Glorying in individuality, in the freedom of the soul, he cries out :

“O to struggle against great odds, to meet enemies undaunted !
To be entirely alone with them, to find how much one can stand !
To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, face to face !
To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of guns with perfect non-chalance !
To be indeed a God !”

And again :

“O the joy of a manly self-hood !
To be servile to none, to defer to none, not to any tyrant known or unknown,
To walk with erect carriage, a step springy and elastic,
To look with calm gaze or with a flashing eye,

To speak with a full and sonorous voice out of a broad chest,
To confront with your personality all the other personalities of the earth."

Walt Whitman is willing to stand alone. He is sufficient unto himself, and he says:

"Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune."

"Strong and content I travel the open road."

He is one of

"Those that look carelessly in the faces of Presidents and Governors, as to say 'Who are you?'"

And not only this, but he has the courage to say: "Nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self."

Walt Whitman is the poet of Individuality—the defender of the rights of each for the sake of all—and his sympathies are as wide as the world. He is the defender of the whole race.

VI.—HUMANITY.

The great poet is intensely human—ininitely sympathetic—entering into the joys and griefs of others, bearing their burdens, knowing their sorrows. Brain without heart is not much; they must act together. When the respectable people of the North, the rich, the successful, were willing to carry out the Fugitive Slave law, Walt Whitman said:

"I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marksmen,
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze of my
skin,
I fall on the weeds and stones,
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,
Taunt my dizzy ears, and beat me violently over the head with whip-stocks.

Agonies are one of my changes of garments,
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded
person."

"I . . . see myself in prison shaped like another man,
And feel the dull unintermitted pain.

For me the keepers of convicts shoulder their carbines and keep watch,
It is I let out in the morning and barr'd at night.

Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail but I am handcuff'd to him; and walk
by his side."

"He judges not as the judge judges but as the sun falling round a helpless
thing."

Of the very worst he had the infinite tenderness to say: "Not
till the sun excludes you do I exclude you."

In this age of greed when houses and lands, and stocks and
bonds, outrank human life; when gold is of more value than
blood, these words should be read by all:

"When the psalm sings instead of the singer,
When the script preaches instead of the preacher,
When the pulpit descends and goes instead of the carver that carved the
supporting desk,
When I can touch the body of boots by night or by day, and when I cry
touch my body back again,
When a university course convinces like a slumbering woman and child
convinced,
When the minted gold in the vault smiles like the night-watchman's
daughter,
When warrantee deeds loafe in chairs opposite and are my friendly com-
panions,
I intend to reach them my hand, and make as much of them as I do of men
and women like you."

VII.

The poet is also a painter, a sculptor—he, too, deals in form
and color. The great poet is of necessity a great artist. With
a few words he creates pictures, filling his canvas with living men
and women—with those who feel and speak. Have you ever
read the account of the stage-driver's funeral? Let me read it:

"Cold dash of waves at the ferry-wharf, posh and ice in the river, half-frozen
mud in the streets,

A gray discouraged sky overhead, the short last daylight of December,

A hearse and stages, the funeral of an old Broadway stage-driver, the cortege mostly drivers.

Steady the trot to the cemetery, duly rattles the death-bell,
The gate is pass'd, the new-dug grave is halted at, the living alight, the
hearse uncloses,
The coffin is pass'd out, lower'd and settled, the whip is laid on the coffin,
the earth is swiftly shovel'd in,
The mound above is flatted with the spades—silence,
A minute—no one moves or speaks—it is done,
He is decently put away—is there any thing more ?

He was a good fellow, free-mouth'd, quick-temper'd, not bad-looking,
Ready with life or death for a friend, fond of women, gambled, ate hearty,
drank hearty,
Had known what it was to be flush, grew low-spirited toward the last, sick-
en'd, was helped by a contribution,
Died, aged forty-one years—and that was his funeral."

Let me read you another description—one of a woman :

"Behold a woman !
She looks out from her Quaker cap, her face is clearer and more beautiful
than the sky.

She sits in an armchair under the shaded porch of the farmhouse,
The sun just shines on her old white head.

Her ample gown is of cream-hued linen,
Her grandsons raised the flax, and her granddaughters spun it with the dis-
taff and the wheel.

The melodious character of the earth,
The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go and does not wish to go,
The justified mother of men."

Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight ?

"Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars ?
List to the yarn, as my grandmother's father the sailor told it to me.

Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you (said he),
His was the surly English pluck, and there is no tougher or truer, and never
was, and never will be ;

Along the lower'd eve he came horribly raking us.
We closed with him, the yards entangled, the cannon touch'd,
My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.

We had receiv'd some elgteen pound shots under the water,
On our lower gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire, killing all
around and blowing up overhead.

Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark,
Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain, and five
feet of water reported,
The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the afterhold to give
them a chance for themselves.

The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sentinels,
They see so many strange faces they do not know whom to trust.

Our frigate takes fire,
The other asks if we demand quarter?
If our colors are struck and the fighting done?

Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain,
We have not struck, he composedly cries, *we have just begun our part of
the fighting.*

Only three guns are in use,
One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's mainmast,
Two well serv'd with grape and canister silence his musketry and clear his
decks.

The tops alone second the fire of this little battery, especially the main-top,
They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

Not a moment's cease,
The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire eats toward the powder-magazine.

One of the pumps has been shot away, it is generally thought we are
sinking.

Serene stands the little captain,
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low,
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they surrender to us.

Stretch'd and still lies the midnight,
 Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the darkness,
 Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking, preparations to pass to the one we
 have conquer'd,
 The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders through a counte-
 nance white as a sheet,
 Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd in the cabin,
 The dead face of an old salt with long white hair and carefully curl'd
 whiskers,
 The flames spite of all that can be done flickering aloft and below,
 The husky voices of the two or three officers yet fit for duty,
 Formless stacks of bodies and bodies by themselves, dabs of flesh upon the
 masts and spars,
 Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight shock of the soothe of waves,
 Black and impassive guns, litter of powder-parcels, strong scent,
 A few large stars overhead, silent and mournful shining,
 Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and fields by the shore,
 death-messages given in charge to survivors,
 The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of his saw,
 Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream, and long, dull,
 tapering groan."

Some people say that this is not poetry—that it lacks measure and rhyme.

VIII.—WHAT IS POETRY?

The whole world is engaged in the invisible commerce of thought. That is to say, in the exchange of thoughts by words, symbols, sounds, colors and forms. The motions of the silent, invisible world, where feeling glows and thought flames—that contains all seeds of action—are made known only by sounds and colors, forms, objects, relations, uses and qualities—so that the visible universe is a dictionary, an aggregation of symbols, by which and through which is carried on the invisible commerce of thought. Each object is capable of many meanings, or of being used in many ways to convey ideas or states of feeling or of facts that take place in the world of the brain.

The greatest poet is the one who selects the best, the most appropriate symbols to convey the best, the highest, the sublimest thoughts. Each man occupies a world of his own. He

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is the only citizen of his world. He is subject and sovereign, and the best he can do is to give the facts concerning the world in which he lives to the citizens of other worlds. No two of these worlds are alike. They are of all kinds, from the flat, barren, and uninteresting—from the small and shrivelled and worthless—to those whose rivers and mountains and seas and constellations belittle and cheapen the visible world. The inhabitants of these marvellous worlds have been the singers of songs, utterers of great speech—the creators of art.

And here lies the difference between creators and imitators: the creator tells what passes in his own world—the imitator does not. The imitator abdicates, and by the fact of imitation falls upon his knees. He is like one who, hearing a traveller talk, pretends to others that he has travelled.

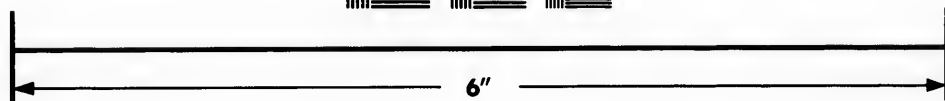
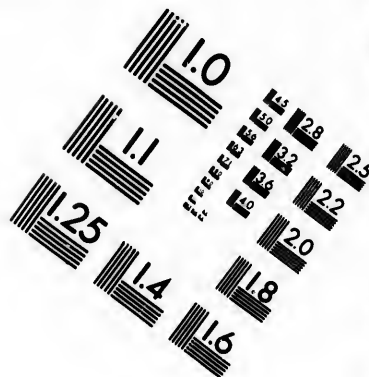
In nearly all lands, the poet has been privileged—for the sake of beauty, they have allowed him to speak, and for that reason he has told the story of the oppressed, and has excited the indignation of honest men and even the pity of tyrants. He, above all others, has added to the intellectual beauty of the world. He has been the true creator of language, and has left his impress on mankind.

What I have said is not only true of poetry—it is true of all speech. All are compelled to use the visible world as a dictionary. Words have been invented and are being invented—for the reason that new powers are found in the old symbols, new qualities, relations, uses, and meanings. The growth of language is necessary on account of the development of the human mind. The savage needs but few symbols—the civilized many—the poet most of all.

The old idea was, however, that the poet must be a rhymist. Before printing was known, it was said: the rhyme assists the memory. That excuse no longer exists.

Is rhyme a necessary part of poetry? In my judgment, rhyme is a hindrance to expression. The rhymist is compelled to wander from his subject—to say more or less than he means—to introduce irrelevant matter that interferes continually with the dramatic action and is a perpetual obstruction to sincere utterance.





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All poems, of necessity, must be short. The highly and purely poetic is the sudden bursting into blossom of a great and tender thought. The planting of the seed, the growth, the bud and flower must be rapid. The spring must be quick and warm—the soil perfect, the sunshine and rain enough—everything should tend to hasten, nothing to delay. In poetry, as in wit, the crystallization must be sudden.

The greatest poems are rhythmical. While rhyme is a hindrance, rhythm seems to be the comrade of the poetic. Rhythm has a natural foundation. Under emotion, the blood rises and falls, the muscles contract and relax, and this action of the blood is as rhythmical as the rise and fall of the sea. In the highest form of expression, the thought should be in harmony with this natural ebb and flow.

The highest poetic truth is expressed in rhythmical form. I have sometimes thought that an idea selects its own words, chooses its own garments, and that when the thought has possession, absolutely, of the speaker or writer, he unconsciously allows the thought to clothe itself.

The great poetry of the world keeps time with the winds and the waves.

I do not mean by rhythm a recurring accent at accurately measured intervals. Perfect time is the death of music. There should always be room for eager haste and delicious delay, and whatever change there may be in the rhythm or time, the action itself should suggest perfect freedom.

A word more about rhythm. I believe that certain feelings and passions—joy, grief, emulation, revenge—produce certain molecular movements in the brain—that every thought is accompanied by certain physical phenomena. Now it may be that certain sounds, colors, and forms produce the same molecular action in the brain that accompanies certain feelings, and that these sounds, colors, and forms produce first, the molecular movements and these in their turn reproduce the feelings, emotions and states of mind capable of producing the same or like molecular movements. So that what we call heroic music, produces the same molecular action in the brain—the same physical

changes—that are produced by the real feeling of heroism ; that the sounds we call plaintive produce the same molecular movement in the brain that grief, or the twilight of grief, actually produces. There may be a rhythmical molecular movement belonging to each state of mind, that accompanies each thought or passion, and it may be that music, or painting, or sculpture, produces the same state of mind or feeling that produces the music or painting or sculpture, by producing the same molecular movements.

All arts are born of the same spirit, and express like thoughts in different ways—that is to say, they produce like states of mind and feeling. The sculptor, the painter, the composer, the poet, the orator, work to the same end, with different materials. The painter expresses through form and color and relation ; the sculptor through form and relation. The poet also paints and chisels—his words give form, relation, and color. His statues and his paintings do not crumble, neither do they fade, nor will they as long as language endures. The composer touches the passions, produces the very states of feeling produced by the painter and sculptor, the poet and orator. In all these there must be rhythm—that is to say, proportion—that is to say, harmony, melody.

So that the greatest poet is the one who idealizes the common, who gives new meanings to old symbols, who transfigures the ordinary things of life. He must deal with the hopes and fears, and with the experiences of the people.

The poetic is not the exceptional. A perfect poem is like a perfect day. It has the undefinable charm of naturalness and ease. It must not appear to be the result of great labor. We feel, in spite of ourselves, that man does best that which he does easiest.

The great poet is the instrumentality, not always of his time, but of the best of his time, and he must be in unison and accord with the ideals of his race. The sublimer he is, the simpler he is. The thoughts of the people must be clad in the garments of feeling—the words must be known, apt, familiar. The heights must be in the thought, in the sympathy.

In the olden time they used to have May-day parties, and the prettiest child was crowned Queen of May. Imagine an old blacksmith and his wife looking at their little daughter clad in white and crowned with roses. They would wonder while they looked at her, how they ever came to have so beautiful a child. It is thus that the poet clothes the intellectual children or ideals of the people. They must not be gemmed and garlanded beyond the recognition of their parents. Out from all the flowers and beauty must look the eyes of the child they know.

We have grown tired of gods and goddesses in art. Milton's heavenly militia excites our laughter. Light-houses have driven sirens from the dangerous coasts. We have found that we do not depend on the imagination for wonders—there are millions of miracles under our feet.

Nothing can be more marvellous than the common and everyday facts of life. The phantoms have been cast aside. Men and women are enough for men and women. In their lives is all the tragedy and all the comedy that they can comprehend.

The painter no longer crowds his canvas with the winged and impossible—he paints life as he sees it, people as he knows them, and in whom he is interested. "The Angelus," the perfection of pathos, is nothing but two peasants bending their heads in thankfulness as they hear the solemn sound of the distant bell—two peasants, who have nothing to be thankful for—nothing but weariness and want, nothing but the crusts that they soften with their tears—nothing. And yet as you look at that picture you feel that they have something besides to be thankful for—that they have life, love, and hope—and so the distant bell makes music in their simple hearts.

IX.

The attitude of Whitman toward religion has not been understood. Towards all forms of worship, towards all creeds, he has maintained the attitude of absolute fairness. He does not believe that Nature has given her last message to man. He does not believe that all has been ascertained. He denies that any sect

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has written down the entire truth. He believes in progress, and, so believing, he says :

"We consider bibles and religions divine—I do not say they are not divine,
I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out of you still,
It is not they who give the life, it is you who give the life."

"His [the poet's] thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things,
In the dispute on God and eternity he is silent."

"Have you thought there could be but a single supreme?
There can be any number of supremes—one does not countervail another
any more than one eyesight countervails another."

Upon the great questions, as to the great problems, he feels only the serenity of a great and well-poised soul.

"No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death.

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself."

"In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's name."

The whole visible world is regarded by him as a revelation, and so is the invisible world, and with this feeling he writes :

"Not objecting to special revelations, considering a curl of smoke or a hair
on the back of my hand just as curious as any revelation."

The creeds do not satisfy, the old mythologies are not enough ; they are too narrow at best, giving only hints and suggestions ; and feeling this lack in that which has been written and preached, Whitman says :

"Magnifying and applying come I,
Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his grandson,
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf, the crucifix engraved,

With Odin and the hideous-faced Mexitli and every idol and image,
Taking them all for what they are worth and not a cent more."

Whitman keeps open house. He is intellectually hospitable. He extends his hand to a new idea. He does not accept a creed because it is wrinkled and old and has a long white beard. He knows that hypocrisy has a venerable look, and that it relies on looks and masks—on stupidity—and fear. Neither does he reject or accept the new because it is new. He wants the truth, and so he welcomes all until he knows just who and what they are.

X.—PHILOSOPHY.

Walt Whitman is a philosopher.

The more a man has thought, the more he has studied, the more he has travelled intellectually, the less certain he is. Only the very ignorant are perfectly satisfied that they know. To the common man the great problems are easy. He has no trouble in accounting for the universe. He can tell you the origin and destiny of man and the why and the wherefore of things. As a rule, he is a believer in special providence, and is egotistic enough to suppose that everything that happens in the universe happens in reference to him.

A colony of red ants lived at the foot of the Alps. It happened one day that an avalanche destroyed the hill; and one of the ants was heard to remark: "Who could have taken so much trouble to destroy our home?"

Walt Whitman walked by the side of the sea "where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her castaways," and endeavored to think out, to fathom the mystery of being; and he said:

"I too but signify at the utmost a little wash'd-up drift,
A few sands and dead leaves to gather,
Gather, and merge myself as part of the sands and drift."

"Aware now that amid all that blab whose echoes recoil upon me I have not
once had the least idea who or what I am,
But that before all my arrogant poems the real Me stands yet untouch'd,
untold, altogether unreach'd,

Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory signs and bows,
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I have written,
Pointing in silence to these songs, and then to the sand beneath.
I perceive I have not really understood any thing, not a single object, and
that no man ever can."

There is in our language no profounder poem than the one
entitled "Sea-Drift."

The effort to find the origin has ever been, and will forever be,
fruitless. Those who endeavor to find the secret of life resemble
a man looking in the mirror, who thinks that if he only could
be quick enough he could grasp the image that he sees behind
the glass.

The latest word of this poet upon this subject is as follows :

"To me this life with all its realities and functions is finally a
mystery, the real something yet to be evolved, and the stamp
and shape and life here somehow giving an important, perhaps
the main, outline to something further. Somehow this hangs
over everything else, and stands behind it, is inside of all facts,
and the concrete and material, and the worldly affairs of life and
sense. That is the purport and meaning behind all the other
meanings of 'Leaves of Grass.'"

As a matter of fact, the questions of origin and destiny are
beyond the grasp of the human mind. We can see a certain
distance ; beyond that, everything is indistinct ; and beyond the
indistinct is the unseen. In the presence of these mysteries—
and everything is a mystery so far as origin, destiny, and nature
are concerned—the intelligent, honest man is compelled to say,
"I do not know."

In the great midnight a few truths like stars shine on forever—
and from the brain of man come a few struggling gleams of light
—a few momentary sparks.

Some have contended that everything is spirit ; others that
everything is matter ; and again, others have maintained that a
part is matter and a part is spirit ; some that spirit was first and
matter after ; others that matter was first and spirit after ; and
others that matter and spirit have always existed together.

But none of these people can by any possibility tell what mat-

ter is, or what spirit is, or what the difference is between spirit and matter.

The materialists look upon the spiritualists as substantially crazy; and the spiritualists regard the materialists as low and grovelling. These spiritualistic people hold matter in contempt; but, after all, matter is quite a mystery. You take in your hand a little earth—a little dust. Do you know what it is? In this dust you put a seed; the rain falls upon it; the light strikes it; the seed grows; it bursts into blossom; it produces fruit.

What is this dust—this womb? Do you understand it? Is there anything in the wide universe more wonderful than this?

Take a grain of sand, reduce it to powder, take the smallest possible particle, look at it with a microscope, contemplate its every part for days, and it remains the citadel of a secret—an impregnable fortress. Bring all the theologians, philosophers, and scientists in serried ranks against it; let them attack on every side with all the arts and arms of thought and force. The citadel does not fall. Over the battlements floats the flag, and the victorious secret smiles at the baffled hosts.

Walt Whitman did not and does not imagine that he has reached the limit—the end of the road travelled by the human race. He knows that every victory over nature is but the preparation for another battle. This truth was in his mind when he said: "Understand me well; it is provided in the essence of things, that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary."

This is the generalization of all history.

XI.—THE TWO POEMS.

There are two of these poems to which I have time to call special attention. The first is entitled, "A Word Out of the Sea."

The boy, coming out of the rocked cradle, wandering over the sands and fields, up from the mystic play of shadows, out of the patches of briars and blackberries—from the memories of birds—from the thousand responses of his heart—goes back to the sea and his childhood, and sings a reminiscence.

Two guests from Alabama—two birds—build their nest, and there were four light green eggs, spotted with brown, and the two birds sang for joy :

"Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together."

"Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together."

In a little while one of the birds is missed and never appeared again, and all through the summer the mate, the solitary guest, was singing of the lost :

"Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me."

And the boy that night, blending himself with the shadows, with bare feet, went down to the sea, where the white arms out in the breakers were tirelessly tossing; listening to the songs and translating the notes.

And the singing bird called loud and high for the mate, wondering what the dusky spot was in the brown and yellow, seeing the mate whichever way he looked, piercing the woods and the earth with his song, hoping that the mate might hear his cry; stopping that he might not lose her answer; waiting and then crying again: "Here I am! And this gentle call is for you. Do not be deceived by the whistle of the winds; those are the shadows;" and at last crying:

"O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more."

And then the boy, understanding the song that had awakened in his breast a thousand songs clearer and louder and more sorrowful than the bird's, knowing that the cry of unsatisfied love would never again be absent from him; thinking then of the destiny of all, and asking of the sea the final word, and the sea answering, delaying not and hurrying not, spoke the low delicious word "Death!" ever "Death!"

The next poem, one that will live as long as our language, entitled, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," is on the death of Lincoln,

"The sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands."

One who reads this will never forget the odor of the lilac, the lustrous western star and the gray-brown bird singing in the pines and cedars.

In this poem the dramatic unities are perfectly preserved, the atmosphere and climate in harmony with every event.

Never will he forget the solemn journey of the coffin through day and night, with the great cloud darkening the land, nor the pomp of inlooped flags, the processions long and winding, the flambeaus at night, the torches' flames, the silent sea of faces, the unbared heads, the thousand voices rising strong and solemn, the dirges, the shuddering organs, the tolling bells—and the sprig of lilac.

And then for a moment they will hear the gray-brown bird singing in the cedars, bashful and tender, while the lustrous star lingers in the West, and they will remember the pictures hung on the chamber walls to adorn the burial house—pictures of spring and farms and homes, and the gray smoke lucid and bright, and the floods of yellow gold—of the gorgeous indolent sinking sun—the sweet herbage under foot—the green leaves of the trees prolific—the breast of the river with the wind-dapple here and there—and the varied and ample land—and the most excellent sun so calm and haughty—the violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes—the gentle soft-born measureless light—the miracle spreading, bathing all—the fulfilled noon—the coming eve delicious and the welcome night and the stars.

And then again they will hear the song of the gray-brown bird
in the limitless dusk amid the cedars and pines. Again they
will remember the star, and again the odor of the lilac.

But most of all, the song of the bird translated and becoming
the chant for death :

"Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise ! praise ! praise !
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool enfoldng death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome ?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O east and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies
wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death."

This poem, in memory of "the sweetest, wisest soul of all our

days and lands," for whose sake lilac and star and bird entwined, will last as long as the memory of Lincoln.

XII.—OLD AGE.

Walt Whitman is not only the poet of childhood, of youth, of manhood, but, above all, of old age. He has not been soured by slander or petrified by prejudice; neither calumny nor flattery has made him revengeful or arrogant. Now sitting by the fireside, in the winter of life,

"His jocund heart still beating in his breast,"

he is just as brave and calm and kind as in his manhood's proudest days, when roses blossomed in his cheeks. He has taken life's seven steps. Now, as the gamester might say, "on velvet." He is enjoying "old age expanded, broad, with the haughty breadth of the universe; old age, flowing free, with the delicious near-by freedom of death; old age, superbly rising, welcoming the ineffable aggregation of dying days."

He is taking the "loftiest look at last," and before he goes he utters thanks:

"For health, the midday sun, the impalpable air—for life, mere life,
For precious ever-lingering memories, (of you my mother dear—you, father
—you, brothers, sisters, friends,)
For all my days—not those of peace alone—the days of war the same,
For gentle words, caresses, gifts from foreign lands,
For shelter, wine and meat—for sweet appreciation,
(You distant, dim unknown—or young or old—countless, unspecified,
readers belov'd,
We never met, and ne'er shall meet—and yet our souls embrace, long, close
and long :)
For beings, groups, love, deeds, words, books—for colors, forms,
For all the brave strong men—devoted, hardy men—who've forward sprung
in freedom's help, all years, all lands,
For braver, stronger, more devoted men—(a special laurel ere I go, to life's
war's chosen ones,
The cannoneers of song and thought—the great artilleryists—the foremost
leaders, captains of the soul)."

It is a great thing to preach philosophy—far greater to live it.

The highest philosophy accepts the inevitable with a smile, and greets it as though it were desired.

To be satisfied; This is wealth—success.

The real philosopher knows that everything has happened: he could have happened—consequently he accepts. He is glad that he has lived—glad that he has had his moment on the stage. In this spirit Whitman has accepted life.

"I shall go forth,

I shall traverse the States awhile, but I cannot tell whither or how long,
Perhaps soon some day or night while I am singing my voice will suddenly
cease.

O book, O chants I must all then amount to but this?

Must we barely arrive at this beginning of us?—and yet it is enough, O
soul;

O soul, we have positively appear'd—that is enough."

Yes, Walt Whitman has appeared. He has his place upon the stage. The drama is not ended. His voice is still heard. He is the Poet of Democracy—of all people. He is the poet of the body and soul. He has sounded the note of Individuality. He has given the pass-word primeval. He is the Poet of Humanity—of Intellectual Hospitality. He has voiced the aspirations of America—and, above all, he is the poet of Love and Death.

How grandly, how bravely he has given his thought, and how superb is his farewell—his leave-taking:

"After the supper and talk—after the day is done,

As a friend from friends his final withdrawal prolonging,

Good-bye and Good-bye with emotional lips repeating,

(So hard for his hand to release those hands—no more will they meet,

No more for communion of sorrow and joy, of old and young,

A far-stretching journey awaits him, to return no more.)

Shunning, postponing severance—seeking to ward off the last word ever so
little,

E'en at the exit-door turning—charges superfluous calling back—e'en as he
descends the steps,

Something to eke out a minute additional—shadows of nightfall deepening,

Farewells, messages lessening—dimmer the forthgoer's visage and form,

Soon to be lost for aye in the darkness—loth, O so loth to depart!"

And is this all? Will the forthgoer be lost, and forever? Is death the end? Over the grave bends Love sobbing, and by her side stands Hope and whispers:

We shall meet again. Before all life is death, and after all death is life. The falling leaf, touched with the hectic flush, that testifies of autumn's death, is, in a subtler sense, a prophecy of spring.

Walt Whitman has dreamed great dreams, told great truths and uttered sublime thoughts. He has held aloft the torch and bravely led the way.

As you read the marvelous book, or the person, called "*Leaves of Grass*," you feel the freedom of the antique world; you hear the voices of the morning, of the first great singers—voices elemental as those of sea and storm. The horizon enlarges, the heavens grow ample, limitations are forgotten—the realization of the will, the accomplishment of the ideal, seem to be within your power. Obstructions become petty and disappear. The chains and bars are broken, and the distinctions of caste are lost. The soul is in the open air, under the blue and stars—the flag of Nature. Creeds, theories and philosophies ask to be examined, contradicted, reconstructed. Prejudices disappear, superstitions vanish and custom abdicates. The sacred places become highways, duties and desires clasp hands and become comrades and friends. Authority drops the scepter, the priest the miter, and the purple falls from kings. The inanimate becomes articulate, the meanest and humblest things utter speech and the dumb and voiceless burst into song. A feeling of independence takes possession of the soul, the body expands, the blood flows full and free, superiors vanish, flattery is a lost art, and life becomes rich, royal, and superb. The world becomes a personal possession, and the oceans, the continents, and constellations belong to you. You are in the centre, everything radiates from you, and in your veins beats and throbs the pulse of all life. You become a rover, careless and free. You wander by the shores of all seas and hear the eternal psalm. You feel the silence of the wide forest, and stand beneath the intertwined and overarching boughs, entranced with symphonies of winds and woods. You are borne on the

tides of eager and swift rivers, hear the rush and roar of cataracts as they fall beneath the seven-hued arch, and watch the eagles as they circling soar. You traverse gorges dark and dim, and climb the scarred and threatening cliffs. You stand in orchards where the blossoms fall like snow, where the birds nest and sing, and painted moths make aimless journeys through the happy air. You live the lives of those who till the earth, and walk amid the perfumed fields, hear the reapers' song, and feel the breadth and scope of earth and sky. You are in the great cities, in the midst of multitudes, of the endless processions. You are on the wide plains—the prairies—with hunter and trapper, with savage and pioneer, and you feel the soft grass yielding under your feet. You sail in many ships, and breathe the free air of the sea. You travel many roads, and countless paths. You visit palaces and prisons, hospitals and courts; you pity kings and convicts, and your sympathy goes out to all the suffering and insane, the oppressed and enslaved, and even to the infamous. You hear the din of labor, all sounds of factory, field, and forest, of all tools, instruments and machines. You become familiar with men and women of all employments, trades and professions—with birth and burial, with wedding feast and funeral chant. You see the cloud and flame of war, and you enjoy the ineffable perfect days of peace. In this one book, in these wondrous "Leaves of Grass," you find hints and suggestions, touches and fragments, of all there is of life, that lies between the babe, whose rounded cheeks dimple beneath his mother's laughing, loving eyes, and the old man, snow-crowned, who, with a smile, extends his hand to death.

We have met to-night to honor ourselves by honoring the author of "Leaves of Grass."

THE sympathy of Whitman is boundless—not man alone or animals alone, but brute inanimate nature is absorbed and assimilated in his extraordinary personality. Often we think one of the elements of nature has found a voice, and thunders great syllables in our ears. He speaks like something more than man—something tremendous. Something that we know not speaks words that we cannot comprehend. He is not over-anxious to be understood. No man comprehends what the twittering of the redstart precisely means, or can express clearly in definite language the significance of the rising sun. He too is elemental and a part of Nature—not merely a clever man writing poems.

The intellectualism which has marked the century—the cultivation of sentiment and the emotions—threatened to enfeeble and emasculate the educated classes. The strong voice of Whitman, showing again and again, in metaphors and images, in startling vivid memorable language, the supreme need of sweet blood and pure flesh, the delight of vigor and activity and of mere existence where there is health, the pleasures of mere society, even without clever conversation,—of bathing, swimming, riding, and the inhaling of pure air—has so arrested the mind of the world, that a relapse to scholasticism is no longer possible.

Standish O'Grady: "Walt Whitman, The Poet of Joy."

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WALT WHITMAN.

*By T. W. ROLLESTON: Translated from the German by ALFRED FORMAN and
RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE.*

. . . . AND now a word upon Walt Whitman's writings. They consist of two volumes—one of poetry, "Leaves of Grass;" the other of prose, "Specimen Days and Collect," containing a varied collection of autobiographical sketches, descriptions of nature, and all sorts of impressions, with, further, a philosophic essay upon the import and the future of American Democracy. His poetry, however, is the prime work of his life; the rest must be considered as supplement or commentary. It is, therefore, with the "Leaves" that we shall chiefly occupy ourselves. The best introduction would perhaps be to quote one of the small poems called "Inscriptions," which stand at the beginning of the book.

Here, then, are the first words of "Leaves of Grass:"

"One's-Self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse, I say the
Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing."

Here is announced, with the finest accuracy, the material of Whitman's verse. And what material! The poets of the present, while occupying themselves merely with the surface of life, have arrived at so fine a technical result that we seldom feel any want

in this respect. And yet there is wanting that which gives to every phenomenon of our days its real worth and importance. Where is the poet who has taken complete possession of the mind-conquests of this singular age, and who has taken into himself, and poetically presented, modern man with his terrible energy, his unexampled intellectual activity and his infinite boldness in word and deed? If this age is actually to be represented in literature, it must be done by one who is able to reconcile the all-denying spirit of analytics with the all-affirming spirit of democracy—who can embrace in himself the intricate spiritual strivings of the age, demonstrate their true direction, and, by the inexplicable powers of a magic personality, impart to that which is now impotent through dispersion the mightiest effectiveness. That is Walt Whitman's task, and that task he has fulfilled. But do not let us be in a hurry to imagine that in a way so easy and off-hand we shall be able to acknowledge in this Yankee the world-poet of the age. As I have already indicated, his recognition demands a self-examination such as we each hesitate to undertake. Moreover, the first impression of the book, considered as art, is not an attractive one, but rather one of surprise or even consternation. In it we have an entirely new literary form, a new method of treatment, and subjects strange to all preceding poetry. All rules, all deeply meditated definitions, are demolished; of antecedent poetry nothing remains—except the poetry.

It is now high time for me to give my hearers some idea of the actual contents of this work—of the doctrine which is its special mark. But the book does not easily lend itself to an interpreter, because, among other things, so much depends upon the personality of the author. And further, although I have been familiar with "*Leaves of Grass*" for some six years, I am certain that I have still only a superficial idea of its contents. But, superficial as it may be compared with the full meaning which still lies beyond me, even this seems worth reporting.

There are many things in Whitman's works which should assure him special consideration in Germany. He is the greatest poetic representative of that which is usually considered a prime focal point in German philosophy. In the philosophy of the

modern world there are apparently only two principal currents—the one starting from England, the other from Germany. In England, as is well known, thinkers are chiefly occupied with the laws of phenomena—the manner of their origin, and how they condition each other; with all, in short, which may be called their visible activities. But in the philosophy especially characteristic of Germany the starting point is from the inner, the subjective, not from the outer, the objective; that is to say, it does not consider the material of speculation as so given in experience that we have nothing more to do than to observe certain relations and sequences.

German thought prefers to absorb itself in the content of the soul-life—it seeks to formulate continually deeper and clearer the various ideas and experiences which go to make up this content—it desires, in fact, to be certain of its premises before it proceeds to draw conclusions. And when the problem is thus presented it becomes clear that the true task of philosophy is not to draw conclusions on this and that, but really to lift the inner life more and more into the light of consciousness. German philosophy keeps thus firm hold of the center of the thinking soul, and does not lose itself in observation. Phenomena and their laws are not regarded as independent facts, setting bounds to the activity of the soul, but rather as expressions of its activity—as faces, rather than as fetters, of the soul. Now, in Walt Whitman this principle of procedure—the principle, namely, of continuously working in towards the center, towards the primitive actuality of things—receives the most manifold and interesting application. For example, religions, social theories, political institutions and the like become for him vapor and dust the moment that either in word or deed they claim or are given an independence which places them beyond or in contradistinction to the life of man. But they are deprived of their significance only in order to receive for the first time their real significance. For they are all utterances of the human spirit, and for every one who regards them from the proper point of view they emit some ray of the godhood that they contain.

Here I should be glad to insert an extended specimen which.

might be taken as typical of his first period style as well as of his views:

"I heard what was said of the universe,
Heard it and heard it of several thousand years;
It is middling well as far as it goes—but is that all?

Magnifying and applying come I,
Outhidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his grandson,
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf, the crucifix engraved,
With Odin and the hideous-faced Mexitli and every idol and image,
Taking them all for what they are worth and not a cent more,
Admitting they were alive and did the work of their days,
(They bore mites as for unfledg'd birds who have now to rise and fly and
sing for themselves.)
Accepting the rough deific sketches to fill out better in myself, bestowing
them freely on each man and woman I see,
Discovering as much or more in a framer framing a house,
Putting higher claims for him there with his roll'd-up sleeves driving the
mallet and chisel,
Not objecting to special revelations, considering a curl of smoke or a hair
on the back of my hand just as curious as any revelation,
Lads ahold of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes no less to me than
the gods of the antique wars,
Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction,
Their brawny limbs passing safe over charr'd laths, their white foreheads
whole and unhurt out of the flames;
By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding for every
person born,
Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three lusty angels with shirts
bagg'd out at their waists,
The snag-tooth'd hostler with red hair redeeming sins past and to come,
Selling all he possesses, travelling on foot to fee lawyers for his brother and
sit by him while he is tried for forgery;
What was strewn in the amplest strewing the square rod about me, and not
filling the square rod then,
The bull and the bug never worshipp'd half enough,
Dung and dirt more admirable than was dream'd,
The supernatural of no account, myself waiting my time to be one of the
supremes,

The day getting ready for me when I shall do as much good as the best, and
 be as prodigious ;
 By my life-lumps ! becoming already a creator,
 Putting myself here and now to the ambush'd womb of the shadows."

Monstrous and unpoetic as these expressions, these metaphors,
 may sound, I beg my hearers to believe that they sound the same
 in English as in German.

At Whitman's first appearance he was ridiculed as a lunatic—
 save where it was shocked by his audacity—by the whole literary
 world, the highest spirits, such as Tennyson and Emerson, alone
 excepted.

But along with his glorification of the begetting spirit, we may
 set the following glorification of the begotten, which is composed
 in a milder key :

"Not you alone proud truths of the world,
 Nor you alone ye facts of modern science,
 But myths and fables of old, Asia's, Africa's fables,
 The far-darting beams of the spirit, the unloos'd dreams,
 The deep diving bibles and legends,
 The daring plots of the poets, the elder religions ;
 O you temples fairer than lilies pour'd over by the rising sun !
 O you fables spurning the known, eluding the hold of the known, mounting
 to heaven !
 You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red as roses, burnish'd with gold !
 Towers of fables immortal fashion'd from mortal dreams !
 You too I welcome and fully the same as the rest !
 You too with joy I sing."

