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CARPENTER
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Some friends of Walt Whitman:
A study in Sex-Psychology

In jotting down some notes ^{about} Walt Whitman's friends I have felt that these may not be without value on account of the light they throw upon the Poet himself. As is well known Whitman's friendships were of an ^{obvious} ~~obvious~~ character ^{obtruded largely in his life} and that fact is illustrated by the many passages in his ~~poems~~ ^{poems} referring to the subject - notably by the group entitled 'Calamus' - to which I shall have to refer more than once.

I need hardly say that in most biographies the friendship side of the subject is passed by in a somewhat casual manner as ^{which I regard as a great mistake - but} a matter of little importance; ^{and} though personally I regard ^{it} ~~that~~ as a mistake yet it may carry with it this advantage that in that way we are spared a good deal of annoyance; for to have ^{us look & review,} ~~unimportant~~ & ~~unimportant~~ critics rummaging in the vitals of men & women with the view of exposing ~~them~~ ^{them} to the common gaze would indeed add a new terror to life.

In the case of Whitman his love-nature, by all accounts,

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accounts, was singularly grand and noble. When we think of his labours & ministrations in the Army Hospitals during the American Civil War, of the hundred thousand or so of wounded soldiers who passed through his hands, of the countless stories of personal affection ^{at that time} & devotion given & received, and of the many poems on Leaves of Grass ^{itself} which run to the same motive, ~~we cannot well think that~~ ^{the grandeur & nobility of his mind} ~~become apparent~~ ^{become apparent} D. Buckle - who knew Whitman so intimately as a

personal friend - says of him after describing their first meeting: "Any attempt to convey to another even the faintest notion of the effect upon me of that short & seemingly commonplace interview would be certainly ^{hopeless} ~~hopeless~~, probably ~~very~~ foolish. Briefly, it would be ~~nothing more than the~~ ^{simple truth} to state that I was, by it, ~~lifted~~ ^{lifted} up & set upon a higher plane of existence, ^{upon} ~~upon~~ ^{lived} ~~lived~~ ever since - that is, for ~~at~~ a period of eighteen years. And my feeling towards the man, Walt Whitman, ~~has~~ ^{from that day to} the present has been and is that of the deepest affection & reverence."

Of course it may be said, & probably will be said that in Buckle Whitman met with a man of ability & ~~culture~~

in whom he ~~met with~~ ^{discovered} a response and an appreciation which he would not have found in an ordinary & perhaps uneducated son or daughter of the people - and that this accounts for the extraordinary impression produced. But I do not think this explanation is by any means adequate; for as a matter of fact (as is well known) the response to him from the roughest & most uncultured individuals or classes was quite as warm & vivid as that from the educated - in fact generally more so. And if there is to be an 'explanation' of this I ^{sup-} suggest that it will be found in a certain quality of Whitman's ^{mind} which lay below all ordinary ^{distraction} ~~distraction~~; but on this subject I cannot do much at present, ~~but~~ I will try to disentangle & make ^{it} ~~clear~~ ^{clearer} at some later time.

At this point I may perhaps insert a few words from my own account of my first meeting with the Poet (Days with Walt Whitman, London, George Allen & Unwin, p. 5). "Meanwhile in that first ten minutes I was becoming ~~conscious~~ conscious of an impression which subsequently grew even more marked - the impression, namely, of immense vista or background in his personality. If I had thought before (and I do not know that I had) that Whitman was eccentric, ~~unbalanced~~, unbalanced,

vivid, my first interview certainly produced a quite contrary effect. No one could be more considerate, I may almost say courteous; no one could have more simplicity of manner and freedom from egotistic wriggings; and I never met any one who gave me more the impression of knowing what he was doing than he did. Yet away & beyond all this I was aware of a certain radiant power in him, a large benign effluence & inclusiveness, as of the sun, which filled out the place where he was - yet with something of reserve & sadness in it too, and a source of remoteness & inaccessibility."

To clinch what I have just said about the direct attraction which Walt exercised on plain unsophisticated folk, I may ~~now~~ quote a few words from an interview with Peter Doyle ^{which is printed in} ~~in 1888~~ ^{had been} Doyle ~~was~~ baggage-man ^{a little book entitled Calamus.} on one of the trains flying between Washington & New York, and at a still earlier date had been conductor of a horse (tram) car at Washington. It was in this earlier capacity that Doyle met Whitman. "You ask where I first met him? It is a ^{curious} ~~curious~~ story. We felt each other at once."

