



RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE

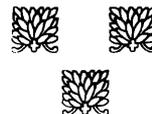
A Sketch

by

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With bibliography and two
unpublished portraits.

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FOREWORD

In the preparation of the following sketch, the writer had access to documentary material in the possession of the family of the late Dr. Bucke. Much of this was autobiographical. In using it the plan has been adopted, as far as possible, of letting the subject of the memoir tell the story in his own way, with such omissions, chronological rearrangement and explanatory connecting links as the nature of the case seemed to require, regard being had to the necessary limits of this paper. Quotation marks are not always used, especially where, as in the case of the fight with the Shoshones and the adventure in the Sierra Nevadas, the narrative is simply condensed from Dr. Bucke's detailed description. Where quotation marks are used, the passage is autobiographical, unless otherwise stated.

INTRODUCTION

Richard Maurice Bucke was a man of marked personality.

His individuality impressed itself on all who came into contact with him. Of striking presence, great native ability, wide and varied experience of the world and of human nature, he distinguished himself in more than one line of thought and action. For many years medical superintendent of one of the largest asylums for the insane in Ontario, he was ranked among the foremost alienists in America. An original investigator in the fields of medical science, philosophy and literature, he worked out his problems with a single eye to the truth, and, having solved them to his satisfaction, presented the processes and his conclusions frankly and fearlessly, leaving the results with the future for acceptance or rejection. His intellectual product is intimately related to his close association for a quarter of a century with Walt Whitman, whose influence was profound and lasting. The names of Whitman and Bucke are inseparably linked together for all time. The story of their friendship is of permanent interest and value.

As a *littérateur*, scientist and administrator, and as the biographer and close friend of Whitman, Dr. Bucke was an outstanding figure among the intellectuals of America.

But to the public at least it was not generally known that he had had a youth of extraordinary adventure, characterized by thrilling incident, intense suffering, prolonged and arduous struggle. These experiences were important factors in the development of a type of manhood worthy of being studied.

Some stages and phases of that development it will be the work of the following pages to attempt to outline.



ANCESTRY AND EARLY LIFE

At the Church of St. Olave, Old Jewry, London, on the 4th of May, 1801, Thomas George Bucke, of Mildenhall, Suffolk, married Georgina Walpole.

Three children were born of this marriage. All received a good education. Horatio Walpole, eldest child and only son, was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, took holy orders, and was appointed curate of the neighbouring village of Methwold. He married Clarissa Andrews, whose brother, Biggs Andrews, Q.C., was a barrister of some eminence.

To the Reverend Horatio Walpole Bucke and Clarissa, his wife, were born seven sons and three daughters.

It was at Methwold that their seventh child and fifth son first opened his eyes to the light on the 18th day of March, 1837. Of this son, Richard Maurice Bucke, it is proposed to speak in the following memoir.

Through his mother, Horatio Walpole Bucke was a great grandson of the famous Prime Minister of England, Sir Robert Walpole, and a grand nephew of Horace Walpole, whose Letters have given him a niche in the pantheon of English literature. On the side of the Buckes also literature had its representative. Charles Bucke, a brother of Thomas George, was the author of "Beauties of Nature," and "Ruins of Ancient

Cities," books which continued to be published until nearly the end of the last century. The tendency to literature of the subject of this sketch was therefore part of his inheritance.

In the spring of 1838 the curate, with his wife and seven children, emigrated to Upper Canada. For a score of years general attention had been directed to the Talbot settlement. Perhaps the familiar nomenclature, reproducing the names of counties, cities, towns and streams belonging to the eastern part of England added to the attraction. On the river Thames, in Upper Canada as in England, were the counties of Oxford, Middlesex, Kent, and Essex. In the township of London Richard Talbot¹ had taken up land twenty years before, and settlement had proceeded apace. His son, E. A. Talbot, was one of a number of writers by whom the praises of the Talbot Settlement were sounded in books which were extensively circulated in the British Islands.

To the township of London Mr. Bucke proceeded with his family to spy out the land, if it was good.

At the forks of the Thames the town of London had already more than twelve hundred inhabitants, ministered to by five churches, seven taverns and three or four schools. Two or three miles east, on Dundas Street, was a farm which caught our immigrant's fancy. He purchased it

¹ Not to be confounded with Colonel the Honourable Thomas Talbot, founder of the Talbot Settlement, which included twenty-eight townships in whole or in part.

and settled down to the life of a pioneer farmer. A scholar and linguist, he had brought with him a library of several thousand volumes, in which no fewer than seven languages were represented. Here in the midst of the primeval forest he installed his family and his books; here three children were born to him; and here, in the gradually widening clearing he passed the remaining years of his life. The property, known afterwards as the Creek Farm, adjoins what is now the site of the village of Pottersburg, a suburb of the city of London.

The Reverend Mr. Bucke was master of seven languages: Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, Spanish and English. The education of his sons was, however, left largely to chance. That is to say, he taught each of them to read in one or more languages, and then, turning them loose in his library, left them to shift for themselves. But, to use Maurice's own words, "they were born with the desire to know, and with the instinct to find out." Each was thenceforward his own schoolmaster. Of the sons, three became physicians and one a lawyer. A fifth entered the civil service of Canada.

Maurice learned Latin from his father. Browsing among the thousands of books, breathing their atmosphere, he became saturated with literature of wide range and varied character. A better foundation could hardly have been laid for his professional and literary life-work, which was to demand a comprehensive knowledge of the mental and moral nature of man.

He never went to school, in the ordinary sense of the word; but his education was, notwithstanding, productive of results that could not easily have been surpassed, had he attended in boyhood the regular institutions of learning.

His early life is described by Dr. Bucke as follows:

"He was born of good middle-class English stock and grew up almost without education on what was then a backwoods Canadian farm. As a child he assisted in such labour as was within his power. Tended cattle, horses, sheep, pigs; brought in firewood, worked in the hay field, drove oxen and horses, ran errands. His pleasures were as simple as his labours. An occasional visit to a small town, a game of ball, bathing in the creek that ran through his father's farm, the making and sailing of mimic ships, the search for bird's eggs and flowers in the spring, and for wild fruits in the summer and fall, afforded him, with his skates and handsled in the winter, his homely, much-loved recreations. While still a young boy he read with keen appreciation Marryat's novels, Scott's poems and novels, and other similar books dealing with outdoor nature and human life."

The great problems of religion presented themselves to him even as a child:—God, Jesus Christ, immortality, eternal suffering.

"The boy (even the child) dwelt on these and similar topics far more than anyone would sup-

pose; but probably not more than many other introspective small fellow mortals. He was subject at times to a sort of ecstasy of curiosity and hope; as, on one special occasion, when about ten years old, he earnestly longed to die, that the secrets of the beyond, if there was any beyond, might be revealed to him; also to agonies of anxiety and terror, as, for instance, at about the same age, he read Reynolds' Faust, and being near its end one sunny afternoon he laid it down utterly unable to continue its perusal, and went out into the sunshine to recover from the horror (after more than fifty years he distinctly recalls it) which had seized him."

At the age of fifteen he read the "Vestiges of Creation," a well-known precursor of Darwinism. His inclination to philosophy and science, thus manifested at so early an age, was a determining factor in his career.

ADVENTURES IN THE WEST

Maurice's mother having died in 1844, his father* married a second wife, and in 1853 she too died. Maurice, then 16 years of age, decided to see the world for himself, and seek his fortunes wherever circumstances seemed propitious.

The next five years were years of varied and remarkable adventure. Crossing Lake Erie, one June day, he lived for three years in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, working at any employment that offered.

At Columbus he was a gardener; near Cincinnati he worked first on a railroad, and then as a farm hand. In the winter of 1854-5 we find him making staves in the cypress swamps of Louisiana. Then for another twelve-month he served as fireman or deck-hand on steamboats plying on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. But his longing to know the world and men was by no means satisfied. He was now just entering on his twentieth year, in the full vigour of early manhood, ready as ever for anything that promised novelty or adventure. Fortune took him at his word.