Walt Whitman is essentially and in the first place a poet, not
 a philosopher ; but that he has occupied himself with philosophic
 questions, and in a philosophic manner, will be clear to every
 reader. And in this respect he stands in a special relationship to
 his age, in which thought has achieved an unexampled influence
 over action. In these days a purely mechanical conception of
 the universe has found the most extraordinary dissemination. Is
 the origin of this mode of thinking to be sought in the spirit of
 freedom, which during this and the preceding century has arisen
 in Europe, and which not seldom in the extremity of its insolence

degenerates into the Platonic *ἄβυσσος*? It is certain, in any case, that the philosophy of the present day is characterized by a strong disinclination to acknowledge any authority whatever. No one is willing to take up the position of a learner—of a non-knower—nor to believe that another can see light and symmetry where for himself nothing but darkness exists. The cuteness which discovers logical connections is plentifully at hand—but not so the wholesome and noble scepticism which not only questions the insight of others, but also, and chiefly, its own. For example, when a thinker like Herbert Spencer seeks to go to the foundation of the idea of duty, he begins with the first conception of it that comes to hand in his (in certain directions) very limited understanding, thus: that duty is merely an impulse which at times forces us to the voluntary endurance of avoidable unpleasantnesses—believing hereby that he has exhausted the meaning of the idea of duty, and proceeding calmly in his examination without any suspicion that duty can really be anything other than what he takes it for and what he has assumed it to be. Now, for those who reject such mechanical philosophy the great problem of the century is the upholding and strengthening of the idea that moral conceptions have (rooted in the nature of the mind itself and independently of objectivity) an aim and a determinate place in the general scheme.

Those holding these latter views will find a powerful friend in Whitman. It is doubtless true that Whitman does not furnish us with the facile, cut and dried, proof such as might, without giving us any trouble, dispel all our uncertainties. In matters of this sort, in the long run, logic is of no avail; and what Whitman does for us goes to the heart of the problem, for he helps us to see with our own eyes all objects of thought as they exist. He gradually strengthens in us the religious sense. We feel ourselves, at last, in relationship not with merely dead, mechanical objects, but with utterances of a living essence. We experience with respect to the whole objective world the same transformation as that which happens when our formal opinions become converted into vital convictions. We know that it is not only possible, but that it also frequently happens, that we can firmly believe in a

thing without this belief having any actual influence upon our life or mode of thought.

For example: how many are there now in the world who are convinced of the truth of the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul—that is to say, that there is a future life in which the material victories and defeats of the present will count for nothing, but where the spirit in which we have acted will count for all! And yet it strikes us as an altogether abnormal exception when we meet with a man who goes through life with the peace of mind which is the logical outcome of this belief. According to Cardinal Newman, who, in an extremely interesting work, has examined the psychology of the subject, this state in which our views and feelings stand opposed to each other might rightly be called one of “formal” belief—a state which he distinguishes from that of effective, “actual” belief. Now, it happens not unfrequently that a formal belief of this description passes into an actual belief. How can such a change have been effected? Only, as it seems to me, by the fact that a new relation between us and the object of our belief has been in some manner brought about by means of which the object is no longer for us a mere name, a logical conclusion, a tradition, but a thing, an actuality, touching the deeps of our consciousness. No matter in what way we describe the thing, every one is acquainted with it, and I need only call attention to the fact that this process of actualization can take place equally where the result may be described not as an ascent, or belief, “formal” or “actual,” but as a vital, spiritual perception, *σύλληψις*, of the object in question. The bringing about of such a relationship between the human soul and the whole inner and outer world is a prime feature of Whitman’s effect upon his readers. When he has accomplished this, he believes that he has accomplished everything, for the perception in their actuality of the things of ordinary experience is religion and begets ethics.

On this point Whitman stands in close relationship with another great poet, William Wordsworth. If Whitman has any predecessor, this predecessor is Wordsworth. For each equally primarily sets himself to the unlocking of the springs of rever-

ence, joy and noble passion which lie contained in our relationships to the facts of daily life. Whence it is that they derive the faculty for the solving of this riddle, what it is that makes their words so effective, is precisely the inexplicable element in poetry. But it is the privilege of poets to be able to express their own perception of things in such a manner as to enable us also to perceive with their eyes, provided we are morally qualified—provided that is, that knowledge, insight into the soul of things, is the consequence to us than that empty acquaintanceship with names and appearances which usually passes for knowledge. . . .

I have said that Whitman claims to derive the conviction of the divine from every form of experience. From every form? Even from that which we call evil? Yes, most certainly—from evil also. . . .

Whitman knows nothing of exceptions. To him God is in evil as well as in good. Is such doctrine immoral? If it is, then are we in a truly lamentable condition, for the reverse doctrine is certainly highly immoral—the belief, namely, that evil, as such, has an independent existence as a primeval principle. Such a theory must degenerate either into a revolting devil-worship or into equally revolting cruelties practised upon those who stand presumably in the devil's service. Or, should I rather say, it would thus degenerate were we not, as already remarked, often so little aware of the real content of our belief? But is not the doctrine of pantheism also necessarily immoral in the fact that it seems indiscriminately to mix and accept evil with good? It might easily become so, but Whitman's conception of it escapes such danger. . . .

Walt Whitman contemplates the world, as presented to our consciousness, in the form of a continually ascending succession of struggles and acquisitions. The theory of the origin of moral evil (of which alone we, naturally, are speaking here), which seems to be involved in Whitman's teaching, stands in direct conjunction with this general theory of evolution. The first appearance of evil marks the beginning of a new step—the birth of a new ideal. The stage of self-consciousness has been reached

—then inexplicably arise among men the ideas of faith, love, justice, etc., each man becoming more or less aware of the presence and claims of these—and in so far as he becomes so aware, in so far does any violation of them become sin. Sin, therefore, is the offspring of the gradually unfolding consciousness of an ideal. A sinful act is, in and for itself, an expression of life like everything else, and contains, for those who have been enlightened by the spirit of Whitman, that which stimulates to the most resolute battle.

Walt Whitman's poems resemble in many respects the productions of nature; among other things, in that they seem to have been created without any regard to the verdict of unthinking men. For were it otherwise he would certainly never have uttered such views as, for instance, the following:

"Partaker of influx and efflux I, extoller of hate and conciliation,
Extoller of amies and those that sleep in each others' arms.

I am he attesting sympathy,
(Shall I make my list of things in the house and skip the house that supports them?)

I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also.

What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?
Evil propels me and reform of evil propels me, I stand indifferent,
My gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait,
I moisten the roots of all that has grown."

In politics Whitman is a rigid democrat. His works are the first embodiment of the genuine democratic spirit in literature; for it is undeniable that no other has seen, as he has seen and presented in his writing, what infinite unsurmised meanings are contained in this word democracy. By him the struggle between republicanism and monarchism is regarded in an almost religious light. If it could be proved that disseminated well-being, peace and order, were only possible under a despotic government, Whitman would still adhere to republicanism, for in his view, as already said, the course of the development of mankind is pri-

marily towards the widening and deepening of his consciousness—that is to say, that mankind may more and more enter into relationship with the existence and ethical experiences of others, and that it may grow more and more to feel and reverence the actuality of these experiences. This point of view being justified, the strivings of democracy are also justified, and at the same time aim and limit are given to them. Political and social institutions, though always with caution, must in the long run be directed to placing and leaving mankind in the most vivid possible contact with life. But under a despotism, be it however enlightened, the sharp impression of life is blurred; it may be embellished, but the sense of the primitive elements of ethics—the greatness and satisfyingness of existence—is not felt to be present and actual.

One of Whitman's disciples has said that if we find anything in him repulsive or offensive, we may be quite sure that there is weakness or defect in ourselves. If that is true, as I firmly believe, the state of society of thirty years ago must, in certain directions, have been a very unhealthy one, for the earlier editions of "Leaves of Grass" were received with an almost universal howl of indignation. The reason thereof lay in a section of the poems called "Children of Adam," in which Whitman sings and glorifies the sensuous in man especially with regard to the relation of the sexes. Indecent, in my opinion, these poems are not, but the criticism which universally selects them for discussion and condemnation is extremely indecent. To this discussion, therefore, I will not contribute, but I must call attention to the fact that the "Children of Adam" are simply the natural realization of Whitman's—genuinely democratic—ideal of human life. In his opinion, this ideal does not consist in the development of certain selected faculties and superiorities, but in the development of man's complete nature. He does not seek to form merely a good man—a man capable of self-command (like Goethe) or a strenuous, helpful man, but an all-round, every way complete man—that is to say, one who, by the exercise of each point of his nature, is capable of finding that which makes him happy and takes him morally forward. In this idea

there is doubtless no alarming originality; it is original only in that clearness of vision which perceives all the bearings of the idea, and that unflinching resolution to realize it in practice.

To conclude: There are in Whitman's works three strongly combined qualities which secure to them a lasting worth among mankind. First, we are made aware in him of the working of an intellect whose depth and compass appears more and more astounding the further we penetrate into it. Second, we find in him a wealth of poetic power whose beauty impresses us the more profoundly and lastingly for the very reason that it is not made an end and aim in itself. Third, the fit reader is brought into relationship with something still more unusual and valuable than either intellect or poetry—he finds that an indescribable, magical personal influence streams forth from these leaves; he is not brought into contact with a book but with a man—with a friend, whose spirit, by nothing that we can call a doctrine, but by actual presence, acts upon ours, strengthening, exalting, purifying and liberating. In the above presentation I have, surely, or at least principally, touched upon the first, and do not feel at present in a position to enter upon an exposition of the other and more important of these realities. And even from the standpoint of intellect I have dealt with Whitman naturally in the most superficial manner.

IF we were asked for justification of the high estimate of this poet, which has been implied, if not expressed, in what has been hitherto said, the answer would be perhaps first, that he has a power of passionate expression, of strong and simple utterance of the deepest tones of grief, which is almost or altogether without its counterpart in the world.

Shelley's skylark pours forth a harmonious madness of joy, Keats' nightingale seems to be intoxicated with passionate yearning; but never before has a bird poured forth to a poet a song so capable of stirring the depths of emotion in the heart, so heart-breaking indeed in its intensity of grief, as that of the lone singer "on the prong of a moss-scolloped stake, down almost among the slapping waves."

In religion, if he is to be labelled with a name, it must be perhaps "Pantheist;" he is an exponent of "Cosmic Emotion."

There is indeed something in this tearing away of veils which, however justly it may offend true modesty, is to unhealthiness and puerility as sunlight and the open air; they shrink from the exposure, and shiver at the healthy freshness; it is not an atmosphere in which they can long survive: mystery is the region in which they thrive, and here all mystery is rudely laid bare.

But underlying all, so far as he himself is concerned, is a sympathy embracing all human beings, however vile, and all animals and plants, however irresponsible. It is this which leads him at times to emphasize his own sensuality, that he may make himself the equal of the most depraved, to draw them if it may be in the bonds of sympathy to himself. It is this which is the open secret of that magnetic influence which he is said to exercise over those whom he casually meets. It was this which led him to the hospitals rather than to the field of battle, and makes him recall in memory now the experiences of the "Dresser," rather than the great battles and sieges at which he was present.

It is as if he were the born poet of emancipation, tender to all suffering persons, yet with nerve strong enough to endure without fainting or shrieking the stroke of necessary surgery.

G. C. Macaulay: "*Walt Whitman*."

ROUND TABLE WITH WALT WHITMAN.

By HORACE L. TRAUBEL.

[A number of Walt Whitman's friends celebrated his seventy-second birthday by a dinner at his own home in Camden, N. J., May 31, 1891. When the guests were assembled Whitman himself came down-stairs and opened the proceedings as indicated. In fact, though Dr. Brinton was official toast-master, Whitman, as the course of the conversation shows, himself in effect assumed the head of the table. He was in bad physical condition—had spent a bad day—and we were almost compelled to carry him from his bed-room to the parlor where the table was spread. He sat next to Mrs. Thomas B. Harned, who plied him with champagne, which I had had prepared for him, and which he immediately asked for, whereby he was at once built up.

At table: Walt Whitman, Charlotte Porter, Anne Montgomerie Traubel, Augusta A. Harned, Helen Clarke, Bertha Johnston, D. G. Brinton, H. L. Bonsall, Thomas B. Harned, Francis Howard Williams, Horace L. Traubel, Harrison S. Morris, Talcott Williams, John H. Clifford, H. D. Bush, W. H. Neidlinger, Henry C. Walsh, J. D. Law, R. M. Bucke, Thomas Donaldson, William O'Donovan, Thomas Eakins, Fred L. May, David McKay, Lincoln L. Eyre, J. K. Mitchell, William Reeder, Daniel Longaker, Geoffrey Buckwalter, William Ingram, Carl Edelheim, G. W. Black, Warren Fritzingier. The conversation about the table as here reproduced is made up from the direct work of a stenographer and liberal notes kept by the writer.]

Whitman.—After welcoming you deeply and specifically to my board, dear friends, it seems to me I feel first to say a word for the mighty comrades that have not long ago passed away—Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow; and I drink a reverent honor and memory to them. [*Lifting his glass of champagne to his lips.*] And I feel to add a word to Whittier, who is living with us—a noble old man; and another word to the boss of us all—Tennyson, who is also with us yet. I take this occasion to drink my reverence for those that have passed, and compliments for the two great masters left, and all that they stand for and represent.

But I won't keep you any longer from your soup. [*Traubel passes up a copy of Dr. Johnston's Notes of a Visit to Whitman—elegantly bound, illustrated.*] Say, you fellows who dabble in the rivulets and bigger streams of literature—there is a splendid lesson that such notes as these of Dr. Johnston teach. It is the same lesson that there is in the play of "The Diplomatic Secret." At the end of that interesting play, which I have seen, a great fellow who is in pursuit of it comes in crying: "At last I have found it—I have found the great secret! The great secret is that there is no secret at all!" That is the secret. The trick of literary style! I almost wonder if it is not chiefly having no style at all. And Dr. Johnston has struck it here in his notes. A man might give his fame for such a secret. [*To Traubel*].—Is pretty much everybody here? What has become of Stoddart? Who will play his part for him? And Hawthorne—wasn't he expected?

Traubel.—The table is about full. Stoddart and Hawthorne have not come. How does the champagne go?

Whitman.—To the right spot—it goes through me, stirs me all up, gives me a show of strength. Mrs. Harned keeps me round with the notch. And is Anne come? Oh! yes—I see—down there by Clifford. Well—well—this is a good family, sure enough.

Traubel.—You will stay then—you will not leave when the fifteen minutes are up?

Whitman.—Did I say fifteen? I feel to show myself—perhaps say a word—let the rest take care of itself.

Traubel.—Ingersoll telegraphs—he cannot come—he lectures to-night in Chicago.

Whitman.—Lectures?

Traubel.—On Shakspeare.

Whitman [*Laughing*].—Next to Camden, Chicago is the luckiest city on the planet to-night!

Traubel.—You flatter the Colonel.

Whitman.—He should be here. And yet wherever he goes, he is our justification. . . . It is to the credit of our land and time, that a man so courageous, unconventional, spontaneous,

should be followed about by multitudes. Do I stretch the truth when I say that?

Traubel.—I guess not.

Whitman.—It is quite the right thing to call him useless or flippant, but the stream runs far deeper than all that—far deeper.

Traubel.—We can't shake off the giant by a shrug of the shoulders.

Whitman.—Nor can we. I say to such men, welcome! welcome!—I say to Ingersoll, welcome! welcome! . . . And now that I am here myself I can't get rid of the feeling that John Burroughs, instead of sleeping on his farm to-night, should be right here with us! But no matter. Bucke is here, and you, Brinton [*turning to his left*], and Harry Bonsall—and I see Tom, too, and more'n enough to play out the bill. But here's Brinton on his feet. [*Aloud.*] And what is it now, doctor? [*And in a low voice as Brinton started.*] I'd give a lot to have all the English fellows here this minute!

Brinton.—As we are now supplied with what was necessary earlier in the repast for us to respond appropriately to the toast of our distinguished friend, I now offer the health of Walt Whitman on this, his birthday, with the hope that he may live to meet us here on the recurrence of this anniversary for many years to come.

Whitman [*As they drink*].—I thank you all, my friends. Don't lay it on too thick. [*Pause—flood of remarks and questions.*] We have a word from Tennyson himself—a very short but wonderfully sweet and affectionate word. And we have a word from Addington Symonds, whom you all know well enough. As for me, I think his word not young enough to be fiery, and not old enough to have lost the pulse. But a wonderful man is Addington Symonds—someways the most indicative and penetrating and significant man of our times; to me very valuable because he has thoroughly absorbed not only the old Greek cultus—all that it stand for, which is indescribably expansive—but the modern Italianism. And we have a graphic and beautiful letter from Moncure Conway—a very many-sided

and a very experienced man—a queer kind of fellow, a thorough Londoner and European, so to speak; an Asiaticer, too, for he went off some years ago to Asia and had two years in Calcutta and other Asiatic cities. And we have others. We have word from a cluster of Englishmen in Lancashire, noble young fellows, wonderfully American, cute, progressive, they who sent us a short cable about two hours ago. [*“Joy, Shipmate, Joy!”*] And we have others. And I do not know, Horace,—or you, Professor—that you could do better than give us a taste of these messages—[*Laughingly*] Not too long!

Brinton [*Letter in hand*].—I begin with the words of him whom our host has referred to as “the boss.”

Whitman.—The boss of us all!

Tennyson.—“All health and happiness to you on your birthday and henceforward!”

Whitman.—Very short, very sweet! No flummery, no adjuncts, nothing but the heart and grip of the matter—good will.* [*Sips his glass to the toast.*] But after all is said, I turn everything over to the emotional, and out of that I myself, the actual personal identity for my own special time, have uttered what I have uttered. To me, as I have said, back of everything that is very grand and very erudite and very scientific and very everything that is splendid in our era, is the simple individual critter, personality, if you please—his emotionality, supreme emotionality. . . . Through that personality I have myself spoken, reiterated. That is behind “Leaves of Grass.” It is the utterance of personality after—carefully remember—*after* being all surcharged with those other elements. But go on, Professor. I do not know how I have been led to speak so much.

Brinton.—As Mr. Whitman has referred to Symonds, I will read you what he says.

Symonds.—“Speaking about Walt Whitman has always seemed to me much the same as talking about the universe. You know what Whitman himself said of *that*:

* James Russell Lowell sent his “felicitations and good wishes” in almost as brief phrase, and sweet also, within the few following days.

"I heard what was said of the Universe,
Heard it and heard it for several thousand years;
It is middling well as far as it goes,—But is that all?"

When I read panegyrics or criticisms of Walt Whitman these words always recur to my memory, 'It is middling well as far as it goes,—But is that all?' My own helplessness brings the truth of these words home to me with overpowering effect, whenever I attempt to express what I feel about him. In order to estimate, to interpret, to account for a hero, it is necessary to be the hero's peer, or at least his comrade. Only a Plato penetrates the sphere of Plato; only a Danté dives into the depths of Danté's soul. In the case of the illustrious dead, this lack of comprehending the hero's aim, and of interpreting his prophecy, is not so common as in the case of the illustrious living. By the mere fact of having survived successive centuries, of having been absorbed into the best thoughts of the best intellects through many generations, a Plato, a Danté, a Shakspeare, becomes in some sort measurable, and acquires a certain ponderable quantity. We classify the fixed stars according to their magnitude. But when 'a new planet swims into our ken,' when an effulgent comet streams across the firmament, uncatalogued by previous astronomers, then it behooves us to observe, suspend our judgment, study the law of the celestial wonder. This is no less true when we meet a moral and mental influence like Whitman's. Incommensurable, all-embracing, all-pervasive; exhilarating, elusive; alluring, baffling; defying analysis, refusing to be classified, Whitman's genius cannot be gauged, cannot be grasped, cannot be adequately presented to the world by any literary process during his own lifetime. His contemporaries must be satisfied with responding to his magic, assimilating his doctrine, thrilling beneath his magnetism. They dare not attempt to define or elucidate him. Only, by saturating their minds with him, they will prepare the soil for future growths of criticism. Let us live and think and act in Whitman's spirit—to the best of our ability—according to the measure which is granted us of understanding him—by the light which each one has derived from him. Doing so, we shall help to just and sane views of our Master as man, as poet, and as prophet. Impercep-

tibly his influence will be felt through what we say and do. But let us not pretend to measure and interpret him. The bow of Ulysses proved too strong for all the suitors of Penelope: not a man of them could bend it. Even so the critique of Whitman lies beyond the scope of any living student. His panegyric—even when poured forth by an Ingersoll—is ‘middling good as far as it goes,—But is that all?’”

Whitman.—I like Symonds. One significant point of all first-class men is *caution*. Let us accept; let us whack away; let us absorb; *but don't let us be carried away*. I like that. It is my own spirit, my own feeling—to accept and try and listen, and don't be too quick to reject, and don't bother about its not agreeing with this, that or the other. But also, don't accept too quickly. Symonds is a curious fellow. He is about fifty years of age. He is pretty rich, or was originally; lived in Bristol, England; had consumption; was diseased deeply with consumption. And so the doctors—with his wealth and everything—told him that it was pretty skittish business—that he was liable at any moment to be squelched out; so he, himself, finally, with his ten thousand pounds and so forth, went off to Switzerland, where he settled about twelve years ago. He had some money, as I said—not so dreadful, but still some. He had a wife. He had three or four children—three or four daughters—splendid girls. I have their pictures, they are up there. [*Thrusting his thumb toward the mantelpiece.*] He sent them to me. I have never seen him, of course, for he has never been in this country and I have never been there. He has written me many times—I suppose twenty times. I love him dearly. He is of college breed and education—horribly literary and suspicious, and enjoys things. A great fellow for delving into persons and into the concrete, and even into the physiological, the gastric—and wonderfully cute. And there he lives. He has built himself a handsome house. He has a good wife, I guess; has splendid daughters; and there in Switzerland, in this Davos Platz, he lives—once in a while going to London, to England. About every three months he writes me, O the most beautiful, splendid letters; I dare not show them to any one hardly, they are so like those tête-à-

tête interviews with your chum, your mate, your comrade who throws off everything—and that is the kind of fellow Addington Symonds is. (Warry—go up and get the picture from my mantel-piece.) He has sent me a good picture taken in Switzerland, and I want to show you what kind of a person he is. I have, I suppose, a dozen photos. I had an idea that we in America made the finest photos on earth, but after seeing those Swiss samples, and some others, I have changed my mind. And it's not the first time I have had to change my mind. . . . I doubt if any one realizes the value and depth and grandeur of first-class photos. I think they penetrate somewhere all art from five-hundred years ago down.

Brinton.—Suppose I go on with the letters? We ought to hear Roden Noel.

Voices.—Yes, Noel—Noel!

Whitman.—Sure enough—no one must be omitted—slighted—all are evened up here!

Roden Noel.—“I seem to have been left out of the list of your English friends. Still, I have always been a friend. I have always said I want to go to America to see Walt Whitman and Niagara.” [*A slight pause.*]

Harned.—Walt, tell us more about Roden Noel.

Whitman.—I don't know much about him. I know he is a good friend of mine, and believes (and it is a great feather in his cap!) in “Leaves of Grass.” The beauty of all this business is, that here are a lot of the best fellows away off in Switzerland or somewhere, or London and somewhere, who have not the least idea that they are being talked about, toasted, loved—Noel, for one, and Addington Symonds among the rest. I must always swear to Symonds—he is so noble, so true. [*Symonds' picture found and meanwhile passed around.*] The best thing about Symonds is his splendid aspiration. He wished to do something—he wished to do good. He was quite willing to leap into the gulf. He wished to do something. He wrote and wrote. He was very reticent. He was afraid of saying too much. He was afraid of going into anything too strongly and wanted to hedge. He was always anxious to make conditions and all that kind of thing.

But he is essentially the most splendid person that England has produced. He was thoroughly critical, to begin with; very cute; very penetrative; very Greek--thoroughly Greek; thoroughly Italian. We don't realize what that word "Italian," in its best sense, means—but he was Italian and is Italian, and he is now a little blue. He thinks he is on his last legs, and it may possibly be that it is so. But he thinks deeply, like perhaps some others—he thinks almost too much of it, and he thinks he has decrepitude and failure and that the last has arrived. I consider it one of the greatest successes, triumphs, feats I have achieved for twenty years he has been a student of "Leaves of Grass"—that I have his approbation and good will. The finale is, not details, not reasons why, or what has been, but, as in Tennyson's short sweet letter—in Symonds'—that he can say, God bless you, and good will to you, and success to you, and, I thoroughly endorse you, without detailing reasons why. [*W. turns, calls for words from absent friends—"Let them speak!"*]

Dowden.—"Among the many congratulations I hope Walt Whitman will accept mine. I wish you better health, if that may be, but in any case we have the happiness of knowing that you are sane in heart and head, and that you must feel how your best self is abroad in the world and active for good. I give you my reverence!"

Whitman.—Always the faithful Dowden! It is a good hand across the sea. We all join hands to-night! In the old world Dowden and Noel have their places—Dowden especially ranking high up. . . . Noel has written a book—essays, what not—and in that he takes up the puzzle of "Leaves of Grass." Some of my friends do not think it goes very deep into the matter—I don't know that it does—but I myself feel that he has struck a true note, which is the main thing, after all.

Burroughs.—"Walt, I keep your birthday pruning my vineyard and in reading an hour from your poems under my fig tree. I will let you eat your dinner in peace, as I shall want to do if I ever reach my 72d."

Whitman [*Leaning towards Traubel*].—The only trouble with

John is, he has a bit of a suspicion of us all—thinks I must have fallen in bad company [*laughing*—the Colonel and you and Bucke, . . . and yet John, of all men, ought to be right here to-night. . . . Well, well, here's love to John forever [*sipping his champagne*].

Dana.—"Health and long life! No man is so happy as he who has more friends to-day than he had yesterday."

Whitman.—Merry for Dana! His hand, too! . . . and now, don't forget Forman, Horace—there's a *love you* from him, too!

Forman.—"I look towards the sea, and see you sitting calmly over there with your face turned to the light. Be not in haste to climb, dear Walt Whitman. Sit there still, 'calm and supercilious' (your own words), and receive for many years yet the expressions of our love for yourself, our respect for your life, and our deep thankfulness for the solid spiritual aid we have received, and expect still to receive, from the inexhaustible treasury of your Book."

Whitman.—Buxton Forman is a Shelleyite of great repute. How strange that Shelley and "Leaves of Grass" should play upon him together! How is it to be accounted for? But what is this you tell me, Horace—a poem from Ernest Rhys?

Rhys.—"To-day, oh poet, at your birthday board

Sit many viewless guests, who cross the seas,

(Their talisman, imagination's spell!)

Ambassadors of many lands and tongues,

Who come to hear your voice, to hold your hand

And wish you health, once more upon the ear!

And break the birthday bread of love once more!

(So viewlessly, across the foreign seas,

Your songs went out erewhile, the welcome guests,

At hearth and board that you have never seen.)

Among your viewless guests, who come to-day, dear host,

To break the birthday bread, count with them Ernest Rhys."

Whitman.—There is Conway's greeting too: let us have Mon-cure Conway's! The *whole* of it!

Conway.—"I am happy to find that Walt Whitman has beside

him appreciative friends who mean to celebrate his birthday, and I trust they will have many such occasions in future. In writing the 'Life of Thomas Paine,' now nearly completed, I have come across many passages and poems in the writings of that revolutionary Quaker which seem to prophesy the appearance of a poet of democracy, and are fulfilled in Walt Whitman. I believe that democracy has never had so true a democrat since Paine's time, and has never had any poet at all except Walt Whitman. Henry Thoreau, I remember, called Walt 'the greatest democrat the world ever saw.' It has been my pleasure in many years of residence in England to remark the impression made by his poems on some of the finest intellects in that country. William Rossetti said to me, 'Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" is the largest thing done in our time.' Swinburne's poem addressed to 'Walt Whitman in America' is nearly the best thing he ever wrote, and he will never write anything worth reading again—his fire has gone out. I always remember with delight the day when Emerson loaned me Walt's first book, fresh from the press, and said, 'No man with eyes in his head can fail to recognize a true poet in that book.' At Emerson's request I called on Walt in the far part of Brooklyn, and I believe he told me I was the first literary man who had ever called on him. At any rate I shall always claim to have been his Columbus. Others may have discovered him first in a distant way, but I sailed the ocean between New York and Brooklyn and saw him, and saw his hearty and kindly old mother, whose blonde face and gentle eyes I do not forget. Salutations to Walt Whitman from his friend of over thirty-three years."

Trumbel.—I have here something from Dr. Johnston which reinforces Conway.

Whitman.—What is that, Horace? Let us hear—what does the Doctor say?

Trumbel.—Johnston quotes William Rossetti as writing: "As posterity to a long distance is certain to be interested in Whitman, so your little book is certain to attain a far more than patriarchal age."

Whitman.—I see—Rossetti speaks of the Doctor's American reports. Who can doubt those reports, Horace? Even those

who doubt me, doubt the "Leaves," ought to see how superbly the Doctor handled his material—or let it handle itself. . . . As to Rossetti, he is always manly and confident, and we will all take his hand to-night. But did Johnston write nothing for himself?

Trumbel.—O, yes!

Whitman.—Well—let us have that, too.

Johnston.—"I wish a very happy birthday to you, my dear good old Friend! As *my* contribution to your birthday tokens I send you a little souvenir of my visit to you in July last, which I hope you will like. That visit resulted from accumulated stores of gratitude, reverence and personal love, and was the crowning privilege and glory of my whole life. Oh, how I wish that I could be with you on your birthday; to sit beside you in that dear old room, to hear your loved voice and to feel the warm grasp of your hand again! But my little ocean-wafted messenger will speak to you and remind you of those two happy days we spent together—days never to be forgotten—and it will tell you that in *spirit* I am with you again, loving and blessing."

Whitman.—Very happily put, Doctor. Are there more letters ready?

Garland.—"I'm very sorry I live so far away that I can be at your dinner to Walt Whitman only in ink and paper. I don't know what I can add to express my regard and admiration for a man who has dared to be himself native and unaffected. In these days of apparent drift toward centralization of power, his doctrine of the Individual comes to have majesty like that of Ibsen's—surpassing it, indeed, for with equal weight of unswerving resolution Whitman has a more fervent humanity. He is a natural lover of man, and does not forget the wounded and crippled even in his moment of hottest warfare. I need only add that prejudice against our most American of poets is rapidly passing away in Boston. There is very little of it remaining among our most thoughtful critics. Our papers deal kindly and with regard with his great name, and were it possible for him to come to Boston once more the truth of what I write would be made manifest by deeds and words of greeting, by clasp of hands and

by smiling lips. Men (and women, too) begin to understand that he stands for the strength of wisdom and not the weakness of ignorant innocence. That he stands for self-government, for individual development, for liberty, love and justice. The free and individual form of his verse is reaching wider circles of readers each year. It will have incalculable effect upon the future verse form not by way of imitation but by its power to educate the ear to freer forms and subtler rhythms. Once more I make salutations to a great personality, a powerful poet, and a serene prophet of a glorious America and faithful American literature to come."

Whitman.—Carland has been here to see me several times. He is cordial, warm hearted, handsome. O yes! more than all that, too, for he is making a great fame for himself by his stories. . . . They tell me his stories are honest as "Leaves of Grass," which is to set 'em up high, sartain! [*Laughing*] and yet the fight is not all over, as he seems to think. I see many a battle ahead, as I have told my friend Horace Traubel here opposite me often.

Child.—"My affectionate greetings to Whitman! May he live on among us for many a happy year, to illustrate the majesty and peace of old age, as he has illustrated the splendors of full-blooded manhood! I think of him in his serene latter days along with the gracious picture of old Cephalus, which Plato gives in the first pages of the *Republic*—enjoying the abiding presence of sweet hope, that 'kind nurse of old age,' as Pindar calls it. The longer I live the more important does the birth of Whitman into this nineteenth century appear to be. He is for me one of its few great emancipators from the special dangers to which it has been liable—the dangers of luxury and mechanism, issuing in that vice of dilettanteism which at present afflicts certain American as well as European centers. The future will assuredly be grateful to Whitman for confronting his age with a type of manhood that exhibited a noble power, an emotional amplitude, a religiousness, a physical sanity, and simplicity of habit and carriage, against which the influence of the time conspired in vain. I say the future will be grateful because I think that, like other great souls, Whitman has been 'before his time,'

and that his influence upon the world has hardly been felt as yet. It *will* be felt because the world is going to recover from its stupor of soul; and then it will recognize its liberators. I join with you in wishing joy to our dear friend and helpful elder comrade. Health and happiness to him and to you all!"

Whitman.—"That is one of the chief things—spinal to all the rest, in fact. Yes, we need a new manhood, a fresh start, a voyage to sea again! "Before my time?" Yes and no—no doubt at the right moment, if at all.

Ford (Exobella).—"My sister Bessie and I both thank you very warmly for the present you sent us of your book. Edward Carpenter sent it on to us. We offer you our warmest greetings and best wishes for your birthday; we never forget it, and always wish you all good."

Whitman.—"Very sweet and noble, very near the heart! I ask myself more than a little if my best friends have not been women. My friend Mrs. Gilchrist, one of the earliest, a picked woman, profound, noble, sacrificing, saw clearly when almost everybody else was interested in raising the dust—obscuranting what was true.

Kennedy.—"I don't know that the spirit moves me to convey to you and Walt at this particular time much more than the simple Hamarian salutation, Aloha!—"Love to you." This I must say, however—that my belief is and forever will be unshaken in the ultimate triumph of the ideas for which that great document, 'Leaves of Grass,' the Bible of the Nineteenth Century, stands: truth, justice, comradeship, union, spirituality, and, above all, the sanctity and nobility of the passion of love. Christianity and Whitmanism are mighty and irreconcilable opposites, as touches the body. The one ascetic, anti-naturalistic; the other a joyous acceptor of nature; the one spurning what is the other's chief glory. Historical Christianity is superstition; Whitmanism is science. But in spiritual insight Christ and Whitman are grandly alike, both seeing the real life to be behind the veil of sense. As before, I write you from the stronghold of Puritanism. The shame of the suppressing here of America's greatest book is still not wiped out of existence.

And here before me lies a clipping taken from a Boston paper which describes how a college man was arrested the other day for kissing his wife on the street! The Boston Dogberry locked up both man and wife in jail over night until it was proved that the woman kissed was the man's lawful wife. Did you ever hear anything more laughable? Christian anti-naturalism deeply entrenched, you see, yet, in the popular mind. It will probably take a thousand years or so for the new gospel to supplant the effete one. However, *sursum corda!*"

Whitman.—All that will come to pass, Kennedy—all is to be provided for! That is one of the things we are here for—that is why we have Ingersoll, great, magnificent fellow that he is! Every blow he strikes for liberty, against what you call Puritanism, is for us, this human critter, the "Leaves," democracy, love! But you know that as well as I do.

A Voice.—And what will we get from Donaldson?

Whitman.—Tom Donaldson, cannot we have a word from you?

Donaldson.—Mr. Whitman, I did not deserve to be let in. I got here late. But I had been suffering this winter from the attention of three doctors, and after a while I found that by quitting the doctors I might get well. So I am mending now—shaking off the rheumatism—but pretty slow yet, and late, therefore, getting here to-night. But we won't say more of that. I want to talk of you. I am not much given to personal compliment—

Whitman.—Where have you been lately? You have been West and in Washington?

Donaldson.—Yes.

Whitman.—Tell us something about it. Tell us, too, about Blaine. We are curious about Blaine.

Donaldson.—I will talk about a more opportune subject—about Walt Whitman. It seems to me I have never seen a book or newspaper article that conveyed to me the real individuality or personality of Walt Whitman.

A Voice.—How about Dr. Bucke's book?

Donaldson.—Since Dr. Bucke's book was written I think the

subject has grown, so that Dr. Bucke might write another—a supplementary—book with profit.

Whitman.—Is he speaking of Dr. Bucke's book, Horace?

Traubel.—Yes.

Whitman [With raised voice].—Tom, Horace says you are speaking of Dr. Bucke's book. Look out! Look out! I myself swear by it. I have had a thousand books and essays, and Dr. Bucke's is about the only one that thoroughly radiates and depicts and describes in the way that I think thoroughly delineates me. I thoroughly accept Dr. Bucke's book.