* Reference
Calamus, a series of letters written during the years 1868-1880 by Walt Whitman to a young friend (Peter Doyle) - edited with an introduction by Richard Maurice Bucke M.D. one of Whitman's literary executors. Published by Laurens Maynard at 287 Congress St. in Boston 1897

was a conductor. - The night was very stormy, - he had been over to see Burroughs before he came down to take the car - the storm was awful - Walt had his blanket - it was thrown round his shoulders - he seemed like an old sea-captain. He was the only passenger, it was a lonely night, so I thought I would go in & talk with him. Something in me made me do it and something in him drew me that way. ~~He would say there was something in me that had the same effect on him.~~ Anyway I went into the car. We ~~were~~ ^{were} familiar at once - I put my hand on his knee - we understood. He did not get out at the end of the trip - in fact went all the way back with me. I think the year of this was 1866. From that time we were the biggest sort of friends. I stayed in Washington until 1872, when I went on the Pennsylvania Railroad. "

In another portion of the same interview, speaking of Whitman's relation to women, Pete says ~~as follows~~ in his rough lingo: - "I never knew a case of Walt's being bothered up by a woman. In fact, he had nothing special to do with any woman except Mrs. O'Connor & Mrs. Burroughs. His disposition was different. Women in that sense never came into his head. - ~~Walt was~~

~~clear, he hated anything which was not clear. No trace of any kind of dissipation in him.~~ I ought to know about him those years - we were awful close together. In the afternoon ~~we~~ I would go up to the Treasury building & wait for him to get through if he ~~was~~ was busy. Then ~~we'd~~ we'd stroll out together, after without any plan, going wherever we happened to get. This occurred days in a row, months running. Towards women generally Walt had a good way - he very easily attracted them. But he did that with men too. And it was an ^{incomparable} ~~incomparable~~ attraction. I've had many tell me - men & women. He had an easy gentle way - the same for all, no matter who they were or what their sex."

The series of letters (to Pete) which follow in this book are full of interest & repay a careful study on account of the side-light which they throw upon both characters (Walt & Pete) & on their relation to each other. Here is one (letter VIII) which returns to the same subject, namely his relation to women, and ~~is~~ which - notwithstanding its somewhat jaunty air - impresses the reader with the sense that Walt's so-called flirtations were not very serious. He is speaking of some evening party,

and says: - "I also made love to the women, & flatter myself that I created at least one impression - a wretched & gay deceiver that I am! The truth is, Peter, that I am here at the present time mainly in the midst of female women, some of them young & jolly, and meet them most every evening in company; and the way in which this aged party comes up to the scratch & cuts out the youthful parties & fills their hearts with envy is absolutely a caution. You would be astonished, my son, to see the brass & coarseness & the capacity of flirtation & carrying on with the girls - I would never have believed it of myself!"

This letter seems to me personally very characteristic, with its slightly histrionic air, & enjoyment of the ~~poor~~ Don Juan pose, and its perfect understanding (as between Peter & himself) that it was only a pose. Looking through the whole series, of over 100 letters, there emerges just such a figure as one might expect from such a correspondence - humorous, shrewd, motherly, & intensely real in its frankness & devotion for a younger friend.

There are plenty of other letters in the same book from which one might make extracts which would yield effective pictures. This for instance speaking of his giddy fits. The doctor

says these dizzy spells are all from that hospital malaria, hospital poison absorbed in the ~~system~~ system years ago. . . . I have taken three or four of my favorite rides on Broadway, I believe I described them to you in my letter a year ago. I find many of my old friends, & hear ones too, and am received with the same warm friend ship & love as ever. . . . Tell Johnny Lee I send him my love, & hope he is well & hearty."

I have felt unwell almost every day - some days not so bad. Besides, I have these spells again, worse, last longer, come suddenly, dizzy & sudden sweat. It is hard to tell exactly what is the matter or what to do.

Thus far we have the poet's love-nature portrayed mainly from the man's side - portrayed, that is, by himself or by friends like Dr. Bucke who were closely in touch with him or who understood his temper^{erament}. It may interest us to approach the subject from the woman's side.

