
 THOMAS NASHE

 Spring, the Sweet Spring¹

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king,
 Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
 Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing:
 Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!²

- 5 The palm and may³ make country houses gay,
 Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
 And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay:
 Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

- The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
 10 Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
 In every street these tunes our ears do greet:
 Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
 Spring, the sweet spring!

1592

1600

From Pierce Penniless, His Supplication to the Devil
An Invective Against Enemies of Poetry

With the enemies of poetry I care not if I have a bout, and those are they that term our best writers but babbling ballad-makers, holding them fantastical fools, that have wit but cannot tell how to use it. I myself have been so censured among some dull-headed divines,¹ who deem it no more cunning to write an exquisite poem than to preach pure Calvin or distill the juice of a commentary in a quarter sermon.² Prove it when you will, you slow-spirited Saturnists,³ that have nothing but the pilferies of your pen to polish an exhortation withal; no eloquence but tautologies to tie the ears of your auditory unto you; no invention but “here it is to be noted, I stole this note out of Beza or Marlorat”;⁴ no wit to move, no passion to urge, but only an ordinary form of preaching, blown up by use of often hearing and speaking; and you shall find there goes more exquisite pains and purity of wit to the writing of one such rare poem as *Rosamond*⁵ than to a hundred of your dunstical sermons.

1. This is from *A Pleasant Comedy Called Summer's Last Will and Testament*, acted before the archbishop of Canterbury in his palace at Croydon in 1592 and published in 1600.

2. The calls of the cuckoo, the nightingale, the lapwing, and the owl respectively.

3. Hawthorn blossom.

1. Specifically, the Reverend Richard Harvey, brother of Gabriel, in an epistle prefixed to some copies of *The Lamb of God* (1590).

2. I.e., plagiarize from Calvin or another commentator on those rare (once a quarter) occasions when you preach at all.

3. Dull, morose persons.

4. Theodore Beza (1519–1605), successor of Calvin at Geneva; most eminent Protestant divine in Europe. Augustine Marlorat (1506–1563), another of the Geneva reformers.

5. Samuel Daniel's *The Complaint of Rosamond* (1592).

Should we (as you) borrow all out of others, and gather nothing of ourselves our names should be bafful⁶ on every bookseller's stall, and not a chandler's mustard pot but would wipe his mouth with our waste paper. "New herrings, new!"⁷ we must cry, every time we make ourselves public, or else we shall be christened with a hundred new titles of idiotism. Nor is poetry an art whereof there is no use in a man's whole life but to describe discontented thoughts and youthful desires; for there is no study but it doth illustrate and beautify. How admirably shine those divines above the common mediocrity, that have tasted the sweet springs of Parnassus!

Silver-tongued Smith,⁸ whose well-tuned style hath made thy death the general tears of the Muses, quaintly couldst thou devise heavenly ditties to Apollo's lute, and teach stately verse to trip it as smoothly as if Ovid and thou had but one soul. Hence alone did it proceed that thou wert such a plausible pulpit man, that before thou enteredst into the rough ways of theology thou refinedst, preparedst, and purifiedst thy mind with sweet poetry. If a simple man's censure⁹ may be admitted to speak in such an open theater of opinions, I never saw abundant reading better mixed with delight, or sentences which no man can challenge of profane affectation sounding more melodious to the ear or piercing more deep to the heart.

To them that demand what fruits the poets of our time bring forth, or wherein they are able to prove themselves necessary to the state, thus I answer: first and foremost, they have cleansed our language from barbarism and made the vulgar sort¹ here in London (which is the fountain whose rivers flow round about England) to aspire to a richer purity of speech than is communicated with the commonality of any nation under heaven. The virtuous by their praises they encourage to be more virtuous; to vicious men they are as infernal hags to haunt their ghosts with eternal infamy after death. The soldier, in hope to have his high deeds celebrated by their pens, despiseth a whole army of perils, and acteth wonders exceeding all human conjecture. Those that care neither for God nor the devil, by their quills are kept in awe. *Multi famam, saith one, pauci conscientiam verentur.*²