Ascending the Missouri river at Fort Leavenworth, he determined to cross the plains and mountains to the Pacific. To carry out his purpose he hired with the conductor or manager

* Rev. H. W. Bucke died at Corunna, below Sarnia, U.C. (Upper Canada), 31 March, 1856.

of a train of twenty-six loaded freight waggons, consigned to a mercantile house in Salt Lake City. Each waggon was drawn by six yoke of oxen, and carried from three to four tons. It was a wearisome, difficult and perilous trail; for in 1,200 miles there were no white inhabitants, except at Fort Carney and Fort Laramie, the roads were bad, the loads heavy, and oxen at best are rather sure than swift as draught animals. The journey occupied five months; nowadays it would require less than forty-eight hours. The party found Indian camps near the forts; the Pawnee nation at Fort Carney, a large party of Sioux at Fort Laramie. They passed through immense herds of buffalo on the Platte, as Parkman had done a few years before. They crossed the Rockies by the South Pass and Green river; the Wahsatch Range by Echo Cañon.

From the summit of the Wahsatch he saw spread before him the rich, spacious and beautiful country of the Mormons, with the Great Salt Lake in the blue distance beyond. The splendid picture never faded from his memory.

The wondrous scenery of the Rockies was a revelation, which the impressionable youth absorbed into his soul. In his later years he recorded with enthusiasm the effect produced upon him by its grandeur and its beauty.

At Salt Lake City the party received their five months' pay; but none thought of turning back. Westward still their gaze was fixed, and with eagerness they pressed toward the setting sun.

Four hundred and fifty miles farther on was Sam Black's trading post, a solitary house, with its sheds and outbuildings on the sink of the Humboldt, and there was no white settler between. Along the trail, the Indians were hostile and in a position to choose their own fighting ground.

"We formed ourselves," says Bucke, "into parties of from five to ten men in each. Each party bought a light waggon and two horses to draw it. Into this were loaded the necessary provisions, cooking utensils and personal effects of the party. One of us, turn about, sat in the waggon and drove, the rest walked."

Unwisely, as it turned out, the parties travelled in sections. The party of which Bucke was a member numbered ten. They chose Samuel Jamieson as captain. Crossing the Humboldt mountains, and then following the river of the same name westward, they were attacked by the Shoshones. Columns of smoke here and there along the river uplands gave the signal to the swarthy foe. "Then I heard, for the first time in my life, from a hundred savage throats, that most unpleasant of sounds, the Indian war-whoop." The ranks of Bucke's party had been swelled and their scanty supply of provisions depleted by the addition of a party of six, who had been robbed of everything by the Indians, and fallen back for help and food. For a full half-day a running fight ensued with a hundred naked savages, "yelling the war-whoop at the top of their voices." The Indians had few guns, and

depended mainly on their bows and arrows; the whites had five rifles, a shot gun and two revolvers. The latter reserved their fire until it was likely to prove effective. One of them was wounded with an arrow, another with a rifle-ball in the groin. The whites were the better strategists, economized their fire, were cooler, and shot straighter. Bucke believed he had hit one or more of the enemy. Rushing toward the bushes to capture the gun of one of these, he was peremptorily recalled by the captain. "At the time the Indians abandoned the fight we had our last bullets in our guns and they were not all loaded."

But their troubles were by no means over. They had forgotten to fill their water cask in the morning. The trail had left the river. Thirsty and exhausted they toiled wearisomely in the hot sun, on the hot sand, "with nothing in sight but sand, sage brush and here and there rocky hills." It was 9 at night before the trail again struck the river. Their suffering had been intense, and Bucke describes it in a most graphic manner. The craving for water was such that enormous quantities of it were swallowed before their thirst was satisfied. Then followed six more days of hunger and privation, while they marched about 150 miles, with nothing to eat but a little flour stirred in boiling water. They arrived at Sam Black's almost exhausted with want of food. "Naturally, the first thing we did was to arrange for supper. Inside of two hours after our arrival we sat down to a table loaded

with meat, game, vegetables and hot biscuits, and it is needless to say that we did full justice to these and the hot coffee served with them."

Two days later members of the third and fourth parties came in. They had been less provident in their supplies, and less fortunate in fighting than Bucke's party. The Indians had robbed them of everything; five of their number were killed or missing; the rest had travelled 175 miles, practically without food, except some seed-pods and a duck they had killed.

His next occupation was that of a gold miner.

After a few days' rest, he writes, "We crossed the great American desert from the sink of the Humboldt to the Carson river and marched up the Carson to Gold Cañon." They sold their horses and waggon; some of them, including Bucke, took up claims, bought mining tools, "and settled down to work gold mining."

Gold Cañon he describes as "a broad and shallow ravine, dry in summer, but, in winter, spring and fall, sending a diminutive tribute of muddy water to Carson river." Here he remained about a year, "a member of a small community who, by the aid of rockers, toms, and sluices, extracted a precarious livelihood from the placer diggings." The miners numbered three or four dozens in all; the whole settlement, including ranchers, about one hundred, "scattered over a country thirty or forty miles across in each direction. To the east, our nearest neigh-

bours lived seven hundred miles distant, on the shores of the Great Salt Lake; across the mountains to the west, we reached by a walk of a little over a hundred miles the westernmost mining camps of California; north and south as far as our knowledge extended the barren slopes of the foot-hills were still in the undisturbed possession of Washoe and Piute Indians; along the highlands towards the head of the cañon, where now stand Virginia City, Silver City and Gold Hill, the mountain sheep suckled her young, unmolested except by the gray wolf."

"The social state of this small community," says Bucke, "was genuinely Arcadian in its simplicity. No civil, military or ecclesiastical organization existed among us. Utah Territory, in which we lived, had at that time no laws or courts, and Gold Cañon possessed no church of any denomination. In spite of the absence of these signs of civilization, I have never known a community the members of which were better disposed or conducted. There was no theft, no violence, and hardly ever even an instance of drunkenness or a quarrel. Each worked steadily all the week, and, after a general wash-up on Sunday morning, it was the rule to adjourn to our general headquarters at Johntown, and spend the afternoon and evening over a social game of cards."

The camp was on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevadas, in what was then Utah, and is now Nevada.

It was the best type of the life depicted in its manifold phases and manifestations in the pages of Bret Harte, Mark Twain and Joaquin Miller. It was a wonderful experience and a valuable education for the youth of nineteen. But, adventures strange and perilous were still before him.

Among the original forty-niners were two brothers, Allen and Hosea Grosh, of Pennsylvania. From California they had made their way over the Sierra to Gold Cañon in the early fifties. As early as 1854 they had discovered native silver in the cañon, which they revisited again and again, but they kept their knowledge to themselves. They were the first discoverers of silver west of the Rockies.¹ In the spring of 1857, after spending the winter in California, they were back again in the cañon, and here young Bucke made their acquaintance, an acquaintance that ultimately involved him in the most terrible vicissitudes, and left him a legacy of life-long indescribable suffering. On the other hand, had the enterprise succeeded, he would in all probability have been reckoned among the McKays and Carnegies and Rockefellerers; for the Groshes held the key to treasures beyond the dreams of Sindbad or Aladdin.

The ostensible object of the Groshes in 1857 was gold mining. Their real purpose was to explore for silver and ascertain the value of their previous discoveries. With a third partner,

¹There is a monument in their honour at Virginia City, to commemorate their achievement.

one George Brown, they made their own assays and "satisfied themselves that they had found and owned enormously rich silver lodes."

They located the best sites, took up as much land as the mining laws permitted, and were about ready to form a company to develop their extraordinary discoveries.

"The strange part of the story is that within three months from that time all three of these young and strong men met with violent deaths, and by an extraordinary combination of circumstances the papers relative to their discoveries, and which were naturally left in the hands of the last survivor, were absolutely lost."

Brown was murdered by a party of immigrants at his own door. Hosea Grosh accidentally cut his foot with a pick-axe, and died of the wound, blood-poisoning having set in. "Allen, overcome with grief, was left alone in the possession of their common secret."

The Grosh boys had been in the habit of spending each winter in California. Hosea's death delayed Allen's departure until winter was already closing in on the mountains.

It was now that Bucke came upon the scene. He had helped to nurse and bury the brother; and this led to a close friendship with Allen, who arranged that Bucke should take Hosea's place as his companion in the long journey over the mountains.

