

The proeme of Book 12 is rich in simple fervour.

"Before I leave off to write of Fire, I shall treat of that dangerous fire that works wonderful things, which the vulgar call artificial fire, which the commanders of armies and generals, use lamentably in divers artifices and monstrous designs, to break open walls and cities, and totally to subvert them; and in sea-fights, to the infinite ruine of mortal men; and whereby they oft-times frustrate the malicious enterprizes of their enemies. The matter is useful and wonderful, and there is nothing in the world that more frights and terrefies the mindes of men. God is coming to judge the world by fire. I shall describe the mighty hot fires by our ancestors, which they used to besiege places with; and I shall add those that are of later invention, that far exceed them: and lastly, I shall speak of those in our days. You have here the compositions of terrible gun-powder that makes a noise, and then of that which makes no noise: of pipes that vomit forth deadly fires, and of fires that cannot be quenched, and that will rage under water at the very bottom of it, whereby the seas rend asunder, as if they were undermined by the great violence of the flames striving against them, and are lifted up into the air, that ships are drawn by the monstrous gulphs. Of fire balls that flie with glittering fire, and terrifie troops of horse-men, and overthrow them. So that we are come almost to eternal fires."

In writing of the fire darts of the ancients, we have the following specimen of what Swift would call the art of falling in poetry—or of anti-climax.

"He bids them shoot their Shafts into the Sails,  
Besmeer'd with Pitch, and so he soon prevails:  
The Fire straight doth burn what's made of Flax,  
And so their Decks were fir'd by melting Wax;  
And tops of Masts were burnt, and Sea-mens packs."

The following is a gem:—

"Shoot a man through with a Bullet, and no place shall be seen where it went in, or came forth.—The minde of man is so cunning, that it hath invented a way to shoot a man quiet through with a bullet, and yet no mark of the bullet shall appear, though all the inward parts be bruised and beaten through. Consider, that what things are heavy, are solid, and so subtile, that they will penetrate and leave no marks, where they entred or came out; and they will do the same, though they be united, as if they were disjoyned; and every part will act by it self alone, as it would do being united. I have said thus, to take away all occasions from ignorant and wicked people, to do mischief."

He must without controversy be a conjuror, who could induce men to stand the test of this merrie experiment? Book 13—the tempering steel. Book 14 treats of the magic of the art of Cook ing. In this we have a noted sample of the disgusting brutality of our gentle philosopher and his friends. It is in accordance with the time when "heretics were thrown from towers, or Saint Be