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PEACEFULLY AT REST

Death of Walt Whitman, the Aged Poet.

WENT TO SLEEP LIKE A CHILD.

The End Came Just as Day Was Fading Into Night—Career of the Venerable Muse, Whose Declining Days Were Passed Away in His Humble Little Cottage at Camden, New Jersey.

PHILADELPHIA, March 28.—Calmly and peacefully, like a child asleep, Walt Whitman, the "Good Gray Poet," passed away Saturday evening at his home, in Camden, N. J. He had been weaker than usual for some days past, but for some reason the knowledge of his condition did not become public property. He had a sinking spell Friday night, but recovered somewhat. Again at 4:30 Saturday afternoon he began to sink. A messenger was hurriedly sent for his physician, Dr. Alexander McAllister, who reached the dying man's bedside a short while afterwards. The doctor found the aged poet in a dying condition, and so informed those around his bedside. He asked the patient if he suffered any pain and the whispered answer was "No."



WALT WHITMAN.

Almost immediately before he died he said to his attendant, Warren Fitzsinger, "Warry, shift," meaning to turn him over on the bed. These were his last words, and they were uttered so low that they were hardly audible.

He remained conscious to the last, but owing to his extremely weak condition, was unable to reply to the repeated inquiries of the friends who had gathered round his bedside. These were Mrs. Davis, his housekeeper; Warren Fitzsinger, his male attendant; Lawyer Thomas B. Hornad, Horace Trouble and Dr. McAllister. Mr. Whitman has been confined to bed since Dec. 17, when he was attacked with pneumonia. Shortly after his physicians pronounced him cured, but the attack so weakened his constitution that he never rallied, and his death was practically due to exhaustion.

The news of the death was cabled to Lord Tennyson and other friends in England, Dr. Buck, of Ontario, his biographer, and friends in this country.

The sick man took very little nourishment during the past three days, an occasional sip of milk punch being all that he could be induced to swallow. Saturday morning he declined nourishment of any kind. He had at intervals since the illness, beginning Dec. 17, last, which rendered him bedfast, expressed a weariness of life and a willingness to die, and it is believed that the old poet realized that death was near and rejoiced accordingly.

It is with regret that the world hears of the "Good Gray Poet's" death. His contemporaries were not always kind to him. The critics "cut him up" with their pens, but the sturdy old man never deigned a reply or a defense.

His chief crimes in the eyes of his opponents were his utter lack of conventionality, his use of words not often sounded in "ears polite" and his total disregard of the laws of versifying. But Whitman calmly ignored the onslaughts made on him and insisted that he had merely inaugurated a new style.

"I dismiss," he has said, "without ceremony all the orthodox accouterments, tropes, haberdashery of words, feet, measure that form the entire stock in trade of rhyme talking heroes and heroines. My meter is loose and free. The lines are of irregular length, apparently lawless at first perusal, but on closer acquaintance you will find that there is regularity, like the recurrence, for example, of the lesser and larger waves on the seashore, rolling in without intermission and fitfully rising and falling."

This sort of reasoning, however, by no means disarmed his critics, some of whom are quite as opposed to his efforts to-day as they were at the time of their original publication. Naturally the general public was to a large extent prejudiced by these opinions of trained literary men. No other result was possible, for Whitman was called "sensual," "immoral," "gross," and with such persistence that the ordinary reader in America came after a time to look upon him as a person whose writings were objectionable. Of late years, however, there has been a decided reaction. Perhaps the new generation have come to understand and appreciate his works better, in the reflected light of the pure, poverty burdened life which their author has been leading in the humble Camden cottage. Whatever the explanation, respect for the lonely old man has certainly replaced to a large extent the ridicule formerly expressed for him.

Abroad there is no question as to the feeling which will be called out by the news of his demise. In the darkest hours of his struggle for fame it was Whitman's consolation that he was appreciated in Europe. The English people particularly hailed him as a genius, as the true American poet, greater than Bryant or Longfellow. In America, when "Leaves of Grass" appeared, in 1855, there was practically no one to utter a good word for it except Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said of it in a letter written to the author: "I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed."

