

The Trimming  
of Thomas Nashe, Gentleman,  
by the high-titled patron  
Don Richardo de Medico Campo,  
Barber-Surgeon to Trinity College in Cambridge

*Faber quas fecit compedes ipse gestat.*

London

Printed for Philip Scarlet

1597

To the learned.

*Eme, perlege, nec te precii poenitebit.*

To the simple.

Buy me, read me through, and thou wilt not repent thee of thy cost.

### To the Gentle Reader

Proface, gentle Gentlemen. I am sorry I have no better cates to present you with, but pardon, I pray you, for this which I have here provided was bred in Lent, and Lent (you know) is said of *lean*, because it macerates & makes lean the body. If therefore this dish be lean, and nothing answerable to your expectation, let it suffice 'twas bred in Lent, neither had it any time wherein it might gather anything unto itself to make it more fat and delightful. His epistle I expected any time these three years, but this mine answer *sine suco loquar* (though it be not worthy to be called the work of one well-spent hour), I have wrought forth out of the stolen hours of three weeks, for although occasion hath been offered ever since the epistle hath been extant to answer it, yet held in suspense, considering the man and matter, whether I should take it upon me or no. At last, concluding him easily answerable, I have undergone it; therefore, howsoever you see it crept abroad, gentles, receive it well in worth. Your favours happily might add strength unto it, and stir up the faint creeping steps to a more lively pace; it, by hard hap being denied of the progress, keeping at home hath grown somewhat greater. To tell you what the man is and the reason of this book were but trivial and superfluous, only this, you may call it *The Trimming Of Thomas Nashe*, wherein he is described, in trimming of which description, though I have found out and fetched from the mint some few new words to colour him, grant me pardon; I think them fit for him who is so limned and coloured with all new-found villainy, for if they be etymologized they no whit disagree from his properties. Slender labour hath fulfilled to weave this thin superficial veil to cover his crimson epistle, and shadow it forth unto the world. For as a garment of too bright a colour is too evil an object for the eyes (as is the sun), & is nothing gazed after -- no, not of those who never saw it before (yet new things are desired) because 'twould prove pernicious to their eyes -- but once o'erclouded and covered with a lawn vesture, through that it shines & becometh a less hurting object, and draws the people's sight after it, so his epistle (in its own colour being too resplendent and hurtful to the readers) is laid apart, & is nothing in request for that 'twould prove as a burning-glass unto their eyes, but vested with this caul & rare-wrought garment, it loseth part of its hurting vigour, & therefore is called to be seen again.

Loathed tediousness I also eschewed, as no less hurtful than too bright an object; the book which he dedicateth to me is so tedious that, had I read it through, it so loathsome would have wrought more on me both upward & downward than 3 drams of pills. His epistle is not behindhand. To that I might say, as said Diogenes to the men of Minda (whose gates were greater in analogical proportion than their city), *O ye men of Minda, look to your city that it flies not out at your gates*. So his book might well, for the largeness of the epistle, have flown out at it, and surely I think had his book any wings, that is, any quaint device flying abroad to please withal, it would never have stayed till this time. Therefore I think it providently done of him (though out of doubt the fool had no such drift) to make the gates so big that, when we have passed through the gates, supposing all the city to be suitable to the stateliness of them, but after we entered finding ourselves merely gulled, and that all the city is not worth the gates, we may the more readily find the way out of the city again, the gates being so great, and this remedy I found once when I took my journey into his city. But to return, if this be not so well set forth as you could wish it were, blame me not, for, as the moon being naked & bare is said once to have gone to her mother and asked of her a

coat to clothe her, but she answered there could be no coat made fit for her for her instability, sometime she being in the full and sometime in the wane, so he being a man of so great revolution, I could not fit him, for if I had undertaken to speak of one of his properties, another came into my mind, & another followed that, which bred confusion, making it too little for him. Therefore, were it not too little it might be 'twould fit, but howsoever, pardon (gentlemen) my boldness in presenting to your favourable views this little & confused coat.

Yours in all courtesy, Richard Lichfield.

## The Trimming Of Thomas Nashe

*Sir, here is a gentleman at the door would speak with you.* Let him come in. Master Nashe, welcome. What, would you be trimmed? & I cannot deny you that favour. Come, sit down. I'll trim you myself. How now? what makes you sit down so tenderly? You cringe in your buttocks like old father *pater patriae*, he that was father to a whole country of bastards. Dispatch, boy, set the water to the fire. But sirrah, hark in your ear, first go provide me my breakfast, that I go not fasting about him. Then go to the apothecary and fetch me some repressive antidotum to put into the basin to keep down the venomous vapours that arise from his infectious excrements, for (I tell you) I like not his countenance, I am afraid he labours of the venereal murr.

Muse not (gentle Thomas) that I come so roughly upon you with *Sit down*, without any dedicatory epistle, which (I know) you expected for that your epistle (in some wise) brought forth this small work, which purposely I omitted, scorning patronage against you. For if (by an epistle) I had made some lord or knight my patron, it would have managed(?) and given courage to you, thus (not sufficient of myself) I should get some protector to stand out with you, as in a cock-fight, if the cock-master takes off his cock when they are buckled together, it encourageth the other cock (deeming his adversary to fly to his master for refuge), so that he crows for the triumph before the victory. Therefore, forsooth, if for order's sake (that of custom might be made a necessary law) you would have an epistle, I thought it best, respecting the subject-matter, as near as possibly I could to pattern it with the like patron. Then, not knowing where to hear of some miscreant polluted with all vices both of body & mind, and viewing over all the impressed images of men in the memorial cell of my brain, at last I espied yourself more lively engraven than the rest, and as it were offering yourself to this purpose. Then presently I made choice of you, that like an ass you might bear your burden & patronize your own scourge, as doth the silly hedge-sparrow that so long fostereth up the cuckoo in her nest till at length she be devoured of her, or the viper that is destroyed of her own whelps. All England for a patron. But to this sudden joy (for sudden joy soon ends) this cross happened, that knowing it to be my duty to gratulate my patron with the first hereof, but not knowing where to find you, for that you (the world's citizen) are here and there, you may dine in this place & go supperless to bed (if you know where to have your bed), you may be in one prison today and in another tomorrow, so that you have a place but as a fleeting incorporeal substance, circumscribed with no limits, that of your own you have not so much as one of Diogenes' poor cottages. You have indeed a terminus a quo (as we logicians speak), but no terminus ad quem. Now sir, for the uncertainty of your mansion house, you having all the world to keep court in, and being so haunted with an earthquake that in what house soever you are one day you are shaken out the next, my little book might kill three or four porters that must run up and down London to seek you, and at the last might die itself for want of succour before it comes to your hands. Yet it might be that in your request you are insatiable, you will take no excuse; your will is your reason, nay, may not be admitted. Well, it shall be yours; for your epistle's sake, have at you with an epistle.

O eloquence.

Item for you.

Well put in.

How hardly I  
leave this  
commonplace.

To the polypragmatical, parasitupocritical, and pantophainoudendecontical puppy, Thomas Nashe, Richard Lichfield wisheth the continuance of that he hath, that is, that he want not the want of health, wealth and liberty.

*Nas hum. Mitto tibi Nashum prora N. puppi humque carentem.*

God save you (right glossomachicall Thomas). The virtuous riches wherewith (as broad-spread Fame reporteth) you are endued, though *fama malum* (as saith the poet), which I

confirm, for that she is *tam ficti pravique tenax, quam nucia veri*, as well saith Master William Lyly in his *Adiectiva verbalia in ax* -- I say, the report of your rich virtues so bewitched me toward you that I cannot but send my poor book to be virtuously succoured of you, that when both yours & my friends shall see it, they may (for your sake) virtuously accept of it. But it may be you deny the epistle; the book is of you, the epistle must be to some other. I answer, you are desirous of an epistle. Did not Caesar write those things himself which himself did? and did not Lucius, that golden ass, speak of himself which was the ass? & will not you (though an ass, yet neither golden nor silver) patronize that which others took pains to write of you? Caesar and Lucius for that shall live forever, and so shall you, as long as ever you live. Go to, I say. He is an ill horse that will not carry his own provender. But chiefly I am to tell you of one thing, which I choose to tell you of in my epistle, both because, of epistles, some be denunciatory, as also considering that wise saying elsewhere of the precise schoolmaster: *If thy friend commit any enormous offence toward thee, tell him of it in an epistle*. And truly, this is a great and enormous offence at which my choler stands upright, neither will I put it up. Therefore in sadness provide your lawyer; I have mine. It will bear as good an action as if you should have come into another man's house and never say, *Ho, God be here*, that is, you wrote a foul epistle to me, and never told me of it before. You might have said, *By your leave, sir*. I warrant you, I write but this small epistle to you, and I tell you of it as long before as the epistle is long. But now I remember me, there was no hatred between us before, and therefore 'twould be proved but chance-medley. Let it even alone, it cannot be undone, for a thing easily done never can be undone, and a man may quickly become a knave but hardly an honest man. And thus (malevolent Tom) I leave thee.

