

'By George!' cried the captain, with something like compunction in his tone, and rubbing his head with his handkerchief, 'I would rather have taken the rascals and had them decently hanged, than sent them to the bottom in this off-hand manner. You couldn't have made a better shot, Mr Brue, if you —'

A horrid yell, rising apparently from the very depths beneath the ship, stopped him in the middle of his speech. A boat glided out of the smoke, and, shooting under our bows, a dozen dark forms were seen springing from it to the side of our ship. But our precautions had been wisely taken, and were completely successful. No sooner did they touch the slippery vessel than most of them, with the most horrid blasphemies, fell back into the sea, snapping their pistols at us even after they were filled with water. At the same moment their boat, which had been completely riddled by our shot, filled and sunk to the bottom. Three only got upon deck, and were immediately overpowered and secured. Five more were with difficulty dragged out of the sea and disposed of in a like manner, one powerful fellow, however, was not so easily quelled. He had succeeded in getting one foot upon deck, when a young seaman, named Ralph, flew at him with the fierceness of a tiger. They closed, and after balancing a moment between the deck and the water, the pirate, who was much the heavier man, fell backwards overboard, dragging his antagonist with him. They both sunk, but soon rose again about four rods from the ship, clinging closely together. Then commenced a combat the most singular and appalling I had ever witnessed. No one on board seemed to think of devising means of assisting our champion. No one dared to fire upon the pirate; for so closely were they coiled together, so rapid were their evolutions, and so dim the light shed by the moon, that it was impossible to hit one without endangering the life of the other. At the commencement of the struggle, their efforts seemed to be aimed solely at drowning each other. They whirled about on the top of the water, dashing it about like wounded sharks. Both then sunk and were for a while lost to our sight. Presently they rose again, and exchanged thick and heavy blows, and closing with redoubled fury sunk again. Neglecting to use their weapons, which would have put a speedy end to the fray, they fought more like savage beasts of prey, bent on throttling each other, than like human beings.

'Shall we stand and see our man murdered?' exclaimed a voice from among the crew, it operated like magic to break the spell that had fallen upon us all.

'Clear away the boat there,' shouted the captain, and six men sprang to execute the order. Just then, after an effort of unusual fierceness, both of the combatants sunk. They remained out of sight so long, that the men who were letting down the boat suspended their operations, and we all stood breathless with uncertainty and anxiety awaiting their reappearance. At length, about thirty yards off, the waters parted; but only one man was seen to rise.

'Is it you, Ralph?' cried the captain, in a suppressed voice.

'Here is some of him, at least, on my knife-blade,' responded the freebooter, with the accent and laugh of a fiend; and springing nearly to his whole height out of the water, he threw the weapon with great force towards us. Another hollow laugh rung over the waters, and, on looking round, wide circles of ripples were seen moving on the face of the moonlit sea, as if some heavy body had just sunk into it. Vengeance was the tardy thought that now rushed on every heart. Some in the blinded fury of the moment, actually discharged their pieces into the centre of those waving eddies, without staying to reflect upon its utter uselessness. Others with their guns in readiness, and eyes glaring on the sea like panthers robbed of their prey, stood prepared to fire the moment he should show his head above the water. But he rose no more. The winged messengers of death that had been aimed at his life sped harmlessly over his head; and had it been possible to penetrate the secrets of the great deep, he might have been seen reposing peacefully on his sandy bottom by the side of his late antagonist. A sullen silence pervaded the ship. The men looked gloomily at each other, and with lowering brows on their helpless prisoners, as if a sufficient atonement had not been rendered for the life of their comrade. To one skilled in the language of the human countenance, it was evident that nothing but the restraint of discipline held them back from a summary act of vengeance and of crime that would have sunk them to a level with the pirates themselves. Judging of the feelings of the crew from their looks, or more probably from his own, and anxious to remove the temptation to evil, the captain ordered our eight prisoners to be stowed under the hatches, and they were accordingly tumbled in with very little ceremony. How many of this band of genuine desperadoes had been lost, we had no means of ascertaining; for our prisoners either did not understand French or English. But when they fired upon us, from twelve to sixteen men were visible, and the yell that followed our discharge was such as is never extorted from mortal man but by the pangs of the last agony. Six or eight then of the freebooters had certainly perished. What chance of success they might fancy that an open boat could have against a vessel of the size of ours, it completely bewildered us to imagine. They must either have been intoxicated, or in the situation of a beast of prey, whom the goading of hunger will impel to rush upon a foe from whose face he would otherwise have fled. Viewing it in either light, it was an act of the

most daring hardihood. The struggle had been fierce and boisterous, but it had passed. The ship was restored to her usual tranquillity, and was moving before a gentle breeze from the shore, and as slowly as scarcely to ruffle the face of the ocean.

