NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BIGELOW'S MODERN INQUIRIES.

MODERN INQUIRIES; CLASSICAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND MISCELLANEOUS. By JACOB BIGELOW, M. D. 12mo. pp. 379. Little, Brown, & Co.

The singular freedom from personal and professional prejudices which marks the contents of this volume gives it an interest which rarely attaches to productions intended for special times and seasons, and the occasion for which dates from a remote period of time. An accomplished classical scholar, the author makes strenuous war on the idolatry that has been paid in modern education to the remains of ancient learning. A physician of eminent repute both in the departments of theory and practice, he does not hesitate to call in question the superstitious reverence which has been accorded for ages to medical treatment, and to trust the cure of disease to the influence of nature, rather than the prescriptions of the schools. The papers of which the volume is composed have been written or spoken, in various forms, and at different times, during the last fifty years. Prepared in the leisure intervals of a busy life, they attest the mental activity, the interest in new ideas, and the thirst for truth, which characterize the modest, but highly honorable, career of the author. At an age advanced beyond the usual limits of public effort, he has lost none of his zeal for human improvement, and even shows the alacrity and hopefulness of youth in discussing the progress of science, and the brilliant future of American freedom. During the darkest period of the late Rebellion, and surrounded with influences not favorable to sanguine patriotism, Dr. Bigelow was among the most resolute supporters of the cause of the Union. With a naturally cautious and conservative temperament, and the tendency of a studious profession to somber forebodings, he was one of the firmest of the firm in the hour of peril. Not for an instant did he falter in his devotion to the Government, or doubt "the vigor and vitality of the country to carry us through the trial." From the beginning of the war, he protested against propitiating the hatred of the Southerners for the North, by concession and smooth speeches. In 1862, he writes: "When the war is ended, we must probably become for some time a military nation. We shall have to manage anomalous communities of straggling Indians, of refractory Mormons, of emancipated slaves and their emancipated masters. And this will be a tax on the resources of our growing nation, but not greater than that which has been required to control either British India or French Algeria." The following "dialogue of the dead," between Napoleon the First and Jeremiah, a late citizen of the United States, certainly shows an uncommonly lively and pleasant fancy for a writer on the borders of fourscore years:

NAPOLEON.—Well, citizen Jeremiah, glad to see you established at the Court of Rhadamanthus. What news do you bring from the outer crust?

JEREMIAH.—Dismal enough, please your majesty; all going to destruction,—Union split, Rebels not beaten nor like to be, business quashed, manufactures and commerce annihilated, crops short, stocks down, amusements done forever, and people groaning and starving from one end of the continent to the other. I had just made up my mind to emigrate to France or Kamschatka, when I found myself suddenly drafted and marched into Pluto's army.

N.—Why, man, I thought you called your country the model of creation, overflowing with men and money, food and raiment, and nothing to do but squat where you please, and enjoy yourselves as long as you please!

J.—So it was till the outbreak of this accursed Rebellion; but now a quarter of the people have gone off, and are going to cut the throats of the other three-quarters.

N.—It did not use to be so in my time. I generally thought that such questions were settled in favor of the most men, the most guns, and the most money. If it were not that my jailor Pluto is more inexorable even than Sir Hudson Lowe, I should like to contract to put your "gigantic Rebellion," in one year, into a quart measure.

J.—Alas, Sir! haven't they got a million of men in arms, and four million of niggers to keep them supplied with food, fodder, and clothing, all without expense, and all of them inhabiting the most delightful and salubrious country in the world?

N.—And haven't you three or four millions of men to their one, and fifty ships to their one, and five hundred gold eagles to their one? Why, man! you must fight till you have killed off a million on each side, and then you will have two millions left, and they will have nothing. Or, what is equivalent, you must let them see that you mean to do it, and have set about it.

J.—Ah, Sir! think of the tremendous bloodshed and slaughter of going to war in that style.

N.—Tut, man! I left twelve thousand of my brave fellows on the field at Austerlitz, and fourteen thousand at Jena, and thirty thousand at Eylau. A most humane policy it was, too, on my part; for, if I had dawdled away a week in fighting the same battles, I should have had three times the number killed, and perhaps been beaten myself. And then, Jeremiah, *on mourut par tout*, these men might all have been dead in their beds in less than a generation.