In 1918 there ~~came out~~ ^{came out} a book entitled: The Letters of Anne Gilchrist & Walt Whitman, which for our present purpose is extremely interesting & helpful ^{though sometimes almost painful to read}. It contains ~~5 letters~~ ^{76 letters in all - 5 being} from Whitman to Mrs. Gilchrist, and some 64 from Mrs. Gilchrist to the Poet, ^{while} the remaining ^{7 being} from outsiders - Anne Gilchrist, as we know from independent considerations, ^{was} a woman of fine instinct & ^{con-} siderable literary ability - the widow of Alexander Gilchrist who wrote the life of Blake. At her first reading of Whitman's Leaves of Grass, ^{in about 1864} she practically fell in love with the Poet (whom ^{up to} that time she had never seen), & whom she did not even meet till 1876 ^(or 7 years later) when she came to Philadelphia. ~~She grew more familiar with the book her devotion grew more definite & urgent, and she soon made up her mind to cross the Atlantic and make his personal acquaintance.~~ This

Her intense enthusiasm for Leaves of Grass may be judged from the letters she wrote to William Rossetti, ~~in~~ and which appeared under the title A woman's estimate of Walt Whitman in the Boston Radical of May 1870: - "I had not dreamed that words could cease to be words, & 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 poems beginning "Tears, Tears" &c, 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." As she grew more familiar with the poems her devotion grew more definite & urgent; and before long she made up her mind to cross the Atlantic and make Whitman's personal acquaintance.

This resolution to cross the Atlantic was, as may be imagined, no small matter. It included the idea of taking her three ^{young} children with her, & placing them out at school or college in Philadelphia. Naturally

the scheme could not be carried out at once, and, as a matter of fact it was not till 1876 that she actually made the passage. ~~through her first letter to the poet is dated September 1874, or five years earlier.~~ It was early in September 1871, ~~that~~ I believe, that she first wrote to Whitman - a truly ardent letter, inspired by what she had read of the Poems - & even then crying her ^{self} out, so to speak, at his feet: "O come my darling & look into these eyes & see the loving ardent aspiring soul in them". But he had delayed to answer. Perhaps the offer was too sudden & unexpected! Then she wrote again: ~~and still~~ ^{and still} ~~she~~ ^I wrote you a letter the 6th ~~of September~~ ^{of the same year} ~~and~~ ^{the long-expected reply} September & would you know whether it has reached your hand. If it have not I will write 'to content' again quickly to you - if it have I will wait your time with courage & patience for an answer; but spare me the needless suffering of uncertainty on this point, & let me have ~~one~~ one line, one word, of assurance that I am no longer hidden from you by a thick cloud - ⁱⁿ that love true day & night last thoughts, first thoughts; my soul's passionate yearning towards thy divine soul, my heart, every deed & thought - my love for my children - my hopes, aspirations for them; all taking new shape, new height through this great love etc.

Again there was a long delay. But at last, in November of the same ~~year~~ ^{year}

* Letters of Anne Gilchrist & Walt Whitman, Letter III p. 66
 Edited by Thomas B. Harner, T. Fisher Unwin, London (No date)

One must remember, in reading this letter, what makes it the more impressive, that Anne Gilchrist, at the time of writing it, was no mere juvenile enthusiast but a literary woman of considerable experience, some 40 years of age, who had assisted her husband during his lifetime in an important literary work and now after his death was engaged in preparing a second & enlarged edition for publication, who was full of plans & activities, including the rearing & education of 3 children, and had no little experience of the world & the vicissitudes of life & fortune. These considerations help us to realise what such a letter meant and the light it necessarily throws back on the personality & character of the man who inspired it.

Again, however, there was a long delay. But at last, in November of the same year,

+ established itself in her mind that he did not ^{and could not,} leave her
 in ~~in the way~~ ^{so fondly} she ^{hoped} - that her dreams of ~~union~~
~~of~~ a heart-response from this magical friend, of a
 perfect understanding, of a ~~union~~ union of lives, of a final
 settlement with her children in ~~the~~ ^{the} New World, were all
 destined to be utterly dashed. It must have been a frightful

blow (and no doubt many wise-acres ^{would} say it was
 very foolish ^{of her} to expose herself to the possibility ^{of it} but
^{we all do foolish things, and} noble & courageous woman as she was - she took ^{the} ^{blow} ^{without} a
 murmur, and to the end of the volume her letters ^{were} ^{strong}
 & dignified & entirely free from words of reproach.