Donaldson.—So do I. But I would like to know where in Dr. Bucke's book is this incident of your life (I am going to give you one particular instance). Oscar Wilde told me—

Whitman [Interrupting].—Take out what I slice in. I think Dr. Bucke has accurately depicted my own preparatory and inaugural life—say a certain sixteen to thirty years on which everything else rests: New York, Brooklyn, experimentation in strange ways, not such as usually go to make poetry and books and grand things, but the flash of active life—yes, in New York, Brooklyn (to me the greatest cities in the universe), and from there down to New Orleans, and up the Mississippi to the big lakes. I travelled over and stopped on them all. Dr. Bucke has briefly, but thoroughly, grasped, gripped, digested all that I was in those twenty years, better than anybody else. I do not so much dwell upon his criticism of "Leaves of Grass." I still think—I have always thought—that it escapes me myself, its own author, as to what it means, and what it is after, and what it drifts at. Dr. Bucke, with audacious finger, brain, seems to say, "Here is what it means," and "This is not what it means," and "This is a contrast and a comparison," and "This is one side and that is the other side." Well, I don't know—I accept and consider the book as a study. But behind all that (which is anent of what I said fifteen or twenty minutes ago) remains a subtle and baffling, a mysterious, *personality*. My attempt at "Leaves of Grass"—my attempt at my own expression—is after all this: to thoroughly equip, absorb, acquire, from all quarters, despising nothing, nothing being too small—no science, no ob-

servation, no detail—west, east, cities, ruins, the army, the war (through which I was)—and after all that consigning everything to the personal critter. And the doctor is almost the only one of my critics who seems to have thoroughly understood and appreciated that very important fact. To me it is the personality of the business; it is the personality of the American man, of the fellow from 1860 to 1890—the forty years, the wonderful forty years, the indescribably wonderful forty years of the recent history of America—in a fellow, in a man, in an individuality, thoroughly absorbed. I suppose I am getting a little foggy and cloudy, but the idea is, that Doctor Bucke is one of the few who have thoroughly appreciated and understood and realized all that and has dominated his book with it. Most poets, most writers, who have anything to say, have a splendid theory and scheme, and something they want to put forth. I, on the contrary, have no scheme, no theory, no nothing—in a sense absolutely nothing.

Donaldson.—Just let 'er go, eh?

Whitman.—Almost that. I have uttered the "Leaves" for the last thirty-five years as an illustration of, as an utterance of, as a radiation from, the personal critter—the fellow, man, individuality, person, American, so to speak. To me, as I have said over and over again, almost tiresomely, there is something curious, indescribably divine, in the compound individuality that is in every one. It is behind all, everything—his time, his degree of development, his stage of development. These have been the main things, and out of them I have reiterated and reiterated and reiterated. I suppose there are four hundred leaves of grass, one after another, which are contradictory, often contradictory—oh! contradictory as hell—perfectly so, but still held together by that iron band, of whatever it may be—individuality, personality, identity, covering our time, from fifty to ninety. That is me, Tom—that is Dr. Bucke's book.

Traube.—But meantime, Donaldson, what's become of your Oscar Wilde story? You've forgotten all about that.

Whitman.—True enough, Tom; Oscar Wilde! Have you been standing all this time?

Donaldson.—Yes, I have! Is it left for that young man to get me my rights? I leave it to all here if it was not your fault, Mr. Whitman, that my story didn't even get started.

Whitman.—I own it, Tom. Go on.

Donaldson.—Well, the incident I wish to recall to your attention, Mr. Whitman, is this: Of course you did not find Oscar Wilde the kind of fellow that some people thought he was. On the contrary, you found him a splendid kind of fellow. And he says that not only are you a good poet, but in that room upstairs, in that front room of yours, over your lamp, you can brew the best milk punch of any man in the United States. I am free to claim that no book has ever developed that fact, and yet it is greatly to your credit. Now, I think the most memorable interview I ever had with you, out of many hundred, I had in that little front room. You had a small stove in the corner that looked very much like a fruit can, and you sat in a small arm-chair with a white robe about you, and the stove pipe got out of the hole, and there was no draft, and the fire went out, and you said finally, "Don't you think this room is cold?" and I said, "Yes, I do," and so we two—Oscar Wilde and me—fished around together, and discovered the reason of the accident, which is just as I have given it.

Whitman.—Good for you, Tom! The cat's out of the bag.

Donaldson.—But that is not all. I seem almost to have made a speech, anyway, though I expressly intended to avoid that. But before I sit down let me say I brought with me the regrets of some friends over the river—especially of Horace Howard Furness.

Traubel.—And I have a letter from him.

Whitman.—Let Furness speak for himself.

Furness.—"What wouldn't I give to be able to be with you! I can join you only in imagination. Yet what imagination is adequate fairly to picture Walt's majestic presence, and the eternal sunshine settling on his head which illumines us all by its mere reflection? I bid him 'take from my mouth the wish of happy years.'"

Whitman.—When you see him give him my love.

Donaldson.—And I brought with me from an old gentleman on the Allegheny river a bottle of whiskey which he warrants to be fifty-four years old.

Whitman.—Oh! noble old man! Hurrah for the old man!

Voices.—Bucke! Bucke!

Bucke.—You all know I am no speaker—

Whitman.—But you can give a word.

Bucke.—If I could speak at all I could say something this evening on the subject in hand. Perhaps the most significant thing of all is the marvellous diversity of opinion about you, Walt, and your book.

Whitman.—Expatiate a little on that, Doctor: that is very curious.

Bucke.—Well, some think, for instance, that above all things you stand for the divine passion of love, others that you especially voice friendship, others again that external nature is your central and supreme theme; to still others you represent freedom, liberty, joyous and absolute abandonment; again your religious sense is placed at the head, and we are told that a noble aspiration for perfect spiritual manhood, supreme assurance of immortality, intuitions of the unseen, intense faith in the essential friendliness of the universe to man, is the essence of your life and teaching. But the opposite of all these is in you as well; you are as capable of hate and scorn as of love and compassion; imitation and obedience belong to you as much as their seeming opposites; reckless defiance and contempt are, though subordinated, as inherent in the "Leaves" and in you as are reverence and affection; despondency and despair are as truly component parts of your character as are hope and joy; common and even coarse manhood is as developed in you as are the glorious ecstasy of the poet and the high speculations of the philosopher; while you are good you are also evil; the godlike in you is offset by passions, instincts, tendencies that unrestrained might well be called devilish; if on the whole you have lived well and done well yet none the less you have had in you, though subordinated, the elements of a Cenci or an Attila. This side of you is little realized, and therefore I have said and

say that no one has yet understood you. Like a group of mountains passaged by dark ravines your Titanic qualities (good and evil) hide one another, so that we who stand by, beholding and admiring some one—or at most two or three—of the majestic summits, or shuddering on the edge of some precipice, necessarily fail to see or adequately to divine the hidden peaks, and, still less, the dark intervening chasms. I do not believe that I or any of us realize, Walt, what you really are. The main thing is that we love you and hope to have you live long with us.

Whitman.—I scarcely know whether I do or not.

Voices.—Bonsall ! Bonsall !

Whitman.—Yes, Harry, give us your "views"—give us your report.

Bonsall.—On my way here the train stopped at Harleigh Cemetery, and as those who had visited the city of the dead and viewed Walt Whitman's tomb entered the cars, I mused how few will honor the living bard to-night compared with the procession of pilgrims from far and near who will make a Mecca of his grave when he is no more ! Camden will be known to the world from the fact of one man living and dying here, as Stratford, Concord, and the few shrines that stand alone and need no Westminster or Pantheon in a proud metropolis.

In our unstudied and unstinted, our informal and perhaps too careless, colloquialism this evening the thought has been dropped that, until we revere the Man and greet him on each recurring natal day, we do not understand, and cannot comprehend, the length and breadth and height and depth of the philosophy of the Poet. To this, for one, and in common with most of us, I take exception. It is because we do realize what manner of man we honor that we are here to-night. It is because we have imbibed something of his spirit and can translate the message spoken to us with the Right Voice that this responsive echo is called forth. It is because we know whereof we speak that even in our most florid imagery we know that we speak the words of truth and soberness. It is because we have travelled the Open Road with him here, that when we come to tread the highway of the spheres and step from constellation to constellation we shall know

that Walt Whitman will await us on a still higher "lift" and extend, as now, the hand we will grasp in courage and confidence because of the light he shed on the way thither.

Whitman.—I did not know you were such a speechmaker, Harry! So you object to Bucke's argument? Well, well, you are both right, I guess—though Doctor gets rather nearer the nerve, so to speak. There's a point or two you fellows could argue out together, though as for that I don't suppose argument would settle anything. [*To Traubel.*] Harry has kept his hand on the wheel this many-a-day—never weary, never unsteady!

Williams (F. H.).—It has become, I had almost said, a fashion to say that Walt Whitman lacks form, and that his method of expressing himself is in great chaos of words. But I do not think that the form in which you have seen fit to express yourself is a mere chaos of words. I do not think that the mere fact that you have refused to be bound by the accepted metrical forms, by the laws of versification as they have been accepted by all time, at all argues that you have disregarded form. As I heard Mr. Richard Watson Gilder say at one of our recent re-unions: "I think that Walt Whitman's form is one of the most extraordinary things about him. I believe that his form is inimitable." I believe that anybody who will get away from the idea of scanning line by line and will undertake to comprehend the fundamental thought at the bottom of "Leaves of Grass" and which runs through it—not through its sections but through the book as a whole—will find that the form adopted is the only one in which that thought could possibly have been embodied and expressed. Any writer, any poet, who had sought to express that thought and had bound himself by any of the accepted metrical laws, would have found himself in the position of the Irishman who tried to carry home a quart of the critter in a half-pint mug—the verse would not have held the thought. The people who say that his thought is a chaos have simply come across a cosmos which is beyond their comprehension.

Whitman.—I hope that is so.

Williams.—Mr. Gabriel Sarrazin has said, sir, that you are not an artist—that you are not an artist because you rise superior

to art. I believe that is nothing more than saying that genius is a law unto itself. Art is an interpretation of nature, and when the thing to be expressed transcends the laws of art, we then arrive at a point within which a genius—if there be such a man—exists. I mean without regard to the laws of art. That is exactly the idea found in "Leaves of Grass."

Whitman.—It is a comfort to hear that. Bravo! . . . Dr. Bucke is my authoritative expresser and explanator, as far as there can be one.

Donaldson.—What about my hundred pages that I am getting out about you?

Whitman.—Go on, Tom, go on—and God be with you!

Morris.—Something has been said about the euphony and harmony of Mr. Whitman's verse. I think if Mr. Donaldson had had the pleasure which I had a couple of weeks ago of going to Long Island and visiting Walt Whitman's birthplace, he could scarcely say, as he has said, that there was no euphony and no harmony in Walt Whitman. The one prevailing feature in all that country is that every door-yard—no matter how humble, how much of a shanty—has a bush of lilac growing.

Donaldson.—Did Whitman plant it?

Whitman.—That was a smart dab, Tom.

Morris.—He has celebrated it supremely. Another figure which we find in the two lyrics of Mr. Whitman is the hermit-thrush. It is an indigenous bird in Long Island.

Whitman.—It is the sweetest, solemnest of all our singing birds.

Morris.—Being on Long Island I was almost constantly in view of the sea. Now, these three elements—the lilac, the hermit-thrush and the sea—are the prevailing elements of those great lyrics, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and the great Lincoln ode. I consider that if any man was to create so much lyric beauty, euphony and harmony are necessarily a main part of his texture.

Whitman.—No doubt, Harrison, that is part of the story—but there's a deal more beyond—a deal more!

Donaldson.—The idea I have always had of Walt Whitman's

euphony and rhythm and poetry was the idea expressed by Mr. Williams: it is not at all what Mr. Morris undertakes to exhibit. And, by the way, I am twice as old as that boy and he can talk twice as well as I can.

Whitman.—Don't say that, Tom Donaldson—you stand very well on your own feet.

Voices.—Talcott Williams—Williams!

Whitman.—Get up, Talcott—show yourself!

Williams (Talcott).—Yes, Mr. Whitman, and all—I will, and let me say a word, too. We are here marking the fourth of a long series of celebrations of this birthday. From this point we will go on in the development of those broad principles which will gradually overspread the world, and which to-day are known to all the English-speaking world, and which in time shall know neither let nor limit. As I remember how lesser forms of verse have disappeared, how the bric-a-brac of verse crumbles under the touch of years, I feel that there are new meanings in yours. As we gather at this table, at which few sit but at which all are peers, in the presence which dignifies us to-night, I feel in some sense a new meaning in the line, "Age shakes Athene's tower but spares gray Marathon." For me the democracy of your verse is only the lesser and smaller part of it. The higher and wider side is its spiritual side. The circumstance that, in an age which not only doubts democracy but doubts itself, and doubts, sometimes, the universe, the universe has been to you a road of many roads—the road of travelling souls.

Voices.—Letters! Letters!

Whitman.—Yes, Horace, the letters—bits of them, anyway.

Wallace.—"This evening—which till a short time ago was dull, cold and overcast, with dark lowering rain-clouds—is now, at sunset, clear, calm, and radiant with heavenliest hues. May it be an omen of your remaining life!"

Whitman.—Good boy! Good boy! And a dozen sign with him—royal Lancashire fellows, all. Read their names—read their names! . . . They call themselves "the College."

Mead.—"All lovers of nature and freedom join in grateful thought of your free and stalwart life."

Whitman.—That is a magazinist, but the magazinists as a rule have rejected us.

Stedman.—"Life, after all, is not like a river—although it is the fashion to say that it is—for *that* stream flows more slowly as it nears the boundless sea. But if Walt's birthdays seem to succeed one another more rapidly as the years shorten, I take all the more the hope that there may be (to use his own word) a long tally of them yet in store. And Whitman's poetry *is* like the river: nothing of it more tranquil, nothing broader and deeper, than his songs almost within sound of the infinite surge. Take, for instance, the last chant of his—'To the Sunset Breeze.' It recalls the sense of zest, and of physical harmony, with which Borrow's blind gypsy asked to be placed where he could feel the wind from the heath: over and beyond this, the reach of a noble intellect, the yielding of a strong soul to the vast movement of the universe. To such a bard it is of little moment whether he stays in one world or another. But to us it is much to have him still among us."

Whitman.—We all like Stedman: he is hearty, warm, generous—yes, sticks to his guns, too, though his guns are not always ours. To-night we all seem to melt and flow together. [*To Traubel.*]—It might go hard with us if this was all simply directed to Walt Whitman! But we are here, I as much as any, to pay our respects, not to Walt Whitman, but to democracy! [*Aloud again.*]—Whose is the next message?

Morse.—"I must join the chorus. A friend visiting Camden some months ago reported to me: 'I found Whitman calmly sitting in the midst of such utter and appalling literary confusion I wondered for a moment how he breathed—vast heaps of everything piled about him. It seemed as though an earthquake had thrown all the life and literature of the hour—everything, in fact—into ruins, but the old god. He alone remained unperturbed and indestructible.' Perhaps this friend did not go so much amiss, forecasting with a wider significance than intended the fate to men and things some far future will reveal."

Whitman.—That is Sidney—our Sidney. We have his bust of us up-stairs, and a noble piece of work it is; some think, the-

best. [*To Traubel.*] John Burroughs, of all men, should be here to-night. He should not only be here but be at the head of the table—see all the fellows, hear all that is said, throw a strain into the music himself.

Curtis (George William).—"My hearty respect and regard for the sturdy and faithful man whom you honor."

Whitman.—How cautious—how non-committal!

Blake.—"My reverential greeting to the venerable poet whose songs will wind men's arms around each other's necks if we will sing them truly after him."

Whitman.—Blake—Blake: is that Blake of Chicago? Yes—I know him: he has been here. Thanks! Thanks!

Sanborn.—"My earnest love to you, Walt Whitman, on this memorial occasion. We think of you at Concord as often as we look out over the meadows across the river, which you were so fond of feeding your eyes upon."

Whitman.—Sanborn was one of our earliest friends! And now, Tom Harned, you don't intend to slip us altogether? Get up, Tom: say your say.

Harned.—We have heard much about "Leaves of Grass"—about Walt Whitman and his methods. But my mind is animated by other ideas. During the past year I have suffered the dread that perhaps it would not now be long that we would know Walt Whitman here in person. The fact must be stated that during the past few months he has occupied a room above us, unable to leave it, his physical condition becoming weaker day by day. It seems to me that the great, the supreme, lesson of Walt Whitman's life is this: that he has been entirely consistent with himself, that he has not advocated any doctrine that he has not lived. And to me, inexpressibly beyond the hope of giving utterance to the thought, the calmness and deliberation with which Walt Whitman invites the future and looks forward unfearingly to crossing the unknown sea, is one of the most beautiful evidences of this consistency. Whitman, above all others, is the poet of immortality. And when I use the word I mean by it a conviction of the immortality of identity—that our lives do not end here, that death is an essential—ay, as he urges, even to

be sung to, praised. Calm, exalted, he awaits death. Here, then, in Walt Whitman's presence, I desire to say that that is the sublime, the supreme, index of his character.

Whitman.—And now comes your turn, Horace.

Traubel.—No, I must be excused. I feel myself in the midst of a battle of which I may some time have something to say. My turn has not come. When the battle is over, then I may write of it.

Whitman.—You are right, boy—your turn is not yet. Years and years from now, when I am gone—when, as you say, the battle is over—much may depend upon your teaching, and you will set out the exact lines of evidence. You are right, boy—and God bless you!

Clifford.—I will put in a word, too, though, like Traubel, I feel to be excused to-night. Everybody knows Emerson's remark: "To be great is to be misunderstood." There is a story that I believe to be authentic to the effect that when some one came to him and asked what he had meant by a certain passage or passages in his essays, he replied in his rather embarrassed manner that he supposed that when he wrote the matter referred to he had meant something clear enough, which now was forgotten or obliterated. So, Mr. Whitman, you are not alone in that particular, if your own account of yourself be correct. But I am not going to make a speech. Let me add an amusing episode. In my not very remote experience, when I happened by accident to be one of a company of persons where the name of Walt Whitman was mentioned and pretty warmly espoused by a majority of those present, a somewhat well-known poetaster of these parts, to whose name it would be cruel if I gave it an immortality by mentioning it here, called a halt by crying out: "Well, if Walt Whitman is a poet, then I am not one." A no inconsiderable world of professionals will one day be tried by that standard, and it is not likely that him we call Whitman—him we honor to-night—will suffer in the decision.

Whitman.—Why, Clifford, you swing a heavy club! Walt Whitman? Sure enough—no poet at all! That is the way

the schools have had it for a long time! But here is Miss Porter, too—what has she to say to all this?

Porter (Miss).—I know we all want to say something to-night, and what I would like to say, or the thought that has particularly occurred to me in what I have read of yours, is that you connect literature more closely with life than any one has done before. And that is what we praise particularly—we narrow people who have just begun to know you—and that is what we look forward to in the future: that that literature may become more widely spread which is more closely connected with life, as you connect it in your democracy and in your "Leaves of Grass."

Whitman.—And Eakins—what of Tom Eakins? He is here. Haven't you something to say to us, Eakins?

Eakins.—I am not a speaker—

Whitman.—So much the better—you are more likely to say something.

Eakins.—Well, as some of you know, I some years ago—a few—painted a picture of Mr. Whitman. I began in the usual way, but soon found that the ordinary methods wouldn't do—that technique, rules and traditions would have to be thrown aside; that, before all else, he was to be treated as a *man*, whatever became of what are commonly called the principles of art.

Whitman.—What wouldn't we give for O'Connor, Ingersoll, Burroughs, to-night! Dear O'Connor—dead, dead! How he would enter into it all—absorb it—glorify it!

Clarke (Miss).—I would like to add my personal thanks to Walt Whitman for his insistence upon the true principle of democracy, which consists not in bringing down those things which are high but in raising up those things which are low.

Whitman.—A hit sharp on the head of the nail!

Eyre.—Walt, I am one of the boys that you cannot see with your eyes. There are a great many millions outside who cannot see you now, but will see you well by-and-by. I met a man in Philadelphia to-day to whom I said, "I am going to dine to-night with the greatest man of this century." He asked: "Who is that?" and I answered, "Walt Whitman." He seemed surprised: "You don't mean actually to call him that, do you?" and I

assured him that I did with all my heart and soul. And I never said a word more true. You are the greatest man of all this century and of all the world. I will tell you, Walt, why you are so great. It is because you have taught me, every one, that I, they, are as great as you. There is one thing I want to say. You spoke of woman. It has been to me a constant wonder that the man who has written "I see a mother clasping her child to her breast, and I watch her long and long," has never married.

Whitman.—That is Ingersoll. That has been explained by Dr. Bucke, who, I think, knows me better than anybody, and has sort of intercalated and found out, partly by his own instigation and partly because he feels it to do. I leave a large—a very, very, large—explication of that and all other questions to Dr. Bucke. Somebody says you cannot understand any one except through a good spirit. Well, it is not alone that—that is not all; but until you appeal, or preach, or explicate the whole thing by a good spirit, I don't think it could be thoroughly explicated anyhow. But I think Dr. Bucke and Horace Traubel are the nearest to the explicators—whatever that may be—of me and the difficulties of that question, and all other questions. The whole thing, my friend, like the Nibelungen, or somebody's, cat, has an immensely long, long, long tail to it. And the not being married, and the not and the not and the not, and the this and the this and the this, have a great many explications. At the first view it may not be so creditable to the fellow, to the critter, but go on, explicate still more and still more and still more behind all that. Somebody says, and I think it is a wonderfully profound thing, that there is no life, like Burns', for instance,—like Robert Burns', the poet's—no life thoroughly penetrated, explicated, understood and gone behind, and that gone behind, and that fact gone behind, and that fact gone behind, but after all, after awhile, you see why it must be so in the nature of things. And that is a splendid explication of Robert Burns. You go behind all, and you realize that, no matter what the blame may be to Robert Burns, somehow or other you feel like excusing and saying that that is the reason why, and that is the reason why, and that is the reason why. See?

Eyre [*Still on his feet, as when interrupted by Whitman*].—This has been the most successful speech of my life, and I could stand on my feet for half an hour and hear some other fellow talk; and of all the fellows in the world whom I should love so to hear talk—like a rivulet, like a brook, like a universal cataract, like some babbling spring, like the fields, like the birds—Walt Whitman stands the first.

Whitman [*Laughing*].—But my speech is not yours. Give us yours.

Eyre.—I want to ask a question. I don't know that you like the word *literature*. There is something better than that, don't you think?

Whitman.—There is something better than that, deeper than that, behind that; like religion, which is not the conventional church, by any means, but rests on something deeper.

Eyre.—In one of your poems I have found—but will you let me repeat it?

Whitman.—Go ahead if it is not too long.

Eyre.—I want to call attention to "My Captain," a poem which has in it the element of the dramatic in a sublime and startling degree—marvellous contrasts of color and sound. I want especially to call your attention to the third verse. I shall give it, in order to show what I mean. [*Recites*.]

Whitman [*Leaning across the table*].—Horace, what ails Brinton? Isn't he to speak?

Traubel.—Ask him. I hope so.

Whitman [*Turning to B., who sat at his left*].—What about that, Doctor? We want to hear from you!

Voices.—Brinton! Brinton!

Brinton [*Half risen*].—I do not know—

Voices.—Brinton! Brinton!

Whitman.—You can't escape us, Doctor!

Brinton.—Well—if I must I must!

Whitman [*To Traubel*].—Did he suppose we intended that he should be left out of the play?

Brinton.—We all know well enough why we are here to-night, and we all know, therefore, that this dinner and its after-talk be-

come an ascription to Walt Whitman and the great cause his "Leaves of Grass" inaugurates and fortifies. And how can I add anything to the warm and loyal words spoken to this effect in his presence by all the eloquent fellows who have spoken before me—

Whitman.—Good, Doctor! A good start! You can add enough!

Voices.—Yes! Yes!

Brinton.—Thank you, Mr. Whitman—and thank you all! But I feel somewhat in the position of a man who at the last hour is asked and expected to put the keystone in the arch. I know nobody except Walt Whitman himself who can do that for our arch to-night—

Whitman.—Give us the word of science, Doctor!

Brinton.—The word of science to Walt Whitman would be—you have done me and the world a service beyond all service hitherto done in literature for reason and the rational insight of man. You have made comrades of men. You have made seekers, discoverers, along lines not previously travelled or known. If we are here about this table in testimony of an acceptance of Walt Whitman's interpretation of comradeship and joy, we are also here to give emphasis to his principles affecting the mental life of the race. Walt Whitman's "Leaves" will never fade and sere, for he has given them a touch of vital blood which will preserve them as long as men read and reason, as long as there are eyes to see and brains to comprehend. And this is the case because in this poetic volume there has been no attempt to elude nature, to get away from the actual—because its author wrote on, without sense of shame or motive of apology, recounting the sights and wonders that everywhere appeared before him. In the highest sense a reflector of truth, he is also in the simplest way a lover of men. On the one side we find his soul reaching out to the largest questions of mind, of civilization; on the other we find his heart throbbing in common with the hopes and horrors of the simplest men. Science sees in Whitman a teacher of evolution—sees in him perhaps so far the finest fruit of evolution and its profoundest explicator and defender.

Whitman.—Do you say that, Doctor?

Brinton.—Yes, I do. You [*turning to Whitman*] have held high the perpendicular hand, and offered us the most precious gift of the ages—offered us freedom, love, immortality. [*Then addressing those about the table.*] Let us hold up as good a hand as high, in affectionate demonstration of our esteem and loyalty!

Whitman.—Noble Doctor! It is the best note of the song, almost! And yet all is so good—all so fits, is of one piece!

Donaldson.—If I understand what you have done, it is to make a plea for America and the Americans—it is to make a plea for universality and the brotherhood of man. Now, do I understand you right?

Whitman.—Oh! that is one thing—the commonhood, brotherhood, democratization, or whatever it may be called. But behind all that something remains. I had a dispute with Thomas Dudley some years ago. His theory was, that our main thing in America was to look out for ourselves—for the fellows here. Well, in response, I remember I said, rather incidentally (but I felt it at the bottom of my heart), that the theory of the progress and expansion of the cause of the common bulk of the people is the same in all countries—not only in the British islands, but on the continent of Europe and allwheres—that we are all embarked together like fellows in a ship, bound for good or for bad. What wrecks one wrecks all. What reaches the port for one reaches the port for all. And it is my feeling, and I hope I have in “Leaves of Grass” expressed it, that the bulk of the common people, the torso of the people, the great body of the people all over the civilized world—and any other, too, for that matter—are sailing, sailing together in the same ship. And that which jeopardizes one jeopardizes all. And in my contest with Thomas Dudley, who is a thorough “protectionist” (in which I thoroughly differ from him), my feeling was that the attempt at what they call “protection”—though I am not posted in the protection details and theories and formulations and statistics, and all that goes to boost up and wall in, and wall out and protect out (doubtless I tread on the corns of a good many people, but I feel it deeply, and the older I live to be the stronger I feel it)—is wrong, and that one feeling for all, extreme reciproc-

ity and openness and freetradeism, is the policy for me. And I not only think that it is an important item in political economy, but I think it is the essential social groundwork, away down; and to me nothing will do eventually but an understanding of *the solidarity of the common people, of all peoples and all races*. And that is behind "Leaves of Grass."

Well, I have talked and garriloussed and frivelled so terrifically this evening, much to my amazement, that I don't think I have anything left. I am glad to see you all, and I appreciate, thoroughly appreciate, your kindness and complimentary honor of me and everything—but oh! I have not felt up to the occasion of making much of a speech, or, at any rate, any more of a speech than I have been flabbing away at from time to time. I must say to my friends further along the table that I am about half blind and cannot see more than ten feet ahead and hardly that—else I am sure I should specify them. [*He had greeted one after another by name.*] The main thing, as I told my friend Horace Traubel, is, that we are here, and are jolly, and having a good jolly time. I welcome you—give out my love to every one of you—and to many and many a one not here.

Voices.—Are there no other letters?

Traubel.—Yes,—several—but no time to read them: the old man is tired and wishes to withdraw. I have letters still—a whole cluster—from Adler, Gilder, Tucker—from Miss Gilder, too, and Miss Lazarus. But we have given what Walt just called "samples." Now he says that his ears and eyes are about given out.

Whitman.—What a pity! But it is late—and they will forgive us. I'm afraid I have already overshot the mark. And—Warry—where are you? [*Rising—taking his cane—waving his hands to the risen crowd.*] And now to all, Good-night and thanks, and God bless you. [*Retires.*]

WALT WHITMAN.

SERENE, vast head, with silver cloud of hair,
Lined on the purple dusk of death
A stern medallion, velvet set—
Old Norseman throned, not chained upon thy chair :
Thy grasp of hand, thy hearty breath
Of welcome thrills me yet
As when I faced thee there.

Loving my plain as thou thy sea,
Facing the east as thou the west,
I bring a handful of grass to thee,
The prairie grasses I know the best—
Type of the wealth and width of the plain,
Strong of the strength of the wind and sleet,
Fragrant with sunlight and cool with rain—
I bring it, and lay it low at thy feet,
Here by the eastern sea.

Hamlin Garland.

WALT WHITMAN AND THE COSMIC SENSE.

By RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE.

I.

I WANT to state in few words what, after long thought and study, seems to me the central fact in this Walt Whitman "Leaves of Grass" business. It is, in my opinion, that there exists in Whitman a function, faculty, sense, or whatever it may be called, that does not exist in ordinary people, and it is from this faculty or sense that the charm and influence of the man and his words flow.* It is not that this faculty stands alone; it could not; it is necessary for its existence that an exalted human personality should co-exist and underlie it. If Whitman were not a supreme man in other respects—if he were not a highly developed man from the point of view of the senses, the intellect and the moral nature, if he were not a superior person physically as well as mentally, he would not and could not have the faculty referred to, or at least could not have it so extraordinarily developed as it was in him. How can I give an idea of what this faculty is? It has no recognized name. Yet it certainly has an existence and is, as I believe, a definite entity of the very first importance. In almost every page of the "Leaves" Whitman alludes to it—or what he says presupposes it. But there are passages, as we shall see, which disclose it more clearly, reveal it with greater abandon, than does the average page—passages in

* When I began writing upon this subject I imagined that I could put all I wanted to say within the compass of a magazine article, but as I proceeded I found the subject much larger than I anticipated. The following pages may, therefore, be looked upon as a brief abstract to be followed later (I hope) by a volume to be named "Cosmic Consciousness."

which he tells us, in his own veiled and mystic manner, about his possession of it, and what it is, and its mode of action.

II.

Briefly stated, the faculty in question is a new consciousness superadded to the old. My statement is that this man has* a mental function not possessed by ordinary men, and that that function is a form of consciousness transcending the common consciousness that we all have, and superadded to it.

The only way to make this statement intelligible is to show the relation of the new to the old mental functions, and how these latter came into existence in the past in essentially the same manner as it is alleged the former is coming into existence now.

Let us assume that what the ablest students of life tell us is a fact; that, namely, there was a time when our ancestors were simply unconscious; that they were organisms so low in the scale of creation that they had not attained to this primitive mental faculty. Then gradually, as they advanced along the highway of life, there was developed in them a consciousness of a world (of something) outside them and in the midst of which they had their abode. That was an immense stride upward on the ladder of universal life. Later, after thousands and tens of thousands of generations of creatures who had consciousness of the external world, there dawned upon this advancing race another consciousness enormously transcending the first—namely, self-consciousness. Here was another advance as great and as momentous as the preceding.

1st. Organized matter became conscious and the higher animal kingdoms were founded.

2d. Conscious beings became self-conscious, and MAN began his career upon the planet.

Now, when these two steps, and all those that preceded them and made them possible, were taken, was the end of the journey

* I suppose I should say *had*, but I find it impossible to think of Walt Whitman as non-existent.

reached? I say no. I say that there is, that there can be, no end to such a journey as that in question, and that sooner or later another step—other steps—must be made.

The universal acquirement of the new faculty of which I have been speaking, and of the existence of which we find evidence in the "Leaves," is to be, as I believe, the next step in this onward march.

III.

The case of Walt Whitman, as possessor of the new sense, is far from being isolated. The present writer knows personally some seven other men, all at present living, who have it, or have had it, in less marked development. The following brief statement may be made as to the faculty itself:

1st. It appears in individuals, mostly (surely not entirely?) of the male sex, who are otherwise highly developed—men of good intellect, of high moral qualities, of superior physique.*

2d. It appears at about that time of life when the organism is at its high water mark of excellence and efficiency—at the age of 30 to 40 years.

Analogy would lead us to believe that this step in promotion awaits the whole race—that a time will come when to be without the function in question will be a mark of inferiority parallel to the absence, at present, of the moral nature.

The presumption seems to me to be that the new sense will become more and more common, show itself earlier and earlier in life, until, after many generations, it will appear in each normal individual at the age of puberty or even earlier; then go on becoming more and more universal, and appearing at an earlier and earlier age, until, after hundreds or thousands of generations, it shows itself immediately after infancy in every member of the race. For it must have been that its immediate precursor, self-consciousness, appeared at first in mid-life, in the most advanced specimens of the race, became more and more universal, mani-

* I have collected so far eighteen cases—all men. Why is the new sense confined to that sex? Why is it that we have no female religious founder? Great poet? Great musician? Great humorist? Great philosopher?

fested itself at an earlier and earlier age, until, as we see now, it declares itself, in every fairly constituted individual, at about the age of three years.

IV.

In order to broaden the basis of the present argument it may be well, though probably not necessary, to state that the successive evolution of

- 1st, Simple Consciousness ;
- 2d, Self-Consciousness ; and,
- 3d, Cosmic Consciousness,

as above set forth, constitutes no exception to the general course of the unfolding of the human mind, of the human race, of the organic world, of the universe as a whole, as far as known to us. Without going here into the broad field of evolution, it may be briefly pointed out that the unfolding of the human being, regarded from the psychical, as well as from any other side, illustrates throughout this doctrine, as will be clearly seen from the following brief statement :

The human mind is a collection of certain bundles of faculties which are named :

- 1st, The Intellect ;
- 2d, The Moral or Emotional Nature ;
- 3d, The Sense of Sight ;
- 4th, The Sense of Hearing, etc., etc.

The intellect is made up of many separate faculties, such as consciousness, self-consciousness, perception, conception, judgment, comparison, imagination, memory, and so on ; the moral nature of others, such as love, reverence, faith, fear, awe, hope, hate, humor and many more. The sense of sight is in like manner made up of the perception of light and darkness, of form, of distance, of color, and so on ; the sense of hearing of the apprehension of loudness, of pitch, of distance, of direction, of music, and much more.

The important fact to notice at present is that each of these faculties named, as well as the much larger number left unnamed, came into existence in its own time. For instance—simple con-

sciousness millions of years ago; self-consciousness perhaps two or three hundred thousand years ago. General vision is enormously old, but the color sense only about a thousand generations; general hearing has existed many millions of years, but the musical sense not many thousand years; the intellect, the basis of which is self-consciousness, must be over a hundred thousand years old, but the human moral nature is probably not a quarter as old; and so on.

V.

The length of time during which the race has been possessed of any given faculty may be more or less accurately estimated from various indications. In cases in which the birth of the faculty took place in comparatively recent times—within, for instance, the last twenty-five or thirty thousand years, as in the case of the color sense and the sense of fragrance—philology, as pointed out by Geiger, may assist materially in determining the age of its appearance. But for comparatively early-appearing faculties—as the intellect, self-consciousness—or the assumption of the erect attitude, this means necessarily fails us. We fall back, then, upon two tests:

1st, The age at which the faculty appears in the individual man at the present time; and,

2d, The more or less universality of the faculty in the members of the race as we see it at the present time.

1, As ontogeny is nothing else but phylogeny in petto; that is, as the evolution of the individual is necessarily the evolution of the race in an abridged form, simply because it cannot in the nature of things be anything else—cannot follow any other lines, there being no other lines for it to follow; it is plain that organs and faculties, speaking broadly and generally, will appear in the individual in the same order in which they appeared in the race, and the one being known, the other may with confidence be assumed.

