his book The Poetry of the East which, as Horace Traubel observed, the poet often read 'with zest and to the end of his days.' Indeed, Whitman loosely modeled some of his own later verse upon poems in Alger's anthology. Though Alger did not so much as mention Whitman's name either in print or in his extant correspondence after 1856, implicit evidence of his more benign opinion may be found in the catalogue of his library: at his death Alger owned two Whitman holographs, a copy of Camden's Compliment to Walt Whitman, and a total of six volumes by Whitman, including a copy of the second edition of Leaves of Grass with 'some leaves spotted with wear.'

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11 Horace L. Traubel, 'Notes on the Text of Leaves of Grass VIII,' Conservator, 9 (March 1898), 10.
13 Catalogue, pp. 22, 117.

'OF WAR TIMES AND POETRY AND DEMOCRACY': A FINAL VISIT WITH WHITMAN

IN compiling The Life and Letters of Edmund Clarence Stedman (1910) after the death of her grandfather on 19 January 1909, Laura Stedman wrote to many of his literary friends and acquaintances requesting written reminiscences of him. One such friend was Francis Howard Williams, a minor Philadelphia poet and dramatist who was close to Walt Whitman during his final years in Camden. In a vivid letter to Laura Stedman dated 30 March 1909, Williams recalled a visit which he and Stedman made to the paralyzed Whitman on 30 January 1892, less than two months before his death on 29 March 1892. The letter was not included in the Life and Letters, and is published here for the first time:

Philadelphia, March 30, 1909

You ask whether I have any memories or stories about your grandfather. Indeed I have many. His personality was one to leave lasting impressions. My acquaintance with him—at first only formal—soon ripened into a very warm friendship; and when he was one's friend one could count on him for any and every possible service and kindness.

2 The Stedman Collection at Columbia contains a typescript of the letter. It is quoted by permission.

[32]

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He used to come over to Philadelphia occasionally and we had evening walks—especially in the old quarter of the town among the ancient residences which once sheltered the 'Society' folk, and around Washington Square,—the latter especially attractive to both of us because Dr Horace Howard Furness lived there.

I remember on one occasion he asked me to take him to see Walt Whitman in Camden. Of course he knew Walt, but had never been to the little house on Mickle St.

'We mustn't go empty handed,' said Stedman. 'What shall we take him? We went over to Camden. He was very ill, but he still seemed to appreciate the visits. We took him to the old house and turned the key in the door. Walt lived in the little comfortless parlor, and went up to Whitman's bedroom. Walt was lying in bed, very weak, partially paralyzed, his great mass of long white hair falling out on the pillow. One could see that the end was not far. He looked at me with weak eyes.

'Hello Frank, you here? Good boy,' he said.

'Yes,' I said, 'and somebody else is here,'

'Who?'

'Edmund Clarence Stedman.'

'What? Ed! Bring him up.'

So I called Stedman up and the interview which followed was memorable. Walt was delighted with the grapes. He fondled them with the simplicity of a child. Stedman sat on the edge of the bed. Whitman's voice was very weak but we talked well—of war times and poetry and democracy—wished he might get out again, longed for the Sun,—just to get on a ferry boat and hear the swish of the paddles.

'But it's no use, Ed,' he murmured. 'This paralysis is undermining me, it's undermining me.'

After half an hour we took our leave. Stedman leaned over the old man, smoothed back his hair and reverently kissed his forehead.

'Goodbye Ed,' whispered Whitman.

Stedman evidently felt that that good-bye was final. His eyes filled and he could not answer. I turned away with a lump in my throat and we crossed the ferry back to Philadelphia, scarcely speaking a word.

I think Stedman had this interview in mind when he wrote his fine verses for Walt's funeral.

This is only one of the many memories of your grandfather which have found firm lodgement in my mind.

I am, dear Miss Stedman, always

Sincerely yours,

Francis Howard Williams

Stedman was unable to attend Whitman's funeral, held on 30 March 1892; however, the poem he sent from New York, 'W.W.,' is a direct, though belated response to Whitman's Good bye Ed:?