Nevertheless the blow was too heavy for ~~it to be possible~~
 to her to recover from it. She returned to England in June 1875;
~~and died in 1885~~ a most serious complaint fastened
^{ran its mallein course for 5 or 6 years,} itself upon her, ^{and she died in November 1885.}
^{(on one side or any rate,}

Such was the tragic ^{end} of the relationship between two
 very noble characters - It is said to think of because in
 many ways ^(not in all) ^{the certainly} these two were so well fitted to become
 life long friends. No doubt many critics following the story
 have been inclined to ~~judge~~ ^{dismiss} Whitman as an
 impressive slow-moving character ^{incapable} ^{of} passionate

+ absorbing emotion. ^{Yes in the latter part of their judgment}
^{as my next few words will show.} most they would be quite astray, ^{Whitman as a matter of fact}
 was subject to strong & passionate ^{love affairs} ~~emotions~~, which were
 sometimes - especially in his earlier years - almost violent in
 their intensity.

In the 1860 edition of Leaves of Grass there is a poem
 (p. 355, of that edition*) written on the occasion of his desertion
 or betrayal by some one whom he loved very dearly, which is
 almost painful to read on account of the weight of feeling with
 which it is charged. In later editions this and one other
 similar poem are excised & omitted - probably I should say
 on account of that very weight of feeling ^{wh. they reveal} ^{them} (for Whitman
 - great artist that he was - could never ^{bear} to have anything excessive
 or unbalanced in his work), though to us that weight of feeling
 makes them all the ~~more~~ more indispensable & precious. Who that
 "Someone" was to whom Walt was, for the time being, so devoted, we
 do not know; but the internal evidence points conclusively to
 a man friend; and some of the points to which I shall
 refer presently make the situation easier to understand.

* See also p. 56 of My Days with Walt Whitman by E. Carpenter,
 where the poem is quoted in full.

The poem in question is as follows:—
 Hours continuing long, sore & heavy-hearted,
 Hours of the dusk, when I withdraw to a lonesome and un-
 frequented spot, seating myself, leaning my face in my hands;
 Hours sleepless, deep in the night, when I go forth, speeding swiftly the
 country roads, or through the city streets, or passing miles & miles,
~~Heard~~ ^{Heard} stifling plaintive cries,
 Hours discouraged, distracted — for the one I cannot content myself
 without, soon I saw him content himself without me;
 Hours when I am forgotten (O weeks & months are passing,
 but I believe I am never to forget!)
 Sullen & suffering hours! (I am ashamed — but it is useless
 — I am what I am;))
 Hours of my torment — I wonder if other men ever have the
 like, out of the like feelings?
 Is there even one like me — distracted — his friend, his lover
 lost to him?
 Is he too as I am now? Does he still rise in the morning, ^{de-}
 jected, thinking who is lost to him? and at night
 awaking, thinking who is lost?
 Does he too harbor his friendship silent ^{and} endless? harbor
 his anguish & passion?
 Does some stray reminder, or the casual mention of a name,

bring the fit back upon him, taciturn & dejected?
 Does he see himself reflected in me? In these hours does he see
 the face of his hours reflected?

No one can doubt the intensity of feeling & the anguish of mind
 from which that poem sprang. ^{But} in this case we see that
 that ^{blend} ~~passion~~ of emotion was roused ^{by} ~~by~~ ^{for another} ~~for another~~
 man. We in this Society, who have studied the byways
 of Sex-psychology are not surprised at this. We know
 now that although love between persons of opposite sex is as a
 rule the most powerful & absorbing, that is by no means
 always so, and that there are ~~many~~ cases of overwhelming passion
 between those of the same sex. The whole of that section
 of Leaves of Grass which is called "Calamus" illustrates this
 fact, and it would seem that Whitman ^{by} ~~has~~ collecting out
 of the great mass of ~~his~~ his poems just this group ^{was able} ~~to~~
 to illustrate and give expression to what we should now call
 the homosexual passion — which passion, though at
 that time ignored & unacknowledged by the world, was
 burning fiercely within him & pressing for deliverance.