2. When a new faculty appears in a race it will be found in the very beginning in one individual of that race; later, it will be found in a few individuals; after a further time in a larger per-

centage of the members of the race ; still later in half the members, and so on until, after thousands of generations, an individual who misses having the faculty is regarded as a monstrosity. In illustration of this law compare in man the musical sense, a faculty just coming into existence, with self-consciousness, a faculty perhaps more than ten thousand generations old. The musical sense cannot have been in existence more than a few thousand years (self-consciousness two or three hundred thousand) ; the musical sense comes into existence in the individual, when at all, near, at, or after adolescence (self-consciousness appears at about three years of age) ; the musical sense fails to appear in more than half, perhaps considerably more than half, the members of the civilized races (self-consciousness fails to appear in certainly not more than one person out of a thousand individuals in the same civilized races). Or consider the case of the color sense, whose age can be approximately fixed by philology, as compared with the visual sense of form. The color sense has existed in the race barely a thousand generations, comes into existence in the individual at from the age of, say, three to fifteen years, and fails altogether to appear in one adult person out of sixty in the British islands. The sense of form considered as a part of sight has existed in the race probably at least a million generations (instead of a thousand) ; appears in the individual within a few days or weeks of birth (instead of at the age of several years) ; does not fail to appear many times in a million persons (instead of failing to appear once in sixty individuals).

VI.

As the faculties named and many more came into existence in the race, each in its own time, when the race was ready for it, let us assume, as we must, that growth, evolution, development, or whatever we choose to call it, has (as thus exemplified) always gone on, is going on now, and (as far as we can see) will always go on. If we are right in such an assumption, new faculties will, from time to time, arise in the mind, as, in the past, new faculties have arisen. This being granted, let us further assume that what I call cosmic consciousness is such a nascent, such a *naissante*,

faculty. And now let us see what we know about this new sense, state, faculty, function or whatever it may be called.

It appears principally (perhaps always) in the prime of life, in superior persons belonging to the most advanced races—that is, it appears in the foremost individuals of the race.

It comes suddenly, like a flash, just as self-consciousness does—though this last comes so early in life that comparatively few recollect, in later years, its on-coming; and when we think of it, it does not seem possible that consciousness, self-consciousness, or cosmic consciousness could well come any other way than *per saltum*.

VII.

Well, then, such an individual as described enters into possession of cosmic consciousness. What is his experience? I give details with some diffidence, since there can be little doubt that the phenomena vary considerably in different cases. However, I will try to keep to what I know to be true as far as it goes, and shall hope to give a fuller and more exhaustive account later.

1. The person, suddenly, without any warning, has a sense of being immersed in a flame-colored or rose-colored cloud, or perhaps rather a sense that the mind itself is filled with such a cloud or haze.

2. At the same instant he is, as it were, bathed in an emotion of joy, assurance, triumph, "salvation." The last word is not strictly correct if taken in its ordinary sense, for the feeling, when fully developed, is that no special "salvation" is needed, the scheme upon which the world is built being itself sufficient.

3. Simultaneously with, or instantly following, the above sense and emotional experiences, there comes to the person whom we are describing a clear conception, in outline, of the drift of the universe—a consciousness that the over-ruling power which resides in it is infinitely beneficent: a vision of THE WHOLE, or, at least, of an immense whole, which dwarfs all conception, imagination, or speculation springing from and belonging to ordinary self-consciousness, making the old attempts to mentally grasp the universe and its meaning petty and even ridiculous.

4. Along with the above comes what must be called, for want

of a better term, a sense of immortality. This is not an intellectual conviction, such as that in any right-angled triangle the squares of the sides that contain the right angle are together equal to the square of the side that subtends the right angle; or that the three angles of any triangle are together equal to two right angles; or that twice two equals four; it is far more simple and elementary, and could better be compared to the certainty of distinct individuality which comes with and belongs to self-consciousness.

5. Accompanying the rest of the experience, as described, there comes to the person an intellectual competency not simply surpassing the old but on a new and higher plane.

6. Along with the subjective experience here-above attempted to be described there is a change in the appearance of the person undergoing the experience. This, as I have never seen it, I cannot fully describe, but it is said that the face of such a person is changed, lit up, transfigured, spiritualized to an extraordinary degree.

VIII.

It must be understood that all cases of cosmic consciousness are not on the same plane. Or if we speak of simple consciousness, self-consciousness and cosmic consciousness as each occupying a plane, then, as the range of self-consciousness on its plane (where one man may be an Aristotle, a Caesar, a Newton, or a Comte, while his neighbor on the next street may be intellectually and morally, to all appearance, little if any above the animal in his stable) is far greater than the range of simple consciousness *in any given species* on its, so we must suppose that the range of cosmic consciousness is greater than that of self-consciousness, and it probably is very much greater both in kind and degree: that is to say, given a world peopled with men having cosmic consciousness, they would vary both in the way of greater and less intellectual ability, and greater and less moral and spiritual elevation, and also in the way of variety, of character, more than would the inhabitants of a planet on the plane of self-consciousness. Within the plane of cosmic consciousness one man shall be a god; another shall not be, to casual observation, lifted so

very much above ordinary humanity, however much his inward life may be exalted, strengthened and purified by the new sense. But as the self-conscious man (however degraded) is in fact almost infinitely above the animal with merely simple consciousness, so is any man with the cosmic sense almost infinitely higher and nobler than any man who is self-conscious merely. And not only so, but the man who has had the cosmic sense for even a few moments only will probably never again descend to the spiritual level of the merely self-conscious, but twenty, thirty or forty years afterwards will still feel within him the purifying, strengthening and exalting effect of that divine illumination, and those about him will recognize that his spiritual stature is above that of ordinary men.

IX.

While its true nature has been entirely unapprehended, the *fact* of cosmic consciousness has been long recognized both in the Eastern and Western Worlds, and the great majority of civilized men and women in all countries to-day bow down before teachers who possessed, and because they possessed, the cosmic sense; for among those who have been thus endowed were Guatama the Buddha, Jesus the Christ, Paul, and Mohammed; and it is entirely because they were so that these men have been enabled to found the religions, and become the leaders, of the civilized world for the last two thousand years.

From the time of Guatama to the time of Mohammed was some thirteen hundred years, and from the time of the latter until to-day eleven hundred years. As far as my researches have yet gone we have, to fill up the latter gap, four great names, the owners of which also possessed the faculty in question—Danté, Las Casas, Balzac and Whitman. Then for the present day the writer of these pages knows, and knows of, ten men, either living or recently dead, all of whom had the faculty in question.

Of course, it will be understood that the eighteen men here specified must be a very small fraction of the total number who within the last twenty-five hundred years have possessed the cosmic sense. I have no doubt I shall myself find many others if I live

to pursue the present inquiry a few more years; but these are all I know of at present, and my reasoning to-day must rest on them. Another thing: it is not possible within my present limits to give proof that the men named had what I here call the cosmic sense. This will be adduced later. In the meantime I ask my readers to take my word for it that these men possessed this faculty.

X.

As stated above, the cosmic sense comes, when at all, suddenly, and often the exact hour is clearly indicated by the records, as in the cases of Guatama, Paul, Mohammed, Whitman and others I could name. But even when this is not true, in all the eighteen cases above referred to the oncoming of the new faculty can be fixed within very narrow limits, and I am able to state, without fear of material error, that the ages at which cosmic consciousness declared itself in the above eighteen men were: in three at the age of thirty years, in three at thirty-two, in one at thirty-three, in two at thirty-four, in four at thirty-five, in one at thirty-seven, in two at thirty-eight, in one at thirty-nine, in one at forty. I will not now dwell on this most important fact (*i. e.*, the age of the oncoming of cosmic consciousness) further than to point out that it is exactly as it ought to be, if the theory of the new sense as here set forth is correct.

XI.

It seems that every, or nearly every, man who enters into cosmic consciousness is at first more or less alarmed, doubting whether the new sense may not be a symptom or form of insanity. Mohammed was greatly alarmed, I think it is clear that Paul was, and I could name others who were similarly affected.

The first thing each person asks himself upon experiencing the new sense is: does what I see and feel represent reality or am I suffering from a delusion? The fact that the new experience seems even more real than the old teachings of consciousness and self-consciousness does not at first fully reassure him, because he probably knows that delusions possess the mind just as firmly as actual facts. True or not true, each person who has the experience in question eventually believes its teachings, accepting

them as absolutely as any other teachings whatsoever. This, however, would not prove them true, since the same might be said of the delusions of the insane.

How, then, shall we know that this is a new sense, revealing fact, and not a form of insanity, plunging its subject into delusion? In the first place, the tendencies of the condition in question are entirely unlike, even opposite to, those of mental alienation, these last being distinctly a-moral, or even immoral, while the former are moral in a high degree. In the second place it is well to bear in mind that all human civilization (speaking broadly) rests on the teachings of the new sense. The MASTERS are taught by it, and the rest of the world by them, so that, if what is here called cosmic consciousness is a form of insanity, we are confronted by the terrible fact (were it not an absurdity) that our civilization, including all our highest religions, rests on delusion. But, in the third place, far from granting such an awful alternative, it can be maintained that we have the same evidence of the objective reality which corresponds to this faculty as we have of the reality which tallies any other sense or faculty whatever. For instance: I know that the tree across the field is real and not an illusion, because all other persons having the sense of sight to whom I have spoken about it see it, while if it were an illusion it would be visible to no one but myself. By the same method of reasoning do we establish the reality corresponding to cosmic consciousness. Each person who has the faculty is by it made aware of essentially the same fact or facts. If three men looked at the tree and were half an hour afterwards asked to draw or describe it, the three drafts or descriptions would not tally in detail but in general outline would correspond. Just in the same way do the reports of those who have, or who have had, cosmic consciousness correspond in all essentials, though in details they may more or less diverge. So, I do not know any instance of a person who has been "illuminated" denying or disputing the teachings of another who has been through the same experience. Paul, as soon as he attained to cosmic consciousness, saw that the teachings of Jesus were true. So Mohammed accepted Jesus as not only the greatest of the

prophets but as standing on a plane distinctly above that upon which stood Adam, Noah, Moses and the rest. So Walt Whitman accepts the teaching of Buddha, Jesus, Paul and of Mohammed; and if, as he once wished, the great masters could return and study him, nothing is more certain than that they would each and all accept him as a "brother of the radiant summit." So all the men I have known who have the faculty agree in all essentials with one another and with all past teachers who have also had it.

XII.

The best example the world has so far had of what Balzac calls a "Specialist" is Walt Whitman—the best, because he is the man in whom the new faculty has been, probably, most perfectly developed, and especially because he is, par excellence, the man who in modern times has written distinctly and at large from the point of view of the cosmic sense, and in so doing has referred to the facts and phenomena of cosmic consciousness more plainly and fully than any other writer either ancient or modern.

Walt Whitman tells us plainly, though not as fully as could be wished, of the moment when he attained illumination, and again toward the end of his life of its passing away. Not that I imagine that he had cosmic consciousness continuously for years, but that I suppose it came less and less frequently as age advanced, probably lasted less and less long at a time, and decreased in vividness and intensity.

Moreover, in the case of Walt Whitman we have the man without the cosmic sense, *i. e.*, before it appeared, and afterwards, and so (better than in any other case, except, perhaps, that of Balzac) can compare the man with his earlier self. I mean that we have a series of writings* by Walt Whitman before his

* I allude, of course, especially to "Death in a School-room," 1841; "Wild Frank's Return," *id.*; "Bevance or Father and Son," *id.*; "The Tomb Blossoms," 1842; "The Last of the Sacred Army," *id.*; "The Child Ghost, a Story of the Last Loyalist," *id.*; "The Angel of Tears," *id.*; "Revenge and Requital," 1845; "A Dialogue," *id.*; &c.

illumination as well as the series, beginning with the first, 1855, edition of "Leaves of Grass," produced afterwards.

We expect and always find a difference between a man's early and his mature writings. What an interval, for instance, between Shelley's romances and the *Cenci*; between Macaulay's earliest Essays and the *History*! But here is something quite apart from those cases. We can trace a gradual evolution of power from *Zastrozzi* to *Epipsychidion*, from Macaulay's "Milton" to his "Massacre of Glencoe." But in the case of Walt Whitman (as in that of Balzac) writings of absolutely no value were immediately followed by pages across each of which in letters of ethereal fire are written the words "ETERNAL LIFE;" pages covered not only by a masterpiece, but by such vital sentences as have not been written ten times in the history of the race. It is upon this instantaneous evolution of the TITAN from the MAN, this profound mystery of the attainment of the "Kingdom of Heaven," that I desire, if possible, to throw some light.

And it is interesting to remark here that, so far as I can judge from my knowledge of Whitman personally, and from a profound study of his writings pursued for over a quarter of a century, he had as little idea as had Buddha, Paul or Mohammed what it was that gave him the mental power, the moral elevation, and the perennial joyousness which are the characteristics of the state to which he attained and which seems to have been to him the subject of continued amazement.

Let us see now what this man says about this cosmic sense, which must have come to him when he was between the ages of thirty-one and thirty-four years—I suppose at the age of thirty-two or thirty-three. The first direct mention of it is on p. 15 of the 1855 edition of "Leaves of Grass"—that is to say, it is on the third page of his first writing after the new faculty had come to him. The lines are found essentially unaltered in every subsequent edition. In the last, 1891-92 edition, they are upon p. 32. I quote, of course, from the '55 edition, since I want to get as near to Whitman at the moment of writing the words as possible. He says:

"I believe in you my soul . . . the other I am must not abase itself to you,
And you must not be abased to the other.

Loafe with me on the grass . . . loose the stop from your throat,
Not words, not music or rhyme I want . . . not custom or lecture, not even
the best,

Only the lull I like, the hum of your valved voice.

I mind how we lay in June, such a transparent summer morning;
You settled your head athwart my hips and gently turned over upon me,
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my
bare-stript heart,
And reached till you felt my beard, and reached till you held my feet.

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and joy and knowledge that
pass all the art and argument of the earth;
And I know that the hand of God is the elder hand of my own,
And I know that the spirit of God is the eldest brother of my own,
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers . . . and the women
my sisters and lovers,
And that a kelson of the creation is love."

The new experience came in June, probably in 1853, when he had just entered upon his thirty-fifth year. Of it he says: I believe in its teachings, although, however, it is so divine the other I am (the old self) must not be abased to it, neither must it ever be overridden by the more basic organs and faculties. Then he says: Stay with me, loafe with me on the grass, instruct me, speak out what you mean, what is in you, no matter about speaking musically or poetically or according to the rules, but just use your own language in your own way. He then turns back to tell of the exact occurrence; the experience came one June morning; the new sense took, though gently, absolute possession of him, at least for the time; his heart, he says, henceforth received its instruction from the new comer, the new self, whose tongue, he says, was plunged to his bare-stript heart, and his life became subject to its dictation—*it held his feet*. Finally, he tells in brief of the change wrought in his mind and heart by the birth within him of the new faculty. He says that he was filled all at once with peace and joy and knowledge transcending all the art and argument of the earth. He attained that point of view from which only can a human being see something of God ("which alone," says Balzac, "can explain God"—which point unless he attain "he cannot see," says Jesus, "the kingdom of God").

And he sums up the account by the statement that God is his close friend, that all the men and women ever born are his brothers and sisters and lovers, and that the whole creation is built and rests upon love.

Here we have essentially the same set of phenomena found in all other cases of the oncoming of the cosmic sense:

1. The subjective light, however, seen by Paul, Mohammed and others that I could name, was wanting, at least record of it is wanting—unless the words, quoted later, "O heaven! what flash," refers to it.

2. But we have the specific, almost violent, mental expansion occurring at a definite place and moment.

3. Strongly marked moral exaltation.

4. And as strongly marked intellectual illumination, as declared in the passage quoted, and as amply proved by the rest of the volume.

5. A conviction of continuous life so clear and strong as to amount to a sense of immortality fully shown in same volume.

6. The extinction—if he ever had them, which is doubtful—of the sense of sin and the fear of death.

Those who so far have been endowed with cosmic consciousness have been, almost to a man, carried away and subjugated by it; they have looked upon it—probably most of them—as being a preterhuman, more or less supernatural, faculty separating them from ordinary men. They have almost, if not quite, always sought to help men, for their moral sense has been inevitably purified and elevated by the oncoming of the new sense to an extraordinary degree; but they have not realized the need, nor, I suppose, felt the possibility of using their extraordinary insight and power in any systematic manner. That is, *THE MAN* has not mastered, taken possession of and used the new faculty, but has been (on the contrary) largely or entirely mastered and used by it. I think this was clearly the case with Paul, who was led away by the grandeur and glory of the new sense to under-rate the really equal divinity of his previous human faculties. Perhaps the same words could with equal truth be applied to the case of Guatama. It may be that Walt Whitman is the first man

who, having the faculty in a marked manner, deliberately set himself against being thus mastered by it—determining, on the contrary, to subdue it and make it the servant—along with consciousness, self-consciousness and the rest—of the united, individual SELF. He saw, what neither Guatama nor Paul saw, what Jesus saw, though not, I think, so clearly as he, that though this faculty is truly godlike, yet it is no more supernatural or preternatural than sight, hearing, taste, feeling, or any other, and he consequently refused to give it unlimited sway, and would not allow it to tyrannize over the rest. He believes in it, but he says the other self, the old self, must not abase itself to the new—neither must the new be encroached upon or limited by the old; he will see that they live as friendly co-workers together. And I may say here that whoever does not realize this last clause will never fully understand the "Leaves."

The next reference made by Walt Whitman to cosmic consciousness, which I shall at present refer to, is in "The Prayer of Columbus," page 323, 1891-2 ed. This poem was written about 1874-5, when the condition of the poor, sick, neglected, spiritual explorer was strikingly similar to that of the great geographical explorer shipwrecked on the Antillean Island in 1503, at which time and place the prayer is supposed to be offered up. Walt Whitman (he has done the same thing a thousand times) used this agreement of circumstance to put his own words into the mouth of the other man. These words refer to his own life, work, fortunes—to himself. In this poem he alludes specifically and pointedly to the matter now under consideration. Speaking to God, he says:

"Thou knowest my manhood's solemn and visionary meditations."

"O, I am sure they really came from Thee,
The urge, the ardor, the unconquerable will,
The potent, felt, interior command, stronger than words,
A message from the Heavens whispering to me even in sleep,
These sped me on."

"One effort more, my altar this bleak sand;
That Thou, O God, my life hast lighted,

With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee,
 Light rare, untellable, lighting the very light,
 Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages;
 For that, O God, be it my latest word, here on my knees,
 Old, poor, and paralyzed, I thank Thee."

"My hands, my limbs grow nerveless,
 My brain feels rack'd, bewilder'd,
 Let the old timbers part, I will not part,
 I will cling fast to Thee, O God, though the waves buffet me,
 Thee, Thee at least I know."

At the time of writing these lines Walt Whitman is fifty-five or fifty-six years of age. For over twenty years he has been guided by this (seeming) supernatural illumination. He has yielded freely to it and obeyed its behests as being from God himself. He has loved the earth, sun, animals, despised riches, given alms to every one that asked, stood up for the stupid and crazy, devoted his income and labor to others as commanded by the divine voice and as impelled by the divine impulse, and now for reward he is poor, sick, paralyzed, despised, neglected, dying. His message to man, to the delivery of which he has devoted his life, which has been dearer in his eyes (for man's sake) than wife, children, life itself, is unread or scoffed and jeered at. What shall he say to God? He says that God knows him through and through, and that he is willing to leave himself in God's hands. He says he does not know men nor his own work, and so does not judge what men may do with or say to the "Leaves." But he says he does know God, and will cling to him "though the waves buffet me." Then about the inspiration, the illumination, the "potent, felt, interior command stronger than words"—he is sure that this comes from God. He has no doubt, there can be no doubt, of that.

He goes on to speak of the "ray of light, steady, ineffable," with which God has lighted his life, and says it is "rare, untellable, beyond all signs, descriptions, languages." And this (be it well remembered) is not the utterance of wild enthusiasm, but of cold, hard fact by a worn-out old man on, as he supposed, his death-bed.

The next direct allusion to cosmic consciousness to be noted may be found on p. 403 of the 1891-2 edition of the "Leaves." It is embodied in a poem written June, 1888, when he again (and with good reason) supposed himself dying. The present writer was with him at the time and knows exactly how the case stood. The poem is called "Now Precedent Songs Farewell," and was written as a hasty good-by to the "Leaves" and to the world. Toward the end of the poem, bidding his songs good-by, he alludes to them and their origin in the following words:

"O heaven! what flash and started endless train of all! Compared indeed to that!
What wretched shred e'en at the best of all!"

He says: Compared to the flash, the divine illumination from which they sprang, how poor and worthless his poems are. And it must be borne in mind that Whitman never had a bad opinion of the "Leaves." I have heard him say more than once that none of us—referring to W. D. O'Connor, John Burroughs, myself and other out-and-out admirers—thought as highly of them as he did. But thinking that way of them he could still say how poor they were compared to the illumination from which they sprang. This last quoted passage may be compared with another in a quite early poem, "A Song of the Rolling Earth" (p. 179, 1891-2 edition). In it he says:

"When I undertake to tell the best I find I cannot,
My tongue is ineffectual on its pivots,
My breath will not be obedient to its organs,
I become a dumb man."

And these, with still another from a poem with the significant title "Who Learns My Lesson Complete" (p. 304), as follows:

"I lie abstracted and hear beautiful tales of things and the reasons of things,
They are so beautiful I nudge myself to listen.
I cannot say to any person what I hear—I cannot say it to myself—it is
very wonderful."

So Paul said that he had "heard unspeakable words."

But Walt Whitman did not die in June, 1888; he rallied and again (it seems) from time to time the vision appeared and the voice whispered. Doubtless the vision grew more dim, and the voice less distinct, as time passed and the feebleness of age and sickness grew. At last, in 1891, at the age of seventy-two, they finally departed, and in those mystic lines "To the Sunset Breeze" (p. 414), which the Harpers returned to him as a "mere improvisation," he bids it farewell. He says:

"Thou hast, O Nature! elements! utterance to my heart beyond the rest—
and this is of them."

"Thou art Spiritual, Godly, most of all known to my sense.

Minister to speak to me here and now, what word has never told, and
cannot tell,

Art thou not universal concrete's distillation?"

And so the Sunset Breeze passed, the Spiritual Illumination passed, and shortly after life passed, and earth lost the last and greatest of the prophets.

AND yet Whitman, though he cries out for "muscle and pluck," untainted flesh and clear eyes, is very far from being a mere lover of coarse material pleasures. He is a poet, and that says enough. His eye sees beauty, his ear hears music. All things grow lovely under his hand; deformity, ugliness, and all things miserable and vile disappear. His touch transmutes them. I have said he is elemental, and more than once the wonder he expresses at the sight of Nature transforming things loathsome into beauty by her own sweet alchemy excites the thought that this poet desires to exert the same influence.

No poet since Shakspeare has written with a vocabulary so fruitful. Words the most erudite and remote, words not quite naturalized from foreign countries, words used by the lowest of the people, teem in his work, yet without affectation. You can take away no word that he uses and substitute another without spoiling the sense and marring the melody. For where Whitman seems roughest, rudest, most prosaic, there often is his language most profoundly melodious.

Standish O'Grady: "Walt Whitman, The Poet of Joy."

IMMORTALITY.

By WALT WHITMAN.

[For some time after the birthday dinner of 1890 (May 31st, at Reisser's, Philadelphia) Walt Whitman knew nothing of the existence of this report of one portion of his several discussions with Ingersoll and others which chanced that night. At a late hour a *Press* reporter had been introduced into the room, and he opportunely caught this passage. Months afterwards Talcott Williams sent a copy of the report to Whitman for revision. Whitman went to work on it, and gave it what he described to us as "about a perfect expression" of his "views held at the moment and still adhered to." The manuscript was in this shape returned to Mr. Williams. When Whitman was preparing his final volume, "Good-Bye," he endeavored to secure a copy of the revised version for publication, but for reasons towards which Whitman never felt kindly Mr. Williams withheld the MS., and would give us no further encouragement than in the loan of the reporter's draft. This draft is appended. It contains only two or three changes, made by Whitman himself, and is given in lieu of the elaborated draft only because Mr. Williams felt indisposed to allow Whitman to insert the matter in "Good-Bye," and since Whitman's death has equally shown an indisposition to have us use it in this book, although it was Whitman's own desire that it should be by this medium given to the public.—THE EDITORS.]

COLONEL INGERSOLL has given me a certificate of character ; and has in some particulars re-echoed what I myself have said and thought of my own works. To me the grandeur of the things I have tried to portray in "Leaves of Grass" is in its essential purpose—in something understood ; something untold but not unfelt. All that I have attempted to glean for the pages of "Leaves of Grass" has been what I have perceived of what I am—of what we all are, of what the world before us is. I have tried to show what I could of practical, materialistic, visible life, with an indication throughout of something behind it all. But never before have I heard, as I did hear in Colonel Ingersoll's

remarks, so comprehensive a criticism, in which every word went to the right spot.

It seems almost "funny" to me that any one can go as far as he does and not take the next logical step. To me the final and ultimate purpose of everything is completed, as it were, only by the unknown futurity of immortality. By me this is divined, acknowledged; of course it is not certain, as, for example, that I see my friends here with me now.

Next, I have written to prepare for the last step—the thing which it is all for. The forces of life are like a lot of locomotives gathered together. Locomotives are wonderful things. They are a proof of the advance of humanity, through interminable ranges of ages. Yes, to me a grand locomotive is a proof of the advance of humanity for hundreds of thousands of years. But what for? If there is no hereafter, what for?

The locomotive is not for itself, but for a purpose. In the same way you might ask of "*Leaves of Grass*," what are they all for?—I know what I meant them for; I know what I felt in my heart or brain or both. Let me say further that Colonel Ingersoll recalls to my mind the well-known story about Lincoln's generals. Somebody told the President that the ablest one among them was an habitual drunkard. "Ah," said Lincoln, "find out what brand of whiskey he drinks. I want to send some of it to the other generals."

Colonel Ingersoll justifies fully my method, my tricks—my method of describing and appealing. I felt willing to keep the roots of everything in "*Leaves of Grass*" underground, out of sight, and let the book work its way. If it grew, in verdure and flowerage, so much the better; but certain important results were to me the main things.

I do not know, however, why I have dwelt on all that. Possibly because I never felt so proud, so thoroughly justified, as by my friend's speech to-night. I felt it all through.

As a sort of supplement, I may say that I believe thoroughly that the main meaning of all the material world is the invisible and spiritual world, the immortality of the future; and back of it all is what I may call the Almighty. I accept the term, as

meaning what I mean. I use it of an impersonal deity, not of a being who sits on high issuing his orders "Do this or that." But I accept and use it in the only way that I think is consistent with great modern thought, as the grandest justification of humanity; of what the old fellows used to call the creation, the creation of man, and by other phrases of that kind. But they, too, are all very profound, deep, wise in their way, reaching down to what humanity was then eligible to feel and to understand, but which now seems almost ridiculous to us from our point of view. They knew probably five or ten or twenty or thirty or fifty or one hundred thousand years ago—they knew things that we think we know (and we do know them); and the conception was, as I said a few minutes ago, very grand. They also had their presciences—but I must not be garrulous.

. . . I don't bother myself about purposes or Infinity, but unless there is something behind all this outward life it seems to me there is no justifying purpose in it. Unless there is a definite object for it all, what in God's name is it all for?

[Ingersoll's reply to Whitman's final question was this:—I can't tell. And if there is a purpose, and if there is a God, what is it all for? I can't tell. It looks like nonsense to me either way.]

THESE are quite glorious things you have sent me. Who is Walt (Walter?) Whitman, and is much of him like this?

John Ruskin to William Harrison Riley, 1879.

SUCH influences as yours are precisely what our poetry in its latest developments needs to make it sane and masculine.

Edward Dowden to Walt Whitman, 1872.

HE speaks with praise of the "proud and melancholy races," and there is a very luxury of melancholy in his "Word out of the Sea," and the lone singer on the shore of Paumanok, wonderful, causing tears. Strange, unapprehended influences pour themselves into the words of that great poem which have never before found expression: melancholy as of one surfeited with joy, to whom sorrow is now a deeper joy, woe with a heart of delight, flickering shadows that seem to live and hover beckoning over the scene, voices as from another world, blank desolation which we desire to be no other than it is, suffering and despair, though somehow it seems better than they should be: a poem whose meaning cannot be fathomed, whose beauty cannot be fully tasted—a mystic, unfathomable song.

Standish O'Grady: "Walt Whitman, The Poet of Joy."

THE POET OF IMMORTALITY.

By THOMAS B. HARNED.

WALT WHITMAN was of a profoundly religious nature and "Leaves of Grass" is a religious book. Whitman teaches at all times a positive faith, and nowhere and never negation or doubt. From his mother, to whom he was devotedly attached, he inherits his spiritual qualities. She was one of those "powerful uneducated" persons that our poet always laid so much stress upon. This woman, of whom he said, "she was the best and sweetest woman I ever saw and ever expect to see," was undoubtedly a great personality. His Quaker ancestry, in my judgment, dominated all other elements in his character. He was from early childhood of a quiet, thoughtful and kindly disposition, full of calm seriousness and powerful faith. Undoubtedly, long before his life purpose had been fully decided upon, his mind ran in humanitarian and spiritual channels. This is clearly seen in the few "pieces in early youth" preserved and printed in the current edition of his complete prose works. They breathe the spirit of sympathy and all point a moral. In one of his earliest pieces he speaks of Jesus as the "beautiful god" and the "divine youth." This veneration for the Nazarene never left him, and however much he may have shocked the conventional Christian with "undue familiarity," as in his poem "To Him That was Crucified," he saw with unerring certainty the distinction between the transient and permanent in the Christian system. He has told me more than once that he regarded it as of the greatest credit to the Caucasian race that it had accepted Christ, however imperfect that acceptance may have been. If to have Christ-like qualities is to be a Christian, then it would be difficult to select a more perfect example than Walt Whitman. His gentleness,

unselfishness, charity, and lovingness for every living creature were so thoroughly natural and spontaneous, that those who knew him personally fully realize how perfectly he has placed a man in his book. I do not agree with Dr. Bucke in his theory that Whitman's cosmic consciousness was a sudden conversion into a new spiritual existence, whereby he was enabled to write greater things than theretofore. I firmly believe that his spiritual life was a growth, and that "*Leaves of Grass*" was evolved from a born spiritual genius passing from stage to stage, through certain formative periods of thought, unfolding until he reached in a perfectly natural way his period of highest fruition.

Whitman and his poems have been treated from many stand-points—comradeship, democracy, sex, art, religion. Because of my intimate personal companionship with him for the last ten years of his life, I desire to add my word on the subject of his personal belief in immortality, as set forth in his published writings and personal utterances. This was the main purport of his life-work—all-inclusive—without which he and his book would not be the living force that they are. For his was something more than the faith of reason. He was familiar with the tendencies of modern thought and the wilderness to which it leads. Of course his mind was never befogged by any dogmatic theology. His use of the terms, God, Soul, Immortality, was wholly without any ecclesiastical tinge—yet they appear all through his poems. "I have no objection to the use of the word 'God'; I use it and like it," he has frequently said to me. He realized so acutely the presence of the infinitely miraculous world about him that the petty supernaturalism taught by the schools seemed to him vulgar and feeble, without claim to any place in a truly modern philosophy. He believed that we had outlived the need of churches and preachers. In his noble and poetic preface to the first edition of "*Leaves of Grass*" he said: "There will soon be no more priests. Their work is done. They may wait awhile—perhaps a generation or two—dropping off by degrees. A superior breed shall take their place—the gangs of Kosmos and prophets en masse shall take their place. A new order shall arise, and they shall be the priests of man, and every man shall

be his own priest. The churches built under their umbrage shall be the churches of men and women. Through the divinity of themselves shall the Kosmos and the new breed of poets be interpreters of men and women, and of all events and things. They shall find their inspiration in real objects to-day, symptoms of the past and future. They shall not deign to defend immortality or God, or the perfection of things, or liberty, or the exquisite beauty and reality of the soul. They shall arise in America, and be responded to from the remainder of the earth."

He regarded the clergy as to a large extent parasites, sucking the life out of natural religion, and in the process of negation going on in the modern world he saw the dawn of a stronger faith more suited to the healthy development of man. He knew that changes were transpiring in the world of thought more important than ever had taken place before, and his aim was always to justify the ways of God to man in an optimistic acceptance of everything in the universe. He believed that this was the best possible world, and that whatever would happen would be the best that could possibly happen. I remember him speaking about the Biblical story of the creation, and he repeated several times the words, "And God saw that it was good." "What a splendid subject for a sermon!" he said, "but where is the man who could do it justice? It would require another Emerson to do so." This cosmic acceptance was with him an all-pervading presence. It never forsook him. I happened to call at his house when he had a most serious and sudden attack which for the moment seemed fatal. He lay on the lounge insensible. In a moment of recurring consciousness, I asked him about his condition, and he responded feebly but with the naturalness of a child: "I shall be better soon, but it will be *all right anyway*." Amid all his conflict with conventional religious thought he knew that religion was the most important factor in the history of civilization; and hence the germ of his book is religion, and therefore he says:

"I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough,
None has ever yet adored or worship'd half enough,
None has begun to think how divine he himself is, and how certain the future is."

"I say that the real and permanent grandeur of these States must be their religion.

Otherwise there is no real and permanent grandeur;
(Nor character nor life worthy the name without religion,
Nor land nor man or woman without religion)."

"Know you, solely to fling in the earth the germs of a greater religion,
The following chants each for its kind I sing."

Everywhere he recognizes the value of the past, and the important fact that religions are the stepping-stones of the ages—how they have painted pictures, written great poems and music, inspired martyrs, created revolutions and enlarged the stature of man. But he warns us not to give the past more than its due. He out-bids at the start the "old cautious hucksters," and recognizes the service of all creeds and myths:

"Taking them all for what they are worth, and not a cent more."

His philosophy includes all churches and religions, and is greater than any. Some one once asked me "whether Walt Whitman ever went to church." I can hardly explain why, but the question seemed very ludicrous. Strong and content, he has always travelled the open road. For a few years we had a Unitarian Church in Camden, and I got him to read his Lincoln lecture there one week-day evening, and this was probably his only visit to a church since early youth. Many Sunday evenings I called on my way to church, and he always enjoyed telling me with fine irony (for he was full of quiet humor): "Well, Tom, you know my philosophy includes them all—even the Unitarians." He never changed his views respecting what he called "this cold-blooded, respectable New England intellectualism," and had no faith in its future. I have taken many ministers of the Unitarian denomination to the little Mickle street shrine, and they were all greatly impressed with him. But though he saw the utter shortcoming of the preacher of to-day, and knew that the people are being fed largely upon husks—with that vulgar dualism, which, disregarding the unity of nature, reduces theology to a commercial basis of punishment and rewards, and

aims to control men by hope and fear—yet he stood with reverence and silence before the Infinities and Immensities. He emphasized material things because they were the basis of the spiritual.

"I will make the poems of materials, for I think they are to be the most spiritual poems,
And I will make the poems of my body and mortality,
For I think I shall then supply myself with the poems of my soul and of immortality."

No man ever had a broader grasp of the infinite, and in no literature can be found loftier ascriptions to the illimitable universe. In his mind man and his destiny are the purposes of world making.

"Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen,
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings,
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

Before I was born out of my mother generations gilded me,
My embryo has never been torpid, nothing could overlay it.

For it the nebula cohered to an orb,
The long slow strata piled to rest it on,
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,
Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths and deposited it with care.

All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and delight me,
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul."

Not only has this process been going on in this world of ours, but it is universal. The essential unity of nature has never been so grandly and conclusively stated. Whitman's mind radiated from this central idea.

"My sun has his sun and round him obediently wheels,
He joins with his partners a group of superior circuit,
And greater sets follow, making specks of the greatest inside them.

There is no stoppage and never can be stoppage.

If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their surfaces, were this moment reduced back to a pallid float, it would not avail in the long run,

We should surely bring up again where we now stand,
And surely go as much farther, and then farther and farther.

A few quadrillions of eras, a few octillions of cubic leagues, do not hazard the span or make it impatient,
They are but parts, any thing is but a part.

See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that,
Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.

My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,
My Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect terms,
The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine will be there."

I do not propose any discussion of Whitman's spiritual pantheism. In the highest sense he always "walked with God" with even pace. His unrestricted faith caused him to recognize a divinity in all things.

"Ah more than any priest O soul we too believe in God,
But with the mystery of God we dare not dally."

To him evil was of like origin with good—but he saw the survival of the good—

"Roaming in thought over the Universe, I saw the little that is Good steadily hastening towards immortality,
And the vast all that is called Evil I saw hastening to merge itself and become lost and dead."