But there was no other prominent American writer to echo the sentiment. In Great Britain, however, the literary world accepted the work at Emerson's valuation, and when Whitman subsequently followed it up with his other poems, he was accorded a singularly exalted place in the foreign world of letters.

Tennyson and Browning and Sir Edwin Arnold all wrote of him in the highest terms, and no English writer visiting America ever neglected to call at the poet's Camden home. His first interview with Sir Edwin Arnold two years ago was almost pathetic in its earnestness. The two men literally fell into each other's arms, and the distinguished English litterateur afterward related that he had spent one of the happiest days of his life in the company of the septuagenarian poet.

Nearly all the British literary men of note were equally enthusiastic in their praise of the American bard. He was held up again and again in the English magazines as the long looked for apostle of a new and perfect school of poesy, and when it became known that the poet was actually in want of the depth of the English admiration for him was manifested in the most convincing manner. An appeal for aid was printed in nearly every paper published in the kingdom. After reciting his merits and the good he had done for literature, the appeal concluded:

"Walt Whitman starving. A man's ransom wanted. The victim is in the hands of a relentless enemy, who, if the ransom be not speedily paid, will immediately make an end of him. Will his fellow men put forth a hand to keep one of the world's immortal a little longer here, or will they allow death to take him ere his time?"

The response to this call was prompt and generous, and saved the poet from any future fear of actual hunger. In view of this general admiration and esteem awarded him, it is no wonder that Whitman held the English in high regard, and it would seem that he would have sought an asylum among them. But he never once dreamed of such a course. He was beyond everything an American, proud of his parentage, and prouder still of his country.

"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," is his boast in one of his compositions. And there are few Americans who had a greater right to be proud of their Americanism, for his family on both sides counted back over nearly 300 years' residence in the New World. His father came of English stock and his mother of Dutch, her maiden name having been Van Velsor. He was born a farmer's son at West Hills, L. I., on May 31, 1819, and received a common school education, partly at his birthplace and partly in Brooklyn. Subsequently he entered a job office in the latter city and learned the trade of printer, to which he clung with more or less regularity for some years.

Incidentally, however, he interspersed his typesetting with school teaching and literary work. He edited several Brooklyn papers for short periods, among others The Freeman and Eagle. But his restless disposition did not content itself with any regular pursuit, and in 1848, accompanied by his brother, he made a trip to New Orleans, traveling by easy stages, sometimes walking, sometimes driving, and when convenient proceeding by steamboat. For a year he came to anchor in New Orleans, doing editorial work on The Crescent most of the time. June of 1849 found him back in Brooklyn, where, oddly enough, he went to work as a carpenter. He followed this business for five years, without, however, discontinuing his writing entirely.

Early in 1855 he issued the first edition of "Leaves of Grass." The contents of this singular book were neither verse nor prose, but a series of ejaculations and aphorisms presenting many original ideas and appealing to the common feelings of mind in favor of the natural enjoyment of life, the exercise of the active powers of mind and body and the frank reception of wholesome influences.

At first the critics did not notice this work, either to praise or condemn. They ignored it entirely. In a few months, however, a copy fell into the hands of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He wrote a letter (from which a quotation is made above) to Whitman praising the work in the most unrestrained manner. This letter was published shortly after its receipt, and at once attracted the attention of the reviewers to the book which they had entirely overlooked before. On all sides the work was condemned, and in Boston and other cities it was declared unfit for circulation in the public libraries because of its alleged immoral tone.

But Whitman defied all his censors, and between other writings continued to make the "Leaves of Grass" his special work. In 1856 he published a second edition of the work, and four years later a third, followed between the years of 1867 and 1883 by five other editions, and in 1889 by the last and ninth, with the final authentic text. All of Whitman's readers agree that on this work his fame will rest.

The period of the poet's life most prolific of experience and suggestions for stirring verse was certainly that from 1863 to 1865. In the former year he went to the front as a volunteer nurse,

and until hostilities ceased between the north and south he remained at his post. He personally attended nearly 10,000 wounded soldiers of both sides, and his tender sympathy eased the last days of many a poor fellow who, but for him, would have died friendless.

