cently forfeited. He determined to puniſh them for their tranſgreſſion, and at the same time to give them an opportu­nity of recovering more than their lost inheritance. Call­ing therefore the various offenders before him, and inquiring into their different degrees of guilt, he began with pronoun­cing judgment on the ſerpent in terms which implied that there was mercy for man. “ And the Lord God ſaid unto the serpent, Becauſe thou haſt done this, thou art curſed above all cattle, and above every beaſt of the field : upon thy belly ſhalt thou go. and duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life ; and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.”

That this ſentence has been fully inflicted on the ſerpent, no reasoning can be necessary to evince. Every ſpecies of that reptile is more hateful to man than any other terreſtrial creature ; and there is literally a perpetual war between them and the human race. It is remarkable too that the *head* of this animal is the only part which it is ſafe to bruiſe. His tail may be bruiſed, or even cut off, and he will turn with fury and death on his adverſary : but the ſlighteſt ſtroke on the head infallibly kills him. That the ſerpent, or at leaſt the greater part of serpents, go on their belly, every one knows ; though it is ſaid@@\*, that in ſome parts of the eaſt ſerpents have been ſeen with wings, and others with feet, and that theſe ſpecies are highly beautiful. If there be any truth in this ſtory, we may ſuppoſe that theſe walking and flying ſerpents have been ſuffered to retain their original elegance, that mankind might see what the whole genus was before the curſe was denounced on the tempter of Eve : but it is certain that moſt of the ſpecies have neither wings nor feet, and that many of the moſt poisonous of them live in burning deſerts, where they have nothing to eat but the duſt among which they crawl@@\*.

To this degradation of the ſerpent, infidels have objected, that it implies the puniſhment of an animal which was in­capable of guilt ; but this objection is founded in thoughtlessneſs and ignorance. The elegant form of any ſpecies of inferior animals adds nothing to the happineſs of the animals themſelves : the aſs is probably as happy as the horſe, and the ſerpent that crawls as he that flies. Fine proportions attract indeed the notice of man, and tend to impreſs upon his mind just notions of the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Creator ; but ſurely the symmetry of the horſe or the beauty of the peacock is more properly dilplayed for this purpoſe than the elegance of the inſtrument employed by the enemy of mankind. The degradation of the ſerpent in the preſence of our firſt parents muſt have ſerved the beſt of purpoſes. If they had ſo little reflection as not yet to have diſcovered that he was only the instrument with which a more powerful Being had wrought their ruin, they would be con­vinced, by the execution of this ſentence, that the forbidden fruit had no power in itſelf to improve the nature either of man or of beaſt. But it is impoſſible that they could be ſo stupid as this objection suppoſes them. They doubtleſs knew by this time that ſome great and wicked ſpirit had actuated the organs of the ſerpent ; and that when enmity was promiſed to be put between its ſeed and the ſeed of the woman, that promiſe was not meant to be fulfilled by ſer­pents occaſionally biting the heels of men, and by men in return bruiſing the heads of ſerpents ! If ſuch enmity, though it has literally taken place, was all that was meant by this prediction, why was not Adam directed to bruiſe the head of the identical ſerpent which had ſeduced his wife ? If he could derive any consolation from the exerciſe of revenge, surely it would be greater from his revenging himſelf on his own enemy, than from the knowledge that there ſhould be a perpetual warfare between his deſcendants and the breed of ſerpents through all generations.

We are told, that when the foundations of the earth were laid, the morning ſtars sang together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted for joy ; and it is at leaſt probable that there would be ſimilar rejoicing when the six days work of creation was finiſhed. If ſo, Adam and Eve, who were but a little lower than the angels, might be admitted into the chorus, and thus be made acquainted with the exigence ot good and evil spirits. At all events, we cannot doubt but their gra­cious and merciful Creator would inform them that they had a powerful enemy ; that he was a rebellious angel capable of deceiving them in many ways; and that they ought there­fore to be conſtantly on their guard againſt his wiles. They muſt have known too that they were themſelves animated by ſomething different from matter ; and when they found they were deceived by the ſerpent, they might ſurely, with­out any remarkable ſtretch of ſagacity, infer that their ma­lignant enemy had actuated the organs of that creature in a manner ſomewhat ſimilar to that in which their own souls actuated their own bodies. If this be admitted, the degra­dation of the ſerpent would convince them of the weakneſs of the tempter when compared with their Creator; and confirm their hopes, that since he was not able to preſerve unhurt his own instrument of miſchief, he ſhould not be able finally to prevail againſt them ; but that though he had bruiſed their heels, the promiſed ſeed of the womans ſhould at laſt bruiſe his head, and recover the inheritance which they had lost. See Prophecy, n⁰ 9, 10.

Having thus puniſhed the original instigator to evil, the Almighty Judge turned to the fallen pair, and ſaid to the woman, “ I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy con­ception : in ſorrow ſhalt thou bring forth children ; and thy deſire ſhall be to thy huſband, and he ſhall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Becauſe thou haſt hearkened un­to the voice of thy wife, and haſt eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou ſhalt not eat of it ; curſed is the ground for thy sake ; in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth unto thee, and thou ſhall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return.”

Here is a terrible denunciation of toil and miſery and death upon two creatures ; who, being inured to nothing, and formed for nothing but happineſs, muſt have felt infi­nitely more horror from ſuch a ſentence, than we, who are familiar with death, intimate with miſery, and " born to ſorrow as the ſparks fly upward,” can form any adequate conception of. The hardſhip of it, too, ſeems to be aggra­vated by its being ſeverer than what was originally threat­ened againſt the breach of the covenant of life. It was in­deed ſaid, “ In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die :” but no mention was made of the woman’s incurring ſorrow in conception, and in the bringing forth of children; of the curſe to be inflicted on the ground ; of its bringing forth thorns and thiſtles inſtead of food for the uſe of man ; and of Adam’s eating bread in ſorrow and the ſweat of his face till he ſhould return to the duſt from which he was taken.

These ſeeming aggravations, however, are in reality inſtances of divine benevolence. Adam and Eve were now ſubjected to death ; but in the ſentence paſſed on the ſer­pent, an obſcure intimation had been given them that they were not to remain for ever under its power. It was there­fore their intereſt, as well as their duty, to reconcile them­ſelves as much as poſſible to their fate ; to wean their affec­tions from this world, in which they were to live only for a

@@@[m]\* Delanay's Rev. examined with candour.

@@@[m]\* See Boebart and Pliny on Serpents, with Bruce's travels.