A TRAMP OVER THE MOUNTAINS

It was the middle of November, 1857, before they left the cañon. The donkey which carried their baggage strayed away, and it was the 20th before they left Washoe Valley. They had now but three days' provisions with them. In the valley the weather had been warm. Ascending the mountains they cut through six inches of ice the first night to get water. Next day, they crossed the eastern summit of the Sierra, about 9,000 feet high. Down 2,000 feet lower, to Lake Tahoe, and then on the following day, around the lake to its outlet through Trucksee river, they trudged on. The trail crossed the river and then Squaw Valley. Undeterred by twenty-four hours of rain, they attempted the western summit. The rain turned to snow, the trail was covered, was lost; the adventurers turned back to the valley, and, drying themselves as best they could in the still falling rain, lay down by their fire till morning.

Next day it was colder and snowing in the valley. They were obliged to encamp here for a week, the almost continuous snow hiding the trails and even the mountain summits. The donkey was killed for food. A tent was improvised of blankets. Its site served as a fire-place during the day and as their bed at night. The young men made themselves snowshoes, but these proved a failure and were thrown away.

On the 28th, the sky being bright and clear, they climbed all day to a high summit. "During a great part of the ascent the ground was too steep for walking. In such places our mode of procedure was to clear away the snow, catch hold of the bushes, and with hands and feet together climb up." Then they found a ravine, at least a thousand feet deep, with perpendicular walls, between them and the main ridge to be crossed. Again they went back to camp, reaching it about ten o'clock at night, tired out.

Finally, on the 29th, "after a terribly hard uphill walk of some ten or twelve miles, through deep snow and over rough ground, we gained the western summit about two o'clock in the afternoon." In the teeth of the intense cold and a bitter west wind, they crossed the three-mile plateau to the western edge. That night they camped down the slope in a forsaken cabin. Their matches had spoiled in Squaw Valley. They lighted their fire with a gun.

Two days of hard snowing followed. Again they made snowshoes, and again their efforts were doomed to failure, and the shoes were abandoned. Their meat failed. Four days of absolute starvation were before them. The trail now was a blazed one, and easily missed; the snow was three to four feet deep, and even more in places, along the side of a high ridge. Then the ridge spread into a broad plateau. Soon the trees failed them, there was no trail, and the cold was intense. Near sundown they came on fresh tracks, and hope sprang up in their hearts.

Then they discerned the truth; they had wandered in a circle, and the tracks were their own. They were off the trail. It was snowing hard, obscuring objects a hundred yards distant. They tried to make a fire, but their gun failed them. It had got damp and refused to go off. Then they found that they were frost-bitten.

The first necessity now was immediate shelter from the cold. Hope died in their hearts. The wealth of Golconda had no further charms or even interest. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life." The gun was thrown away. Allen's papers, containing the records of his discoveries and titles to claims, were abandoned. Others might reap where he had sown. Nothing was kept but the blankets, a tin cup and its contents, and a butcher's knife. In the tin cup was a miserable remnant of their meat.

They struck for the nearest edge of the ridge and down the steep slope full speed through deep snow, to an evergreen valley. Here they spread their blankets on the ground, covered them a foot deep with snow, crept under the blankets feet first, and lay until morning. The warmth of their bodies thawed the snow, and they did not get dry again for several days.

On the 3rd December they followed down a ravine, hoping to find a river. A muddy current would indicate a mining camp up stream. The walking was through snow two and a half feet deep over very uneven ground. Sometimes they

walked into low bushes they could not see. For two days longer they kept on their toilsome way down the ravine to the Middle Forks of the American river and still farther down until it ran through a deep rocky cañon, where they were forced to leave it, and walk over a ridge to and across another large stream. The travellers were famished and their strength was almost gone. The snow now did not average a foot deep. Gosh was so weak, that Bucke walked in front to make the tracks for his feet. "Exhausted and despairing, I sat down, and, weeping, proposed to give up and lie down and die where we were." But Allen was determined to push through, and encouraged the despairing boy, reminding him of their friends in the East. When they camped at night, they were too weak to talk much. The younger hardly expected to live till morning, and thought that even if he survived the night, he would be unable to walk. "Let us make up our bed for the last time," he said to Allen, "for we shall never leave this place." But Allen still cheered him as best he could with the hope of reaching shelter somewhere yet. They slept but little.

Next morning, after "horrible and extravagant dreams . . . we were barely able to crawl along, and went almost as much on our hands and knees as on our feet." The snow was now only a few inches deep. Once Allen said he heard a dog bark; Maurice refused to believe it. Then they came to a ditch with running water, and knew they were near a mining camp.

In a few minutes Allan said, "There is smoke." They had walked or crawled just three-quarters of a mile that day. The name of the camp was "Last Chance."

The miners showed their proverbial generosity; but the exhausted youths could not eat. Next day they were unable to walk. In a few days they became delirious. On the twelfth day Allen Grosh died.

"No knowledge survived of the work of the Grosh Brothers in Gold Cañon and its neighbourhood, except the bare fact that they had found silver. Two years afterwards in 1859, this knowledge, by making the miners watch for indications of silver, led to the finding of the Comstock lode, and that discovery to others, until the faint and soon almost extinguished spark of knowledge, struck from the rocks of Utah by the intelligence and perseverance of these two young men, resulted in the enormous silver-mining industry of western Nevada."¹

Maurice's powerful physique stood him in good stead under the trying ordeal. He was obliged to lie in bed all winter. The miners sent down

¹A letter signed Duncan Gordon, published in the New York "Sun," November 29, 1897, and entitled, "The Tragedy of the Comstock," was contradicted or varied in many of its statements by Dr. Bucke in an interview published in the London (Ont.) "Advertiser" of December 16, 1897. Gordon connected the Groshes and Dr. Bucke more closely with the discovery of the Comstock than the facts, according to the latter, appeared to justify.

the mountains for a surgeon, "who found it necessary to amputate one of my feet, and a portion of the other." "For months," says one who knew him well, Dr. T. J. W. Burgess, superintendent of the Protestant Asylum for the Insane, Montreal, "the stricken man lay in that mountain cabin, tended only by rough, yet gentle, hands, and there it was that he first had time to think. The miners made a collection of gold dust and nuggets to send him on his way to San Francisco. 'I was born again,' he once said, in speaking of this period of his life, 'It cost me my feet—yet it was worth the price.'"¹ The stumps did not thoroughly heal for more than forty years. The sufferings he endured can be better imagined than described. But never was suffering more heroically borne, and uncomplaining, he suffered in silence.

¹From a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Medico-Psychological Association, held at Montreal, June, 1902, and reprinted in pamphlet form from the published proceedings.

RETURN TO CANADA

The youth of 16 returned to his Canadian home a man of 21, maimed and broken in health, but with a knowledge of nature and of men, a store of experience, such as few men of 21 have ever had. A sum of money left him by his mother enabled him to carry out a plan he had formed of going to college.

At once he entered upon a medical course at McGill University. He graduated in 1862, winning the prize for the best thesis of his year. The tremendous force of will, the dominance of the mental and moral powers over the physical system, which such a university career evinces, showed him to be no common man.

The prize thesis, entitled "The Correlation of the Vital and Physical Forces," defended before the Medical Faculty of McGill, May 2, 1862, was printed in the British American Journal, and in pamphlet form.

Among his fellow students at McGill may be mentioned Doctor Joseph M. Drake, afterwards professor physiology at the university; Doctors Wright, of Ottawa, Harkness, of Iroquois, and Phillips, of Brantford.

His reading was not limited by the curriculum nor the books relating to medical science.

Outside of his collegiate course he read with avidity many speculative books, such as the "Origin of Species," Tyndall's "Heat," and "Essays," Buckle's "History," "Essays and Reviews," and much poetry, especially such as seemed to him free and fearless. In this species of literature he soon preferred Shelley, and of his poems, "Adonais" and "Prometheus" were his favourites. His life for some years was one passionate note of interrogation, an unappeasable hunger for enlightenment on the basic problems. Leaving college, he continued his search with the same ardour. Taught himself French, that he might read Auguste Comte, Hugo and Renan, and German, that he might read Goethe, especially "Faust."

From McGill he proceeded to Europe for post-graduate work. The season of 1862-3 was spent in London. Dr. W. C. Vanbuskirk of St. Thomas was his fellow student with him in Paris, and from him some particulars relating to Bucke's student life, both there and in London, have been gleaned. He attended lectures in the operative theatre of University College, London. Fox, Jenner, Ringer, Erichsen, Quain, Harley, Hillier and Hare were among the lecturers. Most of the residue of 1863 was spent in Paris at the Hotel Dieu and the Hospital of the Collège des Médecins, where they attended clinics given by such men as Trousseau, Nelaton and Bouvier.

