

**RIVERSIDE POPULAR  
BIOGRAPHIES. GREAT  
AMERICAN AUTHORS:  
WALT WHITMAN**

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Riverside Popular Biographies. Great American Authors: Walt Whitman by Bliss Perry

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**BLISS PERRY**

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WALT WHITMAN

BY

BLISS PERRY



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PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

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1904

## PREFACE

THE publishers of this book hoped for many years that Mr. John Burroughs, one of Walt Whitman's oldest friends, would write *Whitman's Life*. As other literary engagements prevented Mr. Burroughs from carrying out this plan, I was asked to undertake the present volume. Mr. Burroughs has generously aided me in many ways, and has allowed me to make use of manuscript material in his possession. Mrs. Ellen M. Calder of Providence, the widow of Whitman's friend William Douglas O'Connor, promptly placed in my hands the very large collection of letters by the poet and by his friends and correspondents, originally gathered by Mr. O'Connor. Mr. J. T. Trowbridge and Professor Edward Dowden have allowed me to draw freely upon Whitman's letters to them.

I am also indebted to Mr. E. C. Stedman, to Dr. Weir Mitchell, and to Mr. R. W. Gilder for their courteous assistance. Dr. Talcott Williams

of Philadelphia, with his characteristic generosity toward literary workers, gave me access to his rich collection of Whitman material. Mr. Horace Traubel, one of Whitman's literary executors, and Mr. Laurens Maynard of Small, Maynard & Co., Whitman's publishers, have aided me in every way possible. I am indebted to Mr. Charles H. Ames of Boston for pointing out the singular stylistic correspondence between Samuel Warren's *The Lily and the Bee* and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.<sup>1</sup> My thanks are due to Professor Charles F. Richardson of Dartmouth for writing out the curious story of Whitman's visit to Hanover in 1872; and to John Boyd Thacher, Esq., of Albany, for allowing me to print, from the manuscript in his possession, Whitman's interesting criticism of his own poem on that occasion.

My acknowledgments should also be made to William Sloane Kennedy, to Professor F. N. Scott of the University of Michigan, to Mr. Albert Phelps of New Orleans, to Professor George H. Palmer of Harvard University, to Mr. William Roscoe Thayer, to Miss Jeannette Gilder, and to Miss Elizabeth Porter Gould, for

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.



information which has proved of service. Two books about Whitman which have appeared while my own work was in progress — H. B. Binns's *Life of Walt Whitman* and Horace Traubel's *With Walt Whitman in Camden* — have helped me at many points.

My friend Mr. M. A. DeWolfe Howe has been good enough to read this volume in manuscript, and to give me the opportunity of profiting by a criticism as accomplished as it is kindly.

BLISS PERRY.

CAMBRIDGE, June, 1906.

## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE hospitable reception given to the first edition of this book, both in this country and in England, is naturally gratifying to its author. I wish especially to thank the many surviving friends of the poet who have written me that this brief biography does justice to the man they knew. Certain passages, however, have given offense to Whitman's literary executors. In a few instances I have been able to modify the phraseology of the first edition. All of the changes are indicated in the Appendix, where I have also

printed some extracts from letters written to correct this or that detail. For all such criticism I wish to express my obligation.

With regard to certain phases of Whitman's life, I have had to depend upon verbal testimony. Some of this testimony was in the nature of the case confidential, and although it had to do with controverted questions, I have not felt at liberty to give in every instance the authority for the statements which I have made, although I have been challenged to do so by *The Conservator*. I do not care to have the persons who have been kind enough to assist me in a somewhat difficult task subjected to personal abuse in *The Conservator*, and I prefer to take the full responsibility for what I have printed.

B. P.

CAMBRIDGE, January, 1908.

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