

## GOD IN NATURE.

In the beginning God spake; and the world from chaos sprang.

What matter if a day or six, or twice six thousand years, The measure of the time? With God 'twas as a thought, He counteth not the days by suns, nor years by seasons' years:

Summer and winter marks he not, by heat or cold, Yet 'twas from his first order thus it came to pass, And so from age to age the wheel revolves, and primal order reigns:

Yet, what is God? And whence the power that sways and governs all?

Go ask the wise, and hear him sagely tell Of power and goodness: an Alpha and Omega; A spirit unseen and all seeing, alwise and everlasting. So praise! We knew it all before; yet know we naught. We know the sun comes forth, and gives us light by day, The moon by night; but whence the power that guides them in their course?

What, say the wise? 'Tis Nature's law the universe that sways.

Ah, yes, 'tis Nature's laws. Whence Nature; where her birth?

Whence came she forth full robed: her author who? 'Tis God, Omnipotent and high, that sowed the seed, And nursed the tender buds, and oped the flowers. He made the rocks and everlasting hills, The earth is His, and all the fruits thereof.

The ocean vast is but a speck to Him that notes the sparrows' fall;

And numbers every hair, and sees our very thoughts. The earth and heavens proclaim His boundless will. He speaks in thunder, and in the whispering breeze.

The storm and tempests tell His wondrous power. Their author creeping insects know and feel.

All these are God's; of Him all things are parts: And of the world not land or sea alone, Nor rocks, nor mighty hills, nor streams that ever onward flow.

For things that are, were not; and those that are, not were.

Streams have run dry, and trickling fountains failed. The quaking earth has changed, and fiery mountains ceased to burn—

Another, bursting forth, spreads desolation dire, Where yesterday was peace and rest and quiet homes.

There is no changeless thing; and yet we note no change. As days, and weeks, and months roll on,

We see ourselves as yesterday we were; but what of years? The faithful sun reflects not now the same;

The shadows change; so things of beauty fade, And they are joys no more, but loathsome and abhorred.

But other joys are born, and other beauties live; The trees, the grass, the flowers, that in the beginning were not,

Now bloom and beautify the earth. God makes them all. But these come forth to-day, nor bloom in years ago;

Nor in the beginning were: since some their color change, And grow in beauty by the cunning hand of man.

True, God created man; to Him the glory all; He, the first cause, and last He was and is.

No flower puts forth without His power—no insects born. He spake. He speaks to-day, creating worlds as He has done before.

And ever will. Nor are they all complete, Though from His hand each atom perfect falls.

Ye wise go forth and tell the story still. Tell thoughtless children how it came to pass

Six days he labored and rested on the seventh. But through six thousand years no record lives.

Has God been idle since? We stop appalled and lose ourselves in thought.

Let reason guide us, and not our childhood's lore, For God has given us thought and reasoning powers.

Each day He to us speaks. We hear him in the breeze; We see Him in the trees, and in the starry sky;

In the rainbow arching high, and in the lowly flowers. He is an ever-changing God, yet changes ever less.

—*Philmore, in Rural Press.*

## WHAT BECAME OF "SAM."

It was generally supposed that Sam was what is called "deficient." As to his own family, they were sure of it; at all events, they treated him as if it were so. Not that they were unkind to him; on the contrary, they were all very fond of "poor old Sam," but it seemed to be taken for granted that whatever he said was not worth noticing, and almost everything he did was to be made fun of more or less. He was, in fact, the family butt, though shafts, were, as a rule, tipped with good nature so as not to hurt his feelings. Hardly ever did he attempt to say or do anything in serious earnest, since almost everything he did or said was treated as a sort of a joke.

There was one exception to this. Mothers always know best how to deal with the weak in the flock, and Sam's mother never laughed at him, and never despaired of him. "What is to become of Sam?" his father would say; "he'll never earn his own living," and his mother would quietly answer: "Wait a bit, my dear, there is more in him, perhaps, than we think,

but it wants to be drawn out, and I doubt if we are acting wisely in laughing at him as we do." She said "we," poor soul, but that was only her discreet way of putting it.

Now, Sam had a sister, Mary, of whom he was especially fond. Perhaps it was because she was the sister nearest to him in age, but it was more likely because she placed a little more confidence in him than the others did; it wasn't much, but it was more than he got from any of the rest.

He would do anything for Mary, and when a certain Mr. St. Leger in the neighborhood took a fancy to her, it was amusing to see how Sam resented the engagement. This Mr. St. Leger had lately come into the neighborhood—no one knew where from; but he had plenty of money and very agreeable manners, and was a general favorite with the Frere family. Sam, however, never liked him from the first, and when at length he became Mary Frere's accepted suitor, Sam's aversion to him became intense.

The day was fixed for the wedding, and the Sunday had arrived when, in deference to Mary's particular wish, though very much against Mr. St. Leger's inclination, the banns were to be published in church. The Freres were in their place—a great square pew in the front of the pulpit. The names were read out in due course. Mary was recovering from the electric shock of hearing them; the villagers were interchanging glances, some even cautiously rising a little to peep into the square pew when a voice was heard all over the church, saying, in a most emphatic way, "I forbid the banns."