From my chamber in Cambridge to your " ", where can you tell? That is, that would follow thee even to the gallows.

Yours in love *usque ad aras*,  
Rich: Lichfield.

You see how lovingly I deal with you in my epistle, and tell of your virtues which (God forgive me for it) is as arrant a lie as ever was told. But to leave these parergastical speeches and to come to your trimming, because I will deal roundly with you, I will cut you with the round cut, in which I include two cuts: first, the margent cut; secondly, the perfect cut. The margent cut is nothing else but a preparation to the perfect cut, whereby I might more perfectly discharge that cut upon you, for as in a deep standing pool the brinks thereof, which are not unfitly called the margents, being pared away, we may the better see thereinto, so the margents which fitly we may term the brinks of your stinking standing pool (for it infects the ear as doth the stinking pool the smell) being cut away, I may the better finish this perfect cut and rid myself of you. To the margent cut. When first your epistle came into my hands, I boldly opened it, and, scaling the margents of it, I espied a silly note *quasi-conversant about heads*. I said not a word, but turning over a leaf or two more to see if you continued in those simple animadversions, and indeed I saw you to be no changeling, for there I espied *barbers knocking of their fingers, & lousy napery*, as foolish as the other. *Semper idem* (thought I) might be your mot, and so you will die. Then I began to mark the note which you adjoined to your notes that they might be noted; there, tossing and turning your book upside down, when the west end of it happened to be upward, methought your note seemed a D. *Ah, dunce, dolt, dotterel*, quoth I, *well might it be a D*, and for my life for the space of two hours could I not leave railing of thee all in D's.

Now to the perfect cut: I cannot but admire you in the title you allow me, seeing we admire monsters as well as virtuous men, and a fool (as oft I have heard scholars dispute in mine

office) as a monster. Other barbers like not the title; it pleaseth me, and all the dukes in Spain cannot show the like, and I think that half a year's study did not bring it out of thy dunstical hammer-headed scalp, but thou dost to disgrace me, and think'st thy title decketh a barber, and that a barber with thy title is as a rotten chamber hanged with cloth of arras. But 'tis not so; alas, thy reading affords thee not to know the ancient and valorous power of barbers.

I could speak how they flourished amongst the Abants, a fierce and warlike people, and by the barbers' perpolike [sic?] cunning, as it were amending nature and shaping their faces to more austerity, they became more victorious, as Plutarch recordeth in the life of Theseus. And young striplings newly fit for arms first were brought to Delphos, and there offered the first fruits of their hair to Jupiter; next him the barbers were served, and they cut them, and were as Jove's vices to make them fit for war. They flourished before with the Arabians, the Mysians, the Dacians, the Dalmatians, the Macedonians, the Thracians, the Servians, the Sarmacians, the Valachians and the Bulgarians, as saith Polydorus Vergil; afterward, Alexander entertained into his camps barbers as the spurs and whetstones of his armies.

Dionysius, that bloodthirsty tyrant that feared no peers, stood always in fear of barbers, and rather would have his hair burnt off than happen into a barber's hands.

Therefore in a barber's shop (as Plutarch reporteth) where some few were talking of the tyranny of the tiger Dionysius, *What, said the barber, are you talking of King Dionysius, whom within these two or three days I must shave?* When Dionysius heard of this, he gat the barber secretly to be put to death for fear of afterclaps. The barber's chair is the very Royal Exchange of news, barbers the *head* of all trades. I could speak of their excellency, for that a man's face (the principal part of him) is committed only to barbers. All trades adorn the life of man, but none (except barbers) have the life of man in their power, and to them they hold up their throats ready.

None but  
barbers meddle  
with the head.

If they be happy whom pleasure, profit and honour make happy, then barbers with great facility attain to happiness. For pleasure, if they be abroad, they are sought to of the best companions, knights and esquires send for them; if at home and at work, they are in pleasing conference; if idle, they pass that time in life-delighting music. For profit, a barber hath living in all parts of England; he hath money brought in as due as rents of those whom he never saw before. For honour, kings and ruling monarchs (to whom all men crouch with cap in hand and knee on ground) only to barbers sit barehead and with bended knees. But for all this thou sparest not to rail on barbers (as on all others), & being full of botches and boils thyself, spew'st forth thy corruption on all others; but I naught respect it, thy railings rather profit me. For (as Antisthenes was wont to say) a man might as well learn to live well of his ill-willing & abusive enemies as of his honest friends; of these, by following their virtues, of the others by eschewing their actions by seeing the effects that followed those actions in his enemies, and as Telephus (being wounded, and destitute of a saving remedy at home) went even to his enemies and sworn foes to get some sovereign medicine, so if of my friends I could not learn temperance, I might learn of thee by seeing the effects of thy cankered convicious tongue, for by that thou art brought into contempt. Thy talking makes thee be accounted as a purse that cannot be shut, and as an house whose door stands always open, and as that open purse containeth no silver, and in that house is nothing worth the taking away, so out of thy mouth proceedeth nothing but noisome and ill-favoured vomits of railings. Wherefore draw together the strings, and lock up the door of thy mouth, and before thou speakest such ill-corrupted speeches again, let it be lifted off the hinges; rule, I say, that little and troublesome vermin, that small tongue of thine, which in some is not the smallest part of virtue, but in thee the greatest art of vice, not unlike the purple fish, which whilst she governs her tongue well, it getteth her food and hunteth after her prey, but when she neglect it, it bringeth her destruction, and she is made herself a prey unto the fisher, so

that in that small parcel all virtue and vice lies hidden, as is recorded of Kias, whom King Amasis commanding to send home the best and most profitable meat from the market, he sent home a tongue. The king demanding a reason, he answered that of a tongue came many profitable and good speeches. And this tongue thou hast not. Then the king sent him to buy the worst and most unprofitable meat, and he likewise brought a tongue. The king also asking the reason of this, from nothing (said he) issueth worse venom than from the tongue. And this tongue thou hast, and this tongue cross with the bar of reason, lest thou seem more foolish than those geese in Cilicia, which when they fly in the night-time by the hill Taurus, that is possessed by eagles, are said to get stones into their mouths by which as by a bridle they rein in their cryings, and so quietly pass the greedy talents of the eagles. But alas, why invect I so against thy tongue? *lingua* or *lingendo*, and you know we use always to like in, and so thou shouldst keep in thy poison, or a *ligando*, which is to bind, and so thou shouldst bind up and not disperse abroad that rancour in thee. Thy tongue doth but in duty utter that which is committed unto it, and nature hath set before it a double bulwark of teeth to keep in the vagrant words which, straying abroad and being surprised, may bewray the whole city, and the upper bulwark sometimes serves for a portcullis, which when any rascally word having not the watchword, that is, *reason*, shall but enter out of the gates, is presently let down, and so it cuts it off before it worketh wrack to the whole castle. Therefore I must of necessity find out another cause of thine infected speech, and now I have found it. Fie on thee, I smell thee, thou hast a stinking breath. But a stinking breath (some say) cometh of foul teeth, and if it be so, wash thy teeth, Tom, for if thou wouldst draw forth good and clean words out of thy mouth, thou wouldst wash thy teeth, as every tapster that goeth to draw good beer will wash the pot before he goeth. But it may be the filth hath so eaten into thy teeth that washing cannot get it away; then do as that venom-biting beast, that Nile-breed crocodile, which to purge her teeth of those shivered reeds that are wreathed between by feeding in the water, cometh to the shore, and there gaping, suffereth some friendly bird without danger to creep into her mouth, and with her bill to pick away the troubling reeds. So come you but to some shore, and I'll be that trochilus; I'll pick your teeth and make a clean mouth, or I'll pick out tongue and all, but of this stinking breath I speak not. *Tadet anima*, saith the comedian, and this I mean not meaning as he meant, for he meant a stinking breath, but by *anima* I mean the form by which thou art what thou art, by which also thy senses work, which giveth use to all thy faculties and from which all thy actions proceed, and this *anima*, if thou termost a breath, this breath stinketh, and from this breath (as little rivers flow from a fountain) all thy words flow forth, and the fountain being corrupted (as you know), likewise all the lesser rivers needs must be corrupted, and this *anima*, this breath or fountain thou must cleanse. But how to cleanse this breath it passeth my cunning to tell. For though (as I am a surgeon) I could pick your teeth for the other stinking breath, yet this I durst not meddle with, this hath need of a metaphysician, and let it suffice for me rudely to take up the bucklers and lay them down again, only to tune the lute but to leave to the more cunning to play thereon. Count it enough for me that am but an adjunct to a scholar, that have nothing of myself but what I glean up at the disputation of some scholars in mine office. Let it be sufficient for me (I say) only to tell the reason of this stinking breath, and to leave to more sound philosophers to determine and set down the remedy of it. But now it may be *teipsum noscis*, you smell your own breath, and find it to be so intoxicated with poison that unless you have present help you are quite undone, you perish utterly. And knowing me to be a man of such excellent parts, yea, of far better parts than *In speech be these eight parts*, are very instant with me to unbind the bundle which I gathered at disputations, and give you some remedy for this stinking breath. Lo, how virtue in the friend casteth forth her beams ever upon her enemy. I am overcome; blushing I undertake it, and like a bashful maid refuse, yet deign you that favour. Then mark. First go get some strong hemp, and work it and temper it so long together till there arise out of it an engine which we call *capistrum*; then carry this *capistrum* to some beam that lieth across, for none else will serve when it must be strained, and the one end of it fasten to the beam, and on the other make a noose of as round a figure

Mark this  
secret  
allegory.