And again :

"In this broad earth of ours,
Amid the measureless grossness and the slag,
Enclosed and safe within its central heart,
Nestles the seed perfection."

His use of the term "God" is to symbolize the spiritual vitality which pervades the universe. This is the God that has lighted his life

" With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee,
 Light rare untellable, lighting the very light,
 Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages."

This is the God to which he clung when the waves buffeted him, and of whom he exultingly says:

" Thee, Thee, at least I know."

This is the God to whom he reverently says—

" Give me O God to sing that thought,
 Give me, give him or her I love this quenchless faith,
 In Thy ensemble, whatever else withheld withhold not from us,
 Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space,
 Health, peace, salvation universal."

But what of the soul of man? Is it a distinct identity? Whitman believed in it absolutely.

" Sure as the most certain sure, plumb in the uprights, well entretied, braced
 in the beams,
 Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electrical,
 I and this mystery here we stand.
 Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not my soul,
 Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the seen,
 Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn."

" I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself to you,
 And you must not be abased to the other."

" The body permanent—
 The body linking there within thy body,
 The only purport of the form thou art, the real I myself."

How easily and naturally Whitman becomes the poet of death and immortality! He believes that we are now living in an eternal universe, and that we are deathless. This belief is an absolute faith. He does not pretend to expound any theory or to explain the mystery of continuity. He only sings the poet's songs of exaltation and triumph.

" I do not doubt I am limitless, and that the universes are limitless, in vain I try to think how limitless . . .

I do not doubt that temporary affairs keep on and on millions of years . . .
I do not think Life provides for all and for Time and Space, but I believe that Heavenly Death provides for all."

" The smallest sprout shows there is really no death."

" All goes outward and outward, nothing collapses."

" And I have dream'd that the purpose and essence of the known life, the transient,
Is to form and decide identity for the unknown life, the permanent."

But what kind of immortality did he believe in? Does the individual soul become a part of great nature's spiritual vitality, or retain its individual identity? There is great diversity of opinion among students of Whitman on this subject. Let me put forth no uncertain utterance. I have frequently conversed with him about his belief in immortality. To the very last he assured me that his faith was "stronger than ever" in the immortality of the individual soul. His views are clearly stated in his notice of the death of Carlyle, to be found in his prose writings, where he says: "And now that he has gone hence, can it be that Thomas Carlyle, soon to chemically dissolve in ashes and by winds, remains an identity still? In ways perhaps eluding all the statements, lore and speculations of ten thousand years—eluding all possible statements to mortal sense—Does he yet exist, a definite, vital being, a spirit, an individual—perhaps now wafted in space among those stellar systems, which, suggestive and limitless as they are, merely edge more limitless, far more suggestive systems? I have no doubt of it. In silence, of a fine night, such questions are answer'd to the soul, the best answers that can be given. With me, too, when depressed by some specially sad event, or tearing problem, I wait till I go out under the stars for the last voiceless satisfaction."

And thus with feet "tenon'd and mortis'd in granite" he could well "laugh at dissolution." Death, "God's beautiful, eternal right hand," "usher—guide at last to all," became a welcome

visitor. It has not been my purpose to write an exhaustive or critical paper. I have barely more than hinted at my subject. I stagger before its magnitude. The best way to understand this gospel of the individual man is to read the book. That it is the basis of a new spiritual acceptance of the universe, entirely consistent with modern science, I firmly believe. That it is adapted to all kinds and conditions of men, I also believe. I knew this man intimately, and the only value this article can have is to add my personal testimony 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 an incarnated example here, of life and death. Peacefully, joyously, he met his translation. I count it a blessed privilege to have been with him at the parting, 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."

WHITMAN says that they who most loudly praise him are not those who understand him best. I, perhaps, will not come under the censure, though I do under the description; for I confess I do not understand this man. The logical sense of the words, the appositeness and accuracy of the images, one can indeed apprehend and enjoy; but there is an undertone of meaning in Whitman which can never be fully comprehended. This, doubtless, is true of all first-rate poetry; but it must be applied in a special sense to the writings of a man who is not only a poet but a mystic—a man who thoroughly enjoys this world, yet looks confidently to one diviner still beyond; who professes a passionate attachment to his friends, yet says that he has other friends, not to be seen with the eye, closer and nearer and dearer to him than these. The hardening, vulgarizing influences of life have not hardened and vulgarized the spiritual sensibilities of this poet, who looks at this world with the wondering freshness of a child, and to the world beyond with the gaze of a seer. He has what Wordsworth lost, and in his old age come trailing clouds of glory—shadows cast backward from a sphere which we have left, thrown forward from a sphere to which we are approaching.

Standish O'Grady: "Walt Whitman, The Poet of Joy."

WALT WHITMAN AND THE COMMON PEOPLE.

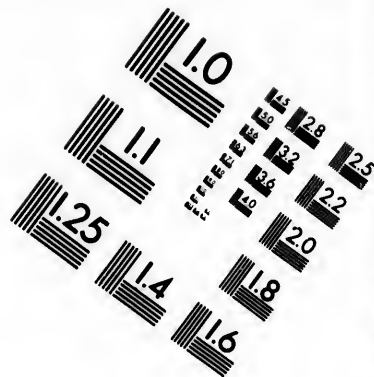
By JOHN BURROUGHS.

WHEN I saw the crowds of common people that flocked to Walt Whitman's funeral, I said, How fit, how touching, all this is; how well it would please him. It is from the common people, the great army of workers, that he rises and speaks with such power and authority. His poems are all attuned to broad, universal humanity.

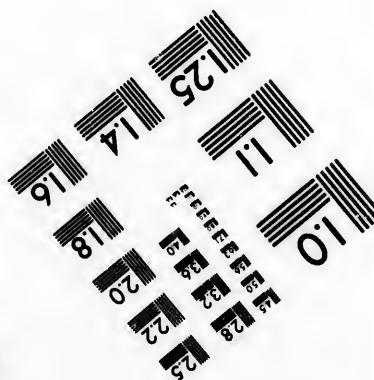
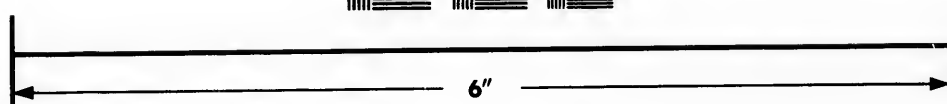
It is not the specially endowed or privileged few that elicit his enthusiasm, but the average man or woman of trades and occupations. I remember once calling his attention to a story in a magazine, wherein some typical western frontier characters were portrayed. He said, after reading it, that it would not do at all; that those large, homely, unlettered pioneer characters were not to be looked down upon or treated in the scornful, supercilious manner in which they were treated in this story. Small, perky men always treated them so, but great men never; and he instanced Tristram Shandy as the proper way to do this thing. The atmosphere which his poems breathe is always that of common humanity—never that of select, specially cultured, privileged humanity.

It may seem difficult at first to reconcile his atmosphere and attitude in this respect with our need at all times of keeping bright the ideal of a rare and high excellence. But there is really no discrepancy. The loftiest heroism, the deepest and purest spirituality, we know can go with commonplace everyday humanity. "Charity and personal force," the poet says, "are the only investments worth anything." We are all under





Resolution test chart featuring patterns of vertical and horizontal lines of varying thicknesses, accompanied by numerical values indicating resolution levels. The values include 1.0, 1.1, 1.25, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8, 3.2, 3.6, 4.0, and a small table with values 1.5, 1.8, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.6, 4.0.



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the illusion, more or less, of the cultured, the refined; yet we know that true greatness, true nobility, and strength of soul are quite apart from these things. "The older one grows," says Goethe, "the more one prizes natural gifts, because by no possibility can they be procured and stuck on." Matthew Arnold, in whose essay on Milton I find this remark quoted from Goethe, thought that one danger that threatened us in this country was that we were inclined to make a religion of the "average man," and therefore of losing the saving ideal of rare and high excellence. Whitman would lift the average man to a higher average, and still to a higher, without at all abating the qualities which he shares with universal humanity as it exists over and under all special advantages and artificial selections. He says that one of the convictions that underlie his "Leaves" is the conviction that the "crowning growth of the United States is to be spiritual and heroic,"—a prophecy, I confess, which, with Hillism and Quayism threatening to override us, does not seem very near fulfillment.

"I announce a man or woman coming—perhaps you are the one,
I announce a great individual, fluid as nature, chaste, affectionate, compassionate, fully armed,
I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement, spiritual, bold,
And I announce an old age that shall lightly and joyfully meet its translation."

Arnold said we had lost in the sense of distinction in this country, and found our great historical characters, like Lincoln, deficient in this quality. No doubt this is so; no doubt distinction—that something about a man and his work that is like cut glass—does not flourish in democracies, where there are no classes; it belongs to aristocracies. But there is another quality close akin which we cannot do without, and which such characters as Lincoln show. I mean elevation—elevation of thought and sentiment. It is a quality which goes with seriousness and large views. It is very pronounced in both Whitman's poetry and prose. The spirit, especially in the prose writings, is lofty and uncompromising—almost arrogant and dictatorial

at times. In the poems, where he gives fuller play to his compassion and contentment, where he is less the critic and more the lover, the elevation is not of the kind that separates him from his reader; it is like that of nature, in which we easily share. We feel that here is a soul whose range of thought and emotion are vastly beyond our own, and yet, who in nowise stands aloof or apart from us, or from the lowest of his fellows.

I WANT, so does Europe and the best of America, that you put Columbus on deck! God! how *you* can make him stand out in that last, long night as he leans looking for the light—America! If only six lines, let us have it. Be good to Walt Whitman this once now, and don't let the land have to reproach itself when you have gone the other side of Darkness.

Joaquin Miller to Walt Whitman, 1891.

MY SUMMER WITH WALT WHITMAN, 1887.

By *SIDNEY H. MORSE.*

"FROM Washington to Camden—not far. From Cleveland to Whitman—as far as the poles."

Thus in his devotion a friend of the poet exclaimed when told that I had gone from the White House to 328 Mickle street, Camden, modelling the heads of two representative men.

To which challenge I made reply, in substance, as follows:

"Two widely different personalities, I grant you, but with somewhat in common. One thing observable in Cleveland as in Whitman is the lack in reverence for tradition and precedent. Neither doubts, I take it, but he is born with his special mission to the modern world. Heir of the ages, he moves in the present as also a new personal force. Whitman makes his own poems out of his own genius and nobody's else.

"'One's self I sing, a simple separate person.'

"Cleveland reshapes the party's platform in the similitude of his own convictions."

Something like this was afterwards said to Whitman concerning the President, he being "very curious about Grover." He had heard similar things said of him even before he was the President. "He read my 'Leaves' at one time, I'm told, and did not think badly of them. Anyhow, I like to know all about the Presidents. They stand for a good deal, to my thinking. I've a fondness for their messages." When I confessed a liking for the "messages," having at one time gone over them all from Washington's Inaugural down, he replied with a smile that he "was never so far gone as that," but thought it might be "a

good thing for a young fellow to go through the list, making his notes. Good history, etc."

He pressed me for "all the news about Cleveland" I could give him. "What's your off-hand idea of him from observations taken on the spot? Where's he drifting? What's his creed—politically speaking?"

I had seen the President an hour or so at a time several mornings, taking clay-notes while he opened his mail. Politics were "not in it," but a remark now and then of his threw a sidelight of a political color. Confessing my meager data to Whitman, he urged: "No matter for that, one don't get away with a glance even that doesn't carry an idea with it, often the best." But the most I could vouch for was little enough. "Watching him while he intently, carefully worked at his letters, the President was not an uninteresting study. It dawned on me at the time that the presidential attitude kept saying: 'Keep at it, no fuss, never fear.' Then, it did not take long to get the impression that he was a man who really had faith in ideas as though they were something real. His administration, I judge, will stand or fall on ideas. He will not forsake ideas to do politic things. In a sense he is a transcendentalist, though his avoirdupois tells against him. I presented him with a photo of Emerson taken in his younger days. You would have enjoyed seeing how heartily he received it, and the few words of Emersonian admiration. The man must have dipped into a good many Jordan streams. As to his political creed, I think he would not object to one's saying that he hopes to rescue the government from all the usurpations of the paternal system, and let what we call 'government' fall back as the least conspicuous feature of our civilization. Local freedom, local responsibility. 'Local option' on all subjects carried as far as possible. The subject came briefly up in some reference to the scramble for the 'surplus' revenue. 'The saddest thing,' he said, 'in regard to the South is, that they are forsaking their old traditions and going in for the sugar-plums of paternalism.' He was on the de-centralizing track."

"That's good democracy," Whitman exclaimed, "and means much if you've the right version of it. Tallies well with what

I heard before he was the President. We shall see. I have a hope that he'll run his administration as they run banks. Why not? I don't wish to debase the office, nor abolish it as Moncure Conway says he does. No, no; the President is the one man representing every inch of the Republic. He's worth keeping if only as a figure-head of our national democracy, the solidarity of the nation. So say I, at any rate, and stick to it."

This was in 1887, but I had remembrances of Whitman dating back to 1876, the summer of the Centennial. I was then, as in 1887, under commission to model some portrait of him. To take in the Exposition and study the poet's head would be the economy of the "two birds with one stone." But the resultant "bust" went the rounds telling its pitiable story. Disappointments came drifting in, but none so frankly put as that forwarded by the poet-victim himself: "Features not unlike, but *hat-brim* looks like. . . . How *could* you?" As a matter of fact, I didn't. If I failed of giving the original brim the "width and generous lop" desired, and always secured, if it was but a twenty-cent straw by the Whitman himself (one of which I ransacked the Quaker city to find for him), the fault was not wholly mine. I could tell a mitigating story of the unlucky Italian who did the casting, demolishing the original brim, substituting therefor a narrow uncanny thing of his own construction. Those were the first years of my art and I had not learned the lesson of eternal vigilance.

Whitman could get around very well by himself in 1876, and came regularly, as he agreed, across the ferry to the extemporized studio on Chestnut street.

One part of the preliminary business was the visit to a photographer. He knew of one who could be "bossed." He climbed the flights easily enough, but the heat under the skylight was oppressive. He doffed his coat and sat in his shirt sleeves. A profile I have of him taken at that sitting shows him looking very old. But the Monday following he seemed to have laid aside ten or twenty of his years. He enjoyed the diversion and was in best of spirits. He presented me with a choice copy of "The Two Rivulets;" choice because there were marginal notes, in his own writing,

of much interest. He volunteered to read, if agreeable to me, while I worked. I suggested the entertainment should begin with his "Mystic Trumpeter." "Then you like that? I got somewhere with that, I think, myself."

A moment of turning leaves, then the word "Hark," that begins the poem. Off my guard, I stayed my hand to listen for some one coming. As if answering my gesture he continued, his intonations still familiar as though the "mystic" visitor and he were old-time comrades:

. . . "some wild trumpeter, some strange musician,
Hovering unseen in air, vibrates capricious tunes to-night.

I hear thee trumpeter, listening alert I catch thy notes,
Now pouring, whirling like a tempest round me,
Now low, subdued, now in the distance lost."

The recitation more than confirmed the report of his gifts as a reader, and further suggested a vindication which all his poems might be capable of. He read yet other things; passages from "Song of Myself," and "The Singer in the Prison." He told me the story of this last poem. Parepa Rosa, singing to the convicts of a prison in New York, I think, furnished the theme. An impressive scene, he said, one ever to be remembered. Attracted by his voice, a dozen or more young fellows, who had come to the Fair from Oil City, softly descended from the upper floor, and stood crowded together in the hall without. Their applause breaking the hush of the moment was startling, so entirely unsuspected was their presence. It was as though the very walls were rattling their approbation. Whitman, turning his head and looking steadily to reassure himself that the prison fellows had not escaped, cried, "Come in." There was needed no second invitation. "So you like it, do you? Well, I rather enjoyed that myself." Would he go to Oil City and read like that? He should have the whole city out to hear him. The money consideration should be something munificent.

The chambermaid also got interested, even anxious; appearing

each morning late as if bent on knowing what 'twas all about. She spread a torn sheet over the carpet, and eyed the performance with a dazed sort of concern. Growing familiar, she poured out her own story of folly and disappointment. She had left a good home, she and her cousin, in far away Wales, to come to the Centennial, where, they had been told, work could be got for the asking at three or four dollars a day. Had lost her cousin. Worked five weeks on promise of five dollars a week, no cent of which had she yet received. Would I as lief pay my rent to her? "Money, money!" exclaimed Whitman. "All for money you came; lost your friend for money; for money are now in distress. Well, to an extent I can sympathize. But if I, like you, was well-to-do in one place, I'd not pack my duds and start for another for money."

"Oh, no, sir; but we wanted to see the Fair, too."

"Have you?"

"No, not yet."

"Will you?"

"I don't know what I will do, sir."

He took the address of her cousin as well as she could give it, and despatched me on a tour of discovery. I was able to trace the cousin to her third engagement. No clue after that. Margie was inconsolable, but the Oil City boys secured her her wages. Sadder and wiser, showering blessings, she departed.

It was pathetic, yet interesting. I came upon many such wandering souls in those Centennial days. The whole event lies in my memory as wonderfully domestic and confiding. Whitman admired the act of the Oil City fellows.

When I returned to Camden, in 1887, Whitman had moved. I asked the bootblack, going over the ferry, if he could tell me where one Walt Whitman resided. He responded briskly, resting back, flourishing his brushes one in either hand: "Wat, 'im as wears gray and speaks to all on us? Don't know where he lives! Anybody 'll tell ye. You jes ask."

On my way I made several inquiries from curiosity, and learned that he had moved to Mickel street. One young fellow volunteered to go and show me the very house. He was communicative; said.

towards the last: "Do you think he is really a poet?" He had read him *some*, but was yet puzzled. The "*some*" meant a poem copied in a Camden paper.

I found Whitman much more crippled, and quieter in manner, than when we met before. Eleven years had wrought their changes. He was, however, in a less perturbed frame of mind. In 1876 he had not the returns from his volumes sent to England, and was undoubtedly poor enough in pocket, and, as he said, "disposed occasionally to feel blue." He was at that time quartered with his brother. He came in, as I remember, with something of a disheartened air, but presently was speaking in cheeriest tones. "Whatever happens, I quite believe in the old world. Take it for all and all, for better or for worse, in sickness or in health, I cleave to it."

He now recalled that day of our first meeting and said: "I believe that must have been about the darkest period of my life, but before the summer had gone there came that burst of sunlight over the sea. The money, and the friendliness of it all, turned the tide and made me about the happiest critter that ever lived. I felt *too* good almost. I wondered if I could stand it. It was worth living for, anyway, if I then died outright. For evermore I shall love old England. It all comes over me now and always does when I think of it, like a great succoring love. You should have seen the tears, Sidney—or you shouldn't. With no discounting of friends at home, I must say that English business stands apart in my thought from all else."

My purpose on this last visit was like unto that of my first visit. I still desired, I told him, to make the "bust." He said he would cheerfully put himself at my disposal. The summer was before us, and nothing else impending. He would engage himself to me for the season. "I'm sure you'll do better this time." So, calling Mary Davis, the housekeeper, he had "the litter of everything; under heaven" poked one side to make a clearing for me at the window. We brought in boxes to fashion a stand for my clay, and I fell to work, he eyeing me curiously that first afternoon. At night he said: "Here in the dark it quite resembles the critter." I now had the "critter" all to my-

self, with plenty of time for undisturbed work. My deep satisfaction overflowed, I think, to the housekeeper, who admonished me that there was an element of uncertainty in Mr. Whitman's programs now-a-days, and sooner than she counted on were her words verified.

With the next morning's salutations the damper fell. "Here's a telegram from Herbert Gilchrist. He's in New York and will be on shortly. He's coming to paint me. I had forgotten about him. But never mind; you'll like him. We can put him over there somewhere. I don't see what I can do to stop it. He has come all the way from England—from England, Sidney—to paint me. Make the best of it; share the crust with him."

I could ill conceal my disappointment. I coveted the whole loaf with no disposition to share it with anybody; was half a mind to pick up my traps and go. But by the time the young man appeared on the scene in person, I was calm once more and ready to be pacified. He was agreeable, enthusiastic; not a fellow to get in one's way at all, it seemed. I could keep my place at the window, and he would plant his easel a little way in the rear. Whitman need not change his position; he was in just the right light, etc., etc. I soon became quite as much interested in Gilchrist's designs and expectations as in my own. For a week we kept it up, working some, talking more, Whitman's wistful eye on us both. Company came—children by the dozen, elderly people pausing at the open window, peering in over the window-sill. The days were crowded and disturbed by callers from near and far. Evidently the stress of it all was telling on the poet. I read it in his face, and in the concerned look on Mary Davis' face when she came in to put things straight a little, or to deliver a message. Finally, consulting her and finding my suspicions correct, early one morning I betook myself with my whole effects to the back yard. There in the cool shadow of the house, under the propitious sky (when it was propitious), with high-boarded fence, and grape-vine weaving itself into a pear-tree for a background, my work proceeded. Occasional excursions to the studio in front for memory-sketches seemed to be serving me very well. Gilchrist was contrite. Had he known, he would

have put his work off and left me in possession. But I think I convinced him that I was faring quite to my own satisfaction. He seemed to be laying in so splendid a piece of work, I could not afford to forego the pleasure of watching its progress.

I usually stayed with Whitman for lunch, Gilchrist frequently joining us. He was well posted. He knew all the English friends and Whitman got in his revenge for long sittings by making him entertain us charmingly with personal anecdote, and accounts of what was being done on the British Isle.

Gilchrist was the precursor of an exodus, it fairly seemed, of literary and pleasing characters from abroad, who confessed to having had Walt Whitman on their list from the start, intending to take him in, as one young girl phrased it, if they missed Niagara. The young lady herself was of a party of three from merry England, who appeared in the door-way one noon, radiant with health, a beautiful tableau. "Ah, darlings," cried Whitman, through the hall, from his seat at the kitchen table: "Come right this way. Herbert, Sidney, move a little. Mary, you lay some plates and bring the chairs." It was a delightful afternoon. Aristocracy or democracy, it mattered not at Whitman's. Either party fell cheerfully into the usual way, did ample justice to a "bite of roast beef," a cup of good tea poured generously by the gray-bearded host himself, with perhaps a cup of custard or piece of apple pie. "Jolly dinners you have here," quoth one distinguished visitor, notwithstanding they were served in the little heated kitchen. The poet's conversation at the table differed from his talk evenings in being more animated and in touch with current topics. We were the privileged recipients of some of his "best things" those noon-times, and I indulge a hope that Herbert Gilchrist may yet be forthcoming with remembrances for which we shall all be grateful.

It may be remarked here that Whitman took great satisfaction in the managing skill of his housekeeper. "Mrs. Davis," he more than once said to me, "has a knack of anticipating what I want, and in case of an emergency at the dinner table she knows right well how to make the best of it. She has rare intelligence and her tact is great. She does much better for me than a whole

retinue of pompous, bothering waiters. I detest the critters, bowing and watching."

There was yet another Mary, old Aunt Mary, we called her, who came to clean up and put things to rights occasionally from kitchen to cellar. She was never, however, allowed to betake herself with her scrubbing-outfit above or beyond those apartments. She would quickly have put things all wrong had she appeared in Whitman's private sanctum. She served me a bad caper out in the door-yard. My high brown-board fence—worm-eaten, moss-grown, highly artistic, antique, picturesque, serving admirably for background—was changed one day, in my absence, to a spotless white. She had "bin cleanin' up," she told me, bound that Mr. Whitman's door-yard should not have "sech a disrespectable appearance," and I could see she would have banished me with my dirt, or else have spattered her white-wash over both me and my work with satisfaction. For she was "born the very day and the very year Mr. Whitman was born on," and "while she lived was bound to look to his interests." It was not until my "dirt" had taken on some semblance of her hero that she began to be reconciled.

"Your Whitman-picters," she observed, finally, "look as much like him as a dead man can like the livin'," and she hoped I would not be disappointed about "sellin' 'em."

She had a voice like Charlotte Cushman in "Meg Merrilies," and could have been cast without "making up" for the part of the Gipsy Queen. She was a bundle of supersitions; had her piety all by heart. Though scolding with energy on occasion, she was constant in proclaiming the duty of a non-complaining mind. One day I chanced to express a regret for the rain. She swiftly brought me to task, saying that I "must not go agin' God's will." "Does God make the rain?" I retorted. "He doeth all things," she said solemnly. "Doth he drown people?" I persisted.

"Ef they're so foolish ez to go in deep water, and they can't swim, He lets 'em pay for 't. He doesn't interfere with the devil's work."

"But how does your Satan get work to do, if God doeth all?"

"Oh, never you fear for *him*. He's allers aprowlin' around lookin' for a chance when God's back is turned. There aint a lazy hair on his head. I wish I could say as much for some others."

Whitman, overhearing the "confab," was not sure but Aunt Mary had the best of it.

Aunt Mary was an original character, and I am sure that Whitman enjoyed with the rest of us her occasional coming. She could remember most back to General Washington, and thought in her very heart that a country that could boast a Washington and a Whitman would never go to pieces.

Among the visitors that summer was a remarkable man, who came all the way from Georgia—a sort of philosopher-farmer, Whitman described him. His name was Johnson. He stopped at the hotel, but made daily visits to the Whitman home. Alone in the deep seclusion of his farm, that "ran more to weeds than it should," he had read "Leaves of Grass," until the poems were to him as familiar as his copy of Lindley Murray's grammar. He could place his finger on any line of any poem you might name, and doubted if the author himself knew his book or understood it as well as he did. At home, his family and neighbors had poked fun, and pronounced him not exactly in his right mind. He sought relief, temporarily, by shaking the dust of Georgia from his feet and making this "visit to the North-land, where dwelt the man who had done most for him after Christ." Emerson he was also familiar with. "Oh, yes, I can quote Emerson, too; but somehow he sets my wits a buzzin', and it all ends in a headache. But reading Walt 's like sailing a calm, unruffled sea. With him, 'I loaf and invite my soul.' With Emerson, it's the other way: your soul invites you; goes nagging after you, and you feel as though you were a truant and a sinner. I don't like to feel that way. And yet, don't mistake me; I set great store by Emerson; I place him among the gods. 'Yourself a new-born bard of the Holy Ghost,' he says, 'cast behind you all conformity' (that's what I've done), 'and be acquainted at first hand with Deity.' That's what I've tried to do, too. I know if I could have seen

Emerson, I'd found him a right royal man. Quoting him again: 'We mark with light in the memory the few instances we have had in the few dreary years of routine and of sin'—there it is again, 'sin.' I don't take to that word much, but he is to be forgiven—'We mark with light the interviews we have had with souls that made *our* souls wiser; that spoke what *we* thought; that told us what *we* knew; that gave us *leave to be* what *we really were*.' That's the whole gospel; to give each other leave to be what we really are. When Jesus said, 'The second is like unto it, love thy neighbor as thyself,' he might have added, and the third is like unto it: give thy neighbor leave to be what he *really* is. I put the emphasis on the 'really,' for that secures you a first-class fellow all the time. You see I believe in heredity some, not altogether, for nobody, no human spirit, I mean, is ever quite cut off by his descent from communion with what your Concord man calls 'the Holy Ghost.' Heredity, after all, is no more than skin deep. Once a fellow gets his dander up and decides to be himself *really*, then, heredity to the four winds."

And much more—too much of truly interesting talk both for Whitman's nerves and my present use. He took me aside one day confidentially to say: "I'd like well to say it to Walt himself, but I'm 'fraid he wouldn't exactly take it right. You see when I'm down home I often take my gun and go gunning for 'possum, and when I come along to a spot where I see one has been, I says to myself, 'The old varmint's been here as well as I.' So when I used to read Whitman I'd keep comin' to ideas perfectly familiar to me. I'd been there before, and I'd say same as I did of the 'possum, 'The old varmint's been here;' and by and by I come to the conclusion that there warn't no place he hadn't been. And I 'spose that's why I took to him, he told me what I knew, spoke what I myself had been thinking. When a man does that for a fellow, it's easy to believe him great." Then after a little he resumed, and this time even more confidentially: "To tell you the truth, though, I own I am a leetle disappointed. Somehow the man don't come up to his poems. He ain't so hearty, so hail fellow well met, so much a

democrat as I expected to find him. In fact, he seems a little starchy and repellent; he checks a feller in his advances and won't quite let him come to familiar conversation. I have to sit and admire him at a distance about as I did at home before I came." Mrs. Davis had explained to him that Mr. Whitman was perfectly friendly, but had to husband his strength in order to get through the hot days. He had taken that into consideration, and yet—"after I've come all the way from old Georgia." He made his visits, however, stayed two or three weeks, even longer than he intended to do, and went home consoled and happy, sending on in advance as herald of his return copies of a Camden newspaper that contained extended complimentary notice of his personality and of his visit to Camden, written, I suspect, by Walt Whitman himself. "That'll convince 'em down home that I'm not without honor, save in *my own country*. And, as they all believe in the Scriptures down there, I suppose I may score a point against them as a prophet."

Confirming what Mrs. Davis had said of Whitman's need of defending himself against too great excitement, I told him of the labor agitator who called one afternoon to persuade Whitman to introduce him to a Camden audience. The man was the happy possessor of a loud voice and in manner was quite imperious. The conversation ran somewhat like this:

"I have solved the problem, Mr. Whitman."

"Ah!"

"In my own mind."

"The right spot to begin."

"I believe, in fact, I've settled the matter."

"Oh!"

"Now to convince the world. You yourself have struck the key-note."

"Thanks."

"Your words are a great re-inforcement to the cause."

"Thanks."

And so on for ten minutes or more, the man standing with hat in hand orating, Whitman, when there came a lull, looking up from perusal of his letters, interposing his "thanks."

Finally, the man, grown weary or perceiving he was making little, if any, progress, suddenly brought up with :

"Well, Mr. Whitman, I think I'll take my leave."

"Thanks."

Not until after he had departed did the inopportuneness of his response become manifest. He was not, however, greatly disturbed in consequence. The man did not strike him as a person who could be profoundly conversant with any problem. He had squarely told him he could not go to the church, was unable even to consider the matter; "yet the fellow kept on spouting." The labor problem, as a practical question, belonged to younger heads than his, if there really was anything to be said or done about it. He was not sure but things were working well enough as they were, evolving in their natural course far better results than any theory of socialism could promise. Evils were being sloughed off about as fast as they could be, he thought. But, he couldn't go into it. There was more talk, anyway, on the subject than was warranted by the situation, or good for the workingmen themselves. So far as he could see there was as much "cussed selfishness" on the one side as the other. It was a question of manhood, if anything. Workingmen's strikes were apt to develop little of that. They would set on their fellow-workingmen who didn't belong to their "union" like tigers or other beasts of prey. It was their "union" against the world. The spectacle was not pleasing. "Let the worker, whoever he be, accept the situation, and triumph on the side of his manliness in spite of it. Then he would bring to his side the world's sympathy. Let him ride down his temptations to be mean and niggardly, even in dire extremity, as a hero would, and his cause is won. Let him say to the 'scab,' 'Thy necessities are as great or greater than mine,' rivalling Sir Philip Sidney. 'How can a man be hid?' old Confucius asked. How *can* he? or deploiled? No capitalist can rob any man of his manhood. When the labor agitation is other than a kicking of somebody else out to let myself in, I shall warm up to it, maybe."

At other times he betrayed an anxiety in behalf of the "masses

driven to the wall," and felt that somehow the Republic was not safe while "anybody was being so driven." He commended and gave me Carnegie's book on "Triumphant Democracy," as containing much that was "about so and gratifying."

I put this conversation down in black and white one day, all he had just said to me, and asked him, "Will you sign that as your whole and final deliverance on the labor issue?"

After a pause:

"No, Sidney; I don't think so. I *said* it, but a fellow don't like to sign anything as 'final' or 'full'—not while he's alive, anyway. You must compare that with something else I may say some day, if you want the 'final' and 'full.'"

He kept the paper for some time, promising to put in some "emendations," but finally it got lost. Of course I was not quite serious about the signing, nor did he look on the proposition gravely. A day or two thereafter he returned to the subject afresh: "As summing of all my thoughts, I wish you to say, that I am for the working man and for every man; wish he should have all that is just and best for him, as I wish it for every man. But he should make his cause the cause of the manliness of all men; that assured, every effort he may make is all right. I wish he would put it down as his motto: 'Nothing shall get my manhood down; I will not duck under as a man to any calamity, no more than Job did.'"

A contribution to the labor agitation that may not more apply to the labor cause than any other cause, but it is a "search light" much needed there as elsewhere.

I had said to Whitman that it would be well if some wise reporter, like his Mystic Trumpeter, "hovering unseen in air," could take passing notes of his home-life, his conversation with visitors and friends, and so give his friends everywhere a more authentic account of him than biographers and critics were able to offer. He assented to the idea heartily, saying he felt the lack of reality in so many of the reports and reviews sent in to him, the touch of nature that lay in facts, and suggested that I might "condescend to the task—without taking on the invisibleness." To that end he procured, or fished from his pile of valuables on the floor a "brau new note-book" which he proceeded to

"dedicate." I am prevented from giving a *facsimile* of this dedication, but it ran as follows:

"Walt Whitman, May 23, 1887. S. H. M. (Camden, N. J.), Sculpting W. W——."

"I put in the sculpting," he said, "to let that o'ershadow the reportorial function. The reporter may 'hover unseen' in the sculptor." I made no doubt that I should fill the book, (some one hundred and fifty pages), before the summer ended. But to my deep regret it lies before me now about as blank as when it came from the binder. The trouble was he but seldom indulged in "talks" until after the evening shadows began to fall, and my pencil had to find its way by a sort of instinct. I found too that I had not been bred to it. Listening interfered, and I put off much writing that I might the better listen, and could never quite catch on to the reality of it again. I am sorry. In those shadowy hours, sitting in his seat by the window, watching the silhouetted shadows of passing men and women—the sort of company of whom he never tired—he mellowed into gentle confidences, and the tones of his voice, low and musical, carried such persuasion and charm, one was indisposed to break in upon them even by the scratching of a pencil. His talk at that time was chiefly retrospective of men and things; or, if I gave him the cue, of himself. It was on one such evening that he took up his big swan-quill pen and set down the following data for my use if I desired it, leaning over with pad on window-sill to catch the last of the daylight. Of course it was intended for my special, private use. But it has often seemed to me that his many friends would feel a real interest in seeing the half-page of MS. just as he hastily scratched it down. But of course the import is preserved in type:

"'Leaves of Grass,' he should say, was continually the expression, in a sense, of the faith that was in him, but never, or very seldom, an expression of the reasons for the faith. The poems were always merely exclamatory, giving a man successive joys, botherings, special sights, passions, moods, etc., etc., from twenty-five to sixty-five years of age, amid the influences, environments and people of America, North and South, East and

West, not only amid peace but amid war. I found that he believed in free trade, anti-slavery, the full human and political equality of woman, and thought that the world was governed too much. Yet he was conservative too. He thought the family organization and the marriage institution the basis of permanent social order. Of theology he thought matters were about right and going on right as they are—including the churches and including the spirit of free inquiry.

"When I was with Whitman it was the hot summer of '87, and he was in his sixty-ninth year. He lived in a little property of his own, a small wooden house in Mickle street, Camden, New Jersey. He was physically very infirm; he had been paralyzed for fourteen years—a result of his too zealous and long-continued labors during the secession war, on the battle-fields and in the hospitals. But he retained good spirits and was always cheery in his own way without exception. He had a good color and weighed over two hundred pounds. In manners, though hearty and emotional, he had a certain dignity and reserve. He took a daily bath, lived rather abstemiously, liked a good drink of champagne, and dressed in a suit of thin woolen Canada gray. Mrs. Davis, a young, strong, good-looking Jersey woman, a widow, was his cook and housekeeper. I don't think a man ever existed so utterly indifferent to criticisms and slanders; (there were even then some in circulation very amusing and strange to those who knew him well). He wrote generally two or three hours a day, and often went out for a drive in a phaeton that his friends had presented him with. He drove himself."

The effort fatigued him and ended our evening. "I think it is all right," he said, as he bade me good-night to go upstairs, "that one should like to have himself reported, if he must be reported, truthfully. I guess that hits tolerable near."

My "note book," though meager of treasures, may as well be yielded up here, and about in the order set down.

