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THE COLD YEARE, 1614.

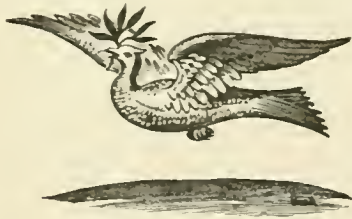
A Deepe Snow :

In which Men and Cattell have perished,

To the generall losse of Farmers, Grasiere, Husbandmen, and all sorts of People in the
Countrie ; and no lesse hurtfull to
Citizens.

Written Dialogue-wise, in a plaine Familiar Talke
betweene a London Shopkeeper, and a
North-Country-Man.

*In which, the Reader shall find many things for his
profit.*



Imprinted at London for Thomas Langley in Iuie
Lane, where they are to be sold.

1615.



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TO THE READER.

Stowe refers to the severity of the winter of 1613-14, in his annals, thus:—"The 17th of January began a great Frost, with extreame Snow which continued untill the 14th of February, and albeit the Violence of the Frost and Snow some dayes abated, yet it continued freezing and snowing much or little untill the 7th of March."



THE GREAT SNOW.
A DIALOGUE.

The Speakers :

A CITIZEN. A NORTH COUNTRYMAN.

North Countryman—

GOD save you sir : here's a letter directs me to such a sign as that hanging over your door ; (and if I be not deceived) this is the shop : is not your name Master *N. B.* ?

Citizen.—N. B. is my name (Father :)

What is your business :

Nor. I have letters to you out of the *North.*

Cit. From whom, I pray ?

Nor. From one Master *G. M.* of *Y.*

Cit. I know him very well ; and if I may hear by you that he is in health, I shall think you a bringer of good and happy news.

Nor. Good and happy news do I bring you then ; (for thanks be to God) health and he have not parted this many a year.

Cit. Trust me, your tidings warms my heart, as cold as the weather is.

Nor. A cup of mulled sack (I think) would do you more good. But to put a better heat into you, I have from your friend and mine, brought you two bags full of comfort, each of them weighing a hundred pounds of current English money.

Cit. Bir o'r Lady sir, the sack you spoke of, would not go down half so merrily, as this news : for money was never so welcome to Londoners (especially tradesmen) as it is now.

Nor. Why : Is it as scanty here, as with us : I thought if the silver age had been any where, your city had challenged it. Methinks our northern climate, should only be without silver mines, because the sun (the sovereign breeder of rich metals) is not so prodigal of his beams to us. Why, I have been told, that all the angels of the kingdom fly up and down *London* : Nay, I have heard, that one of our ruffling gallants in these days, wears more riches on his back, in hat, garters, and shoe-strings, than would maintain a good pretty farm in our country, and keep a plough-land for a whole year.

Cit. We care not how brave our gallants go, so their names stand not in our books : for when a

citizen crosses a gentleman, he holds it one of the chiefest Cheapside-blessings. *I believe &c.*

Nor. I understand you sir : you care not what colours they wear, so you keep them not in black and white.

Cit. You measure us rightly : for the keeping of some so (that carry their heads full high) makes many a good shopkeeper oftentimes to hide his head. So that albeit you that dwell far off, and know not what *London* means, think (as you say) that all the angels of the kingdom, fly up and down here. We, whose wares lie dead upon our hands for want of quick customers, see no such matter : but if any angels do fly, they have either their wings broken and fly not far ; or else are caught like partridges, a few in a covey. Albeit sir, I have all this while held talk with you, yet mine eye hath run over these letters, and acknowledge myself your debtor, in respect an age so reverend (as your head warrants you are) hath been the messenger. But I hope Sir, some greater especial business of your own besides, drew you to so troublesome a journey.

Nor. Troth sir, no extraordinary business : the countryman's hands are now held as well in his pocket, as the shopkeepers. That drew me to *London*, which draws you citizens out of your houses ; or to speak more truly, drives you rather into your houses.