Let God see what he will, they would be loath to have the shame of the world. What age will not praise immortal Sir Philip Sidney, whom noble Salustius³ (that thrice singular French poet) hath famed; together with Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper, and merry Sir Thomas More, for the chief pillars of our English speech. Not so much but Chaucer's host, Bailly in Southwark, and his wife of Bath he keeps such a stir with, in his *Canterbury Tales*, shall be talked of whilst the Bath is used, or there be ever a bad house in Southwark.⁴ Gentles, it is not your lay chronographers, that write of nothing but of mayors and sheriffs and the dear year⁵ and the great frost, that can endow your names with never-dated glory; for they want the wings of choice words to fly to heaven, which we have; they cannot sweeten a discourse, or wrest admiration from men reading, as we can, reporting the meanest accident. Poetry is the honey of all flowers, the quintessence of all sciences, the marrow of wit, and the very phrase of angels. How much better is it, then, to

6. Treated with scorn.

7. A fishmonger's street cry.

8. Henry Smith (1550–1591), a very popular preacher. He published some verse in Latin.

9. Judgment.

1. Common people.

2. Many respect fame; only a few, conscience

(Pliny, *Epistles* 3.20).

3. Guillaume de Saluste du Bartas (1544–1590), an immensely popular religious poet, both in French and in English translation. In his *Second Semaine* he praises Sidney, Bacon, and More.

4. Southwark was notorious for its brothels.

5. Year of high prices.

have an elegant lawyer to plead one's cause, than a stutting⁶ townsman that loseth himself in his tale and doth nothing but make legs;⁷ so much it is better for a nobleman or gentleman to have his honor's story related, and his deeds emblazoned, by a poet, than a citizen.

Alas, poor Latinless authors, they are so simple they know not what they do; they no sooner spy a new ballad, and his name to it that compiled it, but they put him in for one of the learned men of our time. I marvel how the masterless men, that set up their bills in Paul's⁸ for services, and such as paste up their papers on every post, for arithmetic and writing schools, 'scape eternity amongst them. I believe both they and the knight marshal's men, that nail up mandates⁹ at the court gate for annoying the palace with filth or making water, if they set their names to the writing, will shortly make up the number of the learned men of our time, and be as famous as the rest. For my part, I do challenge¹ no praise of learning to myself, yet have I worn a gown in the University, and so hath *caret tempus non habet moribus*;² but this I dare presume, that if any Maecenas³ bind me to him by his bounty or extend some sound liberality to me worth the speaking of, I will do him as much honor as any poet of my beardless years shall in England. Not that I am so confident what I can do, but that I attribute so much to my thankful mind above others, which I am persuaded would enable me to work miracles.

On the contrary side, if I be evil intreated, or sent away with a flea in mine ear,⁴ let him look that I will rail on him soundly; not for an hour or a day, whiles the injury is fresh in my memory; but in some elaborate polished poem, which I will leave to the world when I am dead, to be a living image to all ages of his beggarly parsimony and ignoble illiberality; and let him not (whatsoever he be) measure the weight of my words by this book, where I write *quicquid in buccam venerit*,⁵ as fast as my hand can trot; but I have terms (if I be vexed) laid in steep in *aqua fortis*⁶ and gunpowder, that shall rattle through the skies and make an earthquake in a peasant's ears. Put case⁷ (since I am not yet out of the theme of wrath) that some tired jade belonging to the press, whom I never wronged in my life, hath named me expressly in print⁸ (as I will not do him) and accuse me of want of learning, unbraiding me for reviving in an epistle of mine, the reverent memory of Sir Thomas More, Sir John Cheke, Doctor Watson, Doctor Haddon, Doctor Carr, Master Ascham,⁹ as if they were no meat but for his mastership's mouth, or none but some such as the son of a ropemaker were worthy to mention them. To show how I can rail, thus would I begin to rail on him, "Thou that hadst thy hood turned over thy ears when thou wert a bachelor,¹ for abusing of Aristotle and setting him upon the school gates painted with ass's ears on his head, is it any discredit for me, thou great babound,² thou pygmy braggart, thou pamphleter of nothing but paeans,³ to be censured by thee, that hast scorned the prince of philosophers? Thou that

6. Stuttering.

7. Bow and scrape.

8. Advertisements for jobs were commonly posted on the west door of St. Paul's Cathedral.

9. Proclamations.

1. Claim.

2. (Bad Latin) i.e., even unlearned persons have worn a university gown.

3. Roman patron of poets, especially Virgil and Horace.

4. Stinging reproof (proverbial).

5. Whatever occurs to me.

6. Soaking in nitric acid.

7. Suppose.

8. Richard Harvey in *The Lamb of God*. Nashe has a marginal note at this point that reads, "I would tell you in what book it is, but I am afraid it would make his book sell in his latter days, which hitherto hath lain dead and been a great loss to the printer."