In Paris he was laid up for a time with a mild type of typhoid fever. He was able to continue his reading notwithstanding the illness, and Dr.

Vanbuskirk remembers seeing him engaged in earnest perusal of Comte's works, whilst incapacitated by fever from attending the hospitals.

In London, a warm friendship sprang up between Dr. (afterwards Sir) Benjamin Ward Richardson and Bucke, growing out of mutual admiration and kept alive by intermittent correspondence. Bucke regarded Richardson as "the ablest man in the profession in England, and that is as much as to say in the world." The results of their association would seem to be reflected in some of their publications, especially in those dealing with the therapeutic uses of alcohol.

On the return voyage by the St. Lawrence route he had an experience, which might have been attended with disastrous consequences. He occupied the post of ship surgeon, and in performance of his official duties was obliged to report at Grosse Isle some cases of contagious disease. This necessitated the quarantining of the steerage passengers, some of whom became infuriated at the doctor as the cause of their inconvenience and delay. An organized gang attempted to throw him into the river. With some difficulty Dr. Bucke was hurriedly lowered into one of the ship's boats and carried to a place of safety. He used to speak of this as one of the most exciting episodes in a life that was by no means devoid of thrilling incidents.¹

¹ This incident was communicated by Dr. Hugh A. McCallum of London.

Returning to Canada early in 1864, where his elder brother, Dr. Edward Horatio Bucke had died but a few months before, he settled down to the practice of his profession in Sarnia. But almost simultaneously, he was urgently requested to go to California in the interest of the Gould & Curry Silver Mining Company.¹ He went, and was amply remunerated for his time and services, returning to Sarnia in 1865, not only enriched in experience, but with a substantial sum of money. Here he married, on the 7th September, Miss Jessie Maria Gurd. There were born to them eight children, of whom six survive, together with their mother. Settling down to the

¹ The late Mr. P. E. Bucke furnished interesting information upon the subject. The president, Mr. Bull, of San Francisco, had befriended Maurice after his fearful trip over the mountains. A speculative action of a kind not uncommon in the history of mining enterprises was now, five years later, brought against the company. Maurice's knowledge of Grosh's discoveries was an important factor in the case. Mr. Bull, having sent for him, he set out immediately from Sarnia. The plaintiff's dilatory tactics postponed the trial from time to time and Bucke spent eight months on the Pacific coast awaiting the decisive day. With books for study, supplied by Mr. Bull, he spent the time on Lake Tahoe, where he lodged with a German family. The opportunity to become more proficient in both reading and speaking German was not lost by the active-minded Canadian. Eight hours a day he studied during his sojourn near the mountain lake. When the day of trial at last arrived and the company's title to the mine was established, the claimant's case collapsed. Bucke was thus enabled to repay a hundredfold the kindness he had received in his day of need from a friendly Californian.

² Since the above was written, in 1906, two of the six children have died.

practice of his chosen profession, he met with success from the start, and soon acquired more than a local reputation. The Honourable Alexander Mackenzie, afterwards Premier of Canada, was his first patient and frequently sounded his praises.¹ Sarnia was the home of the late Hon. Timothy Blair Pardee, M.P.P. for the county of Lambton from Confederation, and a distinguished Minister of the Crown for the Province of Ontario from the year 1872 until his decease in 1889. Mr. Pardee and Dr. Bucke recognized in each other congenial spirits, and became intimate friends. Their friendship had doubtless somewhat to do with the appointment of Dr. Bucke, in January, 1876, to the Superintendency of the Asylum for the Insane at Hamilton, on its first establishment. In the following February, on the death of Dr. Landor of the London Asylum, Dr. Bucke was promoted to the leadership of the larger institution, a position he was to fill until his death. Had he lived a few days longer, he would have occupied this important post for a full quarter of a century. Only a few rods distant from the asylum lay the home of his childhood, the old Creek Farm, the scene of his earliest recollections.

It is not too much to say of him that as Superintendent of the London Asylum he did not fall behind the expectations which his university career and his professional reputation had led his friends to form respecting him.

¹ This fact was mentioned by Dr. Bucke to Dr. Hugh A. McCallum.

To the literature of alienism he devoted his attention, with the same persistent determination that had carried him through the perils and labours of earlier years. With the natural scientific bent of his mind, the practice and opportunities for observations and research afforded by his official position, and his continuous and close reading of reports and statistics, it was not long before he was recognized as an authority among alienists. His opinion was sought from far and wide. Medical and psychological societies were glad to give a conspicuous place to his name on their programmes and to his addresses and papers in their publications. His right to rank among the foremost of his profession in America was beyond question. In an appendix will be found a list of his printed pamphlets, lectures and addresses, of which particulars are accessible.

His annual reports to the provincial governments are, with one exception, not specified in the list. The reports are all valuable. That for 1897 contains "The Story of the Care for the Insane in Ontario," an interesting and instructive historical resume of the successive stages of progress in the treatment of this unfortunate class of citizens.

HIS WORK AS ALIENIST AND ADMINISTRATOR

In his chosen field he was not content to follow subserviently in the footsteps of his predecessors.

Cautious, but courageous, sure of his ground before taking the forward step, he signalized his administration of the London Asylum (the largest in the province) by three remarkable innovations, unheeding the opposition or the outcries of those whose conservatism did not approve of the modern spirit and changed methods.

(1) He was the first alienist in America to adopt the system of absolute non-restraint in the treatment of the insane.

(2) He discarded entirely the use of beer, wine or alcohol in any form at the asylum.

(3) He was the first, systematically, to employ gynæcological surgery in the treatment of insane women.

The first of these reforms could not be effected all at once. Public opinion had to be considered, and the experiment might involve dangerous consequences, not merely to the patient, but to the staff and attendants as well. For some years the degree of restraint was gradually diminished. "In the middle of 1883," writes Bucke in 1897, "we totally discontinued the use of restraint and seclusion in every form and have not used them since."

Dealing with this question, Dr. O'Reilly, Inspector of Asylums and Prisons, in his annual report for 1887, writes as follows: "To Dr. R. M. Bucke, Medical Superintendent of the London Asylum, belongs the honour of being the first to take up the subject practically in the Canadian asylums. He approached it at first, very properly, with great hesitation and caution, but it only required a few weeks' practical study of the subject to convince him that all that had been said by the advocates of the system was well founded, and restraint in the London Asylum became a thing of the past. Dr. Bucke did not burn his restraint apparatus with religious ceremonies, nor make any flourish of trumpets about it. When the proper time came, he simply announced that after eighteen months' trial of absolute non-restraint in an asylum having a population of nine hundred patients he had found the system to be all that had been claimed for it, and that he was now unable to conceive of a case where mechanical restraint, except for surgical reasons, would be necessary; would not be, in fact, positively harmful to the patient. Dr. Bucke's example was slowly followed by others, until now in this province restraint appliances are unknown, and one after another the doctors give in their testimony to the great value of this reform, which was commenced by Connolly and Pinel half a century ago."

With the abolition of restraint may be said to have disappeared the last trace of the ancient method of treatment of the insane. The Bedlam

of history is a thing of the past. Except for the protection of patients against themselves, the straight-waistcoat is no longer in use. Patients are treated as human beings. The law of love has been found effective with them as with the rest of humanity.

It is gratifying to be assured that the increased proportion of cures effected bears its due relation to the improvement in methods of treatment.

It was a work of time to persuade the medical profession at large, that alcohol as a medicine was, as a rule, unnecessary and even positively injurious. The practice of eminent physicians such as Sir Benjamin Richardson and Sir William Gull in discountenancing its use in many cases was, no doubt, a strong factor in inducing Dr. Bucke to abandon it altogether. In his first or second year at London, he experimented by reducing the number to whom beer, wine or whiskey was regularly served, and watching carefully the effect. In 1879 he closed the spirit rations entirely. The result warranted his action. "The health of the asylum was never better. I doubt if it was ever as good." The death rate was smaller; the percentage of recoveries higher.