Cit. How mean you sir, the weather :

Nor. The very same. I have been an old briar, and stood many a northerly storm ; the winds have often blown bitterly in my face. Frosts have nipped my blood, icicles (you see) hang at my beard, and a hill of snow covers my head. I am the son of winter, and so like the father, that as he does, I love to be seen in all places. I had as leave walk up to the knees in snow, as to tread upon Turkey carpets : and therefore my journey to see *London* once more ere I die, is as merry to me, as if I were a woman and went a gossiping ; for the earth shows now, as if she lay in, (all in white.)

An old man.

Earth lies in, all in white.

Cit. Belike then you have heard she hath been delivered of some strange prodigious births, that you came thus far, to see her child-bed ?

Nor. I have from my childhood spent my best days in travel, and have seen the wonders of other countries, but am most in love with this of mine own.

Cit. Where, if any be born never so well proportioned, within a day or two it grows to be a monster.

Nor. You say true, and jump with me in that : for I have but two ears ; yet these two ears bring me home a thousand tales in less than seven days : some I hearken to, some shake my head at, some I smile at, some I think true, some I know false.

But because this world is like our millers in the country, knavish and hard to be trusted; though mine ears be mine own, and good, yet I had rather give credit to mine eyes, although they see but badly, yet I know they will not cozen me: these four score years they have not; and that is the reason I have them my guides now in this journey, and shall be my witnesses (when I get home again, and sit, as I hope I shall, turning a crab¹ by the fire) of what wonders I have seen.

Cit. In good sadness father, I am proud that such a heap of years (lying on your back) you stoop no lower for them: I come short of you by almost forty at the least, and methinks I am both more unlusty, and (but for the head and beard) look as aged.

Nor. Oh sir! riots, riots, surfeits overnights, and early potting it next morning, stick white hairs upon young men's chins, when sparing diets holds colour: your crammed capons feed you fat here in *London*; but our beef and bacon feeds us strong in the country; long sleeps and past-midnights-watchings, dry up your bloods and wither your cheeks: we go to bed with the lamb, and rise with the lark, which makes us healthful as the spring. You are still sending to the apothecaries, and still crying out,

*Surfeits kill
more than the
Sword.*

*The cou ry life
and city life
compare.*

¹A CRAB.—Apple.

Early *bridals*,
make *early*
burials.

Fetch Master Doctor to me: but our apothecary's shop, is our garden full of pot-herbs; and our doctor is a clove of garlick: besides, you fall to wenching, and marry here in *London*, when a stranger may think you are all girls in breeches, (your chins are so smooth,) and like cock sparrows, are treading so soon as you creep out of the shell, which makes your lives short as theirs is: but in our country, we hold it as dangerous to venture upon a wife, as into a set battle: it was 36 ere I was pressed to that service; and am now as lusty and sound at heart (I praise my God) as my yoke of bullocks, that are the servants to my plough.

Cit. Yet I wonder, that having no more sand in the glass of your life, how you durst set forth, and how you could come thus far?

Nor. How I durst set forth? If it were 88 again, and all the *Spanish* fireworks at sea,¹ I would thrust this old battered breastplate into the thickest of them. We have trees in our town that bear fruit in winter; I am one of those winter-plums: and though I taste a little sour, yet I have an oak in my belly, and shall not rot yet (I hope) for all this blustering weather.

Cit. It were pity you should yet be felled down, you may stand (no doubt) and grow many a fair year.

SPANISH FIREWORKS.—The Spanish Armada.

Nor. Yes sir, my growing must now be downward, like an ear of corn when it is ripe. But I beseech you tell me, are all those news current, which we hear in the country :

Cit. What are they pray ?

Nor. Marry sir, that your goodly river of The Thames a nurse to London Thames, (I call it yours, because you are a citizen ; and because it is the nurse that gives you milk and honey) is that (as 'tis reported) all frozen over again, that coaches run upon it ?

Cit. No such matter.

Nor. When I heard it I prayed to God to help the fishes ; it would be hard world with them, if their houses were taken over their heads. Nay sir, I heard it constantly affirmed, that all the youth of the city, did muster upon it in battle array, one half against the other : and by my troth, I would have ambled on bare ten-toes a brace of hundred miles, to have seen such a triumph.

