

THE VALE TO YOU, TO ME THE HEIGHTS.

A FABLE.

[Bk. III. vi., October, 1846.]

A lion camped beside a spring, where came the Bird

Of Jove to drink:

When, haply, sought two kings, without their courtier herd,

The moistened brink,

Beneath the palm--they always tempt pugnacious hands--

Both travel-sore;

But quickly, on the recognition, out flew brands

Straight to each core;

As dying breaths commingle, o'er them rose the call

Of Eagle shrill:

"Yon crownèd couple, who supposed the world too small,

Now one grave fill!

Chiefs blinded by your rage! each bleachèd sapless bone

Becomes a pipe

Through which siroccos whistle, trodden 'mong the stone

By quail and snipe.

Folly's liege-men, what boots such murd'rous raid,

And mortal feud?

I, Eagle, dwell as friend with Leo--none afraid--

In solitude:

At the same pool we bathe and quaff in placid mood.

Kings, he and I;

For I to him leave prairie, desert sands and wood,

And he to me the sky."

H.L.W.

CHILDHOOD.

("L'enfant chantait.")

[Bk. I. xxiii., Paris, January, 1835.]

The small child sang; the mother, outstretched on the low bed,
With anguish moaned,--fair Form pain should possess not long;
For, ever nigher, Death hovered around her head:
I hearkened there this moan, and heard even there that song.

The child was but five years, and, close to the lattice, aye
Made a sweet noise with games and with his laughter bright;
And the wan mother, aside this being the livelong day
Carolling joyously, coughed hoarsely all the night.

The mother went to sleep 'mong them that sleep away;
And the blithe little lad began anew to sing...
Sorrow is like a fruit: God doth not therewith weigh
Earthward the branch strong yet but for the blossoming.

NELSON R. TYERMAN.

SATIRE ON THE EARTH.

("Une terre au flanc maigre.")

[Bk. III. xi., October, 1840.]

A clod with rugged, meagre, rust-stained, weather-worried face,
Where care-filled creatures tug and delve to keep a worthless race;
And glean, begrudgedly, by all their unremitting toil,
Sour, scanty bread and fevered water from the ungrateful soil;
Made harder by their gloom than flints that gash their harried hands,
And harder in the things they call their hearts than wolfish bands,
Perpetuating faults, inventing crimes for paltry ends,
And yet, perversest beings! hating Death, their best of friends!
Pride in the powerful no more, no less than in the poor;
Hatred in both their bosoms; love in one, or, wondrous! two!
Fog in the valleys; on the mountains snowfields, ever new,
That only melt to send down waters for the liquid hell,
In which, their strongest sons and fairest daughters vilely fell!
No marvel, Justice, Modesty dwell far apart and high,
Where they can feebly hear, and, rarer, answer victims' cry.
At both extremes, unflinching frost, the centre scorching hot;
Land storms that strip the orchards nude, leave beaten grain to rot;
Oceans that rise with sudden force to wash the bloody land,
Where War, amid sob-drowning cheers, claps weapons in each hand.

And this to those who, luckily, abide afar--

This is, ha! ha! a star!