9. Humanists praised by Nashe in his preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589).

1. Bachelor of arts, recent graduate.

2. Baboon.

3. A reference to Richard Harvey's *Ephemeron, Sive Paeon* (1583).

in thy dialogues sold'st honey for a halfpenny, and the choicest writers extant for cues⁴ apiece, that camest to the logic schools when thou wert a freshman and writ'st phrases, off with thy gown and untruss, for I mean to lash thee mightily. Thou hast a brother,⁵ hast thou not, student in almanacs, go to, I'll stand to it, fathered one of thy bastards (a book, I mean) which being of thy begetting was set forth under his name?"

[THE DEFENSE OF PLAYS]

That state or kingdom that is in league with all the world, and hath no foreign sword to vex it, is not half so strong or confirmed to endure as that which lives every hour in fear of invasion. There is a certain waste of the people for whom there is no use but war; and these men must have some employment still to cut them off; *Nam si foras hostem non habent, domi invenient*.¹ If they have no service abroad, they will make mutinies at home. Or if the affairs of the state be such as cannot exhale all these corrupt excrements, it is very expedient they have some light toys to busy their heads withal, cast before them as bones to gnaw upon, which may keep them from having leisure to intermeddle with higher matters.

To this effect, the policy of plays is very necessary, howsoever some shallow-brained censurers (not the deepest searchers into the secrets of government) mightily oppugn them. For whereas the afternoon being the idlest time of the day, wherein men that are their own masters (as gentlemen of the court, the Inns of the Court,² and the number of captains and soldiers about London) do wholly bestow themselves upon pleasure, and that pleasure they divide (how virtuously, it skills³ not) either into gaming, following of harlots, drinking, or seeing a play; is it not then better (since of four extremes all the world cannot keep them but they will choose one) that they should betake them to the least, which is plays? Nay, what if I prove plays to be no extreme, but a rare exercise of virtue? First, for the subject of them, (for the most part) it is borrowed out of our English chronicles, wherein our forefathers' valiant acts (that have lain long buried in rusty brass and worm-eaten books) are revived, and they themselves raised from the grave of oblivion, and brought to plead their aged honors in open presence; than which, what can be a sharper reproof to these degenerate, effeminate days of ours?

How would it have joyed brave Talbot,⁴ the terror of the French, to think that after he had lain two hundred years in his tomb he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least (at several times), who in the tragedian that represents his person imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.

I will defend it against any collian⁵ or clubfisted usurer of them all, there is no immortality can be given a man on earth like unto plays. What talk I to them of immortality, that are the only underminers of honor, and do envy any man that is not sprung up by base brokery like themselves? They care not if

4. Quadrans, one-eighth of a penny.

5. John Harvey, who published almanacs for 1583 and 1589.

1. Adapted from Livy, *History* 30.9. Nashe translates.

2. Law schools.

3. Matters.

4. In the play *Harey the VI* produced by Strange's men for Henslowe on March 3, 1592. What relation this play had to the Shakespearean *1 Henry VI* is uncertain, but Nashe's reference would fit 1.4.39–43 and 2.3.14–24.

5. Rascal (the usual form is "cullion").

all the ancient houses were rooted out, so that like the burgomasters of the Low Countries they might share the government amongst them as states, and be quartermasters of our monarchy. All arts to them are vanity; and if you tell them what a glorious thing it is to have Henry the Fifth represented on the stage leading the French king prisoner, and forcing both him and the Dolphin⁶ to swear fealty, "Aye, but," will they say, "what do we get by it?" Respecting neither the right of fame that is due to true nobility deceased, nor what hopes of eternity are to be proposed to adventurous minds to encourage them forward, but only their execrable lucre and filthy unquenchable avarice.

They know when they are dead they shall not be brought upon the stage for any goodness, but in a merriment of the usurer and the devil, or buying arms of the herald, who gives them the lion without tongue, tail, or talons, because his master whom he must serve is a townsman and a man of peace, and must not keep any quarreling beasts to annoy his honest neighbors.