Cit. In sadness (I think) so would thousand besides yourself : but neither hath the river been this year (for all the vehement cold) so hard-hearted as to have such a glassy crusted floor ; neither have our youth been up in arms in so dangerous a field : yet true it is, that the *Thames* began to play a few cold Christmas gambols ; and that very children (in good array) great numbers, and with war-like Children dressed as Soldiers. furniture of drums, colours, pikes, and guns, (fit to

their handling) have sundry times met army against army, in most of the fields about the city; to the great rejoicing of their parents, and numbers of beholders.

Nor. In good sooth I am sorry, I was not one of those standers by: I have been brought up as a scholar myself; and when I was young, our wars were wrangling disputations; but now it seems, that learning surfeits, having too many scholars; and that we shall need soldiers, when such young cockerels address to a battle: It shows like the *Epitome* of war; and it is a wonder for men to read it. Our painters in former ages have not drawn such pictures. But you cut me off from what I was about else to know.

Cit. What is that, father?

Nor. A bird came flying from the *North*, and chattered, that snow fell in such abundance within and round about the city of *London*, that none without could enter; nor any within, pass forth.

Cit. Fables, fables: a man may by the shadow have some guess how great the substance is: your own eye (upon your now being in *London*) can witness that your *Northern* song went to a wrong tune.

Nor. And yet by your favour, I think you have not seen your city so whited this forty years.

Cit. Indeed our Chronicles speak of one deep snow only, memorable to our time ; and that was about 34 or 36 years ago. The great snow 36 years ago.

Nor. Nay, not so much, but of your white bears, bulls, lions, &c., we had the description as fully as if with snow-balls in our hands, your apprentices and we silly country clowns had been at their baiting. I remember when I travelled into *Russia*, I have there seen white bears and white foxes : but some credulous fools would needs swear us down, that your city was full of such monsters ; and that they ran alive in the streets, and devoured people : but I see your giants, and terrible herds of beasts, have done your city good service ; for instead of grass, they have had cold provender, and helped to rid away the greater part of your snow. Monsters fash- ioned of the snow in our streets.

Cit. They have indeed : and yet albeit an arm from heaven hath for several years, one after another, shaken whips over our land, sometimes scourging us with strange inundations of floods ; then with merciless fires, destroying whole towns ; then with intolerable and killing frosts, nipping the fruits of the earth : also for a long season, with scarcity of victuals, or in great plenty, sold exceedingly dear ; and now last of all, with deep and most dangerous snows. Yet (as all the former laches), the prints being worn out, are forgotten ; so of this, we make but a May-game, fashioning ridiculous Divers warnings, but no amend- ment.

*God strikes, and
we laugh, as if
he did but jest.*

monsters of that, which God in vengeance pours on our heads; when in doing so, we mock our own selves, that are more monstrous and ugly in all the shapes of sin.

*A good distilla-
tion.*

Cor. You melt (Sir) out of a heap of snow, very profitable and wholesome instructions. But I suppose you have heard of some misfortunes, lately happening unto certain graziers :

Cit. No indeed, sir.

A tale of graziers

Nor. Then take it for truth and on my credit, that a good company of them coming up together to *London* with great store both of sheep and bullocks, they lost, by reason of the snows and deep waves, so many of either (especially of sheep) that perished in great numbers, even on the way, and before their faces, that if they had been sold to their value, it had been a sufficient estate to have maintained a very good man, and have kept him rich all his life time.

*An old man is a
new Almanac.*

Cit. I believe you : but I pray sir, what is your opinion of this strange winter : give me your judgment I beseech you, of these frosts and snows ; and what (in the school of your experience) you have read, or can remember, may be the effects, which they may produce, or which of consequence are likely now to follow.

Nor. I shall do my best to satisfy you. When these great hills of snow, and these great mountains

of ice be digged down, and be made level with the waters; when these hard rocks shall melt into rivers, and these white feathers of heaven stick upon the backs of floods; and that sudden thaws shall show, that the anger of these winter storms are mollified; then it is to be feared, that the swift, violent, and irresistable land-currents (or rather torrents) will bear down bridges, beat down buildings, overflow our corn-fields, overrun the pastures, drown our cattle, and endanger the lives both of man and beast, travelling on their way; and, unless God's hand of plenty be held open, a dearth, to strike the land in the following summer.

*What is likely to
happen upon this
great snow.*

Cit. You say right. This prognostication which your judgment thus looks into, did always fall out to be true.

