

Poem No.

19

A Man of Words and Not of Deeds

(Charles Perrault 1628-1703)

A man of words and not of deeds,
Is like a garden full of weeds.
And when the weeds begin to grow,
It's like a garden full of snow.
And when the snow begins to fall,
It's like a bird upon the wall.
And when the bird away does fly,
It's like an eagle in the sky.
And when the sky begins to roar,
It's like a lion at the door.
And when the door begins to crack,
It's like a stick across your back.
And when your back begins to smart,
It's like a penknife in your heart.
And when your heart begins to bleed,
You're dead and dead and dead indeed.

Translated by Robert Samber

Glossary

weed	any wild plant growing where it is not wanted
roar	loud, deep sound as of a lion
smart	feel or cause a sharp pain

Theme

A man who always talks and boasts and is not involved in any deed is like a garden full of weeds. And when it is once grown it further aggravates the situation like snow in winter. Life passes through different phases and ultimately comes to an end with the death of a person. It is, therefore, necessary that a man must always engage himself in some fruitful activity to make the life pleasant and useful for humanity.

EXERCISE

1. Paraphrase the poem.
2. How does the life of man pass through different phases?
3. What happens when life is spent with the help of words and not of deeds?
4. What does the garden look like when the weeds start growing?
5. Write down all the rhyming words in the poem and use them in sentences of your own.
6. What is the moral of the poem?