Surprise was on every face, but it quickly gave way to the ludicrous as Sam was seen standing up in the middle of the pew, looking the clergyman steadily in the face, as much as to say, "There now, get over that if you can!" The clergyman was so amused that he had to rush on with the service to prevent any unseemly display, while Sam's kindred in the square pew were in every attitude of painfully restrained amusement.

And there he stood, unabashed and defiant, until his father plucked him by the arm and made him sit down. But none of them for a moment thought it was a very unaccountable freak of "poor old Sam's."

No sooner was the service over than he was assailed on all sides for an explanation. Two only were serious about it—his father and Mary.

"What is the meaning of this, sir," said his father sternly; "what could have possessed you to make yourself so ridiculous?"

"He has got a wife already," said Sam doggedly.

"Who has?" was the general exclamation.

"St. Leger."

"Who told you so?"

"Tom Tyler!"

Tom Tyler was the village letter carrier.

There was a shout of laughter at this piece of information.

"When did Tom Tyler tell you this?"

"Yesterday. He brought me a letter for Mrs. St. Leger."

Another shout of laughter greeted this; but Mary looked very grave, while her father said that, of course, the letter was for St. Leger's mother, of whom he had more than once spoken. So Sam was sharply rebuked for listening to Tom Tyler's idle tales, and told to hold his tongue. "You'll have St. Leger try his horse-ship across your shoulders, if you don't mind," cried his eldest brother, and they all laughed again; but Sam was very unlike himself and did not join in the laugh, but maintained a grave composure they had never noticed in him before.

Nor was it a laughing matter somewhere else. The news of that morning's interruption flew apace, with various additions and amendments. Thus improved upon, it reached the ears of Mr. St. Leger, who lived but a few miles off, and it created a profound sensation, so much so that, instead of spending the afternoon with the Freres, as expected, he took himself off and was never seen by them again. It was discovered that Tom Tyler's version had been correct after good riddance for Mary Frere;

but a heart trifled with and wronged can never quite recover itself.

For a time Sam was almost reverently treated at home. They felt the force of his simple explanation why he had chosen such a singular way of uttering his suspicions, that it was "because they would only have laughed at him if he had told them," and were a little ashamed of themselves. But the old habit revived after a while, as old habits, both family and personal, so easily do, and Sam's brains were held as cheap as ever, except by Mary, who was drawn to him more than ever, and by his mother, who never ceased to ponder in her heart, as only mothers do, the meaning of that display of firm intelligence and almost fierce affection.

"I'll tell you what it means," said her brother to Mrs. Frere one day when she was talking to him about it—he was a lawyer in London, old John Quicksett, of Gray's Inn, who could see a thing as shrewdly as most people—"it means this, that Sam has got a heart and a head, but his head is more out of the way than usual, and can only be got at through his heart, like an old-fashioned bedroom that can only be reached by going through another. Look here, sister, I like amazingly that story of the banns—it's grand. Not that there was anything clever in what he did, just the reverse; it might have been a most stupid mistake; but that is what takes my fancy so, the firmness of purpose, a far higher quality of mind than mere cleverness, that could make the poor fellow face everything he did for the sake of the sister he loved. There must be something in one who could run the gauntlet like that, when his heart was once fairly unlocked; and I think I have the key."

"I always thought so," cried Mrs. Frere, greatly excited.

"Well, let me try. I'll run away with Sam and make a lawyer of him. What do you say?"

The grinning was epidemic round the table after it was known that Sam was to be a lawyer. His brothers and sisters could hardly look at first without smiling; it did seem so droll, so absolutely contrary to every notion they entertained of him. Had he sat before them in full naval costume as Admiral of the Channel fleet, it would hardly have struck them as being more unlooked for and preposterous. Uncle John's presence saved Sam from collective bantering, though the old lawyer was too wise to make any fuss about the matter; but when Sam was alone with his brothers and sisters he had a hard time of it, though all was, as usual, in perfect good humor.

At first Sam had, of course, to go through the usual drudgery of a lawyer's office, in which, if it be possible for every one to shine, he certainly did not. His blunders were awful, and provoked the wrath or ridicule, as the case might be, of his fellow clerks who were all well seasoned and somewhat ancient men. But his uncle never found fault with him. The most he said when some frantic bungle was brought to his notice was, "Sam, do this over again; you know you can do it a great deal better than that." And, sure enough, it was done better the second time. In short, his uncle began with, and in spite of every discouragement, persevered in the plan of trusting him, and by degrees he found the more he trusted him the better he did, and the more he treated him as if there were something in him the more he got out of him. Had Sam nothing in him to begin with the plan could not have answered; but this was just what his uncle believed, namely, that there was something in him, but it had been systematically laughed down and set upon from superfluous consideration, and that it could be brought out by a total change of external influence and treatment. And now his powers began to show themselves and to expand, just as a shrub that has been stunted and blackened from want of room and uncongenial soil begins to throw out vigorous shoots when transplanted to ground that suits it and where it has space to grow.

"Sam," said Mr. Quicksett one day, "we shall all of us be away the whole afternoon, and must leave you in charge of the office. If that