J.—What is to become of our ships and commerce when the terrible iron-clads are infesting every part of the Atlantic, and likely to be soon in the Pacific? And what is to be done when the Yazoo is full of rams, and the Nashville runs daily into every port in the South, and keeps them supplied with the necessaries and luxuries of the earth, which we so sadly want?

N.—Blockade them, catch them, sink them; or, at least, don't whine about them.

J.—It is discouraging to think that we have now been at war more than a year, and have accomplished nothing. On the other side, they threaten to take Washington, and make a diversion on Bunker Hill. And the sickness, too, appears to be increasing, and all on our side.

N.—You incorrigible *bete*. Have you not taken Norfolk and Newbern, Pulaski and Pensacola, New-Orleans and the Mississippi, and twice as much more? I never made so much progress in one year in my conquest of Europe. And as for disease—was I stopped by the plague at Cairo, or prevented by the marsh fever from driving the British out of Walcheren?

J.—But it seems that foreign intervention has at last become inevitable.

N.—There you have touched the thing with a needle! Foreign intervention in your quarrel! I should like to have a finger in that pie myself. Let us see. France and England make joint war upon you. Grand expedition planned to your coast. Sea covered with your privateers. Bread riots at home. Disturbance among the makers of lace, broadcloth, rails, linen, hardware, and rat-traps. Suddenly I make a little private peace of my own, and open my ports to Yankee cruisers, who bring me in British manufactures, China tea-chests, India saltpeter, Australian gold, and—oh! ah! what was I dreaming of?—I was beginning to jump for joy; and here I am, deep under Pluto's hatches, and powerless as my royal brother, Cotton.

J.—King Cotton is burning himself like a Phœnix, expecting to rise with a singed tail from his own ashes. But his subjects hate us worse than yours ever hated the English; they will never agree to live with us again—never, never. Would that the good old Constitution were strong enough to hold us all together!

N.—Hark'ee, Jeremiah! you have tried Constitution on them long enough; they repudiate it, kick it, spit upon it. They don't want the Constitution, but the "institution." What if they do hate you? Just observe, man—a few strong garrisons and camps of observation have a wonderful effect in nourishing the affections of such people.

J.—But the niggers, the cyclopitating niggers.

N.—If you want my opinion, Jerry, it is, that the negroes make good slaves, but better soldiers. Did not they drive my first army of 30,000 men, under Gen. Le Clerc, into the sea at St. Domingo? At Magenta and Solferino, the most desperate fighters were the Turcos, a set of double-dyed darkies from the rear of Algeria. Did not your Gen. Jackson thank the blacks for their bravery at New-Orleans? Look ye! If I wish to conquer a country, give me one that is half filled with a disaffected population.

J.—But you would not inaugurate the horrors of a servile war.

N.—There was a time when they could have kept their slaves under the Constitution. But it begins to look too late for that. A part will be emancipated, a part perhaps exported, or a part perhaps left in the hands of their masters if it should be necessary to save them from idleness and starvation. A restraint will no doubt be put on their excesses. But, in the mean time, the grander question, which involves the peace and happiness of twenty-seven millions of your free white men, has received a decision which now rings as a watchword from Maine to Kansas, "Crush the Rebellion." And the mountains and valleys of New-Hampshire and of California alike echo the resolute response: "Put it through." Depend on it, they will do it, Jerry, in spite of your croaking.

J.—I think I feel better.

Dr. Bigelow's remarks on the practical value of the classics, written three years later than the above quoted dialogue (1865), evince a freshness of spirit and a grasp of argument no less remarkable than the skill with which the merits of the controversy are compressed within the space of a nutshell.