W.W.

GOOD-BYE, Walt!

Good-bye, from all you loved of earth—

Rock, tree, dumb creature, man and woman—


[33]
To you, their comrade human.
The last assault
Ends now; and now in some great world has birth
A minstrel, whose strong soul finds broader wings,
More brave imaginings.
Stars crown the hilltop where your dust shall lie,
Even as we say good-bye.
Good-bye, old Walt

Stedman’s poem evidently made a strong impact on members of Whitman’s inner circle. Horace Traubel published it opposite the title page of his memorial volume, *At the Graveyard of Walt Whitman*, and Thomas Donaldson used it as the conclusion of his *Walt Whitman, the Man*. Since Williams played a prominent role at the Harleigh Cemetery service, reading passages from Whitman, Confucious, Guatama, Christ, and others, most likely it was he who placed on the coffin a copy of ‘W.W.’ with an ivy wreath from Stedman, an affectionate gesture of farewell from both men.

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Leaves of Grass (1891 edition) is made up of 895 separately titled poems. Of these, 156 contain one or more uses of apostrophe; the sum of all including repetitions comes to 851. That is a huge amount. The device is found early and late, in short poems and long. Many apostrophes are accompanied by the archaic declamatory ‘O’; many are not. When Whitman was calling on something or someone to be a listener or helper he was using the trope traditionally; sometimes, but rarely, he actually used the word ‘invoke’ or ‘invocation’ (‘... as now to thee I launch my invocation’). But he widens the contexts and the objects addressed far beyond tradition, as we would expect.

There are certain divisions into which his apostrophes fall. Whitman uses the apostrophe politically not as often as might be expected: He addresses America, the states, Democracy, the people, the land, the flag, 27 times; foreign lands, the world, Europe, 11 times. Not very frequent is a religious or spiritual use: God conventionally seen is invoked six times, his own soul 39 times—but 27 of these are from one poem, ‘Passage to India.’ The final three divisions each contain far more. Addressing individuals or groups of individuals is a favorite resource 80 times, in particular instances addressing: a female singer, future poets, the reader (sometimes indirectly), dead poets, daughters, comrades, future generations, mother, brigades, the army, the dead, heroes, felons, a prostitute, Christ (called only ‘dear brother’), pupil, bride, Brazilian brother, friend, designer (of a picture), discoverer. A division into physical objects addressed contains almost as many, 75: hymn, pipe organ, drops of blood, flood tide, river, lands, libraries, earth, sea, his own body, winds, his book, skin, bird, storms, cities, moon, star, coffin, shells, throat, tongue and lips, ship, face, locomotive, songs, drums, bugles, eyes, mouth, the dead, wave, bear, bird, rain, rain drops, breeze, Paris Exposition.

Finally is the largest category, that of abstractions and generalities, the more specific of them used symbolically. There are 113 instances of such uses, and again the list is diverse: old cause, moments, muse, youth, day, old age, night, phantoms, spirit, death, love, liberty, a year, world, fables, the South, Manhattan, victress, hope, faith, a voice, faults (Whitman’s), a lesson, hour, the modern, the dead, divine average, life, spectre, fancy, globe, mother of all (the states).

Listing the objects out of context in this manner creates an ab-

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3 These numbers should be taken as rough approximations only. There are variables that would cause different readers to count up the totals differently. Counts have been conservatively taken, however.

4 From ‘Thou Obs Ald’Ins Free-Dazzing,’ I. 9, Comprehensive Reader’s Edition, p. 402. Many of Whitman’s apostrophes are accompanied by ‘thee’ or ‘thou’ or ‘ye’; an archaism that usually works but occasionally sounds strained.

5 These divisions overlap to some extent, as will be noticed, unavoidable since, for example, one reader might consider an item an image whereas another might consider it both an image and a symbol. The order of listing apostrophized items parallels that of the order of the poems.

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