Whitman’s image has often been used in advertising everything from pencils to cigars. This image appeared on the cover of an advertising booklet for a drug company, Menby & James Ltd., Coldharbour Lane, London, in the early twentieth century. The back cover of the booklet gives details of Whitman’s medical problems and discusses the results of his autopsy. The text also sets the scene of the cover image: a visit to the poet by the physician William Osler, then a professor of clinical medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, who had been sent to see the poet by Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke. The image portrays “the patient’s room at 328 Mickle Street” and how “the floor, chairs, and table were littered with books, manuscripts, newspapers, and ‘mysterious-looking literary bundles tied up with stout strings.’” Inside the booklet are advertisements for various brands of treatment drugs—Pyridium, Pendex, Eskamel, Edrisal—produced by Menby & James. The image is reproduced from the collections of the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester.
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Front Cover: Facsimile of the frontispiece of the 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass / Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, The University of Iowa Libraries