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The whole section "Calamus" is as I say occupied with this subject, and for those who wish to gain an insight into Whitman's inner nature I strongly recommend a reading through of that section. At the present moment it may suffice to quote two or three of the poems contained in it. Here for instance is one entitled A Glimpse: —

A glimpse thro' an interstie caught,
Of a crowd of workmen & drivers in a bar-room arond the stove
Late of a winter night, and I unremarked seated in a corner,
Of a youth who loves me & whom I love, silently approaching & seating
himself near, that he may hold me by the hand
A long while amid the noises of coming & going, of drinking & oaths
& smutty jest,
There we two, content, happy in being together, speaking little, perhaps
not a word.

Or this: —
When I picture the conquests & fame of heroes and the victories of mighty
generals, I do not envy the generals,
Nor the President in his Presidency, nor the rich in his great house,
But when I hear of the brotherhood of lovers, how it was with them,
How together through life, through dangers, odium, unchanging,
Long & long,
Through youth & thro' middle & old age, how unflinching, how
affectionate & faithful they were,
Then I am pensive — I hastily walk away fill'd with the
bitterest envy.

Or this: —

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Earth, my likeness,
Though you look so impassive, ample & spheric there,
I now suspect that is not all;
I now suspect there is something fierce in you eligible to burst forth,
For an athlete is enamour'd of me, & I of him,
But towards him there is something fierce & terrible in me eligible
to burst forth.
I dare not tell it in words, not even in these songs.

John Addington Symonds, as we all know, wrote a great deal about Whitman, ^{generally} ~~and~~ ^(generally, as manifested) about the homosexual temperament, both in the Greek ~~and~~ world and in ~~more~~ modern times, and his work has been most valuable, but it has been somewhat vitiated - its value decreased - by a certain lack of ~~solidity~~ ^{Symonds} and self-reliance ⁱⁿ nature. Symonds' visits to England were but rare, ^{for myself I} and I actually met him only once - though we corresponded occasionally; but I have no doubt at all about his attitude to homosexuality - He shared the temperament completely, and everything which threw light on the subject interested him. But in his expressions about it he vacillated somewhat. (We must remember that he wrote ^{at a} ~~some~~ time ago when people were more hesitating & less outspoken ^{on such subjects} ~~about it~~ than they are now.) And while sometimes he wrote with ardour as almost a propagandist of the faith, at other times he hedged & went backwards ^{on} himself as one alarmed at his own leniency. This change of attitude is for instance very conspicuous in the last pages of his Problem in Greek Ethics, for while throughout the ~~long~~ body of that

brochure he handles the question magnificently and lays out his description of the Greek customs like one silent only on arriving at an accurate statement of them and with no parti pris on either side, in those last pages he almost runs away from himself, and might almost be accused by an unfriendly critic of throwing dust in the eyes of the reader & deliberately causing the latter to mistake his real meaning. When I say this I am sure my audience will not charge me with unfriendly sentiments towards Symonds, for whose memory I have the greatest respect, but this is a case in which absolute truthfulness must not be dispensed with, and I feel sure that by his occasional vacillation & timidity Symonds did as a matter of fact do a certain amount of injury to the cause which really lay so close to his heart.

The same trouble may be observed in Symonds dealing thro' correspondence with Whitman himself and (consequently) in his book about Whitman*. After reading & studying for some time the group of poems entitled "Calamus", Symonds

* Walt Whitman, a Study, by John Addington Symonds (London George Routledge & Sons).
now published by

felt uncertain ~~how~~ (as no doubt many other people have felt uncertain) how far the natural inferences from these poems about physical relationships among men were distinctly contemplated ~~by~~ & envisaged by the author. He therefore wrote to Whitman - not once only, but several times - posing this question.

I think most people will admit that this was a very foolish ^{& mistaken} thing to do. No one cares to be pinned down to a statement in black & white of his views on a difficult & complex subject. Least of all was Whitman open to such treatment.

He hates snap questions & answers generally, knowing how seldom such things arrive ^{at the real truth} anywhere near ~~anywhere~~ - but here was Symonds putting him in a very awkward position.