Trochilus.

Philosophy.

How I bewitch  
thee with  
fecundity.

Ha, ha, a rag  
borrowed from  
your own  
dunghill.

A medicine  
for a stinking  
breath.

as you can, for the roundest figure is the most retentive. Let the noose be always ready to slide, for man's breath is slippery. Then, when everything is fitted, boldly put through thy head, then work the *capistrum* over new again; swing up and down twice or thrice that it may be well strained, and so in short time your old breath will be gone. Despair not yet, man, *probatum est*, old Aeson was dead awhile but revived again and lived many a year after. But mark, now to the pinch. If Plato's transmigration hold (which some men hold), that the *anima* and breaths of men that be dead do fleet into the bodies of other men which shall live, then I hold that some breath, seeing thy young body without an *anima* (and 'twould be hard luck if some breath or other should not be yet straying about for a body, there being continually so many let loose at Tyburn), I say, some unbespoken vagrant breath will go in and possess thy body. Now if this remedy help not, surely thou art unrecurable. If also thy new breath happen to be as stinking as thy old, thou wilt never have a sweet breath in this world, nor then neither. And thus much of my title.

You know (or at the least ought to know) that writers should eschew lies as scorpions, but your lies that you devised of one are the greatest part of the matter of your epistle, as *My shop in the town, the teeth that hang out of my window, my painted maypole*, with many others which fill up room in the epistle in abundant manner, and which are nothing else but mere lies and fictions to yield the matter, whereby I perceive how threadbare thou art waxen, how barren thy invention is, and that thy true amplifying vein in quite dried up. Repent, repent, I say, and leave off thy lying, which, without repentance, is very heinous. That one lie I make of thee in this book is presently washed away with repentance. Another lie I cannot but tell you of, which you clap in my teeth in the very beginning of your epistle, which nothing grieveth me for that I suppose it to be committed of ignorance, that is, you tell me that you come upon me with but a dicker of *Dicks*, but you come upon me with seventeen or eighteen *Dicks*, whereby I see thy ignorance in the Greek tongue; thou knowest not what a dicker is. A dicker is but ten of anything, for it cometh of the Greek word *deka*, which is by interpretation *ten* (de ka).

Thou objectest that old Tooly and I differed. I confess it, I am a man alone; I scorn such ragged rent-forth speech. Yet thou mayest well pray for the dual number, thou scabbed scald lame halting adjective as thou art. In all thy guiles thou never hadst that guile as alone to get thee one crust of bread. No, I know not who had a hand with you in this silly epistle. Go to, he is not a minister; he had but small reason for it. Again, you remember the time when your fellow Lusher and you lay in Cold Harbour together, when you had but one pair of breeches between you both, but not one penny to bless you both, and how by course he wore the breeches one day and went cony-catching about for victuals whilst you lay in bed, and the next day you wore the breeches to go beg whilst he lay in bed, for all the world like two buckets in one well. Now suppose when Lusher wore the breeches that then thou shouldst have been carried to prison (where now thou art), verily I think thou shouldst have escaped prison for want of breeches. Or suppose that at that time thou shouldst have been hanged, I cannot but think that the want of a pair of breeches would have been better to thee than thy neck-verse, for the hangman would have his breeches. No fee, no law. But put case that with much ado, by great extraordinary favour some good hangman had done thee this last benefit, that thou mightest never trouble him again, and should have given thee thy hanging frank and free (as indeed happy for thee had it been if this good hap had happened, for then thou shouldst not have lived thus miserably in this vain and wicked world), I say plainly, put case thou hadst been hanged, the hangman not sticking with thee for thy breeches, then Charon would have come upon you for his ferry-penny. Fie, out, money and breeches, as ill as a rope and butter, for if one slip, the other hold; with him no *naulum*, no waftage, and then thou hadst been in worse case than ever thou wert. Thus you see how the want of a pair of breeches might have been the means to have made thee escape prison, death, and utter damnation, and O thrice happy Lusher, that shouldst have been away with



the breeches at that happy time. But when thou wert in thy chieftest pride, if thou hadst but lent out one pair of breeches thou shouldst have been thus happy.

Praise from the praiseworthy, and he is not praised whose praiser deserveth not praise. Therefore in these places of the epistle where thou praisest me, I take myself most to be dispraised, for that thou, the praiser, art worthy no praise. For howsoever thou lead in a fool's paradise, like the fish called a muge (*mucus snot*) which is said to feed herself with her own snot (for thereof she takes her name), thou feedest thyself with self-conceit that whatsoever cometh from thee is the very quintessence of true wit, and that all thy ribaldry that ever thou set'st forth exceeded in pleasing mirth, that so thou hast embraced true Minerva, whenas (God knows) thou art as far deceived as ever was poor Ixion that embraced a cloud instead of Juno, or that gulled god, monstrous Accadian [sic?] Pan, who instead of that sweet nymph Syrinx frumped a bunch of reeds. Yet I must confess thou hast something; thou art as a bundle of straw that, being set on fire, consumes itself all in smoke, but no warmness cometh from it, so thou hast no true fire in thee, all smother, nothing that can warm a man. Thou art as many ciphers without an *I*, which they wanting are of themselves nothing, and thou hast much apparency of wit which is as ciphers, but thou hast not this same *I*. Iota is wanting to thy ciphers, thou hast not one jot nor tittle of true wit. Again, as some soldiers that were at Cadiz, breaking into a shop for pillage and there seeing many great sacks ready trussed up, they with great joy made haste away with them, and so with light hearts carried away their heavy burdens, and when they brought them into the streets, opening them to see their booties, found in some of them naught but red caps, of which afterward they made store of fires, and in the rest naught but earthen pitchers, chafing-dishes and piss-pots and suchlike, so whosoever shall see thee trussed up and in thy clothes might happily take thee for a wise young man, but when thou shalt be opened, that is, when he shall see but some work of thine, he shall find in thee naught but rascality and mere delusions. And for this cause thou mayest be called the very Choroebus of our time, of whom the proverb was raised, *More fool than Choroebus*, who was a silly idiot but yet had the name of a wise man for he might be called *Choroebus quasi chori phos*, the light of every company into which he came, so thou hast only the name of a wise man, and that is Nashe. O wise name, I pray thee let me christen you anew, and you shall be called *Choroebus quasi chori bos*, the very bull head of all the troop of pamphleters. Thou goest about to gather jests, and to barrel them up into thine ale-house index, that when occasion shall serve thou mightest be a Democritus always to laugh thyself, or to cause others to laugh by thy idiotism. Thus to conclude, as Daphne was turned into a laurel-tree and so kept her chastity, so I wish that for thy wit thou mightest be turned into an ass, that so thou mightest keep thy wit to thyself, and not defile the world withal. But this thou scorn'st, and wilt prove that thou hast a good wit, and thus submissively in eloquence to make us believe thee, at the first word thou begin'st: *Nature, that never wont to be unequal in her gifts, with me hath broke her wont, and endowed me with a dowry above the rest of her children, but every commodity hath his discommodity, and we cannot always please all, and though all my books did not take as I wished they should, yet most of them did take, as Pierce Penilesse and others which I will not name to avoid the suspicion of vainglory. Argus that had an hundred eyes sometimes slept, or else he had not died for it, and when Mercury came he had no power to hold ope his eyes.* O fine speech! By this I gather that thou confessest thyself to be Argus, and me Mercury, and if you be Argus, hold ope your eyes with a pox to ye. I mean ye no harm yet, yet I pipe not to you, but I think it will be my luck to be as ill a scourge to you as ever Mercury was to Argus. But if you will dispute and prove that you have a good wit, away with your confused bibble-babble, bind up your arguments into syllogisms, and I will answer you directly. Content, say you, and thus you begin: *If my fame be spread far abroad, & all the country confirm that I have a good wit, then 'tis true that I have a good wit. But the first proposition is true; therefore I have a good wit.* I answer, Poor and illiterate opponent, to contex no firmer argument against so firm a logician as I am. A double response or answer extempore I can afford you. First,

though your name be blazed abroad, it follows not that you should have a good wit, for as an empty vessel will sound far that hath nothing in it, so you may crack yourself abroad and get to be reported the man you are not.

