

in our ear:—"Long have I listened for the voice, but at last I have heard it. It is as yet a wilderness voice, but it speaks with no uncertain sound. I know by heart the old songs and the old voices; this is the voice of the Poetry of the Future"—and he stoops to breathe low the name. After him Robert Buchanan, who says:—"I know the music of the past, and of the present, and of them I weary. I have heard the echo of the 'yet to be' and the singing has soothed me. I come to celebrate the singer of the future,"—he too breathes low the name. Nor does each whisper differently. It is true that Swinburne has leapt the gulf between the old and new, drawing with him the thread of Victor Hugo's reputation; but his position as a critic has gained nothing by this display of agility as a literary acrobat. We turn with more respect to Rossetti and Buchanan, whose judicial utterances have gained them a wide reputation in the field of letters. When they announce to the world that its new poet has come and that his name is Walt Whitman, we are bound to listen with reverence due to what they would say of the new divinity.

First, then, for Mr. Rossetti's opinion. He says that Walt Whitman "occupies at the present moment a unique position on the globe, and one which, even in past times, can have been occupied by only an infinitesimally small number of men. He is the one who entertains and professes respecting himself the grave conviction that he is the actual and prospective founder of a new poetic literature, and a great one—a literature proportional to the material vastness and the unmeasured destinies of America. He believes that the Columbus of the Continent, or the Washington of the States, was not more truly than himself the patron and founder and upbuilder of this America."

In this large-hearted estimate Walt Whitman would probably concur. In my copy of his works I find the following, often reiterated throughout the book with varying phraseology:—

"See, projected through time,

For me an audience interminable,
Successions of men, Americanos, a hundred millions:
With faces turned sideways or backward toward me to listen,
With eyes retrospective towards me."

"Americanos! conquerors! marches humanitarian;
Foremost! Century marches! Libertad! March!
For you a programme of chants!"

"In the year 80 of the States,
My tongue, eve y atom of my blood, formed from this soil, this
air,
Born here of parents born here, from parents the same, and
their parents the same,
I, now thirty-six old, in perfect health, begin,
Hoping to cease not till death."

In another place we find:—

"For your life adhere to me;
Of all men of the earth, I only can unloose you and toughen
you.
None have understood you, but I understand you.
I have the idea of all, and am all, and believe in all.
Within me latitude widens, longitude lengthens."

"I celebrate myself,"

Here is a short summary of what Mr. Rossetti has said about this prophet of the new cult: "His poem is, *par excellence*, the modern poem. . . . It forms incomparably the *largest* performance of our period in poetry. . . . He breaks with all precedent. . . . His work is practically certain to stand as archetypal for many future poetic efforts. The entire book may be called the pæan of the natural man. . . . This most remarkable poet is the founder of *American* poetry, rightly to be called, and the most sonorous poetic voice of the tangibilities of actual and prospective democracy. . . . I sincerely believe him to be of the order of *great* poets, and by no means of pretty good ones. . . . I believe that Whitman is one of the huge, as yet mainly unrecognized, forces of our time

—privileged to evoke, in a country hitherto still asking for its poet, a fresh, athletic and American poetry, and predestined to be traced up to by generation after generation of believing and ardent disciples. . . . His voice will one day be potential or magisterial wherever the English language is spoken—this is to say, in the four corners of the earth, and in his own American hemisphere, the uttermost avatars of democracy will confess him not more their announcer than their inspirer."

Hear also what Mr. Buchanan says, likewise condensed: "Walt Whitman is already exercising on the youth of America an influence similar to that exercised by Socrates over the youth of Greece, or by Raleigh over the young chivalry of England. In a word, he has become a *Sacer vates*—his ministry is admitted by palpable live disciples. . . . We are in concert with those who believe his to be a genuine ministry, large in its spiritual manifestations, and abundant in capabilities for good. . . . He professes to sow the first seeds of an indigenous literature by putting in music the fleshly yearnings of the cosmical man. . . . He sees in the American future the grandest realization of centuries of idealism. . . . Thoughts crowd so thick upon him that he has no time to seek their artistic equivalent; he utters his thoughts in any way, and his expressions gain accidental beauty from the glamour of his sympathy. . . . He is inspired. . . . In actual living force, in grip and muscle, he has no actual equal among contemporaries. He is the voice of which America stood most in need. . . . He is the clear forerunner of the great American poet, long longed for, often prophesied."

Against these words who dare lift up his voice? If he dared, he might not for want of breath. But too much space has already been occupied. In a future number we hope to add a few specimens of Walt Whitman's poetry.

J. O. MILLER.

THE RESCUE: SKETCHED FROM LIFE.

We found the old gentleman quite talkative that evening. He sat, coatless, in his stiff old yellow arm-chair, leaning far back, with his feet perched comfortably on the back of the great kitchen stove, his pipe in his mouth, and an air of indescribable self-satisfaction overspreading his face. It was thus we delighted to discover him, Fred and I, for at such times we were always able, with a little management, to draw out some queer old yarn, told in a dry, drawling, half-humorous fashion, of the toilsome days gone by.

"It was back in the thirties," he begins, after considerable encouragement. "It's a good long time back, boys, but I kin remember it like yesterday. I was a small kid then; along about ten year old, I should judge. The night it happened was a terror, one of those cold onpleasant ones, when you hear the wind, not blowin' a good honest blast, but comin' sneakin' down the chimley and round the corners, as though it would like to hurt you, an' couldn't. Well, I'd been sent to bed in the room off the kitchen there, the same old place; and mother, she set here just where I am now, (only we had no stove in those days, only the fireplace yonder) rockin' the baby—that's Jim, fifty years old come New Year's. The old man set for a while talkin' to mother an' watchin' her knit an' rock, knit an' rock to the tune of the old kitchen clock. Then he got up an' took down the lantern from its peg. By and bye, I heard the smack of his lips as he kissed mother, for he thought a deal o' the old woman, though you mayn't see why, an' the click o' the lock as he opened the door an' went out to see that everything was right for the night. We could hear him tramp, tramp across the stoop, and then all was quiet an' we couldn't hear nothin' but the wind whistlin' dreary-like outside, and the old logs blazin' and cracklin' up the fire place, and the clock tickin' and the cradle rockin', and mother hummin' some sweet old song, just as cheerful as if she was back in her English home, instead of here in a log house in the middle of the bush.

"After a spell I thought I heard a queer cry outside.