I would not underrate the value or interest of classical studies. They give pleasure, refinement to taste, depth to thought, and power and copiousness to expression. Any one who, in this busy world, has not much else to do may well turn over, by night and by day, the *exemplaria Græca*. But if, in a practical age and country, he be expected to get a useful education, a competent living, an enlarged power of serving others, or even of saving them from being burdened with his support, he can hardly afford to surrender four or five years of the most susceptible part of life to acquiring a minute familiarity with tongues which are daily becoming more obsolete; and each of which is obtained at the sacrifice of some more important science, or some more desirable language. It may not be doubted, that a few years devoted to the study of Greek will make a man a more elegant scholar, a more accomplished philologist, a more accurate and affluent writer, and, if all other things conspire, a more finished orator. But of themselves they will not make him what the world now demands—a better citizen, a more sagacious statesman, a more far-sighted economist, a more able financier, a more skillful engineer, manufacturer, merchant, or military commander. They will not make him a better mathematician, physicist, agriculturist, chemist, navigator, physician, lawyer, architect, painter, or musician. The ancient Greeks knew but little, though they knew how to express that little well. The moderns know a great deal more, and know how to express it intelligibly. Antiquity has produced many great men. Modern times has produced equally great men, and more of them.

It is common at the present day to say, that the Greek language disciplines the mind, extends the compass and application of thought; and that, by its copiousness and by its versatility of inflection and arrangement, it trains the mind to a better comprehension of words, thoughts, and things. All this is no doubt true, and might have great weight as a governing motive in education, were it not that the same ends can be more cheaply obtained by the study of other tongues. Unfortunately for the cause of classical literature, all civilized countries are at this moment full of distinguished men and women who write well and speak well, and who have never acquired the learned languages. It is easy to say that such persons would have been more distinguished if they had known the classics. It is easy to say that Laplace would have been a better mathematician, and Faraday a better chemist, if by chance they had been duly instructed in Greek. But this is gratuitous assumption. The contrary result is more probable, inasmuch as the pursuit of classical literature would have abstracted just so much time from more pertinent and profitable investigations. At this day nobody believes that Watt would have made a better steam-engine, or Stephenson a better locomotive, if they had been taught philosophy by Plato himself.

The ancient languages, if applied to use, are not adequate to supply the wants of modern cultivation. Truths and things have grown faster than words. Modern customs, arts, and sciences can be expressed in French or German, but not in Greek and Latin. A French writer, Professor Goffaux, has undertaken to translate Robinson Crusoe into Latin. The translation is successful, as far as easy diction and pure Latinity are concerned. But the language of the Romans is at fault in the islands of the Pacific, and new words must be coined to express, even imperfectly, things which are not coeval with the language employed. The world-renowned "man Friday" is introduced to us under the vicarious name of "Vendred," and when Friday goes a-shooting he loads his "sclopetum" with "pulvis nitralis." If modern Greece should ever become a first-class power among the nations, it will have to complete, as it is now trying to do, a vocabulary of new terms to express the arts and commerce, the facts and fancies, the business and belles lettres, of the existing time. In other words, it must reinforce its language with a new half, not found in the ancient classics.

The admiration of the old Romans for the Greek language and literature had its origin in the fact, that in that age of limited civilization, they found not much else of the kind to admire. They looked to Greece as the fountain of what had been achieved in art, philosophy, poetry, and eloquence. Of consequence it was chosen as the great place of resort for educational objects, and Athens became the emporium of literary and philosophic instruction. But the Roman youth would never have been sent to Athens, had there been, as now, a railroad to take them to Paris, or a steamship to bring them to America. They would not have consumed their time in groves of Academus, if they could have gained admittance to the Ecole Polytechnique, or to the Royal Institution.

At the present day, we relish the Greek language, from the mingled impression, not only of its own superiority, but of the pleasure it gives us and the pains it has cost us. We relish it as the musician enjoys his music, the mathematician his geometry, and the antiquarian his diggings. We are pleased that it has been preserved with its euphonious intonations, its copious expressiveness, and its noble literature. We know that the spirit of Homer cannot be translated into English, any more than the soul of Shakespeare can be done into Greek. All languages have their idiomatic expressions of thought, and in all of them translation has a killing effect on the strong points of literature. In the opera of Macbeth, the term "hell-broth," in the witch-scene, is rendered in Italian as "polto inferno." And, on the opposite page of the libretto, it is served up afresh in English as "infernal soup." It is highly probable that the half-savage accomplishments of Homer's heroes and gods cannot be made duly appreciable in the English tongue. Nevertheless, the modern world can get on without them; and we may be excused for believing, that, if the study of Greek should be abandoned as a requisite in our universities, although it would still be cultivated like other exceptionable studies, with success and delight by many devotees, yet our practical, bustling, and overcrowded generation would never again postpone more useful occupations to adopt it as an indispensable academical study.