When W. W. made his Western trip in company with J. W. Forney and others, the party stopped at Topeka. Among those at the hotel where they put up was the sheriff of that part. He

invited W. and his friends down to the jail to see some twenty or more Indians, captured by the government and kept in the jail-yard. The sheriff went out and spoke to them; told them of the distinguished party there, but they paid no attention. Forney went out and others followed. . . . But no look or word from the dusky prisoners except the first side-glance. Then W. W. went out. The old chief looked at him steadily, then extended his hand and said his "how." All the other Indians followed, surrounded Whitman, shaking hands, making the air melodious with their "hows." The sheriff could not understand it. "I confess," said W. W., relating this story, "that I was not a little set up to find that the critters knew the difference and didn't confound me with the big guns of officialism."

"Did you know Felton, his Ancient and Modern Greece? No? you ought. Well, here's a specimen. Let me memorize it for you:—

"The Greeks considered man as placed in the center of a harmonious universe. As he looked upon the objects of nature their colors not only pleased him by their variety, but combined in an harmonious effect upon his organs of vision. The sounds of nature, the song of bird, the voices of the winds and the waves, filled his ear agreeably, and impressed his mind with an indefinable sense of harmony. Forms also, the varying surface of the earth—the outlines of the hills—the myriad varieties of trees, animals, and men—the ever shifting, ever beautiful clouds flitting across the sky, stirred within him a rhythmical perfection which did not wholly distinguish itself from the harmony of sound. These objects, too, were in life and motion; and this motion, indeterminate as it may be, has a regularity and a rhythmical progress; while some of the objects of nature which strike the senses the earliest and the most deeply—the stars, for instance—move on in their silent courses in such solemn order that the imagination of man in the primitive ages conceived an unheard music of the spheres, which the philosophers themselves did not refuse to believe; and the moral adaptation between man and the world constituted an ethical harmony never to be lost sight of when we:

endeavor to reproduce to our minds the thoughts, feelings, and speculations of the ancient world. On these primitive harmonies the fine arts were built; harmony and form ripened into sculpture, architecture, and plastic art generally; harmony of color, combined with form, was embodied in painting and the arts of designing; harmony of sound found its artistic expression in music, poetical rhythm, and impassioned expression in oratory; harmony of motion was brought into order and system in the rhythmical and modulated movements of the dancer, and in the refinements of the orchestric art.

“‘But there was a deeper harmony still that blended all these special rhythms into one, and constituted that music which the ancients conceived of as the basis of civilization and the essence of instruction. To them the natural man was not the savage running naked in the woods, but the man whose senses, imagination and reason are unfolded to their highest reach; whose bodily forces and mental powers are in equipoise, and in full and healthy action; who has the keenest eye, the surest hand, the truest ear, the richest voice, the loftiest and most rhythmical step; whose passions though strong are held in check, whose moral nature runs into no morbid perversions, and whose intellectual being is robustly developed; whose life moves on in rhythmical accord with God, nature, and man, with no discord except to break its monotony and to be resolved in the harmony of its peaceful and painless close. This is the ideal being, whose nature is unfolded without disease, imperfection, or sin, to perpetual happiness and joy. This is the ideal education such as the ancient teachers conceived it. This is the ideal music into which all the harmonies of the world were blended. This is the ideal man, the musical man, of whose possibility the ancient philosopher dreamed.’

“‘You can say that that is by me absolutely indorsed. I got the book when I first went to Washington at the commencement of the war, and it was a great enlightenment and consolation to me. Have read it a thousand times and more, and know it most all by heart. Felton was a great old fellow. He didn’t have so much harmony as he talked of; no, not he. He was going to

force things. I used to talk with the ministers of Greece about his Modern Greece, and I found his lectures ruled even in Athens."

"Dant  is the greatest exemplifier of simplicity and meagerness in expression."

"A point to insist upon as a fact is that W. W. was in no sense an adventurer, seeking notoriety."

"Napoleon had the element of the spectacular with many excellent traits; probably he had to have both. Lincoln was destitute of the spectacular, a fore-seer of events. Morally and mentally the healthiest man that ever lived—and the cutest. Very fortunately, too for him, for, if he hadn't these elements, God knows what would have become of him."

"A man has a great advantage in the time of trouble by understanding how things must turn out. Add patience, and he can stand the racket."

"I am not a practical joker myself, not a believer in practical joking of any kind; it is a nuisance to me."

"The South don't seem to realize that the best average dominant feeling through the North is and always has been that of brotherly equality. They seem to think it's a strife between sections, and not the saving grace of freedom. No abolitionist ever hated a Southern slave-holder as he did a Northern 'dough-face.' How Lincoln would have taken the whole South to his heart as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wing, but they would not. Northern soldiers may be said to have almost gone into battle with a sigh, that is, after the first year or so, when they came to find out what brave fellows the secesh were; and the moment they surrendered and Lee told of their destitution not a Northern soldier but would give his last supper to the men he had fought and learned to love.

"But your Southerner is proud, and then, it is never so easy to forgive when you are whipped as when you whip."

He has a great respect for the reign of Queen Victoria, even admiration. Thinks Tennyson should do his best on her birthdays. Some of the fellows from the Queen's dominion calling to-day express great reverence for her majesty: "A soggy old woman," said one, "with just wit enough to mind family affairs, hoard her revenues and keep out of politics. We all feel if we but had an intellectual monarch, what a power in the realm she might have been for literature, for art, and the great humanitarian reforms." To which Whitman replied: "History will tell another story of your Queen; quite another. It will sum up a half century of splendid achievements, with your Queen not unsympathetic, nodding approval, if standing aloof; as though she said, speaking for England, 'See! my English are quite capable of taking care of themselves.' Keeping out of politics, you say; what a virtue that is! And it takes real greatness in a woman who has opportunities by the yard not to put her finger in every pie. Don't go back on your Queen. Just to have sat there enthroned for fifty years and see it all go on—it would do my eyes good to set them on even that sort of majesty. Maybe she's not brilliant. You English are none of you over-brilliant. But you are a brainy set and know how to hang on to things (good things) when you get your holt. What a galaxy of immortal names in this Victorian reign!"

This radical was a true Englishman after all. As I jotted in the dark his response, I fancied a square jaw with a gratified smacking of lips: "Yes, you are quite right. We may not be just satisfied with the Queen, nor with Gladstone, nor with Lord Tennyson (he would have stood higher with us had he refused the title); but, of course, we, you know, believe in old England's glory. It far enough exceeds her shame."

"— is a curious mixture of what one likes and despises all the time. Born with the fatal silver spoon, he has never got it out of his mouth. Takes on airs like a peacock; struts and twirls

his goggles. So much for the *bad* of him. For the good, he is the most honest (intellectually) man I know of; loves the poets, is simplicity itself in adoration of them; bows to science and believes in immortality. Generous to a fault, he yet holds fast his great wealth for some great dream of his which he will realize, I half believe, in spite of his foppery."

[This note stands without name for some reason, and I have not the most distant idea of whom he was speaking. I preserve it, however, as sign of W. W.]

"Harned is a stormer—a valuable man generally; up to all the best things, and, surprising enough (for lawyers don't so much go that way) for his transcendental tastes. I feel propped up against all my shortcomings when he is about. He brings cheer and a substantial basis with him."

"Of course Bucke is the biographer, but others have said much to my liking. I think more and more of Marvin's piece in the *Radical Review*. How is Marvin? Where? He has rare insight—is a poet. Perhaps he is thrumming something great to be heard of some day. I like Marvin."

"Don't tag after anybody, however great. Develop what you have, or, what you have not, was an idea with me when quite young."

"Civilization and culture come like the weather, from countless sources."

"Character—the best part of any person, or any reading, or any work of art; that which is worth any sort of summing up—not necessarily now or ever possible perhaps, the saintly character, but the virile, cute, creative part of man or woman; it is that which delights and saves the earth from getting to be too stupid a place for mortal man to dwell on. Mere amiability, sweetness—sweetness without light—oxen and cows furnish that."

"Christianity is a very creditable thing to the human critter who has built it up."

Forney inaugurated the idea of giving Whitman a lift in the form of a lecture on "Elias Hicks," but the custodian of the hall refused to allow its use, giving as his reason that "Hicks did not believe in the atonement." Whitman dismissed the matter with, "Who shall atone for so great a piety?"

"I detest lemonade and all sort of guzzling. If one is going to drink anything—champagne, abstentiously taken, goes to the spot and don't make a fool of a fellow. A copious draught, also, not from habit, but, for instance, as the boys say."

Two fellows come in after twelve o'clock, noon-time, for "satisfying reasons" for believing certain necessary things. After they are gone, Whitman:

"Anything that pleases me I can stand pretty well, but not this unrolling an argument like as a fellow unrolls a carpet—endless; nothing beyond."

A friend in the East writes me her special request that I should "sound Whitman on the great theme of God and Immortality. His opinion would go far with me." But I cannot lay myself out for a siege of that sort. In the first place, I have no reason to suppose that he knows more definitely than other mortals the so or not so of these long-discussed topics. Casually I have heard him observe that he believed in immortality, but it was not a matter that could be "disposed of to a twice-two-are-four certainty." He believed it, but had no "reasons." I had heard Emerson say something similar, and a great number of other people. "Not a subject for dogmatic posing," Emerson said. Whitman like most other people spoke the word God, but without profane repetition. The word served when all else failed. Epicurus declared to his disciples that he knew of but one thing more foolish than to affirm the existence of the gods, and that

was to deny their existence. Whitman believed God, but with no limiting definition or detail of attributes :

"His thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things,
In the dispute on God and eternity he is silent."

"Feb. 28, '88—Noon.

[From a private letter:] "Eakins' 'pict.' is ab't finished--It is a portrait of power and realism, ('a poor, old, blind, despised and dying king'). Things with me ab't the same. Mrs. D. is well--is in the back room working. My canary is singin' away as I write."

The "canary" and the "good gray poet" are great friends. "He's intelligent, like my lord Bacon, after his own fashion, and a jealous critter. How he scolds when strangers pop in without being formally introduced." "Critter" seems to be a word of special endearment with him.

I find his "canary" has been made the subject of a "special verse," worth quoting here :

"Did we count great, O soul, to penetrate the themes of mighty books,
Absorbing deep and full from thoughts, plays, speculations?
But now from thee to me, caged bird, to feel thy joyous warble,
Filling the air, the lonesome room, the long forenoon,
Is it not just as great, O soul?"

Speaking of the Emerson dinner at Parker's, he gave with relish the following :

Emerson.—Now what will we have to top off with?

W. W.—What are these?

R. W. E.—I don't know ; we will see.

W. W.—But if we don't like them—

R. W. E.—Then will we eat what is set before us, asking no questions.

Letter received Sept. 19, '88 :

"CAMDEN, Wednesday P. M.

Dear S. H. M.—Am surviving yet and in good spirits (sort) after the past nearly four months. Am still imprisoned here in

my sick room, unable to move around or get out at all—but have my brain power as before and right arm volition—(now reduced to them, what great blessings they are!)—November Boughs is all done, printed and press'd, and waits the binding—will send you one as soon as I get it—then I am to have a complete W. W. in one 900 vol. (6) L. of G., Spec. Days, and Nov. B.—all and several condensed in one—this is now going through the presses.—Your bust of me still holds out fully in my estimation. I consider it, (to me at any rate), the best and most characteristic, really artistic and satisfactory rendering of any—so tho't by me. The bust of Elias Hicks pleases and satisfies me first rate—goes to the right spot.—The little armchair statuette is here (as when you left it) and must not be forgotten.—It is valuable exceedingly.—Horace is invaluable to me—I couldn't have done anything with the printing without him—Whether I shall get out of this slough remains uncertain. I am comfortable. Love to you and all inquiring friends.

WALT WHITMAN."

My last afternoon at Walt's was to me both a sad and pleasant one. He was unusually grave and intent on rescuing something from his pile on the floor that, apparently, eluded all the magical poking of his cane. I did not ask what he would find, or offer assistance. I knew he liked to be let alone in such emergencies, and of all things, dreaded the interfering hand that would disturb the order of his possessions heaped about him. Generally there was no trouble. He knew the exact location of about every article, book, pamphlet or letter which he desired; but this time he was baffled. Several times he rested and returned to his search. But toward night he put the cane by resignedly, settled back in his chair, wrapped the big buffalo robe about him, mused awhile, and then, speaking low, said:

"It's of no consequence, Sidney, but I wish very much, if you ever come to think well of it yourself, you would make just a simple bas-relief of my hospital days. Just a suggestion—a cot with soldier boy limp and listless on it, and put me in somewhere, perhaps there by his side. I tried with pencil this morning to indicate my feeling as to what it should be, but it got

spirited away. I'd like that, seems to me, more than anything, and to have you do it. They were the precious hours of my life. My mother's love and the love of those dear fellows, secesh or union. It was awful, or would have been, had it not been grand. They took it all in the most matter-of-fact way. No complaining. The fate of war. One rebel boy quoted Emerson (he had been to Harvard or Yale)—

"Whoever fights, whoever falls,
Justice conquers evermore."

"It seemed to me all the while not that I was away somewhere, out nursing strangers, but right at home with my own flesh and blood. So it was. No ties could be dearer than bound me to each and all of them. My heart bled hour by hour as for its own. I don't know why I go talking to you on a subject I usually keep sacredly locked, but I must show you the little notebooks with the blood smudges. I tried to edit them for the printer, but it was like plucking the heart out of them. I wish I could find what I made. But you will understand—something simple and artistic; just a thought showing me there. If I find it, I will send it.

"A special verse for you—a flash of beauty long neglected—your mystic roll strangely gathered here,
Each name recalled by me from out the darkness and death's ashes,
Henceforth to be, deep, deep within my heart recording, for many a future year,
Your mystic roll entire of unknown names, or North or South,
Embalmed with love in this twilight song."

He sat up later than usual that night. When it was time for me to go he said simply: "We're all going somewhere; you know the rest."

He was sitting calm and pale in the dim light as I passed the window, the mortal already putting on immortality, it seemed to me. A great life, and "through it all he kept the poise of a great soul."

I CANNOT resist the temptation to render you also my grateful thanks for such large and substantial thoughts, uttered in a time when there are, as you say in another connection, so many "little, plentiful mannikins skipping about in collars and tailed coats." . . . My dissent over particulars becomes a very insignificant consideration in the presence of that unbounded delight which I take in the bigness and bravery of all your ways and thoughts. It is not known to me where I can find another modern song at once so large and so naive. . . . I beg you to count me among your most earnest lovers.

Sidney Lanier to Walt Whitman, 1878.

WHEN I shook hands with him there, at the door of his little house in Camden, I scarcely realized the great privilege that had been given to me—that of seeing face to face the wisest and noblest, the most truly great, of all modern literary men. I hope yet, if I am spared, to look upon him again, for well I know that the earth holds no such another nature. Nor do I write this with the wild hero-worship of a boy, but as the calm, deliberate judgment of a man who is far beyond all literary predilections or passions. In Walt Whitman I see more than a mere maker of poems. I see a personality worthy to rank even above that of Socrates, akin even, though lower and far distant, to that of Him who is considered, and rightly, the first of men. I know that if that Other were here, His reception in New England might be very much the same. I know, too, that in some day not so remote, humanity will wonder that men could dwell side by side with this Colossus, and not realize his proportions. We have other poets, but we have no other divine poet.

Robert Buchanan: "A Look Around Literature."

THE LAST SICKNESS AND THE DEATH OF WALT WHITMAN.

By DANIEL LONGAKER.

WALT WHITMAN'S last sickness in reality dates from his years of hospital work in 1863-5, and originated at that time in two causes—the first, the emotional strain of those terrible years; the second, blood-poisoning absorbed from certain gangrenous wounds in patients whom he at that time closely attended. In 1864 and 1865 he had temporary break downs, and these culminated, in January, 1873, in an attack of paralysis, which was greatly aggravated during the same year by the death of his mother. This paralysis more than once brought him to death's door. It let up a little in the late seventies and early eighties, then settled down thicker than ever in the late eighties, and steadily deepened until the end.

Early in 1891 my friend Horace L. Traubel asked me to see Whitman professionally. It was only after some persuasion, I believe, that Whitman had agreed to accept the services of a physician, although his friends had for some time been quite solicitous about his declining health.

I shall not forget my first sight of and interview with him. Seated on the great arm-chair, the back covered with a wolf robe, he told me the particulars of his case. What especially impressed me was the manner in which he spoke of his various spells of sickness and of the functional troubles annoying him at that time. It was a connected and methodical recital, so that there was little occasion for questions on my part. I regret not having made any notes of this and the subsequent visits during the early period of my attendance on him; which mischance makes it impossible for

me to record here the full particulars of this history, given me by him at that time with such completeness.

As usual with old persons, Whitman's memory of remote was better than of recent events. He dwelt more fully on the details of his blood-poisoning from the gangrenous wound of his hand, and of the paralysis which had occurred almost twenty years before, than on those of his last serious attack, in 1888. Speaking of his personal habits, he told me he had always been temperate though he had not been a total abstainer; that he did not use tobacco; that he had never had any venereal disease. He feared, sometimes, that he ate too much. Locomotion was difficult. He moved about awkwardly with the aid of his cane, yet declined assistance. Sensation was little if at all impaired in the arms or the legs. The grip of his hand was good and with not more than the normal difference in strength between the left and the right. Examination of heart and lungs showed these organs in good condition. He had some slight trouble in the upper respiratory tract, and this he denominated his old attack of "grip." His arteries were in fairly good condition, which surprised me. There was little or no atheromatous degeneration ascertainable in the temporals or radials, which, from the history of paralysis, I had expected to find.

In spite of the absence of evidences of gross organic disease, his apparent age was greater than his real years. His present trouble, he said, was a "torpor, want of peristalsis," and difficult and insufficient evacuation of the bowels. There were also frequent calls to void urine. For this purpose he would have to arise several times during the night. The trouble was due to an enlargement of the prostate gland—a condition existing in many men passed the age of sixty years. It usually entails much suffering and distress, and admits, except by surgical interference, only of palliation.

In addition to these functional disturbances Whitman complained of great lack of energy. "Inertia," he explained—"as though a great wet, soggy net were spread out over me and holding me down." More or less constantly present, it was unaffected by atmospheric changes or conditions. For some months now

he had left his room but seldom and had not been out of the house at all. He promptly passed a soft rubber catheter, and expressed surprise that the operation was so easy and painless. No arguing or coaxing was required, as is almost always necessary when this procedure is instituted. I finally prescribed for him a stomachic and laxative pill, and told him I saw no reason why he should not soon again be going out into the air, which I felt very necessary to the re-establishment of his former energy. His nurse, Warren, I was assured, was quite proficient in the art of massaging, and this treatment was ordered to be continued.

At subsequent visits of this time Whitman would hand me memoranda similar to the notes usually kept by nurses. These were in ink, often on the inside of an opened-out envelope, or on the reverse of a sheet bearing a request for his autograph from some distant collector, or on some similar odd bit of paper.

On March 20th, the day following my first visit, he wrote (in part): "Took the pills—had a couple of slack-roasted oysters for breakfast, with a little coffee and small biscuit of Graham meal; have now taken eight of the pills." On the 21st he wrote: "Took a pill first thing this morning; a passable night past, must have slept five hours." Monday, March 23d, he continued: "Extra heavy, inert condition—listlessness, leaden non-volition—sweat rather easily, eat almost nothing—no appetite—no bowel action at all. Void water fairly, used the catheter last evening, it worked fairly. 2:30 P. M., limited (but sort of decided) bowel voidance, bronze color, consistence of dough, no watery discharge, no flatulence. Continued the pills—taken two to-day." Wednesday, March 25th: "Took the fifteenth pill first thing this morning early. Breakfast;—farina, roast apple and two or three mouthfuls of broiled steak. Must have had a passable night's rest." Saturday, March 28th: "A pill first thing this morning; a little oatmeal porridge for breakfast, small cup of cocoa at noon. No bowel impulse this forenoon—head heaviness—dullness extra last evening and to-day. Must have slept off and on from 11 to 6 with some waking." "Head heavy and some distress," he writes on March 30th, "but a shade of im-

provement in general strength and poise (less horrible inertia and weakness, bad enough tho' yet)."

These are mere extracts from his daily notes. They evince a remarkable degree of coöperation and reveal at the same time powers of observation and description of the minutest details that would be a credit even to a physician.

The following observation is as interesting as it is unique. He styled it "*A Crude Notion*":

"My great corpus is like an old wooden log. Possibly (even probably), that slow vital, almost impalpable by-play of automatic stimulus belonging to living fiber has, by gradual habit of years and years in me (and especially of the last three years), got quite diverted into *mental* play and *vitality* and attention, instead of attending to normal play in stomachic and muscular and peristaltic use. Does this account for the stomachic non-action, non-stimulus? Or what is there in this, if anything?"

A great deal, I was obliged to confess. "April 15th, 1 o'clock," he writes in a letter: "Went out in wheel chair fifteen minutes; warm, bright sun, flustered, headache—eyes badly blurred—(first time out in four months)."

Again: "May 10th. Am feeling this deadly lassitude and weakness to-day the same still. One favorable item at 10, a *bowel movement* (the first in ten days), viscid quite definite mostly formed, brown, no g't straining (no use of the syringe). If this is the result of the new pills they are very welcome for *that obstinate* deep-set-in constipation is the back and bottom of all our woes (and seems come to stay). I got the pills soon after 1 yesterday afternoon and took one—then near 5 another—then at 9 this morning another. Had a tolerable night. A rare egg on Graham toast for breakfast—coffee; have been moist—skin half sweating the last 15 or 20 hours. Am sitting here in the big chair in my den as usual."

Again: "June 7, 1891, Sunday ev'ng, 4:30—Have just had my 2d meal, mutton and rice stew, wet Graham toast, &c.; relished fairly—drank a little of the Rhine wine—take the granules (3 to-day). No motion of the bowels now, I think, five perhaps six days. To-day easier (negative)—freer from the horrible

deathly sinkiness of yesterday and Thursday—have been sitting up reading and writing all day—had one or two visitors, excused myself.

"Horace Traubel still in Canada, having a good time I guess. Expect him back last of the coming week. A half-medical acquaintance was in—said, 'You look all right—surely there's nothing the matter with your health!' Didn't know whether to take it as compliment or the other thing. (Ah! this immovable block of constipation.)"

These extracts give a more realizing sense of his condition during these days than could any words of mine. I was informed in a letter received from Dr. R. M. Bucke at this time: "Mentally Mr. W. is failing a good deal. Makes slips now that would have been impossible for *him* a very few years ago. For instance, I have a post card from him, dated 23d inst., on which he says: 'Dr. Torkaner came yesterday. I like him.'" Then Dr. Bucke says: "A *name* is something he *never* went wrong in." This singular name thus quoted was meant for mine.

At almost every visit I would urge the beneficial effects of fresh air, of sunshine, and of a little exercise, but all to little avail. His experience of outdoor exercise was quite bad. As he says in his letter, it flustered him—"blinded and deafened" him. He was loth to repeat it. A very few outings were all he took during the entire spring, summer and autumn. He preferred his bed-room—his den, he called it—to the rest of the house, and here I nearly always found him. Never idle, he sat surrounded by a vast heap of books, papers, manuscripts and what not, in apparently hopeless confusion, always busied in something, always interested in anything I chanced to say of men or women, medical men and matters medical always seeming to interest him especially. The severest thing I could make him say of any one was that many of the women visitors at summer resorts cared more for the exhibition of their jewelry and dress, the men, more for whiskey, than for the wonderful beauties and grandeurs of nature to be seen at so many of these places. All of which he deplored. He had more faith in the

generality—the common average man and woman—than in the majority of these erring seekers after pleasure.

Several times we discussed woman. In his opinion she was man's superior in every way; she bore pain and suffering with more fortitude. On one occasion he told me he thought it a grand thing to grow old gracefully. He used to tell me that my visits did him good, and would say to others that my visits did him as much good as my medicine.

While he did not regain sufficient strength, during this time, to leave his room often, he lost none of his interest in men and the affairs of the day, not only all through the long months of this confinement, rendered doubly tedious by the physical burdens he bore, but all through the dark days that followed the invasion of the fatal sickness which appeared on the seventeenth of December; and this in spite of the mental failure spoken of by Dr. Bucke.

In the early afternoon of the date just named he was seized with a severe chill. He termed it an incipient rigor. The second annual visitation of grippe was prevailing extensively at this time. Returning home about midnight, after an exhausting day of professional work, I had the first intimation of the change in my Camden patient. The note left by my friend Traubel, who had waited in my home until patience gave out, was urgent. And yet, because of my numerous involvements, I was able to respond only late in the afternoon of the following day—more than twenty-four hours after the chill. A cursory examination sufficed to reveal the gravity of his case. The chill had been attended and followed by a rise of temperature—the thermometer showing 102° F.; his pulse was 100; respirations, 30. A very troublesome cough, slight hoarseness, and, already, pretty free muco-purulent expectoration was established. There was complete loss of appetite and marked prostration, so that he voluntarily remained in bed. He did not admit having headache or any special pain, complaining in fact of nothing. He thought his friends had been unduly anxious about him, and he apologized to me because they had brought me over to Camden, needlessly, and so late in the day; he could have waited until the

time of my usual visit on the next day. Not intended as reproof for deferred duty it was yet a keen rebuke, and gladly would I have made amends for this temporary neglect.

On the following day, the third of his illness, there was no improvement. The areas of dullness, especially over the right lung, found on the preceding day, had increased. All the physical as well as rational signs indicated a widely diffused bronchopneumonia. Air entered the lungs very imperfectly. Cough was very troublesome, and expectoration quite free. With his bad general condition, the marked prostration and the hints of heart failure that I had heard, there seemed to me no chance of ultimate recovery or even of a temporary rally. There was a complex of symptoms which in all my previous experience in men of his age had been of fatal, even rapidly fatal, significance. On the next day, Sunday, I saw him twice, the second time late in the afternoon, and in consultation with Dr. Alexander McAlister, of Camden, whose residence in the immediate neighborhood would assure his presence should a physician be suddenly needed through any serious change in the patient's condition. At neither visit was much change in his general condition noted from the previous day, although his strength seemed slowly ebbing. He could take no nourishment and was disinclined to use the stimulants that seemed to us appropriate and necessary. For the first time in my knowledge he made objections to taking his medicine; but he took it nevertheless. The lungs were distinctly worse; very little air was entering the left and less still the right. The respiratory movements were very limited indeed, and tracheal rales, known usually as the death-rattle, were heard with each of the movements. There was some cyanosis, the end of the nose being slightly, and the finger-tips markedly, blue. Clearly, there was not enough lung tissue left functionally active to oxygenate the blood satisfactorily. The heart's action was regular and not intermittent, and the pulse continued at one hundred, with the respirations as on the first day, thirty. There was less fever. He fully realized his critical condition, but gave not the slightest evidence of anxiety or fear of its probable outcome. He was, indeed, cheerful and complained of nothing.

admitting that he had pain or suffered in any way only when he was especially asked. I may say here, this state of mind (this lack of anxiety for the future, this absence of complaint, this cheerful attitude) was maintained to the last hour of his life.

The first part of this, Sunday, night, was passed with sleep at short intervals, but at one A. M., December 21st, his attendants thought the end was near. He took a milk punch and rallied from this very low condition. When I saw him later in the day, he was somnolent; skin relaxed and leaky; the *large rales persisting*. He wished to be left alone, would not talk—indeed, refused to see his near friends. Very remarkably, however, on one occasion, when Warren, his nurse, had left him a few minutes, he raised himself in and sat up on the side of the bed. He was unable to get back unaided. Dr. R. M. Bucke arrived late in the day. He fully shared our belief that the end could not be far off.

The somnolency and the cyanosis continued on the 22d; also some irregularity of the pulse (the first noticed), and greater frequency. He preferred still to be left alone, saying, "My friends seem not to realize how weak I am, and what an effort it is for me to talk." More favorable was his taking food—a small mutton chop in the morning, and several milk punches during the day. His attendants reported a fair night, but on the 23d I found him again in a somnolent state, the heart's action very irregular, the pulse small and averaging one hundred and ten beats to the minute. The right lung seemed less solid and more pervious to air. Several raw oysters were eaten during the day, and this was all. He *could* not take milk punch or stimulants.

December 24th, Dr. McAlister saw the patient with me at five P.M. It was evident that the slight improvement of the preceding day had not continued. More careful examination disclosed quite extensive involvement of the left lung, with the right practically useless. Generally he seemed much weaker. At ten P. M. my colleague was hastily summoned. He found the patient generally cyanosed, with labored respiration; a weak, rapid and irregular pulse; the surface of the body covered with a cold,

clammy sweat. He was exhausted. It was believed by all present that he could not live through the night—so complete was the collapse. On the 25th I saw him twice. Not only had he rallied from the collapse by morning, but there seemed a slight amelioration of the bad condition of the previous day. All were quite hopeful. The promising condition continued only a short time. On the 26th he was as bad as ever. He lay all day long in what appeared to be a semi-conscious state, but very curiously replied promptly to any question put to him. His hearing, not good of late, was now especially acute. Lowering my voice purposely to test this, I uniformly observed that he heard me. My colleagues agreed with me that this was so. "No pain," said he, "but so very miserable!" His heart seemed failing—irregular and intermittent—the pulse, however, still averaging one hundred. All nourishment was refused. Dr. Bucke, watching at the bedside late in the evening, declared the end near at hand, and that he would remain now until all was over. None of us had the faintest idea that the end was yet three months off. But low as was the ebb, life continued. At the consultation on the 27th, Drs. McAlister and Bucke present with me, a very careful examination of the chest was made. The patient was supported for a short time in the sitting posture, in order that the bases and posterior surface of the lungs could be examined. Improvement was indicated by the presence of some resonance on percussion and by the existence of some breath sounds—though these were feeble. The left side was more impaired than we had believed. The respiratory movements were still entirely abdominal, thirty-three to the minute. Expectoration of muco-purulent matter continued. There was little if any fever, but loss of flesh was evident. That we were not mistaken in our conclusion that there was some improvement the next few days abundantly proved. By January 7th there had been re-established a normal pulse respiration ratio, the former seventy-two and the latter eighteen. I had in my attendance during the previous year found the pulse very uniformly at sixty-four. This was, therefore, but little above the normal for him. At this time there was complete abatement of all the alarming symptoms.

The tracheal rale—or death-rattle—had been survived; one attack of complete collapse, with cyanosis and irregular and intermittent heart action, that all thought the sure precursor of death, was not such. Altogether, this was one of the most remarkable experiences of my entire professional life. While all alarming conditions and signs were now gone, there was never any establishment of real convalescence. Badly as he must have felt, he had already settled down to a routine of daily life little varied from this on to the very last.

The curious mental condition of which I have spoken, and which I at first supposed to be a sort of stupor or semi-consciousness, was not such at all, as I found upon a more careful investigation. Had it been coma, or partial coma, hearing, with the other special senses, would have been dull; but his hearing at this time was, for him, remarkably acute—was even abnormally so. He was often supposed to be sleeping when he was without doubt perfectly aware of all that was going on about him. All that was necessary to secure his attention was a word uttered in the lowest tones or a touch on the hand or arm. Once, when I supposed him asleep, and placed my finger on his wrist in the lightest manner possible, he looked up and greeted me. He preferred to be left entirely alone. Often the presence of his best friends seemed to worry him. When he was at his lowest, and when his end was hourly looked for, we were requested to induce him, if possible, to see one of them for a few moments on a matter of some importance to himself. "No, no, I cannot! Tell them to wait until I am better." And he continued: "My friends seem not to realize how it tires me to talk." But we said: "You may never be better." All the same his decision was made, and he would not abate from it.

He preferred attendants in the room adjoining his own, and had a bell-pull fixed within easy reach of his hand as he was lying down. When he desired help, he rang.

He must have suffered greatly, but he made little complaint. All the pain and soreness was referred to the left side, the splenic region, the sigmoid flexure of the colon; and near the end of life there was some pain in the left foot. The cause of the pain

was not clear until the post-mortem. Hiccough was a very persistent symptom from before Christmas up to within a short time of the end. At first it lasted hours without intermission, and finally troubled less continuously. Much cough and mucopurulent expectoration showed that the pneumonia had undergone partial resolution only. Some of the consolidated areas were undergoing softening. Only very late were occasional night sweats noticed, and the fever, if present at all, was very moderate. There was a continual loss of flesh in spite of a fair amount of nourishment taken daily.

As a rule, he would awake about nine A. M. after a restless night. Hourly or oftener he would ring or call the nurse to change his position. Soon it was possible for him to lie on the left side only, and finally this tortured him. Said he: "I have to choose between two evils: lying on the left side tortures me, on the right the phlegm chokes me." However, after each change of posture he was supposed to fall promptly asleep. Between nine and ten in the morning he would have his breakfast—a simple meal of Graham toast, coffee and usually either an egg or a small piece of steak. Then between four and five in the afternoon a second meal, consisting usually of bread and butter, mutton-broth and rice, and occasionally including some raw oysters. Milk, either plain or as milk punch, was taken very moderately, and the same was true of stimulants in general. Every few days three or four ounces of champagne were taken. This with the view of securing its effect on the alimentary canal. It acted pretty uniformly as a laxative, and only a few times was it necessary to resort to enemata. There were only three or four days during which no food was taken, and then he said he did not want to be bothered with it. Whenever he felt unusually restless at night, he would attribute it to having eaten too much. In the vain search for a remedy to control the hiccough, ice-cream, suggested by some one, was tried. Its effect was indifferent, and several times harmful, in that a diarrhoea followed its use. The digestive function was, as a rule, fairly well performed. The moderate quantities of food taken were digested. The tongue remained moist and clean throughout. The excre-

tion of urine was much below normal. It varied from eight to twelve ounces in the twenty-four hours.

After his morning meal Whitman would have the curtain opposite his bed raised. He would then obtain the daily papers and his mail and these would engage him for hours. There were very few days when they were neglected. When they were, all hope would sink in the breasts of his attendants, to be as quickly revived by their resumption. Occasionally, some writing was done. On January 10th he signed two of the Johnston etchings for his attending physicians.

To the very last day of life this interest in the news and affairs of the day was maintained. Little as he said, even in the way of necessary communications, he would occasionally surprise us by referring briefly to a bit of news. "Dr. Parker's dead," said he to me on the day following the death of Dr. Andrew J. Parker.

He did not, as is usual with consumptives, entertain any hopes of recovery. Some days he would say he felt much better, but only once during this long period did he apparently allow himself to be deluded by the hope that he would get well. About the middle of February, one morning after breakfast, some one said to him: "We hope soon to see you in your chair again." His prompt negative—"Never! never!"—showed conclusively that he had no such hope. At another time the nurse told him they were thinking of getting a new bed for him. "You slip away from us so in this one." He rejoined: "Some of these fine mornings I shall be slipping away from you forever." "Well, doctors, what is the verdict?" was a question asked us more than once. In explanation of the reason for the question he said he thought "it would be a satisfaction to know how the cat was going to jump." Then, too, he was of the opinion that "what the doctors can't tell you about yourself no one else can." The exception referred to, when he apparently allowed himself to be misled by a false hope, was when he declared to Warren one morning that "he was going to beat those doctors yet." Once he gave us the account of the famous two-hour talk on Boston Common with Emerson, who, he said quaintly, "talked the finest talk that ever was talked." At the conclusion of the narration

he promptly extended his hand, and, as Dr. McAlister said, "dismissed us with his blessing."

We were much in the dark as to the extent and real nature of his trouble. The large pleural effusion, which must have existed for weeks, entirely escaped our recognition. Repeatedly the question of cancerous disease came up, but it was always decided against. He continued to lose flesh and strength so gradually that one almost failed to observe the decline.

March 11th he was again reading the daily papers. For several days they had been neglected. His attendants were greatly cheered.

I have already spoken of the necessity for frequent changes of posture. In the twenty-four hours from the 21st to the 22d of March he was turned just forty-one times. On the 23d his hearing was dull. It had all along been quite acute. Respirations were now relatively too frequent—twenty-three to the minute. The pulse was eighty-four. The tracheal rale—"death-rattle"—was again heard, but it disappeared as soon as he turned to his left side from the position on the back. March 26th, although we realized that our patient was extremely weak, we were hardly prepared for the end, then near at hand.

At 12.30 P. M. there was a little dyspnoea—he felt short of breath. The respirations had gone up to thirty a minute. His pulse was small and irregular—eighty-four to ninety-two. Some tracheal rales were noticed.

This was his last day, and ere the darkness of night had gathered his emaciated body was without life.