Secondly, I grant that you are famous, and that the country reports you wise. Sententiously I answer, that by a figure the country is taken here for the common rout only, for none that can but write and read will ever agree to it, and *turba malum argumentum*, as much as to say, the troublesome commons' assertion never goes far [sic?] current. Thus leaving no hole for you to creep in with a second objection, you betake you to your second argument.

*If my wit (say you) were not excellent and unanswerable, many who are accounted to have good wits (to whom I have oft given particular occasion) would have answered me, but they have not answered me; therefore my wit is excellent.* Therefore I will answer thee.

I would to God thou & I were to dispute for the best mayorship in Spain. Faith, thou mightest even cast thy cap at it. Dost thou not know that the lion scorns to combat with the base, wise men (though moved) will not work revenge on every object, and the more stately oak, the more hardly set on fire? More plainly, in a similitude, the like reason is to be gathered of the nettles.

Even as the nettle keepeth herself cleanest for that no man purgeth his post-pendence (there your nose, Thomas) with it, not because they cannot, but because it would sting them if they should, and so for that small good turn it would work them a more displeasure, so thou art suffered to be quiet and not wrote against, not for that thou canst not be answered, but that by answering thee they should but give more fodder to thy poison, put more casting to thy gorge, and he that intends to meddle with dung must make account to defile his fingers.

Thus thou art quite put down, thou art drawn dry, methinks I perceive thee wish for some moderator that should cry, *Egregie Nashe* (or, you great ass) *satis fecisti officium tuum*. And now, for want of a moderator, myself (for fault of a better) will supply that room, and determine of our disputation. And herein it shall not be amiss (the question so requiring, and you also requiring it in that place of your epistle where you lay wit to my charge) first to tell what a good wit is. And whereas thou burthenest me to say that *much extraordinary descant cannot be made of it*, thou liest. For how unjust were man's wits not to afford us extraordinary descant of that which giveth us descant for everything?

A good wit (therefore) is an affluent spirit, yielding invention to praise or dispraise, or anyways to discourse (with judgement) of every subject. Mistake me not (I pray you) and think not that I think all those to have good wits that will talk of every subject, and have an oar (as we say) in every man's boat, for many fools do so, and so dost thou. These talk not with judgement; they be like the fellow who, swearing by God, and one standing by, correcting him, said, *Fie on thee! how thou talkest.* *What skills it*, said he, *so long as I talk of God?*

A good wit is it that maketh a man, and he is not a man that hath not a good wit. The very brutish and savage beasts have wit. Oxen and asses by their wit choose out the best pasture to feed in, and thou art no better, for divers men will say, and especially Northern men, to one that doth anything unhandsomely, *Whaten a Nash it is* (for *what an ass it is*), and an ass, all men know, hath not a good wit.

Thus (by these descriptions) the definitive sentence of my determination is this: Nashe, thou hast not a good wit, thou art a silly fellow, and more silly than Sir Thomas of Carleton who, being a little sick and the bell tolling to have him go read the service, the clerk of the parish going to him and telling him that the bell tolled for him, meaning to go read, he went

presently and made his will because the bell tolled for him. And so do thou; ply thee, make thy will, and die betimes before thou beest killed, for thine own wit will kill thee, and call you that a good wit that kills a man? All the wise men of Greece and Gotham never came to the misery that thy good wit hath brought thee to. My mind presageth the great confusion that thy good wit will bring upon thee. For as the camel that (come he into never so clear a fountain) cannot drink of the water till he hath foiled and fouled it with his feet, so whatsoever thy wit goeth about, it first defiles it, and so brings destruction to thine own body. Thy wit, thy wit, Tom, hath no rods in piss for thee; 'twill whip thee, 'twill work thine overthrow, 'twill quite destroy thee; Actaeon (as wise a man as you) nowadays could escape it, for all his love to his hounds and swift flight when he saw their fellness, but was devoured of his own dogs.

But why then (may'st thou say) do I oppose myself against an ass, seeing now I do no more than all could do, for all the beasts in the field can insult and triumph over the silly ass, as well the creeping snail to her power as the fiercest tiger. *Asinus a sedendo*, because every child can ride an ass, therefore 'tis rather a reproachful shame for me to meddle with thee, and by that I get more discredit than the two gods got dishonours that conspired the downfall of one silly weak unable woman. The reason is, I only am left to tell thee thou art an ass, and if thou shouldst not be told it thou wouldst not believe that thou art an ass. Therefore now at length know thine own strength, and knowing that thou art but feeble and hast no strength, blush and be ashamed, and then thou shalt see that all the country hath seen thy ignorance, though kept in silence, and how this many a year thou hast gulled them, but they (gentle-minded auditors) still still expecting better, took all in good part whilst thou, like a cowardly unskilful horseman mounted on a jade, curvettest and showest thy cranks among a company of valorous famous captains whose stirrup thou art not worthy to hold. Alight and listen unto me, and I, even I, that never till now was acquainted with the press, and acknowledge myself far unfit for those things thou professest, I (I say) will read thee a lecture. Hearken, in my gibberish (as thou term'st it) I will construe thee this short distich, which though it wants an author wants no authority.

*Thaida te credis duxisse, sedilla Diana est,  
Namque Actaeoneum dat tibi Caura caput.*

*Ingenuously thou thee complain'st an Irus poor to be,  
But thou art Midas, for thou art an ass as well as he.*

Or thus.

*Some says Nashe is lascivious, but I say he is chaste,  
For he by chasing after whores, his beard away hath chased.*

Otherwise.

*Who says Nashe riots day & night about the streets doth lie,  
For he in prison day and night in fetters fast doth lie.*

Again.

*You say I am a fool for this, and I say you say true,  
Then what I say of you is true, for babes and fools say true.*

Now I give not every word their literal sense, and by that you may see how I presume of your good wit, to see if by allusions you can pick out the true meaning, but I use a more plain demonstration and apply it to yourself, for if you will understand anything aright you

must ever apply it to yourself. It may be thou likest not these verses for that they want rhyming words, and I end both the verses with one word. No, Tom, no, think not so, bewray not so thy poetry, for that distich is best contrived and most elegant that ends both verses with one word if they import a divers sense. But now I see thou art no versifier, thou hast only a prose tongue, and with that thou run'st headlong in thy writing with great premeditation had before, which any man would suppose for the goodness to be extempore, and this is thy good wit. Come, I say, come, learn of me. I'll teach thee how to pot verses an hour together.

Thou nothing doubttest (as thou sayest) of the *patronage & safe-conduct of thy book*, and indeed thou needest not doubt, for I never meant it harm, but always wished it might safely pass by me, yet as I was patron to it I could not but read some of it, but I think if I had read it through, 'twould have poisoned me, it stunk so abominably. Therefore all the while I was reading of it holding my nose. Fie, out, said I, had I but known this cockatrice whilst 'twas in the shell, I would have broken it; it never should have been hatched by my patronage. But 'tis no matter, thy eye-beams will reflect upon thyself, and will be burning-glasses to thine own eyes.

And so in a fury (the countries coming down upon me) I, like a stout patron, out of all the countries that pressed me fore, challenged out the most valiant warrior of them all, Monsieur Ajax, to single combat. Him I overcame, and of him I got safe-conduct, and he hath promised safe-conduct to all comers of that race, and moreover he as another patron hath gotten for them all safe-conduct from hence to Ely by water. The good admonition thou givest me, that is to commence, I thankfully take and willingly would undergo had I but one with whom I might keep mine acts.

As for mine answer, I nothing doubt; that is kept (as I hope) with credit, but my reply is it I stand on. I can get none to answer me. Alas, thou art not able, neither fit, for thy want of a beard taketh away half the subject of our disputation. Not that I say a beard would make thee wise, and so by that thou shouldst be fit to dispute, but because in what art thou wouldst have me commence, in that I would dispute with thee. Therefore suppose I should demand of thee the reason why thou hast so much hair on thy head and so thin or rather almost none at all on thy face? Thou couldst not quaintly answer, because the hair on thy head is twenty years elder than that on thy beard, nor, in natural reason, because the brain seated in the head yieldeth more moisture about it than any way downward, by which moisture hair cometh, but thou hast too moist a brain that cannot hold and remember these things, or rather thou hast too hard and dry a brain, and so these things were never impressed into it.