His ceaseless labors in field and hospital afterward told on him, producing the disease from which he died. During all his active life in the war he managed to do sufficient writing to support himself, and on the occasion of Lincoln's death he brought out the famous "O Captain! My Captain!" which is probably the best known of all his writings.

When the war was over Whitman was appointed to a clerkship in the attorney general's office in Washington, which placed him in comparatively easy circumstances for the first time in years. Until 1873 he remained at the capital one of the principal figures in the city. Then the disease contracted in the army manifested itself in a dangerous form known as "progressive paralysis," and he had to retire from all active work. He took up his abode in the poor little frame cottage at 328 Mickel street, in Camden, N. J., just across the river from Philadelphia. There he remained until death came to relieve him.

It was there, paralyzed and unable to work, that he almost starved, until the English appeal for aid in his behalf awoke the American people to a sense of his condition, and led to some efforts at raising funds for his support. But somehow the "benefits" and other affairs given never yielded the results they should, and a small circle of his intimate friends were the chief providers. Through their efforts he was enabled to end his days in the moderate way that contented him.

On April 14, 1887, Mr. Whitman spoke for the last time in public. He lectured at the Madison Square theater, in New York, on Abraham Lincoln. His appearance was as striking and venerable as ever. Long, flowing white beard, hair like spun silver hanging down in wild profusion under a wide sombrero; a strong patriarchal face, with soft, benevolent eyes; a tall imposing frame, over six feet high, and still muscular and almost straight, despite the weight of years and the ravages of disease. It was generally thought that it would probably be the poet's last appearance before the people, but a few months ago he managed to attend a Philadelphia reception in his honor, at which Colonel Ingersoll delivered an eloquent address.

The New York affair was well managed, and many prominent literary men patronized it; yet, in order that the poet might go home with \$200 in his pocket, the Rev. Robert Collyer had to add a handsome personal contribution to the receipts. But despite his lack of appreciation the sweet tempered old man never felt any bitterness toward his fellows. To all who visited him at his home he never expressed a word of reproach against the American public, and his final address to the world breathes only the most fervent gratitude. It was published just before his last severe illness, which threatened at the time to carry him off on the journey for which he has long been so well prepared, and which he viewed with the utmost complacency:

Thanks in old age—thanks ere I go,
For health, the middy sun, the impalpable air—for life, mere life.

For beings, groups, love, deeds, words, books—for colors, forms,
For all the brave, strong men—devoted, hardy men—who've forward sprang 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 cannoners of song and thought—the great artillerymen—the foremost leaders, captains of the soul;
As soldier from an ended war return'd—as traveler out of myriads, to the long procession retrospective,
Thanks, joyful thanks!—a soldier's traveler's thanks.

Thereafter the days with him moved on in a monotonous round, his strength each day growing less. Yet his mind remained clear, his temper as cheerful as ever and his love of nature seemed to grow stronger as the parting grew near. The trees and the flowers talked to him, the sunshine held philosophy for him, the voices of children and the twittering of birds were hopelessly dulled.

At an early hour Sunday morning Thomas B. Harned, an old friend of Walt Whitman and one of his literary executors, met George Whitman, a brother of the poet, and together with other friends, arrangements for the funeral were finally decided, and the interment will take place at 2 o'clock on Wednesday afternoon.

The remains of the poet will be placed in the recently-completed tomb in Harleigh cemetery, in the outskirts of the city of Camden, a spot selected by Mr. Whitman when he was enjoying his usual health, and which he visited many times during the construction of the tomb. The idea of the tomb was his own and one of his friends could not dissuade him from it. He selected his own lot, which is in a portion of the cemetery known as Woodlawn, and the tomb is built in the side of the hill in a grove. When asked why he selected such a spot he replied: "I would rather go in the woods."