Mr. Traubel sends me this brief statement of the last hour:

"The end came so suddenly this day's evening between six and seven, even after all our anticipation, that we had no time to summon you. Harned, McAlister, Fritzing, and Mrs. Davis were present already when I arrived. There was no sign of struggle on the part of the patient. The light flickered, lowered, was quenched. He seemed to suffer no pain. His heart was strong to the last, and even may be said to have outbeat his life, since for some minutes after the breath was gone, the faint throb at his breast, though lessening, continued. He needed no

help—indeed, help was past avail. A few minor attentions which we fairly reasoned might give him comfort were shown. Elsewise we sat or stood and watched. He said nothing. He lay on his back—the one hand which he had reached out to me when I came, and which I held, on the coverlet. He passed away as peacefully as the sun, and it was hard to catch the moment of transition. That solemn watch, the gathering shadow, the painless surrender, are not to be forgotten. His soul went out with the day. The face was calm, the body lay without rigidity, the majesty of his tranquil spirit remained. What more could be said? It was a moment not for the doctor, but for the poet, the seer."

The wonder, that life had continued so long, grew as one by one the revelations of the post-mortem examination were made.

To this examination he had assented months before his death. "Yes," he said, "if it will be of interest to the doctors and of any benefit to medical science, I am willing."

The following are the notes of the post-mortem performed on the body of Walt Whitman, March 27, 1892, by Henry W. Cattell, demonstrator of gross morbid anatomy, University of Pennsylvania:

The autopsy was made in the presence of Dr. Daniel Longaker, Prof. F. X. Dercum, Dr. Alexander McAlister and Horace L. Traubel. The brain was removed by Dr. Dercum, and is now, after having been hardened, in the possession of the American Anthropometric Society. This Society, which has been organized for the express purpose of studying high-type brains, intends to first photograph the external surfaces and then make a cast of the entire brain. After this, careful microscopic observations will be made by competent observers.

Both the head and the brain were remarkably well formed and symmetrical. The scalp was thin, and practically no blood was lost when the incisions were made. The calvarium was white and the muscular tissue pale. The dura mater was very adherent to the skull cap and showed recent pachymeningitis on both sides, but especially on the right. The blood in the longitudinal sinus was fluid. The bone was well ossified, and there was

little or no diploic substance remaining. The pia and arachnoid were very œdematous, and considerable cerebro-spiral fluid escaped during the removal of the brain. Numerous milky patches, especially over the vertex, were seen, but no miliary tubercles were discernible. The membranes were not adherent to the cortex, and the brain substance was excessively soft. The blood vessels of the circle of Willis were very slightly atheromatous. The brain weighed forty-five ounces, two hundred and ninety-two and one-half grains avoirdupois. While this is a medium weight for a brain, it must be remembered that the brain decreases in weight one ounce for every ten years in a person over fifty, and that it is much more important for intellectual and physical well being that the convolutions are well formed, the sulci deep and the cortical substance wide. Large allowance must also be made for the extreme emaciation of the whole body, involving of course the brain. It is likely the brain had shrunk (from this cause) six to eight ounces in the last months of life. Taking these elements of the problem into account, it seems likely that at mental maturity Walt Whitman's brain weighed at least fifty-six ounces.

The body was emaciated, post-mortem lividity was slight, and there was no rigidity. On attempting to remove the skin of the left side a little to the left of the median line at the sixth rib laudable pus escaped. On careful examination there was found here an elevated area the size of a fifty-cent piece, which was situated over but slightly to the left of the center of the manubrium and had eroded that bone to the extent of a twenty-five-cent piece. The abscess had burrowed into the pectoralis major and had commenced to erode the superficial fascia. It had not broken inwardly, though it could be plainly seen from the posterior surface of the sternum.

About half an ounce of pericardial fluid was found. The heart, which weighed about nine ounces, was very flabby and well covered with epicardial fat, except a small portion in the center of the right ventricle. The pulmonary valves were slightly thickened but competent. Aortic valves in good condition, closing completely. The mitral valves good, the tricuspid perfectly good.

There were three and one-half quarts of serous fluid in the left pleural cavity, and the lung, the size of the hand, was completely pressed against the mediastinum, so that it was absolutely impossible for air to enter. A few bands of recent lymph extended across an injected pleura, which was hemorrhagic in spots. On the pleural surface at a point just below the nipple was an abscess the size of a hen's egg, which had completely eroded the fifth rib, the longest diameter of the abscess being in the vertical direction. There was no external mark on the skin to lead one to suspect the presence of the abscess, though there was some bulging and distinct fluctuation, and the two ends of the rib could be plainly felt grating against each other. Only about one-eighth of the right lung was suitable for breathing purposes. The upper and middle lobes were consolidated and firmly bound down to the pleura. There were about four ounces of fluid in the cavity. Large tubercular nodules and areas of catarrhal pneumonia were everywhere to be found. Those portions of the lung not tubercular were markedly emphysematous, this being especially marked at the free edges of the lung.

The spleen was soft and weighed about eight ounces, the capsule thickened and fibrous; on section pulpy. It was matted down to the diaphragm and showed old peritonitis and perisplenitis. Numerous tubercles occupied this region, extending to the anterior wall of the stomach and to all of the neighboring viscera. The diaphragm was pushed downward by the fluid.

The kidneys were surrounded by a mass of fat. The left suprarenal capsule was tubercular and contained a cyst the size of a pigeon's egg. In this was found a darkish fluid. The capsule strips readily; the kidney weighed about six and one-half ounces, and showed some parenchymatous change. The kidney substance was soft, red, and swollen, and somewhat granular. The right kidney was a little the smaller and the better of the two.

The liver was about normal in size, though fatty, and contained an extra fissure near the center. Some tubercles were observed.

A huge gall stone almost entirely occupied a rather small gall bladder to which it was firmly adherent. The outer surface of the stone was covered with a whitish deposit.

The pancreas was hemorrhagic. The common iliacs were but very slightly atheromatous.

Over the whole of the mesentery, especially in its lower portion, were hundreds of minute tubercles varying in size from that of a fine needle-point to the head of a good-sized pin. These whitish points were surrounded by a hemorrhagic base. The serous surface of the intestines was injected and dotted with tubercles. The bladder was empty and the walls thickened. The prostate was enlarged. The rectum was swollen and filled with semifluid feces. A few hardened masses were found in the transverse colon. The stomach was small. The vermiform appendix was two inches long and patulous, containing two small hardened fecal masses of an irregular outline. The sigmoid flexure was unusually long.

The above macroscopic lesions of the various organs were confirmed by microscopic sections.

It would seem very probable that the extensive adhesion of the dura mater to the calvarium was due to an old sun-stroke.

The cause of death was pleurisy of the left side, consumption of the right lung, general miliary tuberculosis and parenchymatous nephritis. There was also found a fatty liver, gall-stone, a cyst in the adrenal, tubercular abscesses, involving the bones, and pachymeningitis.

It is, indeed, marvellous that respiration could have been carried on for so long a time with the limited amount of useful lung tissue found at the autopsy. It was no doubt due largely to that indomitable will pertaining to Walt Whitman. Another would have died much earlier with one-half of the pathological changes which existed in his body.

To medical ears, at least, it may seem strange that physicians of even average diagnostic skill should overlook a large pleural effusion like this. There were two reasons for it—the first was the lack of complaint of pain; the second, our respect for his disinclination to be disturbed. It seemed a rudeness, almost, to subject him to a searching examination. Practically, this failure of discovery made little difference, since it is doubtful if the re-

removal of the fluid would have added much to his comfort or succeeded in prolonging life. This pleurisy was due to deposit in the membrane of tubercles, the same as were found about the spleen and the peritoneum of the left side of the abdomen in general. Here they originated peritonitis, and thus accounted for the pain. The abscess eroding the sternum must have existed a long time. It also was tubercular, and in all probability was the original point of development of the disease and the focus of subsequent infection. It is a fact now pretty generally known that individuals in apparently perfect health may have tuberculous mediastinal glands, and such this, in all likelihood, was originally. How long it and the other abscess eroding one of the ribs had existed is a matter of surmise, not of certainty. It might have been several years. It certainly antedated the outbreak of pneumonia in December by months. No wonder, now, that he felt a "deadly lassitude and inertia!"

I wish to silence forever the slanderous accusations that debauchery and excesses of various kinds caused or contributed to his break-down. There was found no trace or reason to suspect, either during life or after death, either alcoholism or syphilis. This statement is in justice due the memory of one whose ideal of purity was high.

But he had a ruddy face; and he despised not the "despised persons"—therefore he must be one of them! The accusation is as old at least as the time of the Man of Nazareth, against whom it was charged that he mingled with publicans and sinners.

About his (Whitman's) indomitable will there can be no disagreement. And yet I do not share the opinion that it was exercised in a struggle against the inevitable. Perhaps, if he willed at all, it was to die sooner. But bodily pangs and tortures seemed not to perturb him; he lived out his last days as he had lived his last forty years, with senses alert and keen and emotions under perfect control. His mind was bent on higher things than those passing about his inert and out-worn body. Who, indeed, shall trace for us the mysterious labyrinths of its wanderings, and record its experiences throughout those long days and weeks and months? We are certain they had not the com-

LAST SICKNESS AND DEATH OF WALT WHITMAN. 411

plexion of fear, and it seems likely that his lifelong faith in continued existence did not desert him (was probably confirmed) in this last supreme experience and agony. This much, at least, is certain, that at the very end, as all through his life, the act of dying had no terrors for him who had passed

.... "death with the dying and birth with the new-washed babe."

NOT knowing whether it will reach you, I will, however, write a line to acknowledge the receipt of your beautiful and elevated "Love & Death," & of the friendly letter from you of October 7th last. I have read & re-read the poem, & consider it of the loftiest, strongest & tenderest.

Walt Whitman to John Addington Symonds, 1872.

I THANK you from my heart for the gift of your great book—that beautiful complete book of your poems and your prose, which I call "Whitman's Bible." But my heart has not the power to make my brain and hands tell you how much I thank you. None of your elevés, your disciples, will be able to tell the world what they have gained from you, what they owe to you, what you are for them. . . . We are both growing old, and nearly half a hemisphere divides us, and yet nothing can divide souls, or separate that which is inseparable in the divine nature of the world. . . . I cannot find words better fitted to express the penetrative force with which you have entered into me, my reliance on you. . . . You have exercised a controlling influence over me for half a century. . . . More and more of you will be found in me, the longer I live and the firmer I become in manhood.

John Addington Symonds to Walt Whitman, 1889.

LAST DAYS OF WALT WHITMAN.

By J. W. WALLACE.

THE following pages consist almost wholly of extracts from daily letters written by Horace L. Traubel to friends in England and to Dr. Bucke in Canada during Walt Whitman's last illness. As the letters were written off-hand—often hastily amid pressure of many duties—to a limited number of friends to whom they had special reference, it cannot be claimed for them that they present more than a sectional part of the complete story, which has yet to be written. But they will yield authentic glimpses of the daily course of the long tragedy, and of the deportment and spirit of its suffering hero.

Walt Whitman had been failing in health and strength for some months, when, on the 17th of December, 1891, he was seized with a chill and was helped to bed. Dr. Longaker, of Philadelphia, saw him next day and found him suffering from congestion of the right lung. He became rapidly worse, and on the 21st the doctors said that the case was hopeless and that Whitman would not survive many days. Telegrams and cable messages were sent to his friends, and a series of letters succeeded from which are taken the extracts that follow.

Dec. 21.—The danger apprehended by Dr. Longaker for Walt is choking. Mucus is dangerously present in the bronchials. He is too weak to move himself. Warren turns him every ten minutes, in order to guard against any local accumulation of mucus. The right lung is congested—hard—and he breathes only with the other. The heart is unaffected so far. Appetite entirely gone since last Thursday. For weeks before it had been rapidly declining. The only nourishment he takes

now is in what he gains from milk punch and his medicine. His weakness is extreme—extreme—but his cheerfulness is marvellous. Keep brave, unshaken hearts even now, dear friends. *His* heart does not lose one drop of its serenity.

Dec. 22.—Walt is slowly sleeping away—only dozes, dozes—and never speaks except when spoken to. Bucke should be in Camden now. He will be a host, for he is both doctor and friend.

Dec. 23.—Walt holding his own for the immediate moment. What will come to-morrow no one can tell. Bucke gives us no encouragement, which but confirms the views of the other doctors. The telegrams, etc., etc., to Walt and to me, are vast in number and various in character. Ingersoll wired from Toledo to-day: "After the day the night, and after the night the dawn; yours with words of love and hope"—which profoundly affected Walt. Walt serene and natural—for the first time conceding to-day that the end seems near.

Dec. 24.—(Cablegram.) Remains the same.

Dec. 25.—(Cablegram.) A little worse.

Dec. 26.—(Cablegram.) A little better.

Dec. 27.—(Cablegram.) A little worse.

Dec. 28.—A slight improvement, but we have small hopes for Walt. He is wrecked beyond recovery and he craves to be relieved. Bucke may go home to-night, but expects Walt not to survive his departure many days.

Dec. 29.—A dead, inarticulate day, unchanged from yesterday's condition. As he requires constant attendance night and day we yesterday introduced a trained nurse—Mrs. Keller—who will share with Warren the burdens and duties of the watch. Bucke went home last night. Burroughs was here for two or three days, but had to go home Saturday. Jeff's daughter came east, and George Whitman spent one anxious night at 328. Walt clear, calm and tender, but praying for death—to be released. This is his daily wish, cherished and expressed.

Dec. 30.—His condition is unchanged. A respite now between troubles. He has not for more than twenty-four hours said a word except by way of giving directions to those who attend him. Hiccoughs persistent for several days.

Jan. 1, 1892.—Walt is conscious and calm, and no day passes without some sign from him of the old affections. But he expresses little voluntary solicitude otherwise with respect to surroundings or worldly interests. He will inquire, "What is the news?" and then will lapse, from weakness, unable to follow the thread. In a few minutes we go to have W. sign a codicil to his will, the particulars of which he outlined to us this afternoon. Johnston (New York) over and had two or three minutes with Walt.

Jan. 2.—Walt spent a comparatively easy day, but this evening has been restless and in discomfort. I have just had quite a talk with him. He wishes to die. There is nothing he so *much* wishes as that. The bronchial trouble is about all gone, but the weakness that remains is abject. He cannot turn in bed—cannot even turn his head over on the pillow. But he is serene, calm, clear, unclouded mentally. Indeed, he mourns that this is so—that, after the body has so collapsed, these thoughts—crowding, hurrying thoughts—pursue him. We executed the codicil without event yesterday. The scene was striking, never to be forgotten.

Jan. 4.—Nothing new to report. He seems to lose strength, but gives no further evidence of change. The dreadful hiccoughings continue, day and night. I was in his room an hour ago, and he seemed weak and worn past survival.

Jan. 5.—Still no change in Walt.

Jan. 6.—Without change. Had no talk with him for two days—nor had the others except as they waited upon him and questioned him—till this evening. "Dear, dear doctor," he said on delivery of your message [Dr. B.]. Gives me every sign of great love and tender regard—more than I ever suspected or hoped for.

Jan. 7.—No sign or seeming hope of a rally. W. asked yesterday if word had come of the arrival of his books [two Christmas gifts sent by him] in Bolton. A few minutes later Johnston's letter received, in which they are acknowledged. Weather cold—snow fallen and clear skies. Sleighing, too. Likes to talk of out-of-doors.

Jan. 8.—(From Walt's room). Some trifling rally. We send our love. Walt is glad the books arrived safely.

Jan. 9.—Walt has eaten more to-day than any day yet. No signs of strength, but some signs of *comfort*. He sends his love and best words. Position still critical, but more grounds for *hope*.

Jan. 10.—Walt no worse—possibly improved. He has eaten more and shown some signs of really holding his own. Sat up in bed and affixed his signatures to two etchings for the doctors.

Jan. 11.—Walt very weak to-night—more distinctly so than for a week. I attend to his mail now—giving him the *substance* of important and loving letters, and having perforce to let the rest go. A beautiful letter from Ingersoll.

Jan. 12.—Perhaps a bit of *ease* to-day. No change to report. I am just in Warry's room from Walt's after 20 minutes' talk with W. He was sane and loving. Of all his distant friends Bucke and Ingersoll seem most in his mind. I asked as I left, "What message for Bolton?" and he responded: "Tell them I am very low—very—very low—that I still have one chance in four or five—but only one, if that; tell them I am well seen to—that I am encircled by sweet attentions: tell them I send my best affection and regard—my best, tell them"—and here he broke off out of sheer feebleness, and I cried, "That is enough, don't try more: they will know it all from that!" and he murmured almost in a whisper—"Right!"

Jan. 13.—A trifle easier to-day. He realizes little uninterrupted comfort so far. Naturally, to one in his weak condition life is undesirable and useless, and he is frank enough to say he regards his future with fear, if not alarm. His nights are frightfully restless. He calls again and again and again for the nurses to rearrange his position.

Jan. 14.—A trifle easier this evening, but weaker. I left the house at 9.30, and the hiccoughs had not yet appeared. The lungs seem quite clear. The lower part of body gone to skin and bone, the face suffering some but not to a sad degree. Hands thin and generally cold. Senses acute. Cannot turn or even help turn his body about the bed, and at times can hardly turn his

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head about the pillow. I hear from all the fellows. Garland now in Washington.

Jan. 15.—A brief respite to-day. No hiccoughs for 37 hours; this unprecedented. I read him part of my *Poet Lore* article. He seemed intensely interested, but he was so feeble he could not have it finished at one sitting.

Jan. 16.—Walt rallied to-day enough to look at a paper and read the *Poet Lore* article for himself. He expresses the (to me) most astonishing applause for the article, and even makes me promise a copy for Tennyson as from him. Eats more, hiccoughs gone, comfort greater. Hands and feet all day cold as ice. Weak past utterance still. But some real signs of benefit and relief. Weather superb and cold—fine skies and hope ahead.

Jan. 17.—Walt continues his extraordinary rally. I look upon it as for the present a distinct step beyond danger line. He may live weeks or months now. But do not build too much on this. He has read some to-day.

Jan. 18.—A hard day—but to-night he is resting easy and seems happy under some measure of relief.

Jan. 19.—An easy day for Walt.*

Jan. 20.—A day of some discomfort. The nurse says she discovers a daily loss of flesh in W. Stedman over and spent ten minutes with him. Walt tried to write to-day but gave up.

Jan. 21.—Walt himself is so calm, so sure, so joyful (almost),

* (*Letter from Warren Fritzing.*)—Same date, to this effect: My brother Harry had a Christmas present of a little boy and he named it Walt Whitman Fritzing. When Mr. Whitman was told about it he was extremely pleased and wanted to see it at once. "I want it brought and laid right there," he said, putting his hand on his breast. Well, in a few days—I think ten—I went down to my brother's and brought the baby up along with his nurse. The nurse took it upstairs, and Walt said, "O! here comes the baby, little Walt Whitman, O! O! lay it here," he said, indicating his breast. It was laid there, and he put one hand up and patted it and smiled and was quite pleased, and said, "We ought to have our picture taken now. The dear baby, the dear little thing." After about five minutes or so we took it away, after he had kissed it repeatedly. He has inquired after it several times since, and always wants to know how Harry, Becky, and the baby are.

now the active horrors are all fled, that I myself realize a certain measure of relief.

Ingersoll came here this evening with his brother-in-law and publisher between six and seven. The talk and the inspiration it meant for me are beyond valuation. And it meant a thousand things for Walt and Ingersoll as well. These two giants, full of ardent love, spontaneous as children, brought face to face, with Walt's imminent peril to brace against and defy—offered us a picture, and one which shook our hearts. Words eloquent and sweet were said on both sides, and there were demonstrations of the most subtle and delicate affection. Matched with these were wise and manly consolations, and notes compared out of deep soundings. Things even of the hastening world were brought into vision, discussed and dismissed. It was a great manifest of the power that lives in these two men—a splendid touch of comradeship in rare altitudes and with the best applications of genius and fidelity. You should have listened as Ingersoll's great voice delivered messages from wife and daughters—as he spoke his own fervent hopes and faith, and assured Walt that whether to live or die, whether to lift head as victor or fall at the last day, he, Ingersoll, was his lover and defender, pledged and armed. It was a gauge of battle, and Walt murmured to it, out of his feeble body but unshaken soul: "I know, dear Colonel, I know—know—know."

Jan. 22.—W. in general recent tone—not better, not worse, so far as outward indications go. He is much pleased with Young's second article in the *Star* ["Reminiscences of W. W. "].

Jan. 23.—No change. Walt tries now to examine his mail. He has written a letter to Bucke* which, as he says, would seem

*The letter in question is given:

"Jun. 23, '92, P. M.

"Am deadly weak yet—otherwise inclined to favorable—bowel drain sufficient—appetite fair—the plaster cast come safe to Dr. J.—Bolton—Ralph Moore is dead—Tom Harned well—my doctors and attendants cont first rate—Horace ever faithful—am propp'd up in bed—God bless you all.

"WALT WHITMAN."

[THE EDITORS.]

to show some revival of "sassiness." We have had a good deal of snow lately and I think it has been of material benefit to Walt as to us.

Jan. 24.—I have just had quite a chat with Walt on general matters, and find him exceedingly weak. He is conscious of his failing flesh and strength, and freely makes confession of it. To-day he wrote a letter to his sister. It was very short.*

Jan. 25.—Walt is weaker to-day, and Longaker says he is undoubtedly losing ground and that his days are numbered. We sorrow to hear of Symonds' illness. I referred to it in Walt's presence to-night, and he took up the strain of my condolence with real fervor and affection.

Jan. 26.—No change in W.'s condition to report, but we have ceased to entertain any but the last hope. He has passed a horribly weak day and now sleeps, but sleeps only lightly, as if, and actually, to be shaken up by a breath. He is emaciated, fearfully emaciated, and the complexion is totally gone—that rare red, which seemed the pure flush of dawn. He is deathly in temperature at times, and legs and hands are cold and lifeless. His voice varies, and is often very weak and struggling. He is never able any more to speak a whole sentence by one effort. He did a while ago call out for Warry when he desired some special attention, but even that effort troubled him, so now he keeps his cane on his bed and taps with that as signal wand.

* Mrs. Hannah Heyde, Burlington, Vermont:

"Just a line, sister dear. Have been very sick and suffered—and they say am better, but still at death's door. Have the best attention and watching—send best love and God bless you always. 5 enc'd—bodily functions better than you might suppose. It is all right which ever way. Lou. and Geo. and Jess often come."

This note, and those which follow, were mainly written with a blue pencil. It appears on a note sheet, dated "Jan 24, '92," and is signed simply, "W. W." Whitman wrote three letters to Dr. Bucke and six to his sister within the period of his last illness. We insert them all in the order of their proper dates. We give them without repair, with their marks of physical feebleness unmistakably upon them.—[THE EDITORS.]

Jan. 27.—No change. Walt wrote to his sister* and to Dr. Bucke † to-day.

Jan. 29.—No change. I am not in favor of life on such terms, and I know he feels its weight and sorrow. All his remarks to and of his friends are tender. He is always frankly affectionate with me. Wonderfully still shines the clear light of the soul; no dimming, no loss, no trace of discontent: the very central life of him grand, sure, serene, as in his best days of health and performance.

Jan. 30.—Walt experienced an easier though not a stronger day, and we have had a good chat, in which he evinced a thorough calmness and content, and expressed the most loving thought of you and others. He is greatly pleased that the Morse bust reached you safely. He has many kind words to say of that piece of work, and really thinks that "Our dear, dear Sidney," as he spoke of him the other day, comes nearer the "critter," and is more faithful to the truth as it is in Whitman, than any other man who has attempted to "do" him; and he moreover declares the vigor and breadth of Morse's work, quick with the instinct and generic quality of life. This is his last word on that head.

Feb. 1.—Walt looked worse this morning than at any time since December. He passed a horribly restless night. Longaker

* Whitman's second letter to his sister at Burlington ran as follows:

"Jan. 27, noon.

"Much the same—weak and restless—otherwise fairly—y'r letter came—2 enc'd—Geo. was here—my new fuller best ed'n is out—have written to Mary—very cold to day—am propp'd up in bed—read the papers, &c.—appetite fair—body sore and feeble—Best love and God bless you. W. W."

[THE EDITORS.]

† The letter is appended:

"Jan. 27, noon.

"Feeble and weak and restless, but not without favorable points—appetite holds out—eat two meals every day—bowel movement every day (rather strange after such a long interregnum)—McK was here—paid me \$283.—I enc two adv't slips—to me the 1892 ed'n supersedes them all by far—adv. intended for N Y Trib—God bless you. W. W."

[THE EDITORS.]

tells me the impairment is steady. Pale and haggard as death itself. But the soul shines out a great beacon as of old.

Feb. 2.—Complains of severe pains in his side. We do not know what they portend.

Feb. 3.—After one of his recent nights of restlessness the day has been a quiet sleepy one for Walt. I have this minute asked him, "Any word for Bolton?" and he says, "No, I guess I have no particular word." Yet he tells me at all times to "keep in touch with the boys"—and seems to dread to have the circle broken, or in any way to have his own silence mar the joy of our comradely sympathies. I had a tender telegram from Ingersoll to-day, which I repeated to Walt, who exclaimed, "The dear, dear fellow! Always loving and great!"

Feb. 5.—Continues in his quiet depression—rarely says a word to any one except when interrogated. Strangely silent. "Dear doctor," says he, and sends his love to you [Dr. Bucke]. To-night Jupiter and Venus in friendly proximity. What phenomena in the clear sky. Walt says he would almost dare to be carried out to see them.

Feb. 6.—I hardly need to write you anything to-day, since Walt has sent you a word. And yet I will write, if to say no more than that you must cherish that note as a struggled last word, written under the saddest difficulties and at the price of complete exhaustion—for when it was done, he, too, was done and sank wearily back on his pillow. By the application of the plasters his side is a bit relieved. But the *strength* seems departed forever. He seems to be thoroughly convinced of that himself, and I do not think he has the least notion he can get essentially better than he is now.

Feb. 7.—I supposed Walt had finished your letter yesterday, but he holds it and has added something more to-day. So far as he is concerned there does not seem to be any visible change at all. He passes abjectly weak days, with comfort about all gone and even sound rest not regular or long.

Feb. 8.—We here watch Walt as he holds his slender claim against death. All is pain and unrest. He asked me this evening to give you this counsel: "If entirely convenient *fac-simile*

the letter of February 6th and send it copiously to European and American friends and friends anywhere," letting us have copies here as well. It meant a great struggle to get this letter written, and he wishes it to go out as his general salutation of friends to whom his strength will not permit him specially to write. It was framed with that end in view. I give you his own words written down as he laboredly uttered them.* Saw a letter at Walt's this morning from Hallam Tennyson, conveying a message from his father. Walt asleep, and I did not open it.†

* The letter was to this effect :

"Feb. 6, 1892.—Well I must send you all dear fellows a word from my own hand—propp'd up in bed, dead & weak yet, but the spark seems to glimmer yet—the doctors and nurses & New York friends as faithful as ever—Here is the adv. of the 92 edn. Dr. Bucke is well & hard at work. Col. Ingersoll has been here—sent a basket of champagne. All are good—physical conditions &c are not so bad as you might suppose, only my sufferings much of the time are fearful—Again I repeat my thanks to you & cheery British friends may be last—my right arm giving out.

"V. LT. WHITMAN.

"Feb. 7.—Same cond'n cont'd—More and more it comes to the fore that the only theory worthy our modern times for g't literature politics and sociology must combine all the best people of all lands, the women not forgetting.—But the mustard plaster on my side is stinging & I must stop—Good bye to all.
W. W."

[The advertisement referred to reads thus:

"Walt Whitman wishes respectfully to notify the public that the book 'Leaves of Grass,' which he has been working on at great intervals and partially issued for the past thirty-five or forty years, is now completed, so to call it, and he would like this new 1892 edition to absolutely supersede all previous ones. Faulty as it is, he decides it as by far his special and entire self-chosen poetic utterance."

It is of Whitman's own make, worked out in the midst of the cares of those days.—THE EDITORS.]

† Again Whitman writes to Burlington :

"Monday, P. M., Feb. 8, '92.

"Much the same cond'n cont'd. Am probably growing weaker. Will not write much—\$2 enc'd—Best love and God bless you. W. W.

"Geo. here yesterday."

[THE EDITORS.]

He has sent four or five lines to Bucke * again. He says: "The good doctor! I wish I could send him more."

Feb. 9.—I have just finished a talk with Whitman. His hand and head are happily warm, and I enjoyed having it so—for usually he lives and glows in spots, and I marvel at times how one part of him should be buoyant and hopeful with physical life, and another as dead as death. We almost see the touch of death in Walt at times, and again are transported with signs of corporeal elation. But in real sober fact, he sees as clearly as we see that the end is near—that at most the lapse is a matter of weeks. He says this to us now day by day, and protests that it is not our part as brave and candid men to shelter ourselves behind a delusion. His talk of high themes—of the general trend of worldly affairs—is still clear and cogent; but he rarely dwells upon them of his own accord, and only now and then encourages any discussion of them in his presence. I suppose I am the only one with whom he really converses on such subjects, except as men like Ingersoll or Stedman drop in. Walt is no better to-day than yesterday, and yesterday was a bad day indeed. I think the death of George Stafford affected him somewhat. His niece and Mrs. Louisa Whitman here to-day.

Feb. 10.—Walt has passed a bad day to-day. He calls it "glum," and says he is at his worst. I have a melancholy letter from Symonds. Walt insisted on hearing the whole letter. While I was reading it Gilder, of the *Century*, came in, but W. was in too enfeebled a condition to give him more than five minutes. Ingersoll writes a fine letter to Walt and another to me. I hear from Bucke daily. Burroughs writes every now and then. Kennedy too. Walt's own mail from strangers has dropped to a cipher.

* This constitutes his last direct communication with Dr. Bucke on earth:

"Monday, Feb. 8, P. M., '92.

"Geo Stafford the father is dead—buried to-morrow—I keep on much the same—probably growing weaker—bowel movement an hour ago—bad steady pain in left side what I call underbelly—Dr McA here daily—God bless you all.

WALT WHITMAN."

[THE EDITORS.]

Feb. 11.—I have just had a talk with Walt. He laughed, was serious, was interested, was quizzical, very much as of old; but he was weak, he was discouraged, he was imperilled—and this he knew too—and this was *not* the old status. And here is the difference—and hereby are we watching at the gates of death. Yet I have hours which seem to push away all possibility and taste of despair. I realize his condition—yet find the soul so triumphant I cannot believe it dragged down to the body's death. Nor will it be!

Walt is in much earnest about the *fac-simile* [of letter Feb. 6]. He writes practically nothing. His last letter to Bucke—only a couple of lines—Bucke says was in the worst hand he had ever known from Walt. To-night I got him to write his signature for use in a newspaper (*N. Y. Telegram*), and the job completely exhausted him—though he did it with determined, if very shaky and feeble hand.

Feb. 12.—I have just had a talk with W., but he was so weak, after passing a bad day, that he was not able to say much or to manifest any great interest. I told him I would go into the next room and send a line to you, whereat he advised me to include his love to you all, with special remembrances to George Humphreys and Fred Wild, and particular affectionateness to J. W. W. He loves you all and his sweet words of you should exalt you forever. To-day's mail brought me a letter from Carpenter and a postal from Rudolf Schmidt.

Feb. 15.—No change in Walt. He has slept all day, with hardly a word for any one. Has lately shown a marked disposition of this sort. It is dreadful to have him live in this condition.

The *N. Y. Telegram* of Saturday contained some matter about Walt. They are getting money for flowers for him.

Feb. 17.—The prospects ahead are gloomy in the extreme. When the *Telegram* speaks of these as W.'s dying days he accepts the statement as truth. But the constant attentions, the provision of foods to meet all humors and necessities, and the service of his friends on every side, are bound to prolong his life and make the inroads upon his remaining strength slow and imperceptible.

Feb. 19.—Walt worse again to-day—and still we hope. It is like the cadence in sad music—the wave is up and down—we ride its crest and know its hollows.

Feb. 20.—The bad reports of yesterday cannot be made brighter by to-day's. He rests all day long, not sleeping, but dozing, and will not manifest any interest in anything under the sun. He does not say a word about you or about any one—not because he forgets, but because the pressure of pain holds him down stiffly to his reserves. The only hope now is for him to maintain absolute privacy and peace—to sweep away all interests and anxieties—to retire into himself, back to nature, and let the winds and seas sail him whither they will. If to life, sweet and good—if to death, still sweet and good: that always has been, and would be, and is, his philosophy.

Walt tells me always to "keep in touch with the boys everywhere," to take his place, now—at least, in those minor matters which another may hold in hand.

Feb. 21.—As Carpenter says to me, Walt does seem to turn away from the scenes and claims of this earthly life—to take serene wing to other spheres, away into the eternal silences. He tells me: "I seem to be washed out—to go forth with the tide—the never-returning tide." And usually, when I ask him for messages for others, he gives me some such word as that—and it is a sad word to us, though it may seem to make eternity more glorious. We will almost envy the other world that receives him. And yet Walt says always: "I am no saint. Don't let our Bolton fellows tumble into that bog"—though more our comrade, doubtless, because *not* saint.

Feb. 22.—I was a party with Walt this morning to the signing of some contract papers—going to New York, to Webster. Walt's signature was very bad, but still characteristic. We made an exchange of beds, too—(I bought him a bed out of the *Telegram* flower fund). We feared the moving might shock him—but he was not disturbed. Indeed, he expressed immediate pleasure in the new order. But he was afterwards thoroughly exhausted.

Feb. 23.—Have just had a talk with Walt, and while he is in sad bodily condition, his heart and faith are up with

full sail, and he is at the wheel. But strangely silent day by day.

(Later.)—Your cable just here.—Thanks—thanks from both of us. He has handed it to me with request to acknowledge. He cannot write. Very serene—uncomplaining—but certainly at the edge of things.*

Feb. 25.—For the first time since December, Walt has seemed to show some signs of a rally, though just now, in my talk with him, he was despondent enough and said his apparent change was only apparent. Letters from Carpenter and Ingersoll.

Feb. 26.—Walt's improvement yesterday not continued. He asks about the *fac-similes* every day—anxious as a child.

Feb. 28.—Walt has seemingly reached a stage low down and there must halt—his eye still up, but his body dragging him lower and lower into the nether pits. Still the silence, still the much sleep. He reads his mail and the paper every day, then relapses in great fatigue. I keep him supplied with choice brandy (1825) which they make into a punch for him, and which he calls his "grog"—he seeming from this mixture to get the best physical joy he chances upon these days. All his old simple habits and expressions cling to him—all the naturalness which has made him the man he is. He will leave us unclothed, as he came.

Feb. 29.—Walt has been wrapt in shadows to-day, realizing one of his worst attacks of depression, mental and physical. He was hardly able to talk with me to-night, and as I sat at his bedside, and read him a letter I received from Hallam Tennyson this morning, he was pale as death and seemed incapable of taking any thorough interest in what I said, or in the significance of the message. But he was touched and murmured forth his gratitude. I am not sure but to-day's evil is the reflex of the day, which is clouded and rainy, with a prevailing cold northeast wind. He

* Whitman writes a fourth note to his sister at Burlington :

"Feb. 24, '92.

"Still very poorly—wearing—much same—Lou here—Jess back in St. L.—Geo. sick rheumatism—5 enc'd—Best love as always.

W. W."

[THE EDITORS.]

wishes you to send a copy of the *fac-simile* to L. M. Brown, Nottingham, and to Rudolf Schmidt.

March 1.—Walt has spent to-day as bad a day as any he has known since December, and this evening seems depleted of all his strength and hope.

March 2.—No change in affairs here. It is a sad chronicle, yet one full of victorious lessons, too. I have had a talk with W.—the first, they told me, had by him with anyone to-day. He even laughed at my merry-making description of a tiff between — and —. Frightfully worn and pale, lips blue, hands cold, and eyes dull. But so earnest and kind, so willing to say right things and do good deeds and make even these last feeble endeavors regnant of old royalty—his pride of personality lofty and secure and unruffled! Such an old age and such a sickness as go to his eternal evidence, and will be to me, its witness, the warrant for many a proud word should I live in years to come. We spoke of things and people to-night, a word being put in of you fellows, and a reminder of the plain men at the ferry, and not a little in connection with the nearer necessities and sufferings, from which he never can escape for an hour and which are our perpetual grief. Not a point seems gained, and he suffers past patience—though he patiently endures! To-day he speaks of his miseries as having new aspects—great pain when he lies *left*, and choking when he lies *right*. He says: "I shall never see the boys at the ferry again."