In plays, all cozenages,⁷ all cunning drifts over-gilded with outward holiness, all stratagems of war, all the cankerworms that breed on the rust of peace, are most lively anatomized; they show the ill success of treason, the fall of hasty climbers, the wretched end of usurpers, the misery of civil dissension, and how just God is evermore in punishing of murder. And to prove every one of these allegations could I propound the circumstances of this play and that play, if I meant to handle this theme otherwise than *obiter*.⁸ What should I say more? They are sour pills of reprehension wrapped up in sweet words. Whereas some petitioners of the counsel against them object,⁹ they corrupt the youth of the city and withdraw prentices from their work, they heartily wish they might be troubled with none of their youth nor their prentices; for some of them (I mean the ruder handicrafts' servants) never come abroad but they are in danger of undoing; and as for corrupting them when they come, that's false, for no play they have encourageth any man to tumults or rebellion, but lays before such the halter and the gallows; or praiseth or approveth pride, lust, whoredom, prodigality, or drunkenness, but beats them down utterly. As for the hindrance of trades and traders of the city by them, that is an article foisted in by the vintners, alewives, and victualers, who surmise if there were no plays they should have all the company that resort to them lie boozing and beer-bathing in their houses every afternoon. Nor so, nor so, good brother bottle-ale, for there are other places besides where money can bestow itself; the sign of the smock¹ will wipe your mouth clean; and yet I have heard ye have made her a tenant to your taphouses. But what shall he do that hath spent himself? Where shall he haunt? Faith, when dice, lust, and drunkenness, and all, have dealt upon him, if there be never a play for him to go to for his penny, he sits melancholy in his chamber, devising upon felony or treason, and how he may best exalt himself by mischief.

In Augustus' time (who was the patron of all witty sports) there happened a great fray in Rome about a player, insomuch as all the city was in an uproar; whereupon the emperor (after the broil was somewhat overblown) called the player before him, and asked what was the reason that a man of his quality durst presume to make such a brawl about nothing. He smilingly replied, "It

6. Dauphin (son of the king of France).

7. Deceptions, cheats.

8. By the way.

9. The confutation of citizens' objections against players [Nashe's note].

1. Of a prostitute.

is good for thee, O Caesar, that the people's heads are troubled with brawls and quarrels about us and our light matters; for otherwise they would look into thee and thy matters." Read Lipsius² or any profane or Christian politician, and you shall find him of this opinion. Our players are not as the players beyond sea, a sort of squirting bawdy comedians, that have whores and common courtesans to play women's parts, and forbear no immodest speech or unchaste action that may procure laughter; but our scene is more stately furnished than ever it was in the time of Roscius, our representations honorable and full of gallant resolution, not consisting like theirs of pantaloons, a whore, and a zany,³ but of emperors, kings, and princes; whose true tragedies (*Sophocleo cothurno*⁴) they do vaunt.

Not Roscius nor Aesope,⁵ those admired tragedians that have lived ever since before Christ was born, could ever perform more in action than famous Ned Allen.⁶ I must accuse our poets of sloth and partiality that they will not boast in large impressions what worthy men (above all nations) England affords. Other countries cannot have a fiddler break a string but they will put it in print, and the old Romans in the writings they published thought scorn to use any but domestical examples of their own home-bred actors, scholars, and champions, and them they would extol to the third and fourth generation; cobblers, tinkers, fencers, none escaped them, but they mingled them all in one gallimaufry of glory.

Here I have used a like method, not of tying myself to mine own country, but by insisting in the experience of our time; and if I ever write anything in Latin (as I hope one day I shall), not a man of any desert here amongst us, but I will have up. Tarlton, Ned Allen, Knell, Bentley,⁷ shall be made known to France, Spain, and Italy; and not a part that they surmounted in, more than other, but I will there note and set down, with the manner of their habits and attire.⁸

1592

From The Unfortunate Traveler, or The Life of Jack Wilton¹

[ROMAN SUMMER]

I saw a summer banqueting house belonging to a merchant, that was the marvel of the world, and could not be matched except God should make another paradise. It was built round of green marble like a theater without; within there was a heaven and earth comprehended both under one roof. The heaven was a clear overhanging vault of crystal, wherein the sun and moon and each visible star had his true similitude, shine, situation, and motion, and, by what enwrapped² art I cannot conceive, these spheres in their proper orbs observed their circular wheelings and turnings, making a certain kind of soft angelical murmuring music in their often windings and going about; which

2. Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), Belgian scholar and historian. "Politician": shrewd person.