From the Poetical Remains of the late Mrs. James Gray, in the Dublin University Magazine.

THE MOTHER'S FAITH.

"HARK how the wind is whistling, Mother,  
List to the driving rain;  
And, alas, to think that my gentle brother  
Is tossed on the stormy main."  
The mother raised her meek blue eye  
From the holy book to the stormy sky,  
And a moment's flush went o'er her brow  
As she thought of the boiling flood below.  
But she checked her human weakness well,  
And sighed for the heart that would rebel;  
And then she meekly spoke—"my love,  
I will not fear, there's a God above."

"But I have been to the garden, mother,  
And the vine is trailed and torn,  
One rose-tree crushed, and pale the other  
Droops like a thing forlorn;  
And oh! all night how the tall trees creaked,  
As if some fearful woe they shrieked."  
Again the mother's pale cheek burned,  
As she thought of him for whom she yearned;  
But she spoke again in holy trust,  
"The God I worship is good and just."

"But look at the tossing waves, mother,  
How they dash, and foam, and roar,  
And the wild winds howling almost smother  
Their echoings ashore."  
The mother looked to the ocean wild,  
And her heart grew sick for her absent child,  
And the strong prayer rose from that swelling  
heart—  
"My God, thy help and aid impart."

"Look, look to the path from the beach,  
mother,  
Some neighbour that must be—  
Oh, should he say mine only brother  
Is wrecked in that stormy sea."

But the mother's brow grew deeper flushed,  
And her very breath at her heart was hushed,  
And the light in her meek and trustful eye,  
Grew bright as a star in a frosty sky;  
Then over the cottage floor she sprang,  
And back the door on its hinges flung,  
And round her wet and weary boy  
She flung her arms in feverish joy.  
The gallant ship is all a wreck,  
But she hath fallen upon his neck;  
His hard-earned wealth is lost and gone,  
But the God of mercy hath spared her son.

From Hogg's Instructor.

THE CONSTANCY OF NATURE  
AND FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

BY DR. CHALMERS.

THE constancy of nature is taught by universal experience, and even strikes the popular eye as the most characteristic of those features which have been impressed upon her. It may need the aid of philosophy to learn how unvarying nature is in all her processes—how even her seeming anomalies can be traced to a law that is inflexible—how what might appear at first to be the caprices of her waywardness, are, in fact, the evolutions of a mechanism that never changes—and that the more thoroughly she is sifted and put to the test by the interrogations of the curious, the more certainly will they find that she walks by a rule which knows no abatement, and preserves with obedient footsteps in that even course from which the eye of strictest scrutiny has never yet detected one hairbreadth of deviation. It is no longer doubted by men of science that every remaining semblance of irregularity in the universe is due, not to the fickleness of nature, but to the ignorance of man—that her most hidden movements are conducted with uniformity as rigorous as fate—that even the fitful agitations of the weather have their principle—that the intensity of every breeze, and the number of drops in every shower, and the formation of every cloud, and all the occurring alternations of storm and sunshine, and the endless shiftings of temperature, and those tremulous varieties of the air which our instruments have enabled us to discover, but have not enabled us to explain—that still they follow each other by a method of succession, which, though greatly more intricate, is yet as absolute in itself as the order of the seasons, or the mathematical courses of astronomy. This is the impression of every philosophical mind with regard to nature, and it is strengthened by each new accession that is made to science. The more we are acquainted with her, the more we are led to recognise her constancy; and to view her as a mighty though complicated machine, all whose results are sure, and all whose workings are invariable.