In regard to success in the world at the present day, it is not an academic education, however desirable in any shape it may be, that gives a man access to the confidence and general favor of his fellow-men, or to the influential posts of society. It is native talent, reliability, perseverance, and indomitable will, that conduct him to the high places of the world. In all countries, and most of all in our own country, a contest continually goes on between academic education and self-education—the education that comes from without and the education that comes from within. The much cultivated boy, who, under favor of advantages, performs faithfully his allotted tasks, who fulfills the requirements of his teachers, who is accustomed to subordinate his own judgment to the dictation of others, although he may hold a high rank in the scale of proficiency and the amount of acquisition, is liable, on arriving at manhood, to continue the bean rather than to lead, and finding to occupy a secondary place in the struggle for worldly distinction. On the other hand, the neglected but independent youth, who is brought up in the suggestive school of necessity, who becomes original and inventive because his life is a continued contest with difficulties, who balances character against opportunity, and individual vigor and patience against external guidance—such a one, from the habit of directing himself, becomes more competent to direct others, and to wear more easily offices of trust and responsibility. It is remarkable how many of our distinguished men have been self-educated, or at least without academic education. Franklin was a philosopher, Washington a statesman, Patrick Henry an orator, but not by the grace of classical education. Henry Clay knew nothing of the Greek language, nor did probably Thomas Benton. Andrew Jackson and Andrew Johnson had rougher nursing than that of an alma mater. Rumford, Bowditch, and Fulton did not develop their intellects under the shades of academic seclusion. And, if we were to go abroad for examples, we should find that Napoleon was no classical scholar; and that Peter the Great, when he issued from his lair at Moscow to study the civilization of Western Europe, did not repair to the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, but entered as a working mechanic in the shipyards of Saardam and Deptford.

Among other papers of peculiar interest in this volume, we may specify the essays on "Self-Limited Diseases," "On the Treatment of Disease," "Brief Expositions of Rational Medicine," in which those topics are handled with a degree of common sense, lucidity of statement and illustration, and vigor of logic, which account for the stir they made among medical men on their original publication, and recommend them to the attention of the non-professional reader at the present day.

WALT WHITMAN.

NOTES ON WALT WHITMAN AS PERSON AND POET. By JOHN BURROUGHS. 12mo. pp. 108. American News Company.

Most readers will be surprised at the tone of unqualified panegyric which runs through this little volume. Still no one can follow the enthusiastic flights of the writer without a certain degree of interest. The language of earnest conviction always commands respect, and the worship of Walt Whitman with the author of this essay is evidently a religion. Although we do not profess to share his admiration, we would gladly help him to a hearing. The idolatry which Walt Whitman has called forth in many quarters shows that he must possess some elements of manliness which the public at large has not recognized. He could not easily find a more thorough-going advocate than Mr. Burroughs, and while we cannot accept his point of view, we have no scruple in presenting it to our readers. The bit of autobiography with which he opens the discussion creates a presumption in favor of the writer, and prepares for a candid reception of his words.

Perhaps I can open my subject no better than by simply telling where and how it began with me. Born and raised near the head waters of the Delaware, in New-York, the world of my practical experience was confined to that healthy but rather wild and bleak region, till I had become a well-grown country youth—curious about books—fond even then of the Emersonian essays and poems, and all of that ilk; but my life mainly occupied in farm work in the Summer, and with a little study, cut off by much hunting and trapping wild animals, in Winter.

From a child I was familiar with the homely facts of the barn, and of cattle and horses; the sugar-making in the maple woods in early Spring; the work of the cornfield, hay-field, potato-field; the delicious Fall months, with their pigeon and squirrel shootings; thrashing of buckwheat, gathering of apples, and burning of fallows; in short, everything that touched of, and led to, the open air and its exhilarations. I belonged, as I may say, to them; and my substance and taste, as they grew, assimilated them as truly as my body did its food. I loved a few books much; but I loved Nature, in all those material examples and subtle expressions, with a love passing all the books of the world.