But this is thine answer, 'tis God's will it should be so; thou wert never born to have a beard. 'Tis true indeed. Thus thou mightest answer to all the arguments in the world. But the want of a beard makes thee thus cold in answering, for a beard is a sign of a strong natural heat and vigour. But the true answer is, thou seekest too many ways to cast out thine excrements, thou art too effeminate, and so becom'st like a woman, without a beard. Again, if I should demand of thee why the hair of a man's head groweth downward and not upward, *idem revolueres*, this would be thine answer, because it pleaseth nature. Dost thou not know that hair is the cover of the head, and therefore if it will cover it must lie down? And do not all the parts of a man grow downward, though the whole man grows upward? And therefore the philosophers say that a man turned downward is a plant, that as a plant hath all her boughs, branches and leaves grow upward, so all the parts of a man are upward when he standeth on his head, as his feet, legs, arms, nose, fingers and the rest. But in faith thou, turned upward or downward, art but a plant or stock to be ignorant in those things. Why I marvel of what art thou didst commence bachelor. If I had but the question that thou hadst

at thy sophister's act, I would dispute on that. But now I see I cannot commence for want of an answerer, and I scorn to keep mine acts *in tenebris*.

In this thy trimming, thou being so fit for it, I will work a wonder on thee, and I will hold any man a wager that I will perform it, that is, whilst I am washing you I will request your *connivence*, and put myself to *connivence* and shave you quite through, and when I have done, you shall not be a hair the worse. You may make a riddle of the same if you will, but I will do it, and when I have done, raising myself on my tiptoes, I will so hunt thee for my pay that thou shouldst be in worse case than the beaver (who bites off his stones and lays them in the way for the hunter, for which otherwise he should be hunted to the death). I think verily and in my conscience, *I should break thy head and not give the(?) rest again*.

Leaning on a  
jest.

Thou rude wretch, thou wilt be so *cosmologized*, if thou beest caught here, for calling our Masters of Art *stigmatical*, that is, burnt with a hot iron. Didst thou ever know any of our Masters of Arts burnt with any irons? Then thou callest them *cinquanters*, which is a proper epithet unto thyself, for *sincafter* cometh of *sink* and *antrum*, a hole, and as all the puddle and filth in the channel still runs all along till it comes to a hole or *antrum*, and there it sinks in, so all wickedness and abhorred villainy still straying abroad and seeking for an *antrum*, at last it finds thee, which art the very sink and centre where it rests. And surely if thou shouldst have termed me so, I never would have suffered it unrevenged, for as the torpedo being caught and laid on the ground striketh a torpor and numbness into the hand of him that doth pour but water on her, so I do not think but that in thy epistle thou called'st me but *Dick*, which is my name contract, and other adjuncts which in their own nature are neither good nor bad, the very remembrance of me struck such a fear and numbness into thy joints that yet thou shakest as not dispossessed of that fearful fever. I will stir thee up and make thee seething hot, and when thou art in thy heat I will then quell thee by moving of thee more and more, as when a pot seetheth, if we lade it and move the liquor up and down, even while it seetheth we shall make it quiet. Thou little wottest of what a furious spirit I am, for I keeping among such spirits in this place, as thou say'st, am myself become a spirit, and go about with howling cries with my lance in my hand to torture thee, and must not return home till Ignatius-like thou shalt be carbonadoed, and I shall carry on my lance-point thy bones to hang at my shop-window instead of a cronet of rotten teeth as the trophies of my victory. And this shall be done, comest thou never so soon into my swinge.

Therefore keep out of my haunt; I have a walk. Thou may'st be blasted before thou comest near my walk. If thou dost but look back and see me in my walk, thy neck will stand awry, thy mouth distorted, thy lips ugly wrested, and thy nose hang hookwise. But rather I take thee to be a spirit, for that I talking with thee all this while cannot have a glance on thee.

Spirit walks.

[ ]

But see, what art thou here? *lupus in fabula*, a lop in a chain? Now, sirrah, have at you, th'art in my swinge. But soft, fettered? Thou art out again. I cannot come near thee, thou hast a charm about thy legs, *No man meddle with the Queen's prisoner*. Now therefore let us talk friendly, and as Alexander said to his father Philip, who being sorely wounded in the thigh in fight, and hardly escaping death, but could not go on the ground without halting, Be of good courage, father, come forth, that every step thou sets on the ground may put thee in mind of thy manly courage & virtue, so say I to thee, Nashe, Come forth, be not ashamed of thyself, stretch out thy legs that every step thou goest, thy shackles, crying clink, may remember & put thee in mind of all thy goodness and virtue. I am glad to see thee in this prosperity; thou never wert so rich as now, thou never hadst so much money as would buy so fair a pair of fetters. In very deed thou art beholding to thy keeper that will trust thee with so fair a pair of fetters, neither would he if he had thee not by the leg. But now thou art a good case, thou art no vagabond; now thou servest a master and hast a house to go to and

Holes in the top.

a couch to lie in. Thou must be thriving and provident where thou art, and 'twill be a good saving for thee. And now thou hast a clog at thy heel, as the proverb is, thou must learn of Aesop's dog to do as he did, that is, thou must cringe up thyself round in thy couch all winter-time and dream of a goodly large chamber, fair lodgings and soft beds, and in the summer-time thou must stretch thyself, lie all abroad snoring upon thy couch, and think that silly lodging (seeing thou feelest no cold) a stately chamber built of freestone, laid out with stately bay windows for to take the air at. But what need I tell thee of these things? Thou knowest better than I how to lie in prison, for what a shame were it else for thee, that hast many a day ago been free of all the prisons in London, now to learn thy occupation? Thou art a journeyman long since. I do not think but that thou art able to set ope shop in that trade, for if thou wert but a novice in it, this dear year would quite kill thee.

But say, how dost thou for victuals; do not they of thy old acquaintance help thee? If ever thou hadst true friend, now let him show himself, for a friend is tried in adversity, and though the Romans were wont to say that a true friend was but the salt and sauce of a banquet, yet I say that a true friend to thee must be salt, sauce, bread, and all the meat beside. But thou hast never a true friend, yet thou hast enough of those friends that would be sauce to thy meat, that is, if thou couldst bid them to a supper, they would come to eat up thy meat, and sauce it with fine talk. But (God knows) thou hast no need of those friends; thou couldst be sauce to thine own meat. Fie on friendship, what is become of it? Not one drop nor crumb of friendship between them all? A true friend (as they say) were more necessary than water and fire, for unless he come and call for it thou canst not have so much as fire and water, that is, a fire with a cup of small drink by it to nourish thy body. What is become of those true friends Damon and Pythias, Castor and Pollux, Pylades and Orestes, Nisus and Euriolus, Perithous & Theseus, whom death itself could never separate? Dead? Then Jove raise some deadly tyrant to massacre that cankered brood of thy companions that leave their jester desolate in the winter of his affliction. I curse them with more vehemency because I see some hope in thee, in that thou now seemest simply to betake thee to the truth. For whereas thou wert wont to crack and brag abroad, and endeavoured'st to show that there was no learning in which thou wert not expert, and how that thou wert endowed with plenty of the liberal sciences, which thou knowest to be nothing, so now thou recantest, and in simple truth say'st thou hast no learning, no, not so much as one of the liberal sciences, which thou showest unto us by coming forth in thy fetters, for none of the sciences are bondslaves or kept in chains. They are called liberal *quasi liberi* because they make men free. If these are not sufficient motives for thee, happily let this move thee, that by thy proficiency in philosophy since thou cam'st into prison, thou hearing of Aesop that dwelt in a tub, of Anaxagoras who in prison wrote his especial book of the quadrature of the circle, of Socrates who in prison studied philosophy and wrote verses, and yet (as Cardan saith) slept sweetly, so as Socrates gave more light to the prison than the prison gave darkness to Socrates, and lastly of him that put out his own eyes, and so eclipsed himself of the sight of the world that he might have a more clear insight into the light of nature, keep thou thyself still in prison, eclipse thee from the sight of the world, gaze only on thyself, that so thou more clearly seeing thine own deformed nature might'st labour to reform it, and bring thyself into light again. But (say'st thou) you are a merry man, Master Dick; it befits not the wise to mock a man in misery. In truth thou say'st true, Tom, and for my mind's sake I would not for a shilling but that thou hadst been in prison, it hath made my worship so merry, but because thou continuest my precepts that am a Cambridge man, from whence all virtue flows, and is the very fountain and conduit-head of all learning. O here I could praise Cambridge an hour by the clock.

