

1849

A Thunder Storm

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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 frame work 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 illumine the dark

Sudden as smitten flint gives forth a spark;
 The clouds o'erspread the sky, the wind is up,
 Red light streams down from heaven to earth—and hark!
 The elements have drunk the raging cup,
 Snap, bang! the thunder yelpeth like a furious pup.

III.

And now the storm is at its highest pitch;
 The wind howls like a famished wolf aloof;
 Where'er the lightning strikes, it digs a ditch;
 The thunder shakes the shingles off the roof;
 And if the water were not fire proof,
 It certainly would burn, (as sure as gun
 Is iron, or cow has cloven hoof,)
 For the whole heaven is melted into one
 Vast sheet of liquid flame, that dazzles like the sun.

IV.

Nowhere in nature is there such a sight
 For the true Poet's "frenzy rolling eye."
 Clear, thought-winged flashes of celestial light
 Dart from the bosom of the roaring sky,
 And rive tough locust trees and hickory,
 Scattering them in a thousand different ways;
 And where the lightning-rod doth tower on high,
 A glittering star of brightest glory plays—
 It is Ben Franklin's crown, woven of heavenly rays.

V.

Great Ben! the thunder shouts, louder than seven-
 Teen thousand trumps, thy fame; for thou didst snatch
 "From kings the scepter, lightning from the heaven."
 Though baked among the yesty Yankee batch,
 Thy soul soared higher than an onion patch;
 Yet Benjamin, it has been source of wonder,
 And the solution of it I could never catch,
 Why thou, good soul, didst e'er *invent* harsh thunder;
 It surely was a thoughtless and unlucky blunder.

VI.

Peal after peal, and gust, and zigzag streak,
 And deafening sound, as if the sky had crashed
 Upon that mountain's thunder-shaken peak,
 From heaven's artillery have roared and flashed

For the last hour; and floods of rain have dashed,
Mingled with fire and hail, on all around;
And trees have bent, and window panes have smashed;
And men and houses would have bit the ground,
Had not Ben Franklin's storm-rod kept them safe and sound.

VII.

But look! the darkened sky is clearing off;
The heavens and earth seem both agreed to stop;
The thunder's growl is changed into a cough;
From their retreats the toads begin to hop;
The bright sun has sufficient space to pop
His warm beams on the earth, between the fleece
Of glowing clouds, and clean away the slop;
The elements have come to terms of peace,
And freshened nature looks once more as slick as grease.

THE EUROPEAN CRISIS.

It is impossible to look upon the present commotions of Europe, without being awe-struck with the tremendous crisis they are evidently hastening on. If any one, fifty years ago, had predicted that, in eighteen hundred and forty-nine, France would be a republic, and almost every nation in Europe endeavoring to imitate her example, he would have been looked upon as a madman. But it is even so! Almost every steamer brings tidings of a despotic government overthrown, and a blow struck for liberty. And the end is not yet!

But, some think that all will end in anarchy and confusion—that these commotions will result in the re-enactment of the scenes of another Waterloo, and serve but to fix more deeply the despotism that produced them. And how can such sentiments be entertained by any true American? Do we not see, in the revolution that has lately agitated France, the same elements that constituted the glorious revolution to which we are indebted for the privileges that we now enjoy? This great struggle is a contest between truth and error—the oppressor and the oppressed. Our fathers fought the same battle; and, looking at the difficulties they had to encounter, and the glory they acquired, can we not bid France, On! and in the language of her beautiful hymn, exclaim,

“Ye sons of freedom, wake to glory!
Hark! hark! what myriads bid you rise!”

This great movement will not, cannot fail. The people are beginning to learn their power. In a moment they have snapped asunder, as weeds, the