Appropriately enough, I at this time, 1861, first made the acquaintance of "Leaves of Grass," in the woods. Visiting a friend in the eastern part of the State, I recall that as we went out on a nutting excursion he carried with him this singular-looking book, from which he read to me as we paused in our tramp.

I shortly after procured the volume—the Boston edition of 1860. I read it attentively, and, as I supposed then, understood it. At any rate I understood it thus far, that, as a written poem, or whatever it was, it produced the impression upon me in my moral consciousness that actual Nature did in her material forms and shows. This sort of impression no book had ever before made upon me. I had enjoyed the good of other books greatly, but it had never occurred to me to recognize them as in any way equal to a fine sunrise morning, or a solitary and dim old hemlock forest, or as containing qualities at all akin to these.

His first acquaintance with Mr. Whitman was in the Fall of 1863, when the latter was engaged, with rare self-devotedness, in the care of the sick and wounded soldiers in the army hospitals at Washington. "The actual scene, as I saw it," says Mr. Burroughs, "of this man moving among the maimed, the pale, the low-spirited, the near-to-death, with all the incidents and the interchanges between him and those suffering ones, often young almost to childhood, can hardly be pictured by any pen, however expert. His magnetism was incredible and exhaustless. It is no figure of speech, but a fact deeper than speech. The lusterless eye brightened up at his approach; his commonplace words invigorated; a bracing air seemed to fill the ward, and neutralize the bad smells."

An army surgeon who at this 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 lapper 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 apples, and little articles with delicacy under his arms, and pre-

tuberant 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.

The key to Mr. Whitman's poetry must doubtless be found, if anywhere, in his personal history and character. The notes of the author on this subject form an interesting portion of the volume, and give more light to the reader than his rather shadowy and indistinct theoretical speculations. We take a few paragraphs from different parts of this account, which certainly leave the impression of a remarkable individuality.

Walt Whitman was born in the farm village of West Hills, on Long Island, New-York, May 31, 1819. His father's stock, which was of English immigration, seems to have originally settled there with the earliest planting of the island, some four or five generations previously.

West Hills is about thirty miles from New-York City. It is a secluded place of much natural picturesqueness. The hills indicated by its name are varied with fertile valleys. It is a neighborhood of thinly scattered country houses, with apple orchards, fields of grass and grain, and winding lanes lined with locust trees. Great springs of cold sweet water curiously rise toward the tops of the hills, and their course down and along the lower grounds may be traced by the borders of extra richness and verdure.

Some two or three miles off, near Cold Spring, Queens County, from a farm-house on the side of another hill, a wild, romantic, and bleaker region, we find the maternal source. Here lived the Van Velsors of genuine Hollandic blood, and also an old family. Major Van Velsor had for his wife Amy Williams, descended from a race of mariners; her father and brothers, and grandfather's people, too, all famous seagoing folk. From this couple came the mother of our poet. The Van Velsors were noted people for horses. The Major always had a fine one, and his boys followed suit; and the poet's future mother was a daily and daring horse-rider, even as a girl.

A description of these two families, and their domestic interiors, would be a sample of the life of the middle class of American country people of three generations since, in the early part of the century. Both sexes labored with their own hands. The Whitmans lived in a long story-and-a-half farm house, hugely timbered, which is still standing. A great smoke-canopied kitchen, with vast hearth and chimney, formed one end of the house. The existence of Slavery in New-York at that time, and the possession by the family of some twelve or fifteen slaves, house and field servants, gave things quite a patriarchal look. The very young darkies could be seen, a swarm of them, toward sundown, in this kitchen, squatted in a circle on the floor, eating their supper of Indian pudding and milk. In the house, and in food and furniture, all was rude, but substantial. No carpets nor stoves were known, and no coffee, and tea and sugar only for the women. Roasting wood fires gave both warmth and light on Winter nights. Pork, poultry, beef, and all the ordinary vegetables and grains were plentiful. Cider was the men's common drink, and used at meals. The clothes were mainly home-spun. Journeys were made by both men and women on horseback. Books were scarce. The annual copy of the Almanac was a treat, and was pored over through the long Winter evenings.