March 3.—The story continues, dear comrades, without that touch of cheer and passage of hope which we look for with eager eyes and fail to find. Dear Walt! he is low in silence, far gone in weakness, in eye dull, in face pale, in temperature cold, in hope deserted, in content unmoved; in serenity complete. To look on all this is not to deny but that victory is fulfilled in him—in his ever sweet savor of happy peace and incuriosity about death.

Somehow, sometimes, at odd moments, I seem to realize a happiness, as if this which to others is pain must be to him glory and victory and celebrate a high decree.

McAlister says to-day that Walt has lost more in the three days

past than in the equal number of weeks before. This downward tendency must of course be stemmed, or he will not last much longer. But, like Bucke, I hardly fear any sudden or quick collapse. I am afraid he will go down slowly, inexorably—will make the pace so slow the escape will be like a whisper, a sigh, a lapsing breeze. He has asked for neither papers nor mail to-day. The visits of friends are almost entirely cut off, and his correspondence is fallen quite ignobly, till (except for one or two persons, you among them) it is dust and ashes.

March 4.—Fac-similes here. Walt is pleased and hastens thanks and love. The poor *fac-simile*! or that poor original, trembling, orthographically faulty, but bravely determined, and with eyes out and up, from whatever seas of drowning pain! As if his last word, the lips closing forever, held men to eternal promises, to supernal truths. He wrote a short note to-day to Mrs. Heyde.*

March 5.—No change. Less able to talk than last night. The right side trouble persists. When he lies this way he is much choked and can scarcely speak for rising and falling of mucus. Rarely can stand this tack more than ten minutes or fifteen. It is hard, hard, to have him so close, yet to see him so subtly drifting away—to see that our best endeavor cannot hold him back, though he still lingers on the crests and in the shadows of the tumultuous waves, within hail and call, and sends us cheery response to every salute. I think he wishes me to give the letter of February 7th to the papers here. He calls it "representative," and regards it as a general recognition and kiss to friends everywhere. He loves you and thinks of you often, but his words testifying thereto are scarce.

March 7.—Walt fearfully *down*—a bad day throughout—and now he is in for a restless night. This restlessness appears

* Note number five to Burlington:

"March 4, '92.

"Still lingering along pretty low—Lou here yesterday—Jess well St. L—
5 enc'd—Best love to you and God bless you. W. W."

At one point in this letter Whitman had gone over his pencilled line with a pen. [THE EDITORS.]

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with early evening, works its way fretfully into the midnight, then pours down like a great flood, overwhelming peace, until morning is advanced. He is pale and blue, his eyes are sunken, his temples have fallen in, his cheeks are flat and poor, and his body is terribly emaciated. He suffers constant and intense pain. He told me this evening calmly and rationally that he felt death itself upon him. I almost hope that to-morrow, or any near day, may release him—for the spectacle of his pain is one to break your heart. My sorrow is not made less by the knowledge that he never breathes any complaint, but is as nobly serene as in health. It is marvellous how his grand soul triumphs over all physical disaster and holds its old music like a resplendent sea. Last night I kissed him good-bye and said, "Dear Walt, you do not realize what you have been to us!" to which he murmured, "Nor you what you have been to me!"

Mrs. Keller leaves to-morrow, and Mrs. Davis and Warry will assume the watching between them—some one being engaged to relieve Mrs. Davis in the kitchen. Walt takes the change very hard, and we all regret it, but Mrs. Keller had made an advance contract with another person many months ago.

March 8.—Have just had a word with Walt. After his dreadful night he has lived through a silent day. I found him really too weak to talk. He seemed pleased to hear I was to write to you.

March 9.—Poor dear Walt! Sheltering in silence, not saying word or doing deed further to complicate himself with our world—the body maimed and broken—the spirit proud but fleeting.

P. M.—Nothing is more painful than his silence—yet nothing more natural, either. My talks with him are few and not full, and consist generally and mainly of the simpler affairs of speech or of those direct matters which pertain to his own business and which I have to watch and keep straight. This silence will doubtless increase. His history is now narrowing down to a few spare sentences and constant attentions.

March 10.—You would be much shocked to see Walt as he is now. He is more and more silent. All this day he has hardly said a word in the way of conversation except to me, and even

to me he would probably have said little if words I casually dropped had not excited what little there is left in him of the nature of curiosity. He is turned and turned, hour against hour, day and night, nowhere really rested and at no time enjoying absolutely painless slumber. The patience with which he endures this is inspiring—and if anything could bring a man through, it would be such a demonstration of content and repose as we discover in Walt. The eye is dull *but loves out the sweetest manifests*. I am touched to the quick, when I witness the drama, as it proceeds, slow-paced, into the night. The gloom gathers—yet he goes unappalled into the eternal shadows. How much of his voice still is music! How are his utterances strong and vital!

March 11.—He has been in such a state to-day over that right-side trouble that he has at no time been able to rest that way more than five minutes. This makes the strain on the (sore) left side greater. His flesh has so far gone that he cannot lie on his back at all. My love to you all—and Walt's. "Always that," says Walt.

Midnight.—I am just back from Walt's, where I sat with Warry on my third call, from 12:10 to 12:45, Walt in the next room breathing his difficult hours away in pain and unrest. I never half believed he would have to pass through this fire. He does it with more than a martyr's content and grace.

March 12.—The pains increase. How terribly he suffers—yet he is so voiceless, so patient, so sweet to those who serve him. You would weep to be here at his bedside and to witness the struggle and the heroism; weep for joy as well as sympathy, for such a spectacle is inspiration itself—a life set in scripture.

He speaks loving words of you all, when I convey by sign or sentence some evidence of your love. Other times he is silent. But on the bed of pain his joy has been to feel the strong arms—yours and others—under him.

Signs of marked loss. He is so far in the descent, I dread hourly that necessity will compel me to cable you. Two letters from Symonds to-day which in the evening I read to Walt—much to his joy. He was moved and wept.

March 13.—Brave heart, brave in the high faculties of man-

hood—soon to be swept from our ken! I cherish the few words I have with him now. They are holy with a sacred music. It is a hard battle. Walt holds his way still, but with feebler pulse. He says nothing of life or death, save when spoken to or questioned, and even questions are like as not to go unattended. We respect his desires and let him scrupulously alone, admitting no visitors and rarely going into the room ourselves, except when commissioned or required. Now and then a friend will come, and we let him peep into the room. But Walt has got so low we do not in any other way advise him of visitors. I had only a *tee-bit* talk with him this evening. He was too weary and tired to say much or to interest himself in what I had to tell him. His cough, when on the right side, is grievous; and the doctors even fear that there may come new trouble with the right lung. His left leg and foot acquaint him with a new suffering. He seems doomed to go down in storm—in suffering and pain. We had hoped for other release. But his patience, his quiet, his labline sweetness, disarm the battalions of ill.

March 14.—I am just here after a look in upon Walt, and a mere word with him. He is no better, his turnings are incessant, and I can read in his face the visible signs of dissolution. I hold each added day precious. The horror to have him go and the horror to have him stay in misery keep constant battle in my brain and heart.

Night.—No one can crave to have the suffering prolonged. To-day has been like all the recent days before it—low, weak, sorrowful. The right lung is complicating matters. Longaker tells me he discovered Saturday that it was doing very little work. The December trouble was never really and fully shaken off. Longaker regards the situation as critical and looks for an end any time, yet is unwilling to predict anything. I have spent the day and evening in true sorrow. The pitiable struggles forced upon Walt, now the end seems so near, are dark and woful, and strike like ice to my heart. Yet his attitude is so contained, and he is so sweet, having not the first word in the way of complaint to utter, I am rescued from despair. As you have said, he teaches us a new bravery towards death. These latest

aspects are profoundly touching. He is fondly considerate of us all. Yet the watch, the sacred vigil, night and day, invokes and demands our highest art and heroism. It is a death that becomes him and that he becomes. Sometime I shall have a story to tell of these days.

March 15—Morning.—I fear that some fatal cable message may out-leap this letter. I hope for better fortune but fear the worst. Though one must not call that worst which will give Walt rest and release. My whole life rounds to that prayer. It springs a thousand times a day to my lips and fills my sleep with dreams. When I talked with him he was too weak to lift his hand to shake with me. But when I said, "I am sorry you must suffer so," he struggled and responded, "All—right"—so to utter his content even at the last strain and torture.

6:10 P. M.—I have just finished a talk with Walt. He seems to me a bit easier than this morning. The doctors report a perceptible failure of strength during the last few days. Walt himself seems to have no hope or expectation. Brave as ever, bright so far as mental content goes.

6:20 P. M.—I have just read Walt your [J. W. W.'s] brief note, which came to-day. It touched him, but he made no comment. Comments are scarce; he is silent and composed.

March 16.—Walt spent the same restless night—was turned and turned and turned again. It is a sad story, but he bears it with wonderful serenity and heroism.

Evening.—Walt has passed another day without event, without hope, without alleviation. He seems to go more and more into seclusion—to crave the inner temple—the last stronghold, the silent boundary.

March 17.—Walt recovers sufficiently to write his sister again.* He has unmistakably eased a bit to-day, and gives

* And this is the last letter written by Walt Whitman:

"Camden, March 17th.

"Unable to write much—5 enc'd.—y'r good letter rec'd—God bless you.

"W. W."

Some of his pencilled lines in this letter were so unformed that he had tremblingly gone over them with ink.

[THE EDITORS.]

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March 18. severe pain i pain, and the connection.

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hope that for the present decline is arrested. Do not count this for more than it comes to. Weather very bad, the day having brought in the heaviest snowfall of the season.

March 18.—By no means up to yesterday's promise. The severe pain in W.'s left ankle increases. Bucke holds that this pain, and the trouble up the side, above and at the hip, have a connection.

March 19.—It is hard to see this drag on without break and without the prospect of release. The evil signs accumulate, yet by outward indications Walt holds his own. It has come to a poor fortress, but the last citadel, though shaken, is still held—the flag above it triumphant. I am thinking of a water bed for Walt. His soreness increases and the emaciation goes on by subtle but certain stages. He does very little talking.

March 20.—No hope for us and no comfort for Walt. He is sore and sore, and his turnings become more frequent. We are living through a series of beautiful days which fail to bring us the promise we crave.

March 21.—The story goes on without incident or relief. The doctors are very faithful, and everything seems done that could be done. We always find W. in grateful mood. Only once or twice has he been a bit sharp—but with a sharpness whose edge is easily and quickly taken off. A contained heroism is the rule. No mortal is perfect, but W. touches a high-water mark.

March 22.—No change for the better. Have secured water bed for Walt and hope to get him on it to-morrow. He is not disposed to talk because he is really not able to talk, and no one has much to say to him. Longaker himself spares every question he can.

March 24.—Could not get Walt on his water bed to-day. This has been what he calls the worst day of his life. Did not eat a bite till late in the afternoon. Looks sad and sick as death. Turnings now average three an hour.

Midnight.—Walt just put in his water bed and I am home again. He was quite exhausted, but seemed to be easily restored to his general condition (bad enough, of course). We

placed him on a sofa while we adjusted things, and his moans and gasps (from pain and for breath) played me on all the chords of feeling. I never spoke a word to him save as was required in our work. How glad he was to get back again! The picture will ever remain one of mingled pain and joy. I sorrowed to see him in such need, and so emaciated, and I felt joyous in the prospect that what we did there might perhaps mean some rest for his wearied body.

March 25—Evening.—Walt worse to-day than yesterday, but much at peace with his water bed, which floats him into semi-comfort at last. But the dreadful weakness creeps on. Ingersoll writes Walt a lovely note.*

March 26—Morning.—Walt's night easier, and he sleeps well. The buoyant bed is for the present just the thing for him. He is no longer turned as often as he was, and now only asks to be lifted or simply to be helped to a changed position.

Evening—(Telegram to Dr. Bucke).—Walt has just died—6:43—come at once.

The end came simply and peacefully, Whitman conscious to the last, calm and undisturbed. About 4:30 P. M. he was seen to be visibly sinking, and Dr. McAlister, Harned and Traubel were at once sent for and came—the doctor arriving at 5:30. When questioned by the doctor, Walt faintly smiled and whispered that he felt no pain. Later he beckoned Mrs. Davis and whispered to her, "Won't you lift me up?" He was carefully raised and a pillow placed under his shoulder, after which he lay quietly with his eyes closed, breathing faintly. Shortly after 6 o'clock he opened his eyes and in his last whisper said, "Warry, shift." Warren carefully moved him, and, momentarily opening his eyes again, he smiled faintly his appreciation. He lay very quietly, his respiration growing shorter. Outside, a gentle rain and the closing day. The end came—

* (From Warren Fritzing.)—Same date, to this effect: When I turned him just now the water splashed round and round, like water dashing up a ship's side. I told him so, and he laughed, or attempted to, when the mucus in his throat prevented him.

quietly as "a lapsing breeze," his right hand resting in that of Horace Traubel, his spirit child, who was the last person on earth whom he recognized. It was as though his own wish, expressed long ago, had been fulfilled:—

" At the last, tenderly,
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the well-closed
doors,
Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth;
With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a whisper,
Set ope the doors, O soul,

Tenderly—be not impatient,
(Strong is your hold, O mortal flesh,
Strong is your hold, O love.)"

WALT WHITMAN: MARCH 26, 1892.

DARKNESS and death? Nay, Pioneer, for thee
The day of deeper vision has begun;
There is no darkness for the central sun
Nor any death for immortality.
At last the song of all fair songs that be,
At last the guerdon of a race well run,
The upswelling joy to know the victory won,
The river's rapture when it finds the sea.

Ah, thou art wrought in an heroic mould,
The Modern Man upon whose brow yet stays
A gleam of glory from the age of gold—
A diadem which all the gods have kissed.
Hail and farewell! Flower of the antique days,
Democracy's divine protagonist.

Francis Howard Williams.

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AT THE GRAVESIDE OF WALT WHITMAN.

By HORACE L. TRAUBEL.

WALT WHITMAN died March 26, 1892, and was buried in Harleigh Cemetery, Camden, New Jersey, Wednesday, March 30th. The funeral was attended with no form and little ceremony. The body was offered to public view at 328 Mickle street towards eleven of the morning, and was covered at two. Within these hours several thousand people passed through the hall and about the coffin of the dead poet. There was an incessant stream which would have continued its flow till sundown if at the last it had not been necessary absolutely and arbitrarily to cut it off. The day was fair and mild. The curious throngs that visited the house and lounged about the streets from early morn until the cortege had departed suggested inevitably the democratic character of him to whom the interest was a tribute. Not a mean part of those who filed past the coffin at noon-time were workingmen to whom Whitman was personally known; and school-children, and urchins out of the street, and mothers and fathers, with city officials and ministers and divers professional men and women, not a few artists being sprinkled along the line, mingled on equal terms for a last look at the dear dead face and the folded hands.

The services at Harleigh were in the open air. The platform and a little area fronting it were covered with a tent. The carriages had passed out the Haddonfield pike and into Harleigh, disburdening their freight somewhat towards the edge of the crowd. The bearers of the coffin were preceded by a chosen few of Whitman's friends and followed by others. The procession into the tent, past the thousand eager, serious, on-pressing faces, and under the folds of the tent, was touched with the ardent color of a new faith. No words were said. Those who

were to speak took places upon a slightly raised platform: Thomas B. Harned, Robert G. Ingersoll, Richard Maurice Bucke, Francis Howard Williams, Daniel G. Brinton. With them was John Burroughs, who, though not to speak, ranked high as any in closeness of association and love with Whitman. When all were seated, quiet fell upon the gathering as by its own free feeling. The sides of the tent were all out. Far on every hand, up the incline of the hill, down towards the lake, was a stretching, breathing arena of faces. The speakers now arose, one after another, uttering their word, without preliminary or break. What was read and spoken appears below, line for line, in its due order. It had been the purpose to have nothing done that could not be done by Whitman's nearer lovers and friends in his own spirit, without the insult of parade or ceremonial. And what was sought was secured. As Robert G. Ingersoll said his last word and sat down, the great hush that had fallen was broken by the faint sobs of men and women overcome by the strain of emotion.

Again the coffin was lifted—again the procession trailed its burden on. And at the tomb nothing was said; only at every point the faces: up the hill, along the road—some so distant they could not share in the direct scene and yet were loth to go until it was known that all was done. Birds sang, the fresh leafage rustled in a gentle breeze, the smell of the new year filled the senses.

A great man stood near me. He said: "We seem to leave a greater part of the best that is in us here with him"—adding, however: "And yet curiously we will go out afresh into life, doubly-armed by what he has given in return."

Let this simple recital pass for its worth. Those who shared the day and its experiences know that no word could more than hint of them. I omit names. Faithful friends were there. Wreaths and flowers were sent by many who could not be present. Brave and tender words came by every mail and were flashed across the sea, and that night, in the sweet phrase of one who had spoken at his grave, "he slept beneath a wilderness of flowers."

We thought we had buried him. But he eluded the darkness and the pall. He reappeared in us. We turned from death and took up "the burden and the lesson" eternal of life.

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FRANCIS HOWARD WILLIAMS:

These are the words of Walt Whitman:

*Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.*

*Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.*

*Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalter-
ingly.*

*Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.*

*From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings
for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are
fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.*

*The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.*

*Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the
prairies wide,*

*Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.*

THOMAS B. HARNED:

We have come here to-day to entomb the body of Walt Whitman. We do not come in sadness. The great singer of death and immortality would have us utter only words of joy. We who have been the personal witnesses of his daily habit have no right to be silent. In the presence of death it becomes our duty to give testimony to the consistency of his life.

I am charged with the special duty to speak for this city, in which he has lived for many years. He came to Camden in 1873, poor, paralyzed and sick. He had no thought then that his life would be prolonged. He had given his best years to the nursing of soldiers. No tongue can tell the extent of that ministry. With untiring fidelity he served his country. The history of the war presents no instance of nobler fulfilment of duty or sublimer sacrifice. The stalwart physique broke under the terrible strain, and this man came among us to spend his last days. For more than seventeen years he has been a familiar figure. During these long years of suffering no one has ever heard him utter a word of complaint. We know of his gentleness, his charity, his wisdom, his simplicity, his inspiring and cheery voice, his majestic and venerable figure, his strong and classic face, cast in an antique mould. We have seen him on our streets, or frequenting the ferry-boats, or driving over the neighboring roads. His companions have been from every walk of life, more especially among the poor and humble. He has taken a personal interest in the welfare of mechanics, deck-hands, car-drivers and other sons of toil. He was the friend of children, and they all loved him. Although persons of eminence in literary and public life paid him homage, he cared more for the companionship of the common people.

How fitting it is at this supreme juncture to proclaim his magnificent courage! Every moment of his life tallied with the teachings of his books. He never bent the knee to wealth and power. His love of humanity was so broad that to him the ragged urchin was as dear as the learned scholar. He had a message for

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mankind, and what he had to say he said with fearlessness and without apology. He never flinched under the most adverse censure; and when, in his declining years, he realized that he had been accepted and honored by the greatest men of his own time, his modesty was childlike and serene. Let the day bring health or sickness, pleasure or pain, gain or loss, praise or censure, he ever journeyed "the even tenor of his way."

A predominant trait of his character was gratitude, and it is because of his personal request to me that I speak to-day to return his thanks to the people of Camden for their many acts of kindness while he was one of their humble fellow-citizens. "Don't forget," he said, "to say, thanks, thanks, thanks."

Year by year he grew feebler, and his ability to walk lessened, until, at last, he could not leave the house; but his ability to work, his serene faith, his joyous courage, never faltered or lessened. His tenacity of purpose never weakened. No one could detect any intellectual sluggishness or the timidity of age. His keen insight and clear vision never failed him.

I deem it my duty to mention two important facts: one, his POSITIVE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY, and the other, his FEARLESSNESS OF DEATH.

With him immortality was not a hope or a beautiful dream. He believed that we all live in an eternal universe, and that man is as indestructible as his Creator. His views of religion have been misunderstood. He was tolerant of the opinions of others, and recognized the good in all religious systems. His philosophy was without the limitation of creed, and included the best thought of every age and clime.

This faith in the immortality of identity remained to the last, and he gladly welcomed death as the "Usherer, Guide at last to all." We who have visited him in his sickness know of his utter fearlessness of death. He who sang the immortal death carol waited for "lovely and soothing death" with the serenity of a child.

His life-work is finished. The consecration is complete. We say we have known him. Have any of us known him? Does not such a life baffle our understanding?

Camden will be best known and honored because it has known

and honored Walt Whitman. In this beautiful and fitting burial-ground we place all of him that is mortal. Future generations will visit this shrine in their adoration of one of the world's immortals.

FRANCIS HOWARD WILLIAMS.

These are the words of Confucius :

*All the living must die, and dying, return to the ground. . . .
The bones and flesh moulder away below, and hidden away, become
the earth of the fields. But the spirit issues forth and is displayed
on high in a condition of glorious brightness.*

These are the words of Gautama :

*The state that is peaceful, free from body, from passion and from
fear, where birth or death is not—that is Nirvana.*

It is a calm wherein no wind blows.

*Nirvana is the completion and opposite shore of existence, free from
decay, tranquil, knowing no restraint, and of great blessedness.*

*The wind cannot be squeezed in the hand, nor can its color be
told. Yet the wind is. Even so Nirvana is.*

These are the words of Jesus the Christ :

Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn ; for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek ; for they shall inherit the earth.

*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness ;
for they shall be filled.*

Blessed are the merciful ; for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God.

DANIEL G. BRINTON :

Friends of the dead, comrades and lovers of him who has left us—We meet to bid farewell to him whose life and thoughts have forged the bonds between us. We feared that in midwinter he would have been taken from us ; but he abided until the flowers of spring have come to deck his sepulchre, and until the leaves

of grass, typical to his soul of the mystic energy of nature, stretch out their tender fronds toward his tomb.

His contending spirit has reached the end of the untried roads he loved to follow. Through sharp defeats and baffled crises he has fought out the fight, ever marching on with clear eyes fixed on the well-marked goal. His spirit has passed beyond the "frontiers to eyes impenetrable." The "dark mother, gliding near with soft feet," has taken this child to her sure-enwinding arms, and laves him in the flood of her bliss. We stand on the hither shore, and our eyes have not force to search the dimness of the floating ocean into which he has journeyed. Let us turn to note the legacy he has left.

No idler was he, no dallier with the golden hours; but arduous, contentious, undissuadable and infinitely loving. He came bearing the burden of a Gospel, the Gospel of the Individual Man; he came teaching that the soul is not more than the body, and that the body is not more than the soul; and that nothing, not God himself, is greater to one than one's self is.

He asked no man to accept his teachings, or to become his disciple, or to call him master. His strong voice resounded above the heads of all high men, and over the roofs of the world. It challenged alike wealth and power, and want and death, proclaiming that man, the one man, the individual, every individual, has all rights and all powers, is the autocrat of the world, sole ruler of the universe—let him only enforce his claims and make good his title.

His words are perpetual warnings to all sects and syndicates, to all leagues and orders which bind men's minds or muscles to the bidding of another, which make them slaves in thought or in action; and a warning against that worse and commoner bondage to one's own self, to imbibed traditions, to cultivated fears, to accepted and self-forged shackles. He who would gain true freedom, who would feel soul and body stinging with a new, an electric life, the life of one's self, let him patiently, persistently seek the meaning of that legacy of verse left with us by him whom now we consign to the clasp of the tomb.

Never did he fear that fatal and certain end. Idle, indeed, it

was for Death to try to alarm him. Almost did it seem that to him, as to the mighty sage of Kapilavastu, the King of Terrors had given up his secret, and in his ear had whispered hints of cheer and joy. Death had come to him to mean the truth "without name," the "word unsaid," not to be found "in any dictionary, utterance, symbol," the creative sign, "the friend whose embracing" should awake him.

Therefore he harbored no suspicion of death; but he forgot not that his concern, and that of all men, is not with death, but with life; not with that which cannot be said, but with that the saying and doing of which will help the weak and gladden the strong, lift the falling and enlighten the thoughtful, spread robust love between men and tender sympathy among women. This was his practical mission.

On the portal of the holiest shrine in ancient Greece were inscribed the words, "Know thyself;" the message of "the Pilot of the Galilean Lake" was, "Deny thyself;" the iteration of this child of the doctrine of the inner light, whose mortal remains we now consign to the tomb, was, "Be thyself."

There is no conflict in these teachings. They are the evolution of the self-same sentiment. They are all embraced in one line of him whom Walt Whitman in his strong and homely phrase called "the boss of all of us"—

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

Be thyself; suffer neither the tyranny which comes from the assumptions of others, nor that which proceeds from thine own lower nature; true to thyself, never canst thou be false to any one—to man, to woman, or to God. This was *his* teaching to whom we now bid farewell—the long, the timeless farewell.

FRANCIS HOWARD WILLIAMS:

These are the words of the Koran:

He it is who made the sun for a brightness and the moon for a light.

Verily, in the alternation of night and day, and in what God has created of the heavens and the earth, are signs unto a people who do fear.

Verily those who believe and do what is right, their Lord guides them by their faith; beneath them shall rivers flow in the gardens of pleasure.

These are the words of Isaiah :

O Lord, I will praise thee ; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust and not be afraid ; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; he also is become my salvation.

These are the words of John :

I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever believeth in me shall never die.

RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE :

My friends, this hour and place will be memorable forever, for here and now we consign to its rest all that was mortal of a great man, a man who has graven a deep mark on his age and who will cut a yet deeper furrow across the face of the future.

There is this difficulty in speaking about Walt Whitman : He was so great, he stood so apart from, so far above, other men, that when one who knew him attempts to depict him to those who did not, the reporter inevitably makes such claims as cause him to be charged with extravagant exaggeration. Not only so, but on account of the greatness and especially of the universality of our friend, even those who lived close about him, though conscious of remarkable qualities in the man, were almost never able to realize in any adequate degree the man himself.

Over and above all ordinary greatness (greatness of perception, of intellect, of will, of moral qualities, of intuition, of spiritual exaltation and illumination, and of the power of keen and accurate expression—and all these greatnesses and many

more he had), over and above all these he had in an eminent degree that crowning endowment, faculty, quality, or whatever it may be called, the possession of which causes a man to be picked out from the rest and set apart as an object of affection. In his own vivid language, "He has the pass-key of hearts, to him the response of the prying of hands on the knobs."

Our very presence here to-day, many of us from distant States and provinces, testifies to the truth of what I say; but had our hearts and lives adequate voices, many of them would tell far more emphatically of the place in them that has been taken by our dead friend; for he, though a stranger, has been to many of us closer than the closest—more than all the rest.

You know all this as well as I. All that I have said or can say is an old story. You, as well as I, know the place he occupies in the eyes of the world to-day, and the place he is to occupy in the future. You, as well as I, feel the place he has occupied in our hearts and lives. The deep sense of loss is present with you, as it is with me. And our grief to-day is scarcely lessened by the knowledge that the work of our friend is done and well done, his rest well earned, and that, though to our senses dead, yet, in reality, he more than ever before lives—and will live as long as the heart of humanity beats at the memory of great deeds and heroic lives and deaths.

That I am not overwhelmed and crushed, either by our loss or by the gravity and greatness of this occasion, that I can stand here and speak calmly of our great friend who is gone—"I so fallible, so infinitely low before (his) mighty majestic spirit; I so simple, (he) so august,"—is cause of astonishment to myself, as it well may be to you.

I am sustained by his strength far more than by my own. I have not known him, loved him and studied him a quarter of a century for nothing.

His trust in the essential friendliness to man of the infinite universe; his calm and contented acceptance of all that is or that happens; his absolute assurance that he and all of us came well and shall go well; his conviction that death ("God's eternal, beautiful right hand," as he named it) is not an evil but a good;

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in fine, his faith, intense, glowing, vital beyond the limits of any I have elsewhere known or read of, have been to me the great solace of my life, and are to-day my powerful and sufficient support.

The old days in which his presence was so large a part of my life come back to me, and live constantly before me, enveloped in a haze of sadness (how could it be otherwise?) ; but I do not lament or repine ; I am tranquil and resigned. Whatever others may think or say, I (inspired and informed by the great soul which has just left us) have made up my mind that I shall not give in to this arrogant and masterful Time Spirit who desires to deceive and enslave us. I am not going for one instant to admit that Time, Death, or any other power or influence can take from us what we have once had. The good days of the past live yet, and will always live in the equally good days of the present and future. They do not die, they have not died, they are absorbed, transmuted, grow, are never lost.

This universe is not the hollow nutshell containing the rotten kernel that so many make it. It is vital and infinite. ("In vain I try to think how infinite.") Infinite not in one way, or two ways, but in an infinite number of ways. What! the universe not capable of satisfying our needs? On the contrary, we are capable of feeling but a fraction of the wants that it is able to satisfy.

In this faith, learned from the friend whom we mourn, I rest satisfied and at ease.

And if, dear friend, we now place in the tomb your body, that is after all a small matter. We do not entomb *you* nor bid *you* farewell. You will be with us as much as ever and more than ever. You will be to us as much, as ever you were, and we can love you and serve you as well as if you were still what is called living. You are in fact, and more than ever, living ; as you have said :

"The best of me then when no longer visible, for towards that I have been incessantly preparing."

"That God shall take thee to his breast, dear spirit,
Unto his breast be sure ; and here on earth
Shall splendor sit upon thy name forever."

You were no common man when you lived with us here on earth, and to-day you are no common spirit as you stand amid the innumerable host before the throne of God.

In your own right you took rank here below as a supreme creative workman; in your own right to-day you take rank among the supreme creative gods.

There in the highest regions of the ideal for countless ages your work will go on moulding into higher and yet more noble forms the spirit of man.

Your life for me lit up the past with an auroral splendor, and upon the world's future you will shine a glorious sun, but the present is darkened by the somber shades of your setting.

But our last word to you must not be a mournful one, whatever pain we may feel. Let it rather be a cry of exultation that you were given to the world, and that we have known you and know you.

That it has been my good fortune to know both yourself and your teaching fills me even this day with an unbounded sense of triumph; and I rejoice to think and believe that there are others who know you and whose record shall help to carry on that knowledge to future generations.

All that is best in me I owe to you, and as long as I live I shall honor, thank and serve you.

"And though no glance reveal thou doest accept
My homage—thus no less, I proffer it
And bid thee enter gloriously thy rest."

FRANCIS HOWARD WILLIAMS:

These are the words of the Zend Avesta:

At the end of the third night, when the dawn appears, it seems to the soul of the faithful one as if it were brought amidst plants and a sweet-scented wind.

And it seems to him as if his own conscience were advancing to him in that wind, in the shape of a maiden fair, bright, white-armed, strong, . . . thick-breasted, beautiful of body, . . . as

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fair as the fairest thing in the world. And the soul of the faithful one addressed her, asking: What maid art thou? And she answered, I am thy own conscience.

These are the words of Plato:

Considering the soul to be immortal and able to bear all evil and good, we shall always persevere in the road which leads upwards.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL:

Again we, in the mystery of Life, are brought face to face with the mystery of Death. A great man, a great American, the most eminent citizen of this republic, lies dead before us, and we have met to pay a tribute to his greatness and his worth.

I know he needs no words of mine. His fame is secure. He laid the foundations of it deep in the human heart and brain. He was, above all I have known, the poet of humanity, of sympathy. He was so great that he rose above the greatest that he met without arrogance, and so great that he stooped to the lowest without conscious condescension. He never claimed to be lower or greater than any of the sons of men.

He came into our generation a free, untrammelled spirit, with sympathy for all. His arm was beneath the form of the sick. He sympathized with the imprisoned and despised, and even on the brow of crime he was great enough to place the kiss of human sympathy.

One of the greatest lines in our literature is his, and the line is great enough to do honor to the greatest genius that has ever lived. He said, speaking of an outcast: "Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you."

His charity was as wide as the sky, and wherever there was human suffering, human misfortune, the sympathy of Whitman bent above it as the firmament bends above the earth.

He was built on a broad and splendid plan—ample, without appearing to have limitations—passing easily for a brother of mountains and seas and constellations; caring nothing for the little maps and charts with which timid pilots hug the shore, but

giving himself freely with recklessness of genius to winds and waves and tides; caring for nothing as long as the stars were above him. He walked among men, among writers, among verbal varnishers and veneerers, among literary milliners and tailors, with the unconscious majesty of an antique god.

He was the poet of that divine democracy which gives equal rights to all the sons and daughters of men. He uttered the great American voice; uttered a song worthy of the great Republic. No man ever said more for the rights of humanity, more in favor of real democracy, of real justice. He neither scorned nor cringed, was neither tyrant nor slave. He asked only to stand the equal of his fellows beneath the great flag of nature, the blue and stars.

He was the poet of Life. It was a joy simply to breathe. He loved the clouds; he enjoyed the breath of morning, the twilight, the wind, the winding streams. He loved to look at the sea when the waves burst into the whitecaps of joy. He loved the fields, the hills; he was acquainted with the trees, with birds, with all the beautiful objects of the earth. He not only saw these objects, but understood their meaning, and he used them that he might exhibit his heart to his fellow-men.

He was the poet of Love. He was not ashamed of that divine passion that has built every home in the world; that divine passion that has painted every picture and has given us every real work of art; that divine passion that has made the world worth living in and has given some value to human life.

He was the poet of the natural, and taught men not to be ashamed of that which is natural. He was not only the poet of democracy, not only the poet of the great Republic, but he was the poet of the human race. He was not confined to the limits of this country, but his sympathy went out over the seas to all the nations of the earth.

He stretched out his hand and felt himself the equal of all kings and of all princes, and the brother of all men, no matter how high, no matter how low.

He has uttered more supreme words than any writer of our century, possibly of almost any other. He was, above all

things, a man, and above genius, above all the snow-capped peaks of intelligence, above all art, rises the true man. Greater than all is the true man, and he walked among his fellow-men as such.

He was the poet of Death. He accepted all life and all death, and he justified all. He had the courage to meet all, and was great enough and splendid enough to harmonize all and to accept all there is of life as a divine melody.

You know better than I what his life has been, but let me say one thing: Knowing, as he did, what others can know and what they cannot, he accepted and absorbed all theories, all creeds, all religions, and believed in none. His philosophy was a sky that embraced all clouds and accounted for all clouds. He had a philosophy and a religion of his own, broader, as he believed—and as I believe—than others. He accepted all, he understood all, and he was above all.

He was absolutely true to himself. He had frankness and courage, and he was as candid as light. He was willing that all the sons of men should be absolutely acquainted with his heart and brain. He had nothing to conceal. Frank, candid, pure, serene, noble—and yet for years he was maligned and slandered, simply because he had the candor of nature. He will be understood yet, and that for which he was condemned—his frankness, his candor—will add to the glory and greatness of his fame.

He wrote a liturgy for mankind; he wrote a great and splendid psalm of life, and he gave to us the gospel of humanity—the greatest gospel that can be preached.

He was not afraid to live, not afraid to die. For many years he and death were near neighbors. He was always willing and ready to meet and greet this king called Death, and for many months he sat in the deepening twilight waiting for the night, waiting for the light.

He never lost his hope. When the mists filled the valleys, he looked upon the mountain-tops, and when the mountains in darkness disappeared, he fixed his gaze upon the stars.

In his brain were the blessed memories of the day, and in his heart were mingled the dawn and dusk of life.

He was not afraid; he was cheerful every moment. The

laughing nymphs of day did not desert him. They remained that they might clasp the hands and greet with smiles the veiled and silent sisters of the night. And when they did come, Walt Whitman stretched his hand to them. On one side were the nymphs of the day, and on the other the silent sisters of the night, and so, hand in hand, between smiles and tears, he reached his journey's end.

From the frontier of life, from the western wave-kissed shore, he sent us messages of content and hope, and these messages seem now like strains of music blown by the "Mystic Trumpeter" from Death's pale realm.

To day we give back to Mother Nature, to her clasp and kiss, one of the bravest, sweetest souls that ever lived in human clay.

Charitable as the air and generous as Nature, he was negligent of all except to do and say what he believed he should do and should say.

And I to-day thank him, not only for you but for myself, for all the brave words he has uttered. I thank him for all the great and splendid words he has said in favor of liberty, in favor of man and woman, in favor of motherhood, in favor of fathers, in favor of children, and I thank him for the brave words that he has said of death.

He has lived, he has died, and death is less terrible than it was before. Thousands and millions will walk down into the "dark valley of the shadow" holding Walt Whitman by the hand. Long after we are dead the brave words he has spoken will sound like trumpets to the dying.

And so I lay this little wreath upon this great man's tomb. I loved him living, and I love him still.

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