Nor. These extraordinary fevers (shaking a whole kingdom) have always other mortal diseases waiting upon them.

Cit. We are best to fear it; and by fearing, provide against them.

Nor. I pray God (at whose command the sun sends forth his heat, and the winds bitter storms to deface the fruits of it), that in this last affliction sent down in flakes from the angry element, all other miseries may be hidden, swallowed, and confounded.

Cit. I gladly, and from my heart, play the clerk, crying, *Amen.*

Nor. But I pray sir, you may have melted a great part of our North Country snow out of me, how hath your city here (with all their castles, and *St. George* a horseback to help it), borne off the storm?

Cit. Marry, I will tell you how, sir : just as our *London* fencers oftentimes do in their challenges : she has taken it full upon the head.

Nor. Methinks, and I see it with mine eyes, it cannot hurt you much ; for your streets are fuller of people than ever they were.

Cit. True, sir : but full streets, make shops empty : it's a sign that tradesmen and handicrafts have either little to do, or else can do little, by reason of the weather, when they throw by their tools, and fall to flinging of snow-balls. I assure you father, the tyranny of this season, kills all trading (unless in villany, which shrinks for no weather) so that all commerce lies dead. Besides, it lessens our markets for provision, so that all sort of food was never more dear : it eats up firing, and almost starves the poor, who are not able to buy coal or wood, the rates upon every frosty morning being lifted up and raised at the pleasure of every paltry chandler. Men of occupations, for the most part lie still ; as carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, and such like : not one of these, nor of many other, turns alchemist, for (unless they be shoe-

The hurt the city takes by this snow.

makers) none can extract or melt a penny of silver out of all these heaps of snow.

Nor. You have now given me a large satisfaction.

Cit. Nay, if you should walk but along one street only in *London*; and that is *Thames street*, The dwellers in Thames street. and to see their cellars and warehouses full of rich merchandise, drowned, and utterly spoiled, you would both wonder at the loss, which cannot be set down; and lament it, albeit you know it to be none of your own.

Nor. I do already (by your report, to which I give much credit) lament it in others, as if it were mine own. I love not these tragical passions, I suffer for them upon the reporting. But putting them by, I pray sir, seeing I have unladen myself to you here in your shop, send not you me home like a collier's horse, only with an empty sack on my back: let me have some good news to carry with me.

Cit. The best, and most noble, that I have at this time, to bestow upon you, is to request you to step into *Smithfield*, where you shall see by the careful providence, care, and industry, of our honourable senators (the fathers of our city) much money buried under that dirty field, by the hiring of hundreds of labourers to reduce it (as it is re-

ported), to the fairest and most famous market-place, that is in the whole kingdom.

*Smithfield made
a market place.*

Nor. A market-place! now trust me, it stands fit for so noble a purpose, and will be a memorable monument to after ages, of the royalty, diligence, wisdom and bravery of this. But where shall your *Cheapside* market be then kept, this must either hinder that, or that this:

Cit. *Cheapside* shall by this means, have her streets freed from that trouble, by sending it hither, if (as it is reported) it prove a market place. It will add that beauty to that spacious place, which in former times hath by horses and panniers, and butter-wives, been taken from it: Nay, the very street itself, by this means, will show like a large new *Exchange* or *Rialto*; such a commerce of gentlemen and citizens will be seen there daily by walking upon it.

Nor. I thank you for this news; this goes with me into the *North*: And when I hear that the work is finished, I'll take off one ten years of mine, because I'll come up lustily to *London* once again, to see such an honour to your city.

Cit. And when you do, you shall find (as report already gives it out) besides the market, two goodly receptacles for water fairly built, to add unto it the greater glory and beauty.

Nor. Your city is full of honourable deeds ; and ever may it be so. I have troubled you long ; your money will I bring to you to-morrow morning ; in the meantime, because (as dirty as your streets are) I must trot up and down, to dispatch many businesses. I will for this time, take my leave of you ; and the rather, for that (you see) it hath now left snowing.

Cit. Sir, you are most heartily welcome.



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Notes and Observations

ON

THE GREAT SNOW STORM.

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of _____

in the County of _____

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