

Literary Department.

The World's Greatest Poems.

II. THE BOOK OF JOB.

The first article of this series being, necessarily, more or less introductory, may, possibly, have failed to emphasize, sufficiently, that which should furnish a key to the right understanding of them all: namely, how each of these great masterpieces gives expression to that language of the soul which, under many forms and names, is, radically, one and constant.

In none, perhaps has it found so fully and adequate an utterance as in the Book of Job, in none is it so clearly the language of the human soul brought face to face with God. It is as such, at least, that we shall treat of it, leaving extraneous questions, as of date and authorship, to those whom they concern.

Us, surely, they concern not, would we but see it so, "Search not," says Thomas à Kempis, "who said this or that, but mark what is spoken." And elsewhere: "There be many things, which to know doth little or nothing profit the soul." Nor, says he, shall we be blamed, at judgment, for such ignorance. The authorship of Job, or of the Pentateuch, is not among matters to make "wise unto salvation." More: there are those of whom it is said: "Thou shalt hide them in Thy Tabernacle from the strife of tongues."

Let us leave, then, to the higher critics, questions of authorship and date, and rather mark what is spoken than who may—or not—have said it. Whoever did, was face to face with God, where, first or last, we must all stand "*solus cum Solo*," even in this life.

"By a secret judgment," says the Beloved to His disciple, Thomas à Kempis, "have I seen fit to try each beforehand." Such trial may be like to that of Job.

But, for a task like this, a guide is needful. Whom shall we