

vanity is nothing, a mere emptiness, a vacuity. Hence, if Aristotle commends the 'nature of things,' the better philosopher, Solomon, discommends the 'things of nature,' especially in their base and bad usage. Only the devil's feast-house hath a fair bush at the door, (yet if the wine were good, what needs the ivy?) and 'therefore his people turn in thither, and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them,' Ps. lxxiii. 10. But when they are once in, they find themselves deceived, for 'the dead are there,' &c.

Then put no trust in so weak comforts, that will be unto you, as Egypt to Israel, a reed, which when you lean upon, it will not only fail you, but the splinters shall run into your hand. 'You shall be ashamed of your weak confidence. The burden of the beasts of the south : into the land of trouble,' &c., Isa. xxx. 5, 6. I am no prognosticator; yet if cosmography affirm that we live in a southern climate, and experience testify that we have many beasts among us, methinks the words lie as fit for us as if they were purposely made. How many in our land by loss of conscience are become atheists, and by loss of reason, beasts; who run so fast to this Egyptian feast of wickedness, that he speaks easiest against them that speaks but of a burden! These having found Satan's temptations sweet for the daintiness, judging by their own lusts, dare also take his word for the continuance. But if the great table of this earth shall be overthrown, what shall become of the dainties that the hand of nature hath set on it? To which purpose saith Jerome, *Oh si possemus in talem ascendere speculam, de qua universam terram sub nostris pedibus cerneremus, jam tibi ostenderem totius orbis ruinas*, &c.,*—If it could be granted us to stand on some lofty pinnacle, from which we might behold the whole earth under our feet, how easy a persuasion would make these earthly pleasures seem vile in our opinion! You say, your pleasures are for number manifold, for truth manifest, for dimension great; grant all, though all be false; yet they are for time short, for end sour. *Breve est, quod dilectat : eternum, quod cruciat*,—It is short, that pleaseth them; everlasting, that plagueth them. Pleasure is a channel, and death the sea wherinto it runs. *Mellifluus ingressus, fellifluus regressus*,—Yield your joys sweet at the porch, so you grant them bitter at the postern. *Securus et securis* must meet; wickedness and wretchedness must be made acquainted. The lewd man's dinner shall have that rich man's supper, Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' The devil then, you see, is a crafty and cheating host, whose performance falls as short of his promise as time doth of eternity. Let then the Apostle's caveat, Eph. v. 6, be the use of this observation: 'Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience.'

Obs. 3.—The punishments of the wicked are most usually in the like; proper and proportional to their offences. Solomon here opposeth the 'house of mourning' to the 'house of feasting;' as in express terms, Eccles. vii. 2: for as it is fit in the body that surfeit should be followed with death, so those that greedily make themselves sick with sin become justly dead in soul. They have affected the works of hell, therefore it is just that hell should expect them, and that every one should be granted their own place, Acts i. 25. As they would not know what they did till they had done it, so they fitly know not the place whither they go till they are in it. *Nescit*,—'he knoweth not,' &c. For the high places, which their ambition climbed to, ver. 14, they are cast down, like Lucifer, to the lowest place, the depth of hell. As Simon Magus would fly with arrogance, so he came down with a vengeance,

* Hier. lib. ii., Epist. ad Heliod.

and broke his neck. See how fitly they are requited. 'They eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence,' Prov. iv. 17; now they are scanted of both, except they will eat the bread of gall, and drink their own tears.

Thus Pharaoh drowns the Hebrew males in a river, Exod. i. 22; therefore is drowned himself with his army in a sea, Exod. xiv. 28. He had laid insupportable burdens on Israel; God returns them with full weight, number, measure. When Israel had cut off the thumbs and great toes of Adoni-bezek, hear the maimed king confess the equity of this judgment: Judges i. 7, 'Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me.' As proud Bajazet threatened to serve Tamerlane, being conquered,—to imprison him in a cage of iron, and carry him about the world in triumph,—so the Scythian having took that bragging Turk, put him to the punishment which himself had lessoned; carrying and carting him through Asia, to be scorned of his own people. Thus Haman is hanged on his own gallows, Esth. vii. 10. Perillus tries the trick of his own torment.

The Papists, that would have fired us in a house, were themselves fired out of a house. Gunpowder spoiled some of their eyes, musket-shot killed others, the engines of their own conspiracy; and the rest were advanced higher by the head than the Parliament-house, that would have lifted us higher, of purpose to give us the more mortal fall. God hath retaliated their works into their own bosoms. 'They travailed with iniquity, conceived mischief;' and, lo, the birth is their own sorrow. 'They have digged a pit for us,'—and that low, unto hell,—'and are fallen into it themselves,' Ps. vii. 14, 15.

'Nec enim lex æquior ulla est
Quam necis artifices, arte perire sua;'

No juster law can be devised or made,
Than that sin's agents fall by their own trade.'

The order of hell proceeds with the same degrees; though it give a greater portion, yet still a just proportion of torment. These wretched guests were too busy with the waters of sin; behold, now they are in the depth of a pit, 'where no water is.' Dives, that wasted so many tuns of wine, cannot now procure water, not a pot of water, not a handful of water, not a drop of water, to cool his tongue. *Desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam.** A just recompense! He would not give a crumb; he shall not have a drop. Bread hath no smaller fragment than a crumb, water no less fraction than a drop. As he denied the least comfort to Lazarus living, so Lazarus shall not bring him the least comfort dead. Thus the pain for sin answers the pleasure of sin. Where now are those delicate morsels, deep carouses, loose laughers, proud port, midnight revels, wanton songs? Why begins not this fellow-guest with a new health, or the music of some ravishing note? or, if all fail, hath his fool-knavish parasite no obscene jest that may give him delight? Alas! hell is too melancholy a place for mirth. All the music is round-echoing groans; all the water is muddy with stench; all the food anguish!

Thus damnable sins shall have semblable punishments; and as Augustine of the tongue, so we may say of any member: *Si non reddet Deo faciendo quæ debet, reddet ei patiundo quæ debet*,—If it will not serve God in action, it shall serve him in passion. Where voluntary obedience is denied, in-

* Aug. Hom. 7.