

WALT WHITMAN'S WORKSHOP.

A COLLECTION
OF UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS.

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

CLIFTON JOSEPH FURNESS.



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ing theories and practices. All the Commerce and Wealth of the World — vast ganglions of bankers and merchant princes — what were they in comparison with the general prevalence through the bulk of the torso of These States of sound men women and children, of simpler wants, owners of their own homes, of natural talents, untainted with the sick-madness which we see.⁶⁷

— Rank as those movements are, I know nothing in These States so grand as the movements of their politics — I do not view them in their details, but in the magnificent copiousness of their aggregate; I perceive all the corruption — I observe shallow men are put in the greatest offices, even in the Presidency — and yet with all that, I entirely accept the movements of American politics. I know that underneath all this putridity of Presidents and Congressmen that has risen at the top, lie pure waters a thousand fathoms deep. — They make the real ocean, whatever the scum may be on its surface.

About this business of Democracy & human rights &c, often comes the query — as one sees the shallowness and miserable selfism of these crowds of men, with all their minds so blank of high humanity and aspiration — then comes the terrible query, and will not be denied, Is not Democracy of human rights humbug after all — Are these flippant people with hearts of rags and souls of chalk, are these worth preaching for & dying for upon the cross? May be not — may be it is indeed a dream — yet one thing sure remains — but the exercise of Democracy, equality, to him who, believing preaches, and to the people who work it out —

cot outside the tent, and the other covered with a dark gray blanket, and waiting to be buried — for these, & more than these, if more than these there be — if anything more monstrous, more unnatural than these there be. . . . Democracy goes on — the modern soul America goes on and must and shall go on.

My final aim

To concentrate around me the leaders of all reforms — transcendentalists, spiritualists, free soilers. — We want no *reforms*, no *institutions*, no *parties* — We want a *living principle* as nature has, under which nothing can go wrong. This must be vital through the United States, fit for the largest cases and actions, and the smallest.