3. Type parts in the *commedia dell' arte*.

4. With Sophoclean dignity.

5. These two Roman actors flourished about 70 B.C.E.

6. Edward Alleyn (1566–1626), the most celebrated Elizabethan actor.

7. Actors older than Alleyn and famous in the

period before 1588. Richard Tarlton (d.1588) was the most popular Elizabethan comedian.

8. Nashe never fulfilled this resolution.

1. *The Unfortunate Traveler*, published in 1594, recounts the many adventures of the scapegrace Jack Wilton. Toward the end of the book, Jack arrives at Rome, the site, in the usual English view, of roughly equal numbers of wonders and horrors.

2. I.e., concealed.

music the philosophers say in the true heaven,³ by reason of the grossness of our senses, we are not capable of. For the earth, it was counterfeited in that likeness that Adam lorded over it before his fall. A wide, vast, spacious room it was, such as we would conceit⁴ Prince Arthur's hall to be, where he feasted all his Knights of the Round Table together every Pentecost. The floor was painted with the beautifullest flowers that ever man's eye admired; which so lively were delineated that he that viewed them afar off and had not directly stood poringly over them, would have sworn they had lived indeed. The walls round about were hedged with olives and palm trees and all other odoriferous fruitbearing plants, which at any solemn entertainment dropped myrrh and frankincense. Other trees, that bare no fruit, were set in just order one against another, and divided the room into a number of shady lanes, leaving but one overspreading pine tree arbor where we sat and banqueted.

On the well-clothed boughs of this conspiracy of pine trees against the resembled⁵ sunbeams were perched as many sorts of shrill-breasted birds as the summer hath allowed for singing men in her sylvan chapels. Who, though they were bodies without souls, and sweet-resembled substances without sense, yet by the mathematical experiments of long silver pipes secretly inrinded in the entrails of the boughs whereon they sat, and undiscernibly conveyed under their bellies into their small throats sloping, they whistled and freely caroled their natural field note. Neither went those silver pipes straight, but, by many-edged, unsundered writhings and cranked⁶ wanderings aside, strayed from bough to bough into an hundred throats. But into this silver pipe so writhed and wandering aside, if any demand how the wind was breathed, forsooth the tail of the silver pipe stretched itself into the mouth of a great pair of bellows, where it was close soldered and bailed about with iron; it could not stir or have any vent betwixt. These bellows, with the rising and falling of leaden plummets wound up on a wheel, did beat up and down uncessantly, and so gathered in wind, serving with one blast all the snarled pipes to and fro of one tree at once. But so closely were all those organizing implements obscured in the corpulent trunks of the trees that every man there present renounced conjectures of art and said it was done by enchantment.

One tree for his fruit bare nothing but enchained chirping birds, whose throats being conduit-piped with squared narrow shells, and charged syringe-wise with searching sweet water driven in by a little wheel for the nonce,⁷ that fed it afar off, made a spirting sound, such as chirping is, in bubbling upwards through the rough crannies of their closed bills.

Under tuition⁸ of the shade of every tree that I have signified to be in this round hedge, on delightful leafy cloisters lay a wild tyrannous beast asleep all prostrate; under some, two together, as the dog nuzzling his nose under the neck of the deer, the wolf glad to let the lamb lie upon him to keep him warm, the lion suffering the ass to cast his leg over him, preferring one honest unmannerly friend before a number of crouching pickthanks.⁹ No poisonous beast there reposed (poison was not before our parent Adam transgressed).¹ There were no sweet-breathing panthers that would hide their terrifying heads to

3. The music "in the true heaven" is the fabled music of the spheres.

4. Conceive, imagine.

5. Simulated. "Conspiracy": union.

6. Twisted.

7. For the purpose.

8. Protection.

9. Sycophants.

1. The banqueting house represents the world before Adam's fall; thus it includes "no poisonous beast," since poison did not exist in prelapsarian Eden.