So impressed was he with the importance of the results effected, that he brought the matter before the Dominion Medical Association in a paper read at London, on the 10th September, 1879. The essay was printed in the *London Advertiser*, and reprinted twice in England. In the following year he enlarged and completed it

for publication in pamphlet form, under the title "Alcohol in Health and Disease." He did not halt half way in his conclusions. He placed alcohol and blood-letting in the same category as obsolete in medical practice. "A time will come," he believes, "and that perhaps before many generations have passed away, when it will be as rare for a physician or surgeon to prescribe alcohol, as it is now for either of them to prescribe blood-letting, and when a healthy man will no more think of taking alcohol with a view of preserving his health, or to make him feel better, than he thinks now of going to a surgeon to be bled with a view to the same end."

Among the reforms Dr. Bucke initiated at the London Asylum should be mentioned his adoption, experimentally, in 1888 of the "Intermittent Downward Filtration" system of sewage disposal. Col. Warring, of New York, was the engineer selected to inaugurate the new method. It proved efficient, economical, and in every way satisfactory. Dr. Bucke published the results far and wide through reports, addresses and printed papers, with a view to its general adoption by cities, towns and villages.

The sewage field, of about six acres, fertilized by the trenches into which the sewage was scattered day by day by a centrifugal pump, produced abundant crops, the average annual value of which was estimated by him in 1897 at \$250 an acre.

No wonder that his reputation not only as an alienist but also as an administrator, grew with the years. The theorist and the practical man of affairs, the scientist and the business manager, were in him combined in a remarkable degree.

He was fortunate in having the hearty co-operation of a staff of able and loyal assistants. But the impression of his initiative, his energy, his mastery of detail, his enthusiastic interest in the institution, was felt in every part of its administration.

Walt Whitman, who visited Bucke in 1880, described his management of the insane in the following terms:

"His method is peaceful, uncoercive, quiet, though always firm—rather persuasive than anything else. Bucke is without brag or bluster. It is beautiful to watch him at his work—to see how he can handle difficult people with such an easy manner. Bucke is a man who enjoys being busy—likes to do things—is swift of execution—lucid, sure, decisive. Doctors are not in the main comfortable creatures to have around, but Bucke is helpful, confident, optimistic—has a way of buoying you up."¹

On the establishment of a Medical Faculty in the Western University, at London, Ont., in 1882, Dr. Bucke was appointed Professor of Mental and Nervous Diseases. His teaching we are assured was invariably satisfactory to both faculty and students.

¹"With Walt Whitman in Camden," by Horace Traubel. Boston, 1906, page 448.

In 1891 the Medical Faculty of McGill University paid him the high compliment of inviting him to deliver the opening lecture for the year. Its ability and forcefulness were the subject of wide comment and commendation.

Six years later, he was chosen President of the Psychological Section of the British Medical Association on the occasion of its meeting at Montreal. This was, perhaps, the most distinguished honour that could be bestowed upon a specialist in the branch of science to which he had devoted the best part of his life. It was followed in 1898 by his election to the Presidency of the American Medico-Psychological Association.

HIS LITERARY TASTES

The life of a physician in good practice in a small town is exacting in its demands, and leaves little time for literary culture. The more successful he is as a practitioner, the rarer necessarily are his opportunities for keeping up an adequate acquaintance with the great masters of the world of letters or with the current thought of the time. To do so presupposes the literary instinct and training. It calls for an intellectual equipment beyond the ordinary, careful economy of time, and great mental energy and resolution. Dr. Bucke was fortunate in possessing the instinct, the character and the training.

Reference has already been made to books read by him in his childhood and youth. As already stated, his bent for scientific and philosophical study manifested itself at an early age.

Buckle, Darwin and Tyndall he read while a medical student. In Paris he had become acquainted with Auguste Comte's "Cours de Philosophie Positive." Littré's books upon Comte and the writings of other positivists deepened the impression produced by the books mentioned. Herbert Spencer's works were perused with avidity. On the scientific and philosophical side, these, and especially Comte's works, were the formative influences in his earlier mental development. At a later period he became profoundly interested in Francis Bacon, whom he pronounced

"incontestably the greatest intellect that the race has produced," adding, "His prose is the best in our language."

But matter-of-fact scientist as Bucke was by inclination and training, he had also the imaginative faculty developed in a high degree. Not only in the light which prism could analyze, whose wave lengths and velocities could be computed, was he interested, but also in that other "light that never was on sea or land," which defies analysis and calculation.

Shelley, "the poet's poet," was an early favourite. The charm of the Adonais, the Prometheus and the Epipsychidion, held him to the last. Tennyson and Browning were read with pleasure. Shakespeare's dramas he regarded as "probably the noblest expression of genius in any language—while his sonnets, to my mind, reach a spiritual level as high as has ever been attained by man—as high as that attained by St. John or by the author of the 'Divine Lay'—the 'Bhagavad-Gita'." The passage quoted shows that he had added to his stores of reading an acquaintance with the sacred books of the East, and been profoundly impressed with their poetic and spiritual content.

He possessed a memory for poetry which was the admiration and envy of his friends. He would repeat with profound appreciation and appropriate expression the whole of the Adonais or Saul. Tennyson's "Revenge," or sonnet after sonnet of Shakespeare, without book and without a mistake

that the hearer could detect. "Leaves of Grass," from beginning to end, he seemed to know by heart.

Dr. Bucke learned German to read Faust in the original, "and found the poem worth the labour." This was followed by others of Goethe's works. Goethe was among "the writers who distinctly, though not markedly," influenced his mental evolution.

Dr. Bucke was not only an idealist, but a mystic, and the combination of these characteristics with literary culture and the scientific temperament and training forms an interesting psychological study. His literary product is the resultant of these forces, working upon an ardent and energetic nature.

Bucke, like his friend William D. O'Connor, was a strong Baconian in the never-ending Shakespeare controversy, and wrote letters and articles on the subject to newspapers and magazines, in 1896 and subsequently. In the fall of 1897 this involved him in a brief controversy with Mr. Goldwin Smith, begun in the *Canadian Magazine* and concluded by Dr. Bucke in the columns of the *Toronto Globe*.

ILLUMINATION

We now come to an event which Dr. Bucke regarded as pivotal in connection with what he deemed his most important life-work.

In 1867, Dr. Sterry Hunt, visiting Dr. Bucke at Sarnia, mentioned the name and quoted some verses of Walt Whitman. The effect on the hearer was instantaneous and lasting. Henceforth his life was largely influenced by Whitman's personality and "Leaves of Grass." To this influence may be attributed practically the whole of his literary product.

In 1868 he procured a copy of W. M. Rossetti's *Selections*. In 1870, visiting Dr. Hunt in Montreal, he borrowed the latter's copy of the 1855 edition of the *Leaves*. In 1872 he obtained a copy of the new edition of 1871. All these volumes as well as Whitman's later publications in prose and verse he studied with eagerness.

It was during the early spring of 1872, while in England, that he passed through an experience known in the nomenclature of mysticism as illumination. "He and two friends had spent the evening reading Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Browning, and especially Whitman. They parted at midnight, and he had a long drive in a hansom (it was an English city). His mind deeply under the influence of the ideas, images and emotions called up by the reading and talk of the evening, was calm and peaceful. He was in a state of

quiet, almost passive enjoyment. All at once, without warning of any kind, he found himself wrapped around as it were by a flame-coloured cloud. For an instant he thought of fire, some sudden conflagration in the great city, the next he knew that the light was within himself. Directly afterwards came upon him a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness, accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. Into his brain streamed one momentary lightning-flash of the Brahmic-Splendour which has ever since lightened his life; upon his heart fell one drop of Brahmic Bliss, leaving thenceforward for always an after taste of heaven."

The effects were similar in some respects to those of "conversion." "Among other things he did not come to believe, he saw and knew that the Cosmos is not dead matter, but a living Presence, that the soul of man is immortal, that the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all, that the foundation principle of the world is what we call love, and that the happiness of every one is in the long run absolutely certain. He claims that he learned more within the few seconds during which the illumination lasted than in previous months or even years of study, and that he learned much that no study could ever have taught."

To this psychical experience may be traced, on Dr. Bucke's own authority, the theory elaborated by him in his book, "Man's Moral Nature"

(1879) as to the relation of the great sympathetic nerve to the moral nature. In it, he says, "he sought to embody teaching of the illumination."

