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### THUNDER.

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SPIRIT of strength ! to whom in wrath 'tis given,  
To mar the earth and shake its vasty dome,  
Behold the sombre robes whose gathering folds,  
Thy secret majesty conceal. Their skirts  
Spread on mid air move slow and silently,  
O'er noon-day's beam thy sultry shroud is cast,  
Advancing clouds from every point of heaven,  
Like hosts of gathering foes in pitchy volumes,  
Grandly dilated, clothe the fields of air,  
And brood aloft o'er the empurpled earth.  
Spirit of strength ! it is thy awful hour ;  
The wind of every hill is laid to rest,  
And far o'er sea and land deep silence reigns.

Wild creatures of the forest homeward hie,  
And in their dens with fear unwonted cower;  
Pride in the lordly palace is put down,  
While in his humble cot the poor man sits  
With all his family round him hushed and still,  
In awful expectation. On his way  
The traveller stands aghast and looks to heaven.  
On the horizon's verge thy lightning gleams,  
And the first utterance of thy deep voice  
Is heard in reverence and holy fear.

From nearer clouds bright burst more vivid gleams,  
As instantly in closing darkness lost;  
Pale sheeted flashes cross the wide expanse  
While over boggy moor or swampy plain,  
A streaming cataract of flame appears,  
To meet a nether fire from earth cast up,  
Commingling terribly; appalling gloom  
Succeeds, and lo! the rifted centre pours  
A general blaze, and from the war of clouds,  
Red, writhing falls the embodied bolt of heaven.  
Then swells the rolling peal, full, deep'ning, grand,

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THUNDER.

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And in its strength lifts the tremendous roar,  
With mingled discord, rattling, hissing, growling;  
Crashing like rocky fragments downward hurled,  
Like the upbreaking of a ruined world,  
In awful majesty the explosion bursts  
Wide and astounding o'er the trembling land.  
Mountain, and cliff, repeat the dread turmoil,  
And all to man's distinctive senses known,  
Is lost in the immensity of sound.  
Peal after peal, succeeds with waning strength,  
And hushed and deep each solemn pause between.

Upon the lofty mountain's side  
The kindled forest blazes wide ;  
Huge fragments of the rugged steep  
Are tumbled to the lashing deep ;  
Firm rooted in his cloven rock,  
Crashing falls the stubborn oak.  
The lightning keen in wasteful ire  
Darts fiercely on the pointed spire,  
Rending in twain the iron-knit stone,  
And stately towers to earth are thrown.

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No human strength may brave the storm,  
Nor shelter skreen the shrinking form,  
Nor castle wall its fury stay,  
Nor massy gate impede its way :  
It visits those of low estate,  
It shakes the dwellings of the great,  
It looks athwart the vaulted tomb,  
And glares upon the prison's gloom.  
Then dungeons black in unknown light,  
Flash hideous on the wretches' sight,  
And strangely groans the downward cell,  
Where silence deep is wont to dwell.

Now eyes, to heaven up-cast, adore,  
Knees bend that never bent before,  
The stoutest hearts begin to fail,  
And many a manly face is pale ;  
Benumbing fear awhile up-binds,  
The palsied action of their minds,  
Till waked to dreadful sense they lift their eyes,  
And round the stricken corse shrill shrieks of  
horror rise.

the storm,  
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THUNDER.

99

Now rattling hailstones, bounding as they fall  
To earth, spread motley winter o'er the plain,  
Receding peals sound fainter on the ear,  
And roll their distant grumbling far away :  
The lightning doth in paler flashes gleam,  
And through the rent cloud, silvered with his rays,  
The sun on all this wild affray looks down,  
As, high enthroned above all mortal ken,  
A higher Power beholds the strife of men.

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