

minute and comprehensive is the providence of God ; that " no man liveth to himself ;" that eternity alone can be the measure of their influence who are " workers together with him." " O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."—*Sunday at Home.*

NATURE A BIBLE.

Thus there are two books from whence I collect my divinity ; besides that written one of God, another of his servant nature, that universal and public manuscript, that lies exposed unto the eye of all : those that never saw him in the one, have discovered him in the other. This was the scripture and theology of the heathens ; the natural motion of the sun made them more admire him than his supernatural station did the children of Israel ; the ordinary effect of nature wrought more admiration in them than in the other all his miracles ; surely the heathen knew better how to join and read these mystical letters than we Christians, who cast a more careless eye upon these common hieroglyphics, and disdain to such divinity from the flowers of nature. Nor do I so far forget God as to adore the name of nature ; which I define not, with the schools, to be the principle of motion and rest, but that straight and regular line, that settled and constant course the wisdom of God hath ordained in the actions of his creatures, according to their several kinds. To make a revolution every day is the nature of the sun, because of that necessary course which God hath ordained it, from which it cannot swerve but by a faculty from that voice which first did give it motion. Now, this course of nature God seldom alters or perverts, but like an excellent artist, hath so contrived his work that with the self same instrument, without a new creation, he may effect his obscurest designs. Thus he sweeteneth the water with a wood, preserveth the creatures in the ark, which the blast of his mouth might have as easily created ; for God is like a skilful geometrician, who when more easily, and with one stroke of his compass, he might describe or divide a right line, had yet rather do this in a circle or longer way, according to the constituted and forelaid principles of his art ; yet this rule of his he does sometimes pervert to acquaint the world with his prerogative, lest the arrogance of our reason should question his power and conclude he could not. And thus I call the effects of nature the works of God, whose hand and instrument he only is ; and therefore to ascribe His actions unto him is to devolve the honor of the principal agent upon the instrument ; which if with reason we may do, then let our hammers rise up and boast that we have built our houses, and our pens receive the honor of our writing.

I hold there is a general beauty in the works of God, and therefore deformity in any kind of species whatever ; I cannot tell by what logic we call a toad a bear, or an elephant ugly, they being created in those outward shapes and figures which best express those actions of their inward forms. And having passed that general visitation of God, who saw that all he had made was good, that is, comfortable to his will, which abhors deformity and is the rule of order and beauty ; there is no deformity but in monstrosity, wherein, notwithstanding there is a kind of beauty, nature so is