I must not forget to mention that both these families were near enough to the sea to behold it from the high places, and to hear its still hours the roar of the surf; the latter, after a storm, giving a peculiar sound at night. Then all hands, male and female, went down frequently on beach and bathing parties, and the men on practical expeditions for cutting salt hay, and for clamming and fishing. And so, out of such embryonage, appear the parents and earliest childhood scenes of the poet—the father, Walter Whitman, and the mother, Louisa Van Velsor.

From the immediate mother of the poet come, I think, his chief traits. She, with her good health and good sense, her kind and generous heart, cheerfulness, equanimity, her big family of sons and daughters, has passed through a long and assiduous life, affording a sample of the perfect woman and mother. I have more than once heard Walter Whitman say that his views of humanity and of the female sex could never have been what they are, if he had not the practical proof of his mother and other noble women always before him.

I should not neglect to put on record a statement, also, of the father of the poet, as a most honorable man, a good citizen, parent, and neighbor. He was a large, quiet, serious man, very kind to children and animals. For some years he was a farmer on his own land, but afterward went into business, house-building and carpentering.

I am not able, nor is it necessary, to give the particulars of the poet's youthful life. While a child, after living at the natal farm a brief time, his parents moved to Brooklyn, and he went to the public school there through certain years, yet every Summer visiting the place of birth in the country again. Brooklyn, as it remembered, was a charming rural town at that time, far different from the huge and crowded city it now is.

When a boy of 12 he went to work in a printing office, and learned to set type. At 16 and 17, I find him spending his Summers in the country, and along the seacoast of the island teaching country school, and "boarding round" among the families of his pupils. From this field of employment he sent a short sketch or story to that once famous monthly, *The Democratic Review*. The sketch made a hit, and was copied and commented widely. Other sketches and writings for *The Review* followed. Whitman left his country school-teaching and came to New-York.

For a few years he now seems to be a member of that light battalion of writers for the press, who, with their pen, compose tale, report, editorial, or what not, for pleasure and a living; a peculiar class, always to be found in any large city. Once in a while one appears at the political mass meetings as a speaker. He was one Democratic side, at the time going for Van Buren for President, and, in due course, for Polk. He speaks in New-York, and down on Long Island, where he is made much of. It is probable, however, that all is done with a view to exercise as largely as anything else.

Through this period—from 1837 to 1855—without entering into particulars, it is enough to say that he ransacked all experiences of life, with all their passions, pleasures, and abandonments. He was young, in perfect bodily condition, and had the City of New-York and its ample opportunities around him. I trace this period in some of the poems in the *Children of Adam*, and occasionally in other parts of his book, including *Calamus*. Those who have met the poet of late years, and think of him only as the composed and gray-headed man of the present, must not forget, in reading his LEAVES, those youthing and more ardent stages of his career. Though of Walt Whitman it may be said that he is always young.

I may mention here a characteristic, which, however, belongs not to this period alone. At all times he has lived well the society of the class called "common people." He has gone much with such persons, for instance, as the New-York Bay pilots, the fishermen down Long Island, certain country farmers and city mechanics, and especially the leisurely stage-drivers. The latter class for years have adopted him as a special favorite and chum. He has ridden on top of the stages with them, gone of an afternoon along Broadway, or from Fulton Ferry or Bowling Green up to Twenty third-st.; so noting and absorbing the life and objects of his endeared "Mannahatta." He has often and often visited in and around the Island all such places as the ship-yards, the founderies, &c.; is fond of the public shows, and delights in those extra gala-days or distinguished receptions when "million footed Manhattan descends to her pavements."

The artistic pleasure he has always most cared for is the Italian opera, or some good band or concert. Many passages of his poetry were composed in the gallery of the New-York Academy during the opera performances.