But there is enough of patent and palpable regularity in nature, to give also to the popular mind the same impression of her constancy. There is a gross and general experience that teaches the same lesson, and that has lodged

in every bosom a kind of secure and steadfast confidence in the uniformity of her processes. The very child knows and proceeds upon it. He is aware of an abiding character and property in the elements around him—and has already learned as much of the fire, and the water, and the food that he eats, and the firm ground that he treads upon, and even of the gravitation by which he must regulate his postures and his movements, as to prove that, infant though he be, he is fully initiated in the doctrine that nature has her laws and ordinances, and that she continueth therein. And the proofs of this are ever multiplying along the journey of human observation: insomuch, that when we come to manhood, we read of nature's constancy throughout every department of the visible world. It meets us wherever we turn our eyes. Both the day and the night bear witness to it. The silent revolutions of the firmament give it their pure testimony. Even those appearances in the heavens at which superstition stood aghast, and imagined that nature was on the eve of giving way, are the proudest trophies of that stability which reigns throughout her processes—of that unswerving consistency wherewith she prosecutes all her movements. And the lesson that is thus held forth to us from the heavens above, is responded to by the earth below; just as the tides of ocean wait the footsteps of the moon, and, by an attendance kept up without change or intermission for thousands of years, would seem to connect the regularity of earth with regularity of heaven. But, apart from these greater and simpler energies, we see a course and a uniformity everywhere. We recognise it in the mysteries of vegetation. We follow it through the successive stages of growth, and maturity, and decay, both in plants and animals. We discern it still more palpably in that beautiful circulation of the element of water, as it rolls its way by many thousand channels to the ocean—and, from the surface of this expanded reservoir, is again uplifted to the higher regions of the atmosphere—and is there dispersed in light and fleecy magazines over the four quarters of the globe—and at length accomplishes its orbit, by falling in showers on a world that waits to be refreshed by it. And all goes to impress us with the regularity of nature, which in fact terms, throughout all its varieties, with power, and principle, and uniform laws of operation—and is viewed by us as a vast laboratory, all the progressions of which have a rigid and unflinching necessity stamped upon them.

Now this contemplation has at times served to foster the atheism of philosophers. It has led them to defy nature, and to make her immutability stand in the place of God. They seem impressed with the imagination that had the Supreme Cause been a Being who thinks, and wills, and acts as man does, on the impulse of a felt and a present motive, he would be more the appearance of spontaneous activity, and less of mute and unconscious mechanism in the administrations of the universe. It is the very unchangeableness of nature, and the steadfastness of those great and mighty processes wherewith no living power that is superior to nature, and is able to shift or to control her, is seen to interfere—it is this which seems to have impressed the notion of some blind and eternal fatality on certain men of loftiest but deluded genius. And, accordingly, in France, where the physical sciences have of late been the most cultivated, have there also been the most daring avowals of atheism. The universe has been affirmed to be an everlasting and indestructible effect; and from the abiding constancy that is seen in nature through all her departments, have they inferred that thus it has always been, and that thus it will ever be.

But this atheistical impression that is derived from the constancy of nature is not peculiar to the disciples of philosophy. It is the familiar and the practical impression of every-day life. The world is apprehended to move on steady and unvarying principles of its own; and these secondary causes have usurped, in man's estimation, the throne of the Divinity. Nature, in fact, is personified into God; and as we look to the performance of a machine without thinking of its maker, so the very exactness and certainty wherewith the machinery of creation performs its evolutions, has thrown a disguise over the agency of the Creator. Should God interpose by miracle, or interfere by some striking and special manifestation of providence, then man is awakened to the recognition of him. But he loses sight of the Being who sits behind these visible elements, while he regards those attributes of constancy and power which appear in the elements themselves. They see no demonstration of a God, and they feel no need of Him, while such unchanging and such unflinching energy continues to operate in the visible world around them; and we need not go to the schools of ratiocination in quest of this infidelity, but may detect it in the bosoms of simple and unlettered men, who, unknown to themselves, make a god of nature, and just because of nature's constancy; having no faith in the unseen Spirit who originated all and upholds all, and that because all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Such has been the perverse effect of nature's constancy on the alienated mind of man; but let us now attend to the true interpretation of it. God has, in the first instance put into our minds a disposition to count on the uniformity of nature, insomuch that we universally look for a recurrence of the same event in the same circumstances. This is not merely the belief of experience, but the belief of instinct. It is antecedent to all the findings of observation, and may be exemplified in the earliest stages of