^{Whitman} He could hardly with truthfulness deny any knowledge or contemplation of such inferences; but if on the other hand he took what we might call the reasonable ~~line~~ line, & said that, ~~far from making allowance~~ while not advocating abnormal relations in any way, he of course made allowance for possibilities in that direction, & the occasional development of ^{such} abnormal relations, why, he knew that the moment he said ~~such~~ such a thing he would have the whole American

Press at his heels, sneering & slandering, & distorting his words in every possible way. Things are pretty bad here ^{in this country}, but in the States, ^(on such matters) they are ten times worse. Symonds ought to have

known & allowed for this, but apparently did not do so. In the end Whitman wrote a letter - (which is ^{quoted in part by} ~~part~~ Symonds) ~~book (p.) in the straight terms of denial & disapproval~~ in which he expressly repudiates, disowns, & brands as damnable all 'morbid inferences' which may be drawn from the gospel of comradeship. ~~Though he is prepared to entertain the latter~~ ~~which has no real~~ That of course was a perfectly safe & correct line to take, but it does not bring us much farther on our way, as it still leaves open the question what inferences are really morbid & what are not so. It is evident that Symonds' ill-judged letter annoyed & irritated the Poet - & very naturally so - and I (for one) can only regret that S. ever wrote it; for the incident has given a handle to the reactionary folk and a push in the direction of Constable & all his crew. We must remember too how different the atmosphere on all these matters was then, especially in the U.S. from what it is now in the centres of modern culture and in places like Oxford & Cass; Bridge & London where you can nowadays talk as freely as you like, & where sex variations ^{abnormalities} & even ~~are~~ are almost a stock subject of conversation.

Personally ~~at~~ having known Whitman fairly intimately I do not lay any great stress on that letter. W. was in his real disposition the most candid, but also the most cautious of men.

An attempt was made ^{on this occasion} to drive him into some sort of confession of his real nature; and it may be that ^{that} very effort to drive him ~~onward~~ aroused all his resistance & caused him to hedge more than ever. In the book ^{entitled} Walt Whitman in

Camden ~~(p. 100)~~ there is a report of an after dinner

speech in wh. ~~W.~~ ^{speaks of} Synonds ^{as} being of a very "suspicious" disposition. ^(At first I was baffled by the expression, but on a second reading) ~~the context led me to suppose that~~

this was said in allusion to these repeated enquiries on Synonds' part, and that Whitman interpreted them as conveying ~~some~~ ^{some} ~~sense of suspicion of his own nature~~ the idea that he (Whitman) had things (memories, motives, &c) which he was anxious to conceal.

Then there is our friend Leon Bazalgette who has written an excellent book on Whitman (sa Vie et son Oeuvre), and who is an enthusiastic disciple of the Poet, but who is also (curiously enough) a strenuous opponent

opponent of the theory that Whitman himself had any homosexual tendencies or ^{sympathies} ~~propensities~~. Thus we are left divided in opinion and a good deal mystified. But I can not help thinking - though I may of course be wrong - that Bazalgette has been swayed in his judgment by the domination of French public opinion which is ^{and generally} ~~has~~ ^{been} ~~been~~ ^{so} much inclined toward the adoration of the Female and so adverse to or negligent of romantic attachments between men.

There is ^{also} a little book, lately published, entitled Walt Whitman's Anomaly, ^{which} ^{by any means} though not very scientific in treatment ~~it~~ is stated in the introduction to be by "a Medical man", and is published by George Allen & Co. of London. It embodies again the same defect which we find in the French school - a defect wh. I can only describe as a certain vulgarity of view. The author, in fact, in alluding to or trying to describe the particulars wherein Whitman's nature differs from the normal temperament is content all along to accentuate the petty or pathological ~~marks~~ ^{marks} but fails altogether to realize that the feminine characteristics in such a case may have a most important meaning as pointing to the evolution of a higher type of humanity than that which we are accustomed to, and may indicate an effort of Nature towards a superior form - a form inclusive of the feminine as well as the masculine. I say the

Sincerity,
 rush in with

~~It is not~~ in such a case as that ~~it is useless to~~
 ~~of talk about~~

Some tag of ~~harming~~ propriety or morality. What we have to do first is to establish a fact, and then afterwards to ~~analyze~~ analyze & discuss ~~that fact~~; and it seems to me - though of course I may be wrong - that the plain fact is his preoccupation, ~~throughout~~ throughout his poems, with the male rather than ^{with} the female.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that according to the usual standards of life this is a strange preoccupation - something not easy to classify - something dislocated, ~~unaccountable~~ out of joint. Still, there it is, and we have to reckon it up and take account of it. Here was a man who notwithstanding the obvious superiority of the female as a mate, her superior adaptation in the matter of physical structure, mental build & temperament ~~etc~~ - did actually prefer the male, and continued all through life to favour & give expression to that preference. Here we seem to come face to face with a strange anomaly.