In 1849 he began traveling. Passing down through Pennsylvania and Maryland, he crossed the Alleghanies, went aboard a small trading steamer at Wheeling, and by slow stages, and with many and long stoppages and detours, journeyed along and down the Ohio River. In the same manner, he then passed with Western pioneer life and its scenes, he descended by degrees the Mississippi. In New-Orleans he edited a newspaper, and lived there a year, when he again ascended the Mississippi to St. Louis; moved through that region, explored the Illinois River, and the towns along its bank, and lingered some while in Wisconsin and among the great lakes; stopped North of the Straits of Mackinaw, also at Niagara and in Canada. He saw Western and North-Western nature and character in all their phases, and probably took there and then the decided inspiration of his future poetry.

After some two years, returning to Brooklyn, I trace him again trying his hand at a printer's occupation. He started a newspaper, first as weekly and then as daily. He sold out, and went into business as carpenter and builder (his father's trade); worked with his own hands at the rougher work, and built and sold moderate-priced houses.

It is at this period (1855 and the seasons immediately following), that I come on the first inkling of LEAVES OF GRASS. Walt Whitman is now thirty-four years old, and in the full fruition of health and physique. There is a lull or interval in his house-building business, so that he has no cares from that quarter.

In 1855, then, after many manuscript doings and undoings, and much matter destroyed, and two or three complete re-writings, the essential foundation of LEAVES OF GRASS was laid and the superstructure raised, in the piece called *Walt Whitman*, and some nine or ten smaller pieces, forming the thin quarto or first edition. Indubitably there must have been, as Emerson says, "a long foreground somewhere" to this first quarto. But that foreground, that vast previous, ante-dating requirement of physical, moral, and emotional experiences, will forever remain untold.

Of his familiar figure and gait, as seen on the wide sidewalk of crowded Broadway, in his own city, of a fine afternoon—or, of late years, on Pennsylvania-ave., in Washington—I give the following easily-recognized portraiture. It is from a Washington letter, written by one himself a poet, and printed (February, 1866), in a Columbus, Ohio, periodical:

"There are a few interesting persons here for whom you do not look, and you shall therefore come upon them unexpectedly. Walk up the Avenue at four o'clock, for instance. Who is this that cometh as if breathing or blown by a strong, slow wind—gigantic in expression at least, paternal, and (begging pardon of Apollo) somewhat Jove-like? This is one of those you did not expect to see, and you may as well look at him, for you cannot help it. Once (and, as you love and reverence that gentle father of our newest country, you may well bear this in reverent memory while you gaze,) Abraham Lincoln, seeing this one passing from his White House window, and following him with genial eyes, said, in that voice we all remember here—'well, *he* looks like a MAN.'"

Yet those who entertain great expectations Walt Whitman will probably disappoint at first sight. I have known and seen him for years under various surroundings, in company, on rambles, by the sick cots in the army hospitals, and elsewhere; and I should describe him, off-hand, as a cheerful, rather quiet man, easily pleased with others, letting them do most of the talking, seeking not the least conquest or display, never exhibiting any depression of spirits, asking very few questions, and at first view making the impression on any unsuspecting stranger of a good-willed, healthy character; without the least ostensible mark of the philosopher or the poet; but all the while, though thus passive and' receptive, yet evidently the most masculine of beings.

Observed more closely, he suggests ideas as of the Beginners, the Adamic men. One notes the great strength of his face, of the fullest Greek pattern, and combining the quality of weight with that which soars and ascends; head high-domed and perfectly symmetrical, with no bulging of the forehead; brows remarkably arching; nose straight and broad, with a strong square bridge; gray beard, in bushy fleeces or locks; florid countenance, well seamed; blue eyes, with very heavy projecting lids; and in physiognomy, as in his whole form withal, a certain cast of chivalry:

"Douglas! Douglas! tender and true."

While not incapable, also, on due occasions, of measureless obstinacy and hauteur.

There probably lives not another man so genuinely and utterly indifferent to literary abuse, or to "public opinion," either when favorable or unfavorable. He has never used the usual means to defend his reputation. It has been his fate to have his book and his personal character atrociously intercepted from their due audience with the public, whose minds have been plied and preoccupied by detractions, and the meanest misreports and falsehoods.

