The Breakers.

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wraapt in the purpose of accomplishing the four ruling ideas of his life; and
he deviated not from the path he had chosen.

His chief contests were with Henry IV. of Germany. At last, when
Henry, in the height of his wickedness and folly, demanded that he should
descend from the papal chair, which he averred he had usurped, Gregory
excommunicated him. The horrors of excommunication were felt by Henry
in their full force. He was even deserted by nearly all his adherents. They
dared not drink to the king, for “in the clanking of their goblets they heard
the re-echoing of the dreaded excommunication.” Thus abandoned, he de-
determined to sue for forgiveness. He performed the renowned journey to
Canossa on foot, and unattended. The king, and the descendant of kings,
climbed the snowy Alps, was lowered in Lombardy by peasants’ hands, and
waited, bare-headed and bare-footed, three days in the bitter cold to obtain
the forgiveness of the carpenter’s son.

And when he had obtained it, it availed him nothing. He was not rein-
stated in his former rights, but, by his humiliation, he had cast off even the
few followers that had clung to him. Goaded by such treatment, his cha-
acter suddenly assumed a new and singular energy. He gathered together
what army he could, and, in seven years from his humiliation at Canossa,
he entered Rome in triumph.

The noble Gregory was banished. Confined to his stronghold in Salermo,
he could look out upon the world, seeming, as yet, unchanged by his labors.
His last words are expressive of his disappointed hopes. As he looked from
his window over the fields, which were just assuming the verdure of spring,
he said, “I have loved justice, and hated iniquity, and I, too, die an exile.”
His attendants turned to comfort him; but his spirit had departed.

And had he lived in vain? Was the seed he had sown to bring forth no
harvest? No. The seed he had scattered had rigorously taken root, although
as yet it had not sprung forth. Let us look at the condition of affairs a few
years after his death, and we see Henry the Fourth dying of cold and hunger
on a door step. The supremacy of Rome was acknowledged, the church was
free from simony and marriages of priests—the work of Gregory was ac-
complished!

Like Gregory must every one labor who would produce great results.
Like him he may descend to the grave without seeing the fruit of his toil;
but his labors shall succeed like his, if his motives be as pure or his toil as
incessant.

THE BREAKERS.

The breakers of time are the rock-based islands standing in the sea of
life. The rapid currents setting in from the icy coasts of disappointment,
and the shores of pride, with the storms raised by passion’s burning sun,
often drive upon these breakers the vessels freighted with human beings and human hopes. The foaming, fluctuating currents of popular opinion sometimes set towards these, and dash with relentless fury the burdens of their angry bosoms upon the reef-bound shores.

The foliage of a sweetly scented flower may conceal the poisonous serpent; the hush of winds may precede a tempest; a country, smiling in its varied plenty and romantic scenery, may lie in fancied security above the pent-up and struggling powers of an earthquake. So the rovers on life's sea may promise themselves peace, safety, and glory, and then soon be wrecked on these foam-fringed islands; some of which, to the distant beholder, present nature in her garb of beautiful scenery.

A young gentleman of fortune embarks in the gaudy skiff of his father's patrimony. He shoots swiftly by the shores and landmarks of boyhood; and, forsaking the rudder of economy, gives himself up to the oarsmen of extravagance. With gay companions and pleasant winds, he sails at will over the slightly ruffled bosom of the deep. The song, and the music, and the whirlings of the dance delight him. He rejoices in the smiles of merry-cheeked Mirth, and says, "To feast and be merry are the two cardinal virtues." He casts out the well-baited, golden fish-hooks; but, instead of catching delicious trout, hauls in the slippery eels, which slip from his grasp, and leave only their slime behind. Perhaps he loves the rosy liquid, whose bright glow is often as deceptive as the hectic flush on the consumptive's cheek. Poor fellow! "Oft in the stilly night" the boat flies up and strikes him on the head; or, miser-like, he grasps at the stars, supposing them to be gems pendent from night's concave; and then these stars commence their wild dance on the blue pavement of the sky, while all things else are spinning round in endless revolutions. Yet on he speeds, in frolic and fun, until the startling cry, "Breakers ahead," comes too late; the frail skiff is wrecked; and the merry-hearted, reckless sailor is swept away to the ghostly regions, hid from mortal view by gloomy clouds that beetle toward heaven, like dark mountains on dark mountains piled.

Vicissitude rules this sea, Progression the limitless ocean beyond. Here storm follows quick upon storm. Calms and tempests alternate. Around the breakers, the ceaseless dashings of the waves utter their melancholy music; and toward them a vessel is moving. Her prow is decked with the spoils of vanquished navies; her flag, indicative of sovereignty, waves proudly in the breeze; her captain swears, in the pride of his heart, to sweep the sea of every rival, and sail in triumph to the harbor of universal empire. Soon the sharks, those minions of power, anxious for the fruits of battle, gather themselves together, to follow in the wake. Now onward, like some ponderous engine of destruction, moving with a wide wasting power, she bears down upon the slightly built craft, and more stately vessels; and yet onward, as a machine directed by the genius of Death, goes crashing
among the fleets, and beneath the troubled waters sinks them, laden with the hopes and liberties of men and nations.

Upon the breakers the terrible form of Destiny appears. Huge and moving shadows are seen; for, in the iron framework of Necessity, is placed the deep sounding loom of Time, which fails not in its ceaseless workings with the lapse of years. Destiny is weaving his fatal chords. The chords are finished; they are tied to the balls of Opportunity, which, thrown from the sling of Fate, swoop unerringly to their mark, and fasten to the empire ship. The decree of her doom has gone forth. Her sun of dominion rushes down the west, and hides beneath the wave; and now

"With one stride comes the dark;
With far heard whisper o'er the sea,
Off shoots the fate-bound bark."

Stern Destiny still tugs at the chords; and, as a war horse goaded to madness rushes to destruction, the empire ship dashes upon the rocks; her masts quiver, and timbers groan, with the shock. The waters part, and down, like a mass of lead, she sinks to a dark and slimy anchorage, there to be ranked with the unserviceable, while others, in her place, sail the sea, foremost and greatest.

It is thus that a nation, emerging from obscurity, receives power and dominion to act out a scene or a play in the world's great drama; and then, relapsing into obscurity, gives up its dominion to another, which fulfills its part, and passes away; so that Progress may march with ever-advancing steps to the earthly goal of man's destiny.

A THUNDER STORM.

I.
If there won't be a thunder storm, I'm blest!
The sun has hid his beams behind yon cloud
That hangs like night along the darkened west;
The cattle gather in a fearful crowd;
The summer landscape wears a pall-like shroud;
These signs doth nature give of coming strife,
Of wind, rain, lightning, thunder raging loud;
A war of elements, with fury rife,
Fiercer than cannon's roar, and drum, and screaming fife.

II.
The rain begins to fall in large, quick drops,
That patter on the thirsty earth; and mark!
How the uprising wind sways the tree tops;
And faintest flashes now illume the dark