The further
 question which
 challenges us
 here is:

But we who
 already
 have studied the phenomena of sex-mirrors are ~~accustomed~~ accustomed to the existence of ~~the anomaly~~ ^{this anomaly?} Can we explain it, - or at least - since we cannot really explain anything - can we by due consideration of these numerous exceptions to a ^{going to our} ~~great~~ general law - succeed in ~~lifting~~ ^{giving to our} ~~our~~ statement of the law ~~into~~ into a new & a better form?

I think we can - I think we may say that the widespread existence of this anomaly (common not only in man, but in various animals) ^{by Dr. Huxley} ~~proves to us that the female~~ ^{perhaps after all} ~~is not~~ ^{sex intercourse} ~~is not~~ ^{but that} ~~the main object of love + mating~~ ^{is the continuation of} ~~of the sexes is not by any means adequate~~ ^{of the sexes} ~~some other aspect~~ or explanation of the matter is needed. Undoubtedly the continuation of the race is important, undoubtedly one of the results of mating throughout the animal kingdom is the production of offspring. But is this the sole or even the main result? I doubt it. It seems to me much more reasonable & even logical to regard the offspring of the sexes as a bye product - a valuable & beautiful bye product if you like, but not ^{necessarily} ~~after all~~ the main thing. The main thing is the actual establishment & consolidation of a ~~new~~ new form of life - the double life. When two people love each other to that degree that they become in effect one person they take on this new character, & may almost be said to enter into a new order of existence. It is that - the new & double life - which is the main thing, and if that can be attained without marriage, or apart from what is usually called marriage, why, the main purpose of

marriage is already fulfilled. In the case of Whitman - united as he was by most intimate ties to one or more men-friends, we ~~can~~ see already the emergence of a new organic inspiration and a new power of life. His poems radiate this power in all directions. Thousands of people date from their first reading of them a new era in their lives just as decidedly as they might date a similar era from the arrival of their first child. Thousands date from the reading of them a new inspiration and an extraordinary access of vitality carrying ~~the~~ ^{their} activities & energies into new channels. How far this process may go we hardly yet know, but that it is one of the factors of future evolution we can hardly doubt. I mean that the loves of men towards each other - & similarly the loves of women for each other - may become factors of future human evolution just as necessary & well-recognized as the ordinary loves which lead to the propagation of birth of children & the propagation of the race. If so, we may safely say that we see here in operation a great power, which is already playing its part in moulding the world, and one which we are morally bound ~~not to deny & disavow, and not to run away from, at risk of denying our humanity & committing~~ ^{the sin} ~~the~~, so execrated in the N.T. of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

Walt Whitman never married, nor is there as far as I am ^{aware} ~~any~~ 'a suggestion anywhere that ~~he~~ ^{ever} ~~thought~~ ^{seriously of} ~~marrying~~. He leaves us a problem the answer to which, if ever found, will probably contain in itself the key to some ages of future development. We cannot at our present stage say ~~what~~ exactly what that key is or where to be found. But what I think is incumbent on us to do is to confront the problem in question as directly and squarely as we can; ^{compare by in blameless security on the other side;} not to blink it or dodge it, but so far as it touches our own lives to acknowledge it boldly & serenely - as if we indeed were that person concerned, and convinced that in solving the problem in any degree for ourselves we shall be solving it for thousands & millions of others and so helping to lighten a great load which today presses upon humanity.

MS. p 23

Consult the book Walt Whitman in Canada, for an after-dinner speech in N.
W. W. speaks of Symonds as being 'a very suspicious disposition'

Also p. 23. Title of volume of books by John Bayly etc. (San Vic or San
Cecilia)