

## THE STORM.

Cool breezes were blowing. White clouds were sailing. And boats were riding on the surfs bound for the vast unknown, while the mild breeze was tempting the leaves of the forest to join the clouds across the deep and the heap. The sky was clear. The scenery was beautiful. The water was calm. Everybody was busy but not in a hurry. Tranquillity ruled over the scene.

The peasants with their scythes were mowing the grass. The bullocks with their carts were carrying the reaped harvest to the granary. Little boys with their books were coming home from the school. And the aged folk sitting on the verandah in front after their daily nap with their hubble bubbles, were expecting their boys' return. But the birds by nature were still more active. They were hovering round and round high above. The talented larks were at a lonely height with their art. The cuckoos were on the green branches broadcasting their coo. The black crows with their dark minds were pecking one another with their 'natural chorus. And while the little sparrows, which have no tune to harp at anything to quarrel for, were twittering on the 'straw-built sheds' the quiet pigeons were circling round in silence.

Suddenly the cool breeze began to blow moist. The white clouds assumed dark colour. Darkness pervaded the sky. The dark sky canopied the scene. At this sudden change the river puffed up with rage. The water rose high with hundred and one foamy hands to combat this darkness out. The larks got interrupted in their music. The crows got perturbed. The sparrows were hushed up, the larks flew down to their nests. The cuckoos hid themselves behind the green foliage. The crows took shelter in the branches and under the house

roofs. The sparrows stealthily dropped into the rooms while the doves greeted the pigeons in.

Gradually the loud din of the winds came to be echoed and re-echoed from the blue. And it was followed by swarthy storms of dust, hissing fast along the sky. The winds shook the trees. They rolled on the water. They talked to themselves on the thatched roofs of the houses. On the other hand the dusts hoodwinked the creatures as if a miracle was going to be performed. And really the anticipated miracle was achieved in no time. Meanwhile the deep-mouthed storm had driven to the scene and it began to puff vehemently.

A regular guerilla ensued. The clouds, in the meantime, cleft and torrents flowed down to the earth incessantly. The storm began to harass trees and the houses to quit their places but the trees and the houses insisted on their remaining at their posts. The little following of the storm bent the trees once to the right and then to the left by their slaps. And at last some yielded naturally. They fell prostrate on the ground. While some of the houses and trees that had stood the ravages of time these long years could not probably say a resolute 'No' to the seductive temptation of joining the plunder. They followed the wheels of the storm to an unknown distance. On the other hand the river was unable even after a series of leaps with her hands groping about to trace out the culprit who incurred her displeasure. So the river, desperate as she became, ran breadth-wise overflowing either bank to spot out the absconder. She ran and ran. But alas! she could not know that the storm on its chariot had long fled away.

Thus, however, these devastative works were all finished. But ah! the sky, which sheltered the marauders could not get itself scot-free. The clouds with their dark armours were still pacing up and down the sky. Perhaps their lust was not satisfied. They were looking for more.

The birds who were "ever in motion, ever at rest," got tired of this dark repose in the lonely corners. They soon burst into boundless evening-free. But alas! the boats below were no more to pursue them. They dived deep into the river long ago to escape the cruel hands of the storm. Nor even there were the packs of ginned cotton to track them in the blue. Still more to the surprise of all, even from the far away sky, Apollo with his ever-hot ball vanished. But happily Diana appeared on the scene with her stained silver-plate. Her magic charm dispelled the gloom of the sky but the world was left to darkness to mourn over the losses in silence.

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### MRS. BROWNING IN MY HUMBLE VISION.

Of all the Victorian poets, if not of all the English poets, I like Mrs. Browning most. Her great passion, her soft tenderness, her sensitive and loyal heart, her rosy girl-hood, her invalid womanhood, her solitary sofa, her beautiful story, her womanly love and magnificent husband, her devotion and her immortal "Sonnets from the Portugese";—all these things together have awarded her a very lofty position in my heart. She has a world of her own. It is always full of faith, love truth and affection. Her strong humanity as well as the artistic way in which she puts it in her poetry, I read, hear, follow and am charmed away with at last. Forgive me, my reader, if I am unable to see her with a critic's eye. Whatever her position in literature may be, she has a life indeed and this burning life of her weak heart never allowed her to completely give