The elaborate critique in which Mr. Burroughs presents an analysis of Walt Whitman's genius, though desultory, and often indefinite, shows an intelligent idea of the elements of poetical power, and contains many suggestions which will aid in forming an impartial estimate of the writings in question. There is doubtless truth in the following passage, which expresses some of Mr. Burroughs's main points with less diffuseness than is found in a large part of his essay:

The image Walt Whitman seems generally to have in his mind is that of the Earth, "round, rolling, compact," and he aims to produce effects analagous to those produced by it; to address the mind as the landscape or the mountains, or ideas of space or time, address it; not to excite admiration by fine and minute effects, but to feed the mind by exhibitions of power; to make demands upon it, like those made by Nature; to give it the grasp and wholesomeness which come from contact with realities; to vitalize it by bringing to bear on it material forms, and the width of the globe, as the atmosphere bears upon the blood through the lungs; working always by indirections, and depending on a corresponsive working of the mind that reads or hears, with the mind that produces, as the female with the male; careless of mere art, yet loyally achieving the effects of highest art; not unmindful of details, yet subordinating everything to the total effect.

Yet no modern book of poems says so little about Nature, or contains so few compliments to her. Its subject, from beginning to end, is MAN, and whatever pertains to or grows out of him; the facts of mechanics, the life of cities and farms, and the various trades and occupations. What I describe, therefore, must be sought in its interior. The poet is not merely an observer of Nature, but is immersed in her, and from thence turns his gaze upon people, upon the age, and upon America. Heretofore, we have had Nature talked of and discussed: these poems approximate to a direct utterance of Nature herself.

From this comes, in a sense, the male principle of the book, which gives that erect, proud, aggressive, forenoon character, the opposite of dallying, or sentimentalism, or poetic sweetness, or reclining at ease—but which tallies a man's rude health and strength, and goes forward with sinewy life and action. From the same source also comes that quality of the book which makes it, on the surface, almost as little literary or recondite as the rocks and the trees are, or as a Spring morning is. Yet a careful analysis shows that the author has certainly wrought with all the resources of literary composition at command. In the same degree that the book is great in a primordial, aboriginal sense, it is great in a Goethean, Emersonian literary sense. It touches and includes both extremes; not only is the bottom here, but the top also; not only all that science can give, but more beside. No doubt this fact greatly misled the critics, who failed to discriminate between mere wildness and savagery, as waiting for science and culture, and that vital sympathy with Nature, and freedom from conventional literary restraint, which comes only with the fullest science and culture, and which is one of the distinguishing features of our author.

After becoming acquainted with Mr. Burroughs's theory of poetry, which he sets forth by fits and snatches of elucidation rather than by set formal phrase, the reader will be at no loss to comprehend the secret of his enthusiasm for Walt Whitman. He has grown weary of the dainty prettinesses and smooth decorations of which he finds so many instances in modern verse; and turns for refreshment to the lusty healthfulness and rugged charms of natural expression. In his view the ancient representation of beauty riding on the back of a lion has a profound allegorical significance that has been lost sight of to a great degree by the favorite poets of the day. The word Nature, in their hands, suggests only some flower bank, or Summer cloud, or picturesque scene that appeals to the sentiments. But Nature does nothing merely for beauty; it has an immense background of vast energy, as of earthquakes, and ocean storms, and cleft mountains; and when this background is wanting, beauty is emasculated, and struck with death. "I never knew how beautiful a red-bird was till I saw one darting through the recesses of a shaggy old hemlock wood. In like manner the bird of the naturalist can never interest us like the thrush the farm boy heard singing in the cedars at twilight as he drove the cows to pasture, or like the swallow that flew gleefully in the air above him as he picked the stones from the early May meadow." Poetry nowadays is an attempt to give us beauty without the lion. It has the merit of form, of color, of jewels, of perfume, but is without the charm of the aboriginal might which gave such sinewy strength to the Grecian bards. Walt Whitman, in the view of the author, stands alone in these degenerate days as the poet of pure, undiluted, majestic Nature. He has the courage, the stamina, to accept the facts in life, on which all else is founded. He corrects the false and artificial idea of Nature which has made poetry effeminate and sickly, and hence the author hails his appearance as the most important literary event of our times. Mr. Burroughs's theory, in fact, repeats the old apologetic for Michel Angelo in comparison with Raphael, but we must think twice before admitting its application to Walt Whitman as against Tennyson and Browning.

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