Therefore I say, for thy contempt of me, I will call thy keeper, and tell him how th'art stolen out of prison, & come to me to help thee off with thy shackles. No, Thomas, no, I am no picklock, I thank God; I live without picking, though thou livest not without locks. But are you gone? Thou wert afraid of thy keeper; go to the place from whence you came, & with a

knave's name to you. Ha, ha, if I had but followed this matter even a little more, I could have persuaded thee to live and die in prison. Alas, I could do anything with thee now, all thy senses are so taken down. Happy (quoth I) in prison? Hapless indeed. How happy is the owl caught fast in a lime bough when all the smaller birds do chatter at her for joy? How happy the rat caught in a trap, and there dies a living death? How happy the tired hart stricken of the hunter, who runs panting, consuming her breath, and at last faints for want of breath? How happy the wearied hare pursued with dogs, ever looking when they shall tear her in pieces? And how happy the cony-catching weasel ensnared in the parker's net, and hanged upon a tree? Thus happy art thou. With the owl thou art limed and wondered at, with the rat thou art sore pressed, with the hart thou art in a consumption, with the hare thou always expectest a tearing, and with the weasel thou shalt be hanged. All these torments are in prison, a demi-hell, where (like fiends) the prisoners crawl about in chains, every one perplexed with his several pain, a darksome labyrinth out of which thou canst never pass, though guided by a thread.

O double unhappy soul of thine, that lives so doubly imprisoned, first in thy body, which is a more stinking prison than this where thou art; then, that it accompanieth thy body in this prison. Were it not sufficient that one prison should torture thy soul enough? No, first because thy soul hath too deep a hand in all thy knaveries, 'tis so imprisoned and fettered to thy body that it cannot go without it. Poor soul, more miserable than the king's daughter captivated & long time kept imprisoned in the thieves' houses, at last offering to break away, was condemned to be sewed into the ass's body & there to die, for the ass's body was dead, and nothing alive in the ass (the prison) to trouble the maid, the prisoner. But thy prison is alive, and all the affections in thy body are as stinking vermin & worms in it, that crawl about thee, gnawing thee and putting thee to misery. She in short time was sure to die, and so to be free again; thou art still in dying, and hoping for freedom, but still livest, and this augments thy calamity; she should have had her head left out to breathe into the air, but thou breathest into thy prison, thy body, that corrupts within thee, and so returns to be thine own poison. Thus much misery (poor soul) thine own body affords thee, and by being with thy body in the second prison, all this is doubled. Now if thou wouldst be free from thy prisons, make a hole in thy first prison, break out there, and so thou escapest both, thou never canst be caught again, and by this thou shalt cry quittance with thy body that thus hath tormented thee, and shalt leave him buried in a perpetual dungeon.

Here let me give a cut or two on thy latest-bred excrements before I go to the finishing of the perfect cut.

A little lump of lead, while it is round, will lie in a small room, but being beaten it will spread broad, and require a larger place to contain it, and a rope bound fast up might easily be covered, but unfolded & drawn out at length, it hardly can be hidden; so you (simply considered) are of no report, but if you be untrussed and beaten out, & your actions all unfolded, your name cannot be limited. And now you, having a care of your credit, scorning to lie wrapped up in oblivion, the moth of fame, have augmented the stretched-out line of your deeds by that most infamous, most duncical, and thrice opprobrious work, *The Isle of Dogs*, for which you are greatly in request, that as when a stone is cast into the water many circles arise from it, and one succeedeth another, that if one goeth not round, the other following might be adjoined to it, and so make the full circle, so if such infinite store of your deeds are not sufficient to purchase to you eternal shame and sorrow, there arise from you more under than to help forward, and last of all cometh this your last work, which maketh all sure, and leaveth a sign behind it. And of this your last work I must needs say somewhat, for seeing that this my first work & offspring hath remained in my womb beyond the time allotted, it must needs be grown greater, and if it become a monster, it must needs be in excess.

**Apostrophe  
Apuleius.**

**Continuata  
metaphora.**

**Cropped ears.**

A proclamation  
for T. Nashe.

Oyez, oyez, if there be any manner of man, person or persons can bring any tidings of Thomas Nashe, gentleman, let him come and give knowledge thereof, & he shall be plenteously rewarded.

Hear you, Thomas, the crier calls you. What, a fugitive? How comes that to pass, that thou a man of so good an education, & so well backed by the muses, shouldst prove a fugitive? But alas, thy muses brought thee to this misery; you and your muses may even go hang yourselves. Now you may wish that he that first put the muses into your head had knocked out your horns. But seeing it hath so happened, call for your Thalia among your muses, let her play some music, and I will dance at your hanging. But 'twas providence in thee to foresee thy woe, and to labour to eschew it, if not by averring what you have said, and standing to it, yet by showing your heels. For as the proverb *Ubi leonina pellis insufficiens est, vulpina astutia assuenda est*, if by strong hand you cannot obtain it, light heels are to be required, for one pair of legs are worth two pair of hands. And of all the parts of thy body, thy legs are thy most trusty servants, for in all thy life whenas thou couldst not obtain of any of the parts of thy body to effect thy will, yet legs thou hast to command for to walk and flee whithersoever was thy pleasure, neither now in this extremity do they deceive thee. O, how much art thou beholding to thy legs. Banks was not so much beholding to his horse, that served to ride on, and to do such wonderful cranks, as thou art to thy legs which have thus cunningly conveyed thee. If every beggar by the highway's side (having his legs corrupted and half destroyed with botches, biles and fistulas) maketh much of them, getteth stilts and creepeth easily on them, for fear of hurting them, because they maintain them, and prove better unto them than many an honest trade, then why shouldst not thou (by an argument *a malo in peius*) make much of thy legs, which by speedy carriage of thee from place to place to get thee victuals do not only maintain thy life, but also at this time have saved thy life by their true service unto thee. Wherefore (these things considered) thou canst not choose but in all humility offer thy old shoes for sacrifice to Thetis for thy swift feet. And 'twas wisely done of that high dread leech Apollo to appoint Pisces the sign to the feet, to show that a man should be as swift as a fish about his affairs. Nevertheless can I accuse you of laziness, for all this time of your vagation, with you I think the sign hath been in Pisces. Now in this thy flight thou art a night-bird, for the day will bewray thee; the bat and the owl be thy fellow-travellers. But to come roundly unto you, this cannot long continue; the owl sometime is snared in the day season, and old Father Time at length will bring you to light. Therefore, were you as well provided to continue your flight as is the beast ephemeron, which because she hath but one day to live hath many legs, four wings, and all what nature can afford to give her expedition to see about the world for her one day's pleasure, or as Pegasus, that winged horse which in swiftness equalleth the horses of the sun which in one natural day perambulate all the world, or as the beast alce, which runneth on the snow with such celerity that she never sinketh unto the ground, were you (I say) as swift as any of these, you shall be caught, such is your destiny. And then your punishment shall be doubled on you, both for your flying, and for your villainy.

Since that thy *Isle of Dogs* hath made thee thus miserable, I cannot but account thee a dog, and chide and rate thee as a dog that hath done a fault. And yet do not I know why I should blame dogs, for *can*, which signifieth a dog, is also a most trusty servant, for that dogs are faithful servants, to whom their masters in the night-time give in charge all their treasure. They are at command to wait upon their masters whither they bend their journey, to fight for them against their enemies, and to spend their lives to defend them, and to offend their adversaries, as we read of King Cazament, who being exiled, brought with him from banishment two hundred dogs, which (with wonderful fierceness) warred against their resistants, in whom he reposed much more confidence & hope of victory, again to be seated on his throne, than if he had been defended by a mighty host of armed men. And Jason's dog, his master being dead, never would eat any meat, but with great grief and hunger died for company. Tycinus the Sabine had a dog which accompanied him to prison, and when



he was dead, he remained howling by the carcass, to whom when one cast meat, he laid it to the mouth of his dead master to revive him again, and when his corpse was thrown into the river Tybris, the dog leapt after it, so that all the people wondered at the love of this faithful creature. Pyrrhus the king, going a journey, came by a dog which kept the body of a dead man, which when he saw, he commanded the body to be buried and the dog to be brought home with him; this done, a few days after came soldiers before the king among whom the dog espied them which killed his master, and barked incessantly at them, sometime looking and fawning on the king, and then barked again. At which sign the king, astonished, examined them, and upon light examinations they confessed the murder, and took punishment for it. Further, we read of a dog called Capparus in Athens which in the night pursued a thief that robbed a church, & being driven back with stones by the thief, followed him aloof off, but always kept him in sight, and at last came to him, and sat by him while he slept. The next morn, so soon as ever the sun's golden crown gan to appear, and his fiery steeds, trappered in their caparisons, set on their wonted race, the thief fleeing, the dog still kept his chase, and complained in his language to the passengers of the thief. At last he was taken and brought back, before whom the dog came all the way leaping and exulting for joy, as to whom all the praise was due for this deed.

