



Whitman: Unrecorded notes on health

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ON THE BACK COVER:

WHITMAN: UNRECORDED NOTES ON HEALTH.—Written in pencil on a scrap of paper, 7¼ x 5½ inches, is an unknown piece of prose of just the sort that Edward F. Grier would have included under “Health” in his edition of Walt Whitman’s *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 6:2245–2259:

—The *main object* henceforth to cultivate a *perfect personal* [*personnel* written above]
—get the blood, stomach, bowels in good condition—*perfect condition*—& *keep them so, uniformly*[,] the mind clear & equable.

—Become indeed a *serene, clear, healthy*, [four words underlined twice in ink; *p* in *perfect* and *personal* also in ink]

Gay-hearted man [in ink, underlines and pointed fingers, in pencil, for emphasis]

Do good to the utmost extent of means—

Kind demeanor—affectionate gentle words—give liberally—give, give, give

As can be seen in the reproduction on the back cover (with the kind permission of the Feinberg Collection), the writing is of a mature Whitman; and, furthermore, he refers to “a really GAY-HEARTED MAN” in *Good-Bye My Fancy*, published in 1891. Whitman was obsessed with health, with dozens of such references throughout his prose (“bygone atmospheres of perfect health” in the 1876 Preface; and “The master sees greatness and health in being part of the mass” in *Democratic Vistas*).

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WILLIAM WHITE