The subject appears to have been first broached by him in a paper on "The Functions of the Great Sympathetic Nervous System," read by him at St. Louis in May, 1877, and again in a paper on "The Moral Nature and the Great Sympathetic," read at Washington in May, 1878, before the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane.

In July, 1877, for the first time, he met and conversed with Walt Whitman. He called upon the poet at Camden. Of this meeting he gives a graphic account in the Introduction to "Calamus," a collection of Whitman's letters to Peter Doyle, edited by Dr. Bucke, and published in 1897.

It is too long to transcribe here. But the effect is given in these words:

"Briefly, it would be nothing more than the simple truth to state that I was, by it, lifted to and set upon a higher plane of existence, upon which I have more or less continuously lived ever since—that is, for a period of eighteen years. And my feeling toward the man, Walt Whitman, from that day to the present has been, and is, that of the deepest affection and reverence. All this, no doubt, was supplemented and reinforced by other meetings, by correspondence and by his

readings, but equally certainly it derived its initial and essential vitality from that first, almost casual contact."

In a paper published in 1894, referring to the interview, he had written as follows: "A sort of spiritual intoxication set in which did not reach its culmination for some weeks, and which, after continuing some months, very gradually, in the course of the next few years faded out . . . it is certain that the hours spent that day with the poet was the turning point of my life. The upshot of it was the placing of my spiritual existence on a higher plane."

Readers of Lucian will remember his description of a somewhat similar effect produced upon him by the philosopher Nigrinus. Other instances in sacred and profane literature are by no means infrequent in cases of men and women of exceptional moral and spiritual elevation.

"Man's Moral Nature" (1879) is dedicated "To the man who inspired it—to the man who of all men, past and present, that I have known has the most exalted moral nature—to Walt Whitman."

In this book he divides the moral nature into two classes of functions: positive, *i.e.*, love and faith; and negative, *i.e.*, hate and fear. He finds its physical basis in the great sympathetic nervous system. The moral nature is not a fixed quantity, but has developed from an initial stage, with hate and fear predominant, to that in which love and

faith are more and more in evidence. The means by which the change has been effected have been (I) Natural Selection; (II) Sexual Selection; (III) Social Life; (IV) Art; (V) Religion. Infinite progress is the law. "Hate and fear are dying out. The argument is that their total extinction is justified. Faith and love are increasing. Infinite faith and love are justified. . . . the highest moral nature is nearest in accord with the truth of things. This is why we call those men inspired who have exceptionally exalted moral natures as well as superior intellectual natures . . . religion, morality and happiness are three names for the same thing—moral elevation.

"This then is the end, the conclusion of the whole matter: Love all things—not because it is your duty to do so, but because all things are worthy of your love. Hate nothing. Fear nothing. Have absolute faith. Whoso will do this is wise; he is more than wise—he is happy."

It is hardly too much to say that this theory and these conclusions were the foundation and regulating principles of Dr. Bucke's conduct.

The facts and reasoning upon which his theory was based are for the scientist and the philosopher. The author's presentation is clear, full and interesting. His theory is put forward as a tentative one, as the one that seems most in conformity with the facts. The argument will appear more or less cogent according to the training and tendencies of him to whom it is submitted. The conclusion, however, according as it does with the

highest and best in man, should meet with general acceptance. He was an optimist by instinct by observation, by reflection, by a varied experience. Appropriately, he prefixes to the final chapter these lines from Whitman:

"The Lord advances and yet advances;
Always the shadow in front; always the
reached hand, bringing up the laggards."

WALT WHITMAN AND DR. BUCKE

After the first interview in 1877, Dr. Bucke made periodical visits to the Good Gray Poet. He took the field as his champion and expounder. Controversy as to the quality and tendency of "Leaves of Grass" raged with more or less heat. Bucke rarely assumed the defensive. He was best in attack. His skill as a writer shows itself in exposition of his theme, in marshalling and massing his facts. Opposing facts are often left to take care of themselves. The result, as far as Whitman is concerned, seems to justify the strategy, if such it can be called. The last word has by no means been said, but, notwithstanding passages regarded by many as offensive to taste or to the critical ear, Whitman's place in the Pantheon is by this time assured. Criticism accepts "Leaves of Grass" as a whole, with reservation of judgment as to details.

In September, 1879, Bucke lectured on Whitman before an Ottawa audience. In May he wrote the *Philadelphia Press* a letter entitled, "The Good Gray Poet." This was an appellation first used by William D. O'Connor, in his brilliant defence of Whitman many years before.

The summer of 1880 was memorable for Whitman's visit to London as the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Bucke. He remained four months. During the summer the two men made a voyage down the St. Lawrence as far as the Saguenay and up the latter stream to Chicoutimi and Ha Ha Bay.

Whitman was greatly impressed with the Asylum, its "ample and charming gardens and lawns," the religious services, the demeanour of "the motley, yet perfectly well-behaved and orderly congregation," the "Refractory Building," then under special charge of Dr. Beemer. Referring to the whole institution, he wrote in his diary: "As far as I could see, this is among the most advanced, perfected, and kindly and rationally carried on, of all its kind in America. It is a town in itself, with many buildings, and a thousand inhabitants."

The four months thus spent with Whitman were important in results. Bucke was resolved to write a biography of the poet. The latter demurred, objected, was at length overruled, gave consent, and, indeed, actively co-operated. Bucke put himself in communication with all whom he thought possessed of information required by him, including leading writers in Europe and America. The results were a collection of correspondence unique and valuable, and friendly visits received and returned.

With Whitman he went to Long Island in 1881 to familiarize himself with the former's early home and its environment. In working the book into shape valuable aid was rendered by William D. O'Connor, Mrs. Anne Gilchrist and others, who contributed facts, illustrative material and incidents.

Although the book was ready in 1881, publication was delayed owing to difficulty in secur-

ing a satisfactory publisher. After various suggestions had been made, Osgood of Boston, would appear to have been his original choice. But Osgood was not in the humour. He had just been forced by threats of prosecution by the Attorney-General of Massachusetts to withdraw from sale his edition of "Leaves of Grass." Early in May, 1882, Bucke wrote O'Connor that Osgood had declined "Walt Whitman, a Study." O'Connor wrote another scathing letter to the press, defending the "Leaves." On the 3rd June, he wrote Whitman that Bucke had written him "quite jubilant over my letter, and telling him the fix I have got his book into, which is comic as a scene from Molière. You will see the fun, when you know that he had sent his MS. to Osgood! I"

Whitman, as has been stated, took an active interest in the "Life." His extended and varied experience, as compositor, editor, proof-reader, business manager, was at Bucke's disposal, and was invaluable. It was Whitman who arranged with Gutekunst for proofs of portraits of his father and mother, the number of copies to be printed and the price. The first twenty-four pages were written by him.

He suggested names of publishers, and finally, when Osgood declined the book, it was Whitman who, on 19th February, 1883, with his own hand drew up the agreement between Dr. Bucke and David McKay of Philadelphia, for the publication of "Walt Whitman, a Contemporaneous

Study." The agreement shows Whitman's business ability and carefulness in looking after details, and is witnessed by him.

It was under the title, "Walt Whitman," that the volume at last appeared from the press of David McKay.

In the following year, the Glasgow edition appeared with an addition entitled, "English Critics on Walt Whitman," edited by Edward Dowden, LL.D., Professor of English Literature in Trinity College, Dublin.

"The book is valuable," says Ernest Rhys in his introduction to the volume of Selections from Walt Whitman in the Canterbury Poets, "not only as an authoritative biography—the standard biography—but for its collection of contemporary notices and criticisms, European and American, favourable and the reverse, of 'Leaves of Grass.'" "In the English list the names of Ruskin, Tennyson, Swinburne, Buchanan, Symonds, and other leading poets and writers bear unique testimony to Whitman's influence."

In the Introduction, Dr. Bucke asserts that the basic meaning and value to us of the man, Walt Whitman, and the book "Leaves of Grass" is *moral elevation*. "The true introduction, therefore, to this volume is the author's previous work, 'Man's Moral Nature.' In that book he has discussed the moral nature in the abstract, pointed out its physical basis, and shown its historical

development; while the sole object of the present work is to depict an individual moral nature, perhaps the highest that has yet appeared."