The Athenians decreed that for this public good the dog should be kept by public charges, and the care of his keeping was always afterward laid upon the priests. And I fear me, and almost divine so much, that the very dogs (wheresoever thou play'st least in sight) will bewray thee and bring thee to thy torture. Again (among the Egyptians) Saturn was called Kyon, because as a pregnant woman he begot all things of himself and in himself, and in antique time they worshipped dogs, and had them in great account, till on a time when Cambyses killed a man and cast him away, no other beast but a dog ravened in the dead carcass.

Lastly, to come nearer to yourself, you shall hear of a dog that was an excellent actor. In Rome there was a stage-player which set out a history of divers personages, among whom there was a dog to be poisoned and revive again, a part of no less difficulty than the king or the clown, and was as well performed, for (at his time) he eat the poison, and presently (drunkard-like) stackered up and down, reeling backward and forward, bending his head to the ground as if it were too heavy for his body, as his part was, and at last fell down, stretched himself upon the stage, and lay for dead. Soon after, when his cue was spoken, first by little and little he began to move himself, and then stretching forth his legs, as though he awaked from a deep sleep, and lifting up his head, looked about him; then he arose, and came to him to whom his part was he should come, which thing (besides the great pleasure) moved wonderful admiration in old Vespasian the emperor there present, and in all the other that were spectators.

These pretty tales of dogs might keep me from chiding of thee, but thou art no such dog; these were all well nurtured when they were whelps, you not so. The worm was not plucked out from under your tongue, so that you have run mad, and bit venom ever since, for these are properties of a mad dog. First, the black choler which reigneth in them turneth to madness most commonly in the spring-time and in autumn, and you, though you are mad all the year, yet have showed the sign of it especially this last autumn. They always run with their mouths open and their tongues hanging out; your mouth is never shut, your tongue never tied. Slaver and foam fall from their jaws as they run, and 'tis but slaver that proceedeth from thy mouth. Though their eyes be open, yet they stumble on every object, so though thou seest who offends thee not, yet thou all offendest. They whosoever are bitten with a mad dog also run mad, and they whom thy ulcered tongue did bite are so stirred up by it that, till they have got you and wormed you, they cannot be well. Thus you may see to what misery you were born. Woe to the teats of thy dam that gave thee suck, and woe to blind Fortune, that she opened not her eyes to see to afford thee better fortune,

and woe to the dog-days, for in those thou wroughtest that which now works thy woe; take heed hereafter what you do in dog-days. The nature's [sic?] secretaries record of that kind of goat called oryx, that all the year her throat is shut, the strings of her voice tied, till dog-days come, & then that very day and hour in which the dog-star first appeareth (at which time dog-days begin) she openeth her voice and cryeth; the like miracle these last dog-days have done of thee, for what all the whole year could not bring to pass, and all the country long have expected, that is, thy confusion, these dog-days by thine own words have effected. Therefore happy hadst thou been if thou hadst remained still in London, that thou might'st have been knocked on the head with many of thy fellows these dog-days, for now the further thou fleest, the farther thou run'st into thy calamity. There is watch laid for you, you cannot escape; th'art in as ill a taking as the hare, which being all the day hunted, at last concludes to die, for (said she) whither should I fly to escape these dogs? If I should fly to heaven, there is *canis fidus celeste*; if I should run into the sea, there is *canis piscis marinus*, and here on earth millions of dogs seek to torment me. Aye me, heaven, earth and sea conspire my tragedy, and as woeful as the cony which escaping the weasel fell into the hunter's net, of which was that pithy epigram, *Would to God the weasel with my blood had sucked out my life, for now I am kept a prey for the ravening dogs, and cruel-hearted man sits laughing whilst my body is broken up, and my guts divided into many shares*, and though yet thou hast escaped thy snares, it will not be long ere thou beest taken, and then there's laughing work for all the country, for though thy body were shared out into infinite individuals, yet every one could not have his part whom thou hast abused, for recompense for thy injury done unto him.

The dog-star.  
The dog-fish.

Now let me see thy punishment for thy *Isle of Dogs*; 'tis an ancient custom in our country when we take a dog that hath done a fault, presently to crop his ears, and this surely for thy fault is thy punishment. But why (might some say) are thine ears punished for thy tongue's fault? I answer, thine ears are worthy to be punished for not discharging their office, for whereas they should hear before thou speakest, as they that be skilful at the ball first receive the ball before they cast it forth again, and into a vessel there is first infusion before there be effusion out of the same, the over-pregnant dog (we see) bringeth forth blind puppies, and the spider that prepares her matter and weaves her web together at the same time makes but slender work of it, and easy to be broken of every fly. I say, whereas thou shouldst first have heard, thou first speakest; thy tongue was in thy ears' place, and for this cause thine ears are justly punished.

Nature gave thee two ears, and but one tongue, because thou shouldst hear more than thou shouldst speak, but because thou hast spoken more than ever thou heard'st, thine ears shall be taken from thee. She set thine eyes and thine ears both of equal highness and always open, that they might be ready to hear and to see, but thy tongue she put into a case that it might be slow to speak, but thine ears were dull to hear, and thy tongue too quick of speech; therefore thine ears deserve their punishment. Then to be short, to have thine cropped is thy punishment. What, Tom, are thine ears gone? *O fine man, will you buy a fine dog?* Why thou art in the fashion, thou art privileged to wear long locks by ancient charter; but now if the fashion were as hot as ever 'twas to wear rings in their ears, faith, thou must wear thine even in thy tongue because that cozened thee of thine ears. Are thy ears so moveable? Art thou a monster? Indeed all beasts have free moving of their ears granted to them, but for men I never knew any but thee have their ears moving, and thine I see to have the gentle quite removed. I think 'tis a disease, for I am assured 'tis a horrible pain to be troubled with the moving of the ear. I conjecture no goodness by this strange accident of moveable ears this year. I hope shortly we shall have ballads out of it. I am afraid I tell you by this strange sign that we shall have a wet winter this year, for if it be true (which the philosophers affirm) that when an ass's ears hang down toward the ground 'tis a certain sign of rain instant, then seeing thine ears not only hang toward the ground, but even drop down to the ground, how can it choose but be a sign of great wet at hand? And to thee it should

Ha, ha, ha.  
Crop-eared  
first wore  
locks.

be a cause of perpetual showers that should flow from thine eyes, but thou art dry, no drop of grace from thine eyes. If taking away of thine ears could take away thy hearing too, 'twere some profit for thee, for then thou shouldst not hear thyself railed on, laughed at, nor know thyself to be a mocking-stock to all the country. But there is a more plain way made to thy hearing organs, so that thou shalt more lightly hear thyself everywhere called crop-eared cur. What wilt thou give me if I (I am a surgeon) make a new pair of ears grow out of thy head, which passeth Apollo's cunning, that so thou may'st still live with fame in thine own country, or if I heal them as though thou never hadst any, that I may go with thee into Germany, and there show thee for a strange beast bred in England, with a face like a man, with no ears, with a tongue like a venomous serpent, and a nose like nobody. The last I care not if I consented to, if thou shouldst live in good order but one half year, but to the first, that is to give thee new ears, I never will grant, though thou shouldst be inspired to live orderly all the residue of thy life, no, though I had wax & all things ready, for long ago hast thou deserved this disgrace to be earless, ever since thou began'st to write, for libels deserve that punishment, and every book which yet thou hast written is a libel, and whomsoever thou namest in thy book hath a libel made of him, thou purposing to speak well of him, such is the malice of thy cankered tongue. Therefore thou deserved'st to lose thine ears for naming the Bishop of Ely and of Lincoln, and for writing of *Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem*. How dardest thou take such holy matters into thy stinking mouth, so to defile and pollute them? Your *Dildo* & such subjects are fit matter for you, for of those you cannot speak amiss; the more you rail of them the nearer you touch the matter, but because you were not punished for those libels, you began your old course again, *canis ad vomitum*, you began to chew the cud of your villainy and to bring more libels into light. But I hope this last libel will revenge the rest.