The tomb is a substantial structure, built of massive rough granite blocks, some of them weighing over seven tons. The door is of granite, six inches thick. No rods, bolts or other fastenings are used in the structure, the four corners being held together by interlocking or morticing the blocks of granite. The only metal used was the heavy hinges on which the door hangs and the massive brass lock that secures it. The tomb contains receptacles for eight caskets or coffins, arranged in two tiers. They were constructed of marble, and will be sealed with polished marble slabs. The roof is also of granite, the top piece containing simply the name, "Walt Whitman."

The poet's wish was that the remains

of his mother, which are buried in Evergreen cemetery, and those of his father, buried in Brooklyn, should be exhumed and deposited in the tomb. This wish will be complied with by those to whom he instructed the bequest.

Yesterday an autopsy was made upon the body of the deceased poet. The physicians found, it is said, that the left lung was entirely gone, and only a breathing spot of the right lung remained. They found about three quarts of water around the heart, and a large number of small abscesses about that organ. The pain in the left side had been occasioned by peritonitis.

The brain was found to be abnormally large and in a quite healthy condition. Portions of the brain and other organs were taken for microscopic examination. After they had finished their labors the physicians stated that the poet was one of the most splendidly built men they had ever examined.



WALT WHITMAN'S CAMDEN HOME.

TWO YOUNG WOMEN MANGLED.

Both in a Dying Condition from Being Run Down by a Switch Engine.

EVANSVILLE, Ind., March 28.—A terrible accident befell two young women in this city Saturday afternoon. While attempting to cross the Evansville and Terre Haute tracks at the John street crossing, about four blocks beyond the Union station, Misses Lizzie Deims and Mary Klinger, aged, respectively, sixteen and eighteen, were run down by switch engine No. 101. Both were frightfully injured.

It is generally claimed that the accident occurred owing to the gross negligence of the engineer. No bell was rung nor whistle was blown when crossing this place, and the citizens are very indignant over the affair. There is no flagman stationed at the crossing, and the company is coming in for a considerable amount of abuse. The Deims girl had her head crushed, and the Klinger girl suffered the loss of both legs. They were taken to the hospital and are still alive, although neither can survive.

BRUTAL MURDER OF A CHILD.

Five-Year-Old Ida Osborne Found with One Arm and Her Back Broken.

NEW ALBANY, Ind., March 28.—At Boston, Crawford county, thirty-five miles west of this city, great excitement exists over the finding of the dead body of a little girl, aged five years, and named Ida Osborne, a daughter of Clara Osborne. The child had been in the family of John Lane, and it transpired that Lane had been beating it in a most cruel manner. He was missed from his home Friday evening, and the house was closed.

A number of citizens went to the house and broke open the doors. On entering the house they found the little girl lying dead on the floor, one arm and her back broken, and her body covered with cuts and bruises. Officers and citizens are searching for Lane and if he is captured it is certain there will be no expense in trying him, for he will be swung from the limb of a convenient tree.

JEWISH TRAVELING MEN.

They Form a Society for the Relief of the Russian Jews.

CHICAGO, March 28.—Two hundred Jewish traveling men have resolved themselves into a society for the relief of Russian Jews. They met Saturday at the Palmer House and elected I. M. Frank president and Samuel Despres secretary. The members of the association pledge themselves to plead the cause of the sufferers on their commercial travels, and secure them positions wherever possible.

The meeting was addressed by Dr. E. G. Hirsch, Adolph Loeb and Joseph Boifield, of the Russian Relief association, and Simon Wolf, of Washington. Dr. Hirsch called upon his hearers to stand by the pledges he had made to President Harrison that refugees would not become a burden to the government. Mr. Wolf said a report of the conditions in Russia was being prepared which would startle the civilized world.

DIFFERENCES SETTLED.

Engineers Adjust Their Trouble with the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

WINNIPEG, Man., March 28.—The committee of engineers to which the differences in dispute between the Canadian Pacific Railroad company and trainmen, were referred for adjustment, made their report Saturday as follows:

That \$2.90 per hundred miles be offered by the company and that eleven hours constitute a day's work, overtime to be allowed after that at the rate of twenty-five cents an hour for conductors and seventeen cents for brakemen. The finding of the committee, which is a compromise, has been accepted by both the company and the men.