betray; no men-imitating hyenas that changed their sex to seek after blood. Wolves, as now when they are hungry eat earth,² so then did they feed on earth only and abstained from innocent flesh. The unicorn did not put his horn into the stream to chase away venom before he drank,³ for then there was no such thing extant in the water or on the earth. Serpents were as harmless to mankind as they are still one to another; the rose had no cankers, the leaves no caterpillars, the sea no sirens, the earth no usurers. Goats then bare wool, as it is recorded in Sicily they do yet. The torrid zone was habitable; only jays loved to steal gold and silver to build their nests withal, and none cared for covetous clientry or running to the Indies. As the elephant understands his country speech, so every beast understood what man spoke. The ant did not hoard up against winter, for there was no winter, but a perpetual spring, as Ovid⁴ saith. No frosts to make the green almond tree counted rash and improvident in budding soonest of all other; or the mulberry tree a strange politician⁵ in blooming late and ripening early. The peach tree at the first planting was fruitful and wholesome, whereas now, till it be transplanted, it is poisonous and hateful.⁶ Young plants for their sap had balm; for their yellow gum, glistening amber. The evening dewed not water on flowers, but honey. Such a golden age, such a good age, such an honest age, was set forth in this banqueting house.

Oh Rome, if thou hast in thee such soul-exalting objects, what a thing is heaven in comparison of thee, of which Mercator's globe⁷ is a perfecter model than thou art? Yet this I must say to the shame of us Protestants: if good works may merit heaven, they do them, we talk of them. Whether superstition or no makes them unprofitable servants, that let pulpits decide; but there you shall have the bravest⁸ ladies, in gowns of beaten gold, washing pilgrims' and poor soldiers' feet, and doing nothing, they and their waiting-maids, all the year long, but making shirts and bands for them against⁹ they come by in distress. Their hospitals are more like noblemen's houses than otherwise; so richly furnished, clean kept and hot perfumed, that a soldier would think it a sufficient recompense for all his travel and his wounds, to have such a heavenly retiring place. For the pope and his pontificalibus¹ I will not deal with; only I will dilate unto you what happened whilst I was in Rome.

So it fell out that, it being a vehement hot summer when I was a sojourner there, there entered such a hotspurred² plague as hath not been heard of. Why, it was but a word and a blow, "Lord have mercy upon us," and he was gone. Within three quarters of a year in that one city there died of it a hundred thousand: look in Lanquet's *Chronicle*³ and you shall find it. To smell of a nosegay that was poisoned, and turn your nose to a house that had the plague,

2. Both the earth-eating wolves and the sex-changing hyenas (and, below, the elephant who understands speech) derive from the collection of fabulous claims in the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder (23–79 C.E.). The sweet-breathing panthers may have come from the same source, but the belief that the panther lures its victims by its (supposedly) sweet breath was commonplace.

3. The unicorn's horn was thought to be an antidote for poison.

4. In his account of the Golden Age (*Metamorphoses* 1.89–112), Nashe's view of the prelapsarian world, like others, conflates it with the Golden Age.

5. Crafty plotter.

6. Again from Pliny.

7. The Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator designed terrestrial and celestial globes in 1541 and 1551, respectively; they were in common use in England when Nashe wrote.

8. Finest.

9. In case. "Bands": collars.

1. Vestments.

2. Fiery.

3. Wilton's travels supposedly took place early in the sixteenth century. (He meets such figures as Thomas More and Erasmus and serves as page to the poet Henry Howard, earl of Surrey.) In 1522, according to the chronicle history that Wilton cites, one of the recurrent epidemics of the Black Plague killed a hundred thousand people in Rome.

it was all one. The clouds, like a number of cormorants that keep their corn till it stink and is musty, kept in their stinking exhalations till they had almost stifled all Rome's inhabitants. Physicians' greediness of gold made them greedy of their destiny. They would come to visit those with whose infirmity their art had no affinity; and even as⁴ a man with a fee should be hired to hang himself, so would they quietly go home and die presently after they had been with their patients. All day and all night long, car-men did nothing but go up and down the streets with their carts, and cry "Have you any dead bodies to bury?" And had many times out of one house their whole loading. One grave was the sepulcher of seven score; one bed was the altar whereon whole families were offered.

The walls were hoared and furred with the moist scorching steam of their desolation. Even as, before a gun is shot off, a stinking smoke funnels out and prepares the way for him, so before any gave up the ghost, death arrayed in a stinking smoke stopped his nostrils and crammed itself full into his mouth that closed up his fellow's eyes, to give him warning to prepare for his funeral. Some died sitting at their meat, others as they were asking counsel of the physician for their friends. I saw at the house where I was hosted, a maid bring her master warm broth for to comfort him, and she sink down dead herself ere he had half eat it up.

1594

4. Just as if.