We hear how you threatened to spoil our stirring satirist; alas, have thy writings such efficacy? Indeed they are poisoned, but poison will not work on every subject, and if thou shouldst but name him, so that it might give but any blemish to his fame, assure thyself to be met withal of troops of scholars which will soon make thee be one of Terence's parasites; in wounds thou shalt exceed Casianus which was so pitifully pinked of his own scholars, & now whilst I am in the hot invective, I have a message to do to you: the townsmen of Cherry Hinton send you commendations, & they demand a reason of you why you call them clowns. They say they never offered you any wrong, wherefore if ever you come that way, they will send all the dogs in the town after you to pluck off your ears if they be not gone before you come. Now I think it be time to remember my promise to the readers, that is that I be not irksome to them with tediousness, that so they might with good acceptance digest what hitherto they have read; therefore I will draw toward an end and so finish the perfect cut.

Whereas thou commend'st thy epistle to me as a garment for a fool, and therefore that it should be long, I (as is thy desire) have cut it with my scissors, laid it ope, and according to that pattern have made a coat for thyself, but it is so short that thou shalt not need to curtail it, for some fools have long coats for that cause only, that they might the better hide their folly and cover their nakedness, which else all should see. Yet I have made thy coat short and little, that by thy behaviour in it thou may'st bewray to others thy simplicity, & if I had took in hand to have made it great enough to cover all thy folly, this is not the twentieth part of stuff that would have served, neither possibly couldst thou have had thy new coat against this time. But seeing thy garment is dispatched for thee, wear it and use it well, for the fashion of long clothes is wearing away, & short clothes will shortly be in request again, and then thou shalt be a fool of the fashion, as soon as the proudest of them all.

Again, this coat for thy body and the cool irons for thy legs will be a most cooling suit for thee all this summer-time; therefore make much of it, let it not be thy everyday suit, but as the Utopians were wont to make them suits of leather which lasted seven years, in which

they did all their labour, and when they went abroad they cast on their cloaks which hid their leather clothes and made them seem comely and handsome, so if thou canst but get some old greasy cast fustian suit to wear within doors, this coat will serve thee to cast on to jet abroad in, and do thee credit.

Wherefore (good Tom) I exhort thee to keep thee (whilst thou art) in good case; thou art well apparelled, it may be thou presently wilt bestow a coat of me. Do not so. All thy coats are threadbare, and I need them not, though thou hast many, for I know thou hast three or four coats ready made (like a salesman) for somebody. Then, to whichsoever thou sewest but a patch or two concerning me, that coat shall serve me. Thou puttest divers stuff into one coat, and this is thy use in all thy confutations, as in this thy book thou bringest into the party against whom thou writest, his brothers, which argueth (as I said before) want of invention, but skills not, thou art privileged never to go from the matter, it might as well be permitted in thee as in the historian that, promising to speak of the faith of the Jews, make a long tale of Nilus. But (as I said) be a good husband, Tom, and keep thy coat to thyself; thou wilt need them all. And when this coat which I bestow on thee shall wax threadbare, I will dress it for thee the second time, and give it thee again.

This I speak not to wage discord against thee, but rather to make an end of all jars, that as wife & husband will brawl and be at mortal feud all the day long, but when board or bedtime come they are friends again, and lovingly kiss one another, so though hitherto we have disagreed and been at odds, yet this one coat shall contain us both, which thou shalt wear as the cognizance of my singular love towards thee, that we living in mutual love may so die, and at last, loving like two brothers, Castor and Pollux, or the two sisters, Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, we may be carried up to heaven together, and there translated into two stars.

Finally, these things considered aright, in love I beseech thee (that thou may'st see I am not past grace) to suffer me to retort thy grace, and so to end, which myself will follow for you, you suing *sub forma pauperis*.

#### *A Grace In The Behalf Of Thomas Nashe*

To all ballad-makers, pamphleters, press-haunters, boon pot-poets, and suchlike, to whom these presents shall come, greeting. Whereas Thomas Nashe, the bearer hereof, born I know not where, educated sometime at Cambridge, where (being distracted of his wits) he fell into divers misdemeanours which were the first steps that brought him to this poor estate, as namely in his fresh-time how he flourished in all impudency toward scholars and abuse to the townsmen, insomuch that to this day the townsmen call every untoward scholar of whom there is great hope, *a very Nashe*. Then, being Bachelor of Art, which by great labour he got, to show afterward that he was not unworthy of it, had a hand in a show called *Terminus & non terminus*, for which his partner in it was expelled the college, but this foresaid Nashe played in it (as I suppose) the varlet of clubs, which he acted with such natural affection that all the spectators took him to be the very same. Then suspecting himself that he should be stared for *egregie dunsus* and not attain to the next degree, said he had commenced enough, and so forsook Cambridge, being bachelor of the third year. Then he raised himself unto an higher clime. No less than London could serve him, where, somewhat recovered of his wits, by the excrements thereof (for the space of nine or ten year) he hath got his belly fed and his back clothed. As also I hope you are not ignorant how he hath troubled the press all this time, and published sundry works and volumes which I take with me as humble fellow suitors to you, that you being all in one strain (and that very low, he in a higher key), you would vouchsafe to take him as your graduate captain-general in all villainy, to which villainy conjoin your voices, and in which villainy

pray and say together, *Vivat, moriatur Nashe*. To these premises, that they are true, and that he among you all is only worthy this title, I (as head-lecturer) put to my hand.

Richard Lichfield.

But Tom, thyself art past grace, for some of thine own faction, envying thy proficiency and honour to which thou aspiest, hath pocketed thy grace. O envy, caterpillar to virtue! But let him know that thou hast a patron will stick to thee, and that thou art gracious in more faculties than one; I will put up another grace for thee, wherein he shall have no voice, and one only man, an old friend of thine, shall strike it dead.

A Grace in the behalf of Thomas Nashe, to the right worshipful and grand commander of all the superrants & subtercubants of England's great metropolis, the Provost-Marshall of London.

Forasmuch as Thomas Nashe sundry and oftentimes hath been cast into many prisons (by full authority) for his misbehaviour, and hath polluted them all, so that there is not one prison in London that is not infected with Nashe's evil, and, being lately set at liberty, rangeth up and down, gathering poison in every place, whereby he infecteth the common air, I am to desire you that, as you tender the common good of the weal public, and as the virtue of your office requireth, which is to cleanse the City of all vicious and unruly persons, when this above-named Nashe shall happen into your precincts or diocese of your authority, you would give him his unction in the highest degree, and cleanse us quite of him, which you shall effect thus: send him not to prisons any more, which are corrupted by him already, but commit him to be Proctor of the Spittle, where he shall not stay long, lest he breed a plague among them also, but pass from him to Bull, who by your permission having full power over him, and being of such amiable and dexterious facility in discharging his duty, will soon knit the knot of life and death upon him, stronger than that Gordian knot never to be loosed, and by that pretty trick of fast and loose will loose your City from him, and him from all his infections, and will hang him in so sweet & clear a prospect as that it will be greatly to your credit to see the great concourse thither of all sects of people. As first I, with my brethren the Barber-Surgeons of London, will be there (because we cannot phlebotomize him) to anatomize him, and keep his bones as a chronicle to show many ages hereafter that sometime lived such a man, our posterity having by tradition what he was, and you in some part might be chronicled (as well as St. George) for destroying this serpent. Then there will flock all the cony-catchers of London to see the portraiture of the architects of their art. Lastly, all the ballad-makers of London, his very enemies that stayed his last grace, will be there to hear his confession, and out of his last words will make epitaphs of him, & afterward ballads of the life and death of Thomas Nashe. Let this grace pass as soon as may be, if not for any particular love to him, yet as you are a magistrate of the City, and ought to know what 'tis to prefer a public commodity. If this grace pass not, he is like to be stayed finally till the next year. I, his head-lecturer present him to you.

Richard Lichfield.

Thus (courteous gentlemen) I have brought you to the end of his trimming. Though he be not so curiously done as he deserveth, hold me excused: he is the first man that ever I cut on this fashion. And if perhaps in this trimming I have cut more parts of him than are necessary, let me hear your censures, and in my next cut I will not be so lavish, but as the

curate who, when he was first entailed into his benefice, and among other injunctions being enjoined (as the order is) to forewarn his parish of holy-days, that they might fast for them, and thinking all those holy-days which he saw in his calendar written with red letters, on a time said to his parishioners, *You must fast next Wednesday for Saint Sol in Virgo, which is on Thursday*, because he saw it in red letters. Which moved laughter to the wise of the parish, who presently instructed him, that over what red words soever he saw *Fast* written, those he should bid holy-days; so in short time he became expert in it. In like manner, I having but newly taken orders in these affairs, if here I have been too prodigal in snip-snaps, tell me of it, limit me with a fast, and in short time you shall see me reformed.

FINIS