"Man's Moral Nature," had given Dr. Bucke a status not only as an original investigator and independent thinker, but as a writer of talent. It was with general acquiescence therefore that, on the establishment of the Royal Society of Canada in April, 1882, he was honoured with selection as one of the original Fellows.¹

"Walt Whitman" brought him into closer touch with men of eminence on both sides of the Atlantic. As Whitman's intimate friend, authoritative biographer, and redoubtable champion, he was now become a personage in the literary world.

Among notable literary men and women whose acquaintance he made and with most of whom he corresponded more or less, may be here mentioned the following: in France, Gabriel Sarrazin; in Denmark, Rudolph Schmidt; in the British Islands, Professors Edward Dowden of Dublin, and York Powell of Oxford, John Addington Symonds, William Sharp, Anne Gilchrist, Herbert H. Gilchrist, H. Buxton Forman, Edward Carpenter; in the United States, John Burroughs, William D. O'Connor, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Horace L. Traubel, Robert G. Ingersoll, E. C.

¹ Mr. P. E. Bucke is authority for the statement that Dr. Sterry Hunt refused the offer of membership until assured that Dr. Bucke's name would also be included in the list.

Stedman, Thomas B. Harned, Minot J. Savage, Sidney Morse the sculptor, Thomas Eakins the painter, William Sloan Kennedy, Isaac Hull Platt, Oscar Triggs, Daniel G. Brinton, Henry Howard Furness, Talcott Williams, Francis Howard Williams, Hamlin Garland, Charles G. Garrison, Laurens Maynard, Mary A. Livermore, Professor William James. Browning and Tennyson he met in England.

Lord Tennyson and Walt Whitman carried on a friendly and even affectionate correspondence for twenty years, until it was terminated by death. A letter of introduction from the American poet was a sufficient passport to the hospitality of Farringford, where Bucke spent a delightful afternoon and evening with the Tennysons in the summer of 1891.

Visitors of note found their way to London, from time to time, to enjoy the friendly hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Bucke. Among these may be specially mentioned Edward Carpenter, who spent some weeks with them in the summer of 1884.

Dr. Bucke paid many visits to Whitman at Camden. During one of these visits, in June, 1888, Whitman was seized with a serious illness which threatened a fatal termination. Dr. Bucke became his general medical adviser, and at once placed Dr. William Osler in charge. Early in 1892, when the old poet's time for departure was at hand, Bucke was again at his bedside, although unable to remain until the end. At the

funeral, which was a memorable expression of popular appreciation and sympathy, the doctor was an honorary pall-bearer. He was one of the speakers at the grave. By the poet's will, Richard Maurice Bucke, Thomas B. Harned and Horace L. Traubel were appointed his literary executors.

The volume entitled "In Re Walt Whitman," published by the executors in 1893, contains among its many papers articles from Dr. Bucke's pen.

A large part of Whitman's correspondence, MSS. and other papers, came into his hands, and he devoted himself assiduously to their assortment and to editing portions from time to time, as his other duties permitted.

The books issued by Bucke under the titles, "Calamus" (1897), and "The Wound-dresser" (1898), are composed of Whitman's letters to Peter Doyle and the poet's mother respectively. "Notes and Fragments," of which 225 copies were issued for private circulation in 1899, is made up of Whitman's notes and memoranda, showing the evolution of "Leaves of Grass," almost from the germ.

The Introductions by Dr. Bucke to these three volumes are full of interest, and of autobiographical as well as biographical value.

Dr. Bucke's collection of portraits of Whitman is the most complete in existence. His collection

of books, pamphlets, MSS., and bibliographical data relating to the sage of Camden is also probably unsurpassed.

In Horace Traubel's volumes, "With Walt Whitman in Camden," are many references to Dr. Bucke, jotted down by Traubel, from Whitman's table-talk in 1888. They are interesting as indicating Whitman's estimate of Bucke's qualities and friendship.

Referring to Sloane Kennedy, as one of his most ardent admirers, Whitman added, "Indeed, he out-Buckes Bucke."

On another occasion, Bucke's name being mentioned, he exclaimed: "Bucke? O, yes, Bucke! Some one was here the other day and complained that the Doctor was extreme. I suppose he is extreme—the sun's extreme, too; and as for me, ain't I extreme?"

Ernest Rhys having "seen Dr. Bucke and Niagara," Whitman expressed pleasure, saying, smilingly, "I am proud of both."

Speaking of his serious illness in June, 1888, Whitman said Bucke saved his life, "his skill, decision, brotherliness, pulled me ashore." And again, "Osler, too, has his points, big points. But after all the real man is Dr. Bucke. He is the top of the heap. He has such a clear head, such a fund of common sense—such steady eyes—such a steady hand. As you say, Bucke is a scientist, not a doctor; he has had severe personal experiences—is an expert in questions involving

the mind—is in every sort of way a large man—liberal, devoted, far-seeing. I especially owe him so much,—Oh, so much."

A short note from Bucke, he described as "a whiff of fresh air from the north." In sending a return message, he added: "Doctor is the king-pin." One day there was no letter from Bucke; "I get to look for Bucke as I look for my breakfast," he said.

"COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS"

In May, 1894, Dr. Bucke read before the American Medico-Psychological Association in Philadelphia, a paper entitled, "Cosmic Consciousness." The thought had been long in his mind. The germinal idea is traceable in his two earlier books, "Man's Moral Nature," and "Walt Whitman."

In August, 1897, as president of the Psychological Section of the British Medical Association at Montreal, he further developed the thought in his presidential address on "Mental Evolution in Man."

Four years later the result of his researches on the subject was put before the world in a book entitled "Cosmic Consciousness; a Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind," of which a limited edition of 500 copies was printed from the type by Innes & Co., of Philadelphia, in 1901. As a specimen of the book-maker's art it is worthy of note. Its dignified format, quarto, on a specially good quality of paper, with wide margins and large clear-cut type, is an evidence of conscientious purpose and execution.

The term "cosmic consciousness" is derived from the east, signifying an elevated plane of consciousness associated with various psychic phenomena, including that known as "illumination." The author finds it exemplified in fourteen conspicuous instances, including the found-

ers of the three great religions, and in eleven other persons, viz.: Paul, Plotinus, Dante, Las Casas, John Yepes, Francis Bacon, Jacob Behmen, William Blake, Honoré de Balzac, Walt Whitman and Edward Carpenter. He adds thirty-five cases, "some of them lesser, imperfect and doubtful instances." These include Moses, Gideon, Isaiah, Socrates, Pascal, Spinoza, Swedenborg, Wordsworth, Finney, Pushkin, Emerson, Tennyson, Thoreau, Bucke himself, and Traubel. Collecting and comparing their recorded experiences, he finds sufficient data for a general induction. There are, he thinks, perceptible in the history of human consciousness, three distinct stages of evolution, simple consciousness, self consciousness and cosmic consciousness. "The prime characteristic of cosmic consciousness is, as its name implies, a consciousness of the cosmos, that is, of the life and order of the universe." With it occur, among other phenomena, an intellectual enlightenment or illumination, moral exaltation and a quickening of the moral sense, and withal "a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life, not a conviction that he shall have this, but the consciousness that he has it already." This position he supports by quoting in each case the words of the original records.

The theory is that this higher form of consciousness is at present making its appearance in the human race, that the comparatively few cases cited are forerunners of a time, when by regular and orderly evolution the whole human

race will reach the higher plane, along which it will proceed on its path of further infinite development.

This conclusion is based upon the fact, which he considers established by the records, that there is a progressive increase throughout human history since the earliest recorded instances in the number of persons who have attained to cosmic consciousness.

Another physician, who was also a philosopher, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, hints at such a conclusion, in a remarkable passage in the "Professor at the Breakfast Table."

"I think of it," he says, referring to a similar intuition in his own experience and that of others, "as a disclosure of certain relations of our personal being to time and space, to other intelligences, to the procession of events, and to their First Great Cause I am disposed to consider our beliefs about such a possible disclosure rather as a kind of premonition of an enlargement of our faculties in some future state than as an expectation to be fulfilled for most of us in this life. Persons, however, have fallen into trances—as did the Reverend William Tennant, among many others—and learned some things which they could not tell in our human words."

Conversion, the "inner light," illumination, mysticism, are psychological facts pertaining to religion in its higher manifestations. In "Cosmic Consciousness" they are subjected by a scientist, who was at the same time a philosopher and a

mystic, to scientific collation and comparison, and to the inductive process of reasoning.¹

As a compilation of recorded cases, aside altogether from the theory based upon them, the book possesses a distinct value and is of remarkable interest.