childhood. The infant who makes a noise on the table with his hand for the first time, anticipates a repetition of the noise from a repetition of the stroke, with as much confidence as he who has witnessed for years together the unvariableness wherewith these two terms of the succession have followed each other. Or, in other words, God, by putting this faith into every human creature, and making it a necessary part of this mental constitution, has taught him at all times to expect the like result in the like circumstances. He has thus virtually told him what is to happen and what he has to look for in every given condition—and, by its so happening accordingly, he just makes good the variety of his own declaration. The man who leads me to expect that which he fails to accomplish, I would hold to be a deceiver. God has so framed the machinery of my perceptions, as that I am led irresistibly to expect that everywhere events will follow each other in the very train in which I have ever been accustomed to observe them—and when God so sustains the uniformity of nature, that in every instance it is rigidly so, he is just manifesting the faithfulness of his character. Were it otherwise, he would be practising a mockery on the expectation which he himself had inspired. God may be said to have promised to every human being that nature will be constant—if not by the whisper of an inward voice to every heart, at least by the force of an uncontrollable bias which he has impressed on every constitution. So that, when we behold nature keeping by its constancy, we behold the God of nature keeping by his faithfulness—and the system of visible things, with its general laws, and its successions which are invariable, instead of an oblique materialism to intercept from the view of mortals the face of the Divinity, becomes the mirror which reflects upon them the truth that is unchangeable, the ordination that never falls.

Conceive that it had been otherwise—first, that man had no faith in the constancy of nature—then how could all his experience have profited him? How could he have applied the recollections of his past to the guidance of his future history? And what would have been left to signalize the wisdom of mankind above that of veriest infancy? Or suppose that he had the implicit faith in nature's constancy, but that nature was wanting in the fulfilment of it—that at every moment his intuitive reliance on this constancy was met by some caprice or waywardness of nature, which thwarted him in all his undertakings—that instead of holding true to her announcements, she held the children of men in most distressful uncertainty by the freaks and the falsities in which she ever indulged herself—and that every design of human foresight was thus liable to be broken up, by ever and anon the putting forth of some new fluctuation. Tell us, in this wild misrule of elements changing their properties, and events ever flitting from one method of succession to another, if man could subsist for a single day, when all the accomplishments without were thus at war with all the hopes and calculations within.

In such a chaos and conflict as this, would not the foundations of human wisdom be utterly subverted? Would not man, with his powerful and perpetual tendency to proceed on the constancy of nature, be tempted at all times, and by the very constitution of his being, to proceed upon a falsehood? It were the way, in fact, to turn the administration of nature into a deceit. The lessons of to-day would be falsified by the events of to-morrow. He were, indeed the father of lies who could be the author of such a regimen as this—and well may we rejoice in the strict order of the goodly universe which we inhabit, and regard it as a noble attestation to the wisdom and beneficence of its great architect.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

FALED MELODY OF THE DYING SWAN.

THE melody ascribed to the dying swan has long been well known to exist only in the graceful mythology of the ancients; but as few opportunities occur of witnessing the bird's last moments, some interest attaches to Mr Waterton's personal observations on this point, which we can ourselves corroborate, having not long since been present at the death of a pet swan, which, like Mr Waterton's favorite, had been fed principally by hand; and, instead of seeking to conceal itself at the approach of death, quitted the water, and laid down to die on the lawn before its owner's door. 'He then left the water for good and all, and sat down on the margin of the pond. He soon became too weak to support his long neck in an upright position. He nodded, and then tried to recover himself; he nodded again, and again held up his head; till at last, quite enfeebled and worn out, his head fell gently on the grass, his wings became expanded a trifle or so, and he died while I was looking on. \* \* \* Although I gave no credence to the extravagant notion which antiquity had entertained of melody from the mouth of the dying swan, still I felt anxious to hear some plaintive sound or other, some soft inflection of the voice, which might tend to justify that notion in a small degree. But I was disappointed. \* \* \* He never even uttered his wonted cry, nor so much as a sound to indicate what he felt within.'

CREATING A WANT.

The Rev. Dr. French, the last archbishop of Tuam, though a wealthy man, was extremely simple and temperate in his mode of living—a plain joint of meat supplied his dinner. Whenever he saw one of his children about to try a new dish, not tasted perhaps before, he always said, with a smile, 'Now, you are going to create a want.'