The theory itself is attractive. Whether it is borne out by the facts cited, the reader must decide for himself. It is at any rate suggestive. As a contribution to the literature of the subject, it occupies a unique place. The ultimate conclusions, if a consensus should be arrived at, will be of inestimable moment to the human race. Among other results will be, perhaps, a final reconciliation of the long struggle between science and religion.

In the mountains of Montana, more than a year before the book went to press, the author's eldest son, Maurice, had been thrown from his vehicle in a runaway accident, dashed against a rock, and instantly killed. He was thirty-one years of age, but had already reached eminence in his profession, that of a mining engineer. A British Columbia paper described him as "a man of exceptional attainments, genial, courteous, pure and thoroughly incorruptible." To the dead son, the volume is dedicated. There are few more pathetic words in all literature. Few sons ever had so noble an epitaph. But the bitter

¹ P. D. Ouspensky in his "Tertium Organum" (1920) quotes copiously from Bucke and comments interestingly on his conclusions.

pain is not the last word. The confident assurance of speedy reunion sustains and consoles. Then the great mystery of death, sorrow and suffering, will be solved. "We shall clearly see that all were parts of an infinite plan, which was wholly wise and good." Those who would know the intensity of the religious sentiment which dominated the soul of Richard Maurice Bucke will read the tender and beautiful words of the dedication with admiration as well as sympathy.

According to Bucke, cosmic consciousness is a nascent faculty, showing itself principally in exalted human personalities, with exceptional development of all the ordinary human faculties, with exceptional physique, beauty of build and carriage, exceptionally handsome features, exceptional health, exceptional sweetness of temper, exceptional magnetism, and exceptional moral nature.

An interesting feature of the book is the manner in which the author's expert knowledge of alienism is brought in to illustrate the development and devolution of function. Devolution being most active in the latest forms, insanity and genius develop side by side in increasing ratio, as the natural concomitant of the rapid evolution of mind, which distinguishes the Aryan race. It is the price we pay for progress. The possessors of the newer consciousness are not insane. This is shown by an examination of the distinguishing characteristics of insanity. His treatment of the subject is always frank, sincere and reverent.

The entire edition of "Cosmic Consciousness" was sold within a short time.¹ One of the most eminent authorities, Professor William James, wrote Dr. Bucke an appreciative letter from which the following extracts will be of interest:

"I believe that you have brought this kind of consciousness 'home' to the attention of students of human nature in a way so definite and un-escapable that it will be impossible henceforward to overlook it, or ignore it, or pooh-pooh it entirely away. For psychology and religion, that seems to me a very high service indeed But my total re-action on your book, my dear Sir, is that it is an addition to psychology of first rate importance, and that you are a benefactor of us all."

¹ A second edition was printed. A third edition has now been issued (1923) by Messrs. E. P. Dutton & Co.

CONCLUSION

Death came suddenly to Dr. Bucke on the 19th February, 1902. He and Mrs. Bucke had dined and spent the evening with friends in the city.¹ After dinner, the gentlemen of the party, four in number, all of them university men, discussed the question of the cyphers and the Baconian authorship, with special reference to the Doctor's application of Bacon's cypher. His book was ready for publication, and was to appear in June, when the particulars would be disclosed. The general question was debated with friendly freedom. The Doctor, in his customary buoyant spirits, was at his best. Argument, illustration, apt quotation, treasures new and old from the wonderful stores of his memory, were presented to listeners, who admired whether they agreed with his conclusions or not.

The party rejoined the ladies for a brief moment before the cutter called to take Mrs. Bucke and himself to their home east of the city. Addressing one from a neighbouring city, he inquired particularly about her six children, naming each in turn. He had last seen them at their home five years before. Surprise was expressed at the minuteness of his recollection, as he asked to be remembered to the young people. But it

¹The hosts were his Honour Judge Talbot Macbeth and Mrs. Macbeth. The guests were Dr. and Mrs. Bucke; Mr. F. P. Betts, K.C., and Mrs. Betts; and Mr. and Mrs. James H. Coyne, of St. Thomas.

was characteristic of the man to be specially interested in children, and he did not easily forget them. In a few courteous words he took leave of host and hostess, and of the other guests.

The night was intensely cold, the sky clear, the moon nearly at its full, the stars shining with the steely glitter of a Canadian night in February, the snow crisp under foot. Going out into the night, he stopped to exclaim in admiration of the beauty of the sky. Driving home, he spoke of the pleasure the evening had given him, and warmly of the friends he had met. In a few minutes he was at home, but could not resist the desire to go out once more to look at the night and the stars. On the verandah, he slipped, struck his head against a pillar, and dropped lifeless to the floor. And so, in the prime of vigour, while the eye was not dimmed, nor his natural force abated, he "fell on death," and was reunited to the son, who had gone before.

His decease called forth many expressions of appreciation and of sorrow.

The London *Free Press*, in referring to his death, gave an interesting description of his appearance, which is worth reproducing:

"The Asylum Superintendent was a familiar figure down town. He was known, at least by sight, to nearly everyone. His personality was so markedly picturesque as to attract attention. The kindly face, full of strong character, the flowing beard, streaked with gray and white, the very

build of the well-proportioned, well-preserved man of sixty odd years, was certain to bring notice. Those who knew Dr. Bucke were proud of the fact. To know was to admire and esteem."

Dr. T. J. W. Burgess, in the paper already cited, adds: "In appearance Dr. Bucke was one of the most picturesque personalities in the ranks of the American Medico-Psychological Association. His commanding presence, his massive head, his keen, searching eyes and prominent nose, his face, every line of which carried the stamp of intellectual force, his flowing beard covering the *négligé* linen shirt, his silvery locks showing below the broad-brimmed, gray, slouch hat, and his grey tweeds, made him a strikingly conspicuous and original figure. His manner was plain but dignified, his language, clear and in speaking he attracted the attention of his hearers no less by the matter of his remarks than by his personal appearance.

"During his asylum career, Dr. Bucke evinced wonderful ability in the management of the insane, his constant endeavour being to care for the interests confided by the Province to his charge intelligently, faithfully and economically. As an administrator he had few superiors, and those who knew him well will ever bear witness to his singularly clear judgment in all relating to hospital affairs. He had long been regarded as one of the leading authorities on the subject of mental disease, and his services as an expert were sought in most important cases where sanity was in question. In these his wide knowledge of medicine

and of human nature always showed to advantage, his opinions always commanding the attention and respect alike of judge and jury. . . . Sadly shall we miss the sight of his picturesque, Whitmanic garb, and face full of strong character, the sound of his bluff, cheery voice, and the hearty grasp of his hand—and not one of us but will fervently echo the wish—'O, for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still.'"

"By his demise Canada has lost one of her foremost minds, this Association one of its most valued members, and, saddest of all, his family a devoted husband and father. Peace to his ashes." "He rests from his labours, and his works do follow him."

In a paper published in the American Journal of Insanity, Dr. C. K. Clarke observes: "It is impossible to judge him by ordinary standards, so great a part did individuality play in his make-up Whatever this remarkable man did, he did with his whole soul, and no one ever dreamed of attacking his sincerity of purpose, no matter how violently they differed from his conclusions In daily life he was simple, direct and honest, and loved nature as such a man is likely to do. The happiest days of each year were those spent at his summer retreat at Gloucester Pool in Muskoka."

Traubel mentions a conversation with Whitman, in which the latter described Bucke's optimism in the following words:

"Bucke has an immense faith in the people at large—immense—in civilization, in modern mechanical devices—miracles of power." "Do you say," asked Traubel, "that Bucke has more faith in the people than you have?" "I think he has," was the reply, "Bucke is an optimist—thoroughly so, without qualification or compromise—so are you—but I could hardly call myself that in the strictest sense of the word

An optimist he was in the fullest sense of the word. He radiated hope, courage and energy. He made many friends and kept them. Whether at home in the beautiful grounds surrounding the great institution, which he administered with such signal success, or at "Liberty Hall," his summer island-residence in Gloucester Pool, his domestic life was ideal in its simplicity, its sincerity, its atmosphere of affection, ease and joyous freedom.

"He was a man, take him for all in all
We shall not look upon his like again."

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