



The Best Laid Schemes

SELECTED POETRY AND PROSE
OF ROBERT BURNS

Edited by

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Chorus—

A fig for those by LAW protected!

LIBERTY's a glorious feast!

Courts for Cowards were erected,

Churches built to please the PRIEST.

What is TITLE, what is TREASURE,

What is REPUTATION's care?

If we lead a life of pleasure,

'Tis no matter HOW or WHERE.

A fig &c.

With the ready trick and fable

Round we wander all the day;

And at night, in barn or stable,

Hug our doxies on the hay.

A fig for &c.

Does the train-attended CARRIAGE

Thro' the country lighter rove?

Does the sober bed of MARRIAGE

Witness brighter scenes of love?

A fig for &c.

Life is all a VARIORUM,

We regard not how it goes;

Let them cant about DECORUM,

Who have character to lose.

A fig for &c.

Here's to BUDGETS, BAGS and WALLETS!

Here's to all the wandering train!

Here's our ragged BRATS and CALLETS!

One and all cry out, AMEN!

A fig for those by LAW protected,

LIBERTY's a glorious feast!

COURTS for Cowards were erected,

CHURCHES built to please the priest.

Finis—

On a Scotch Bard Gone to the West Indies.

A' ye wha live by sowps o' drink,

all; who; sups

A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,

doggerel

A' ye wha live and never think,

Come, mourn wi' me!

with

Our *billie's* gien us a' a jink,

comrade has given; dodge

An' owre the Sea.

and over

Lament him a' ye rantan core,

all; merry gang

Wha dearly like a random-splore;

who; party

Nae mair he'll join the *merry roar*,

no more

In social key;

For now he's taen anither shore,

taken another

An' owre the Sea!

The bonie lasses weel may wiss him,

pretty; well; wish, desire

And in their dear *petitions* place him:

The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him,

and all

Wi' tearfu' e'e;

with tearful eye

For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him

well; know; sorely

That's owre the Sea!

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!

have

Hadst thou taen aff some drowsy bummle,

taken off; bungler

Wha can do nought but fyke an' fumble,

who; fidget

'Twad been nae plea;

it would[have]; no argument

But he was gleg as onie wumble,

sharp; any gimlet

That's owre the Sea!

Auld, cantie KYLE may weepers wear,

old, cheerful; mourning

An' stain them wi' the saut, saut tear:

salt

'Twill mak her poor, auld heart, I fear,

it will make; old

In flinders flee:

splinters fly

He was her *Laureat* monie a year,

laureate many

That's owre the Sea!

medley

bundles

wenches

He saw Misfortune's cauld <i>Nor-west</i>	<i>cold</i>
Lang-mustering up a bitter blast;	<i>long-</i>
A Jillet brak his heart at last,	<i>flirt broke</i>
Ill may she be!	
So, took a birth afore the mast,	<i>berth before</i>
An' owre the Sea.	
To tremble under Fortune's cummock,	<i>crooked staff</i>
On scarce a bellyfu' o' <i>drummock</i> ,	<i>bellyful of oatmeal and water</i>
Wi' his proud, independant stomach,	
Could ill agree;	
So, row't his hurdies in a <i>hammock</i> ,	<i>rolled; haunches</i>
An' owre the Sea.	
He ne'er was gien to great misguidin,	<i>never; given; mismanagement</i>
Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in;	<i>would not stay</i>
Wi' him it ne'er was <i>under hidin</i> ;	<i>hiding</i>
He dealt it free:	
The <i>Muse</i> was a' that he took pride in,	<i>all</i>
That's owre the Sea.	
<i>Jamaica bodies</i> , use him weel,	<i>fellows; well</i>
An' hap him in a cozie biel:	<i>shelter; cosy refuge</i>
Ye'll find him ay a dainty chiel,	<i>always; fellow</i>
An' fou o' glee:	<i>and full of</i>
He wad na wrang'd the vera <i>Diel</i> ,	<i>would not [have] wronged; very Devil</i>
That's owre the Sea.	
Fareweel, my <i>rhyme-composing billie!</i>	<i>farewell; friend</i>
Your native soil was right ill-willie;	<i>ill-willed</i>
But may ye flourish like a lily,	
Now bonilie!	<i>handsomely</i>
I'll toast you in my hindmost <i>gillie</i> ,	<i>gill-cup</i>
Tho' owre the Sea!	

To the Author. [Second Epistle to Davie]

AULD NIBOR,	<i>old neighbour</i>
I'm three times, doubly, o'er your debtor;	<i>over</i>
For your auld-farrent, frien'ly letter;	<i>old-fashioned, friendly</i>
Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,	<i>must say it</i>
Ye speak sae fair;	<i>so</i>
For my puir, silly, rhymin' clatter	<i>poor; rhyming</i>
Some less maun sair.	<i>must serve</i>
Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;	
Lang may your elbuck jink an' diddle,	<i>long; elbow; jiggle</i>
Tae cheer you thro' the weary widdle	<i>to; struggle</i>
O' war'ly cares,	<i>of worldly</i>
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle	<i>children's children</i>
Your auld, gray hairs.	<i>old</i>
But DAVIE, lad, I'm red ye're glaikit;	<i>advised; foolish</i>
I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;	<i>told; have neglected</i>
An' gif it's sae, ye sud be licket	<i>and if; so; should; beaten</i>
Until ye fyke:	<i>twitch</i>
Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faikit,	<i>such hands; should; spared</i>
Be hain't wha like.	<i>whoever protects [them]</i>
For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,	
Rivan the words tae gar them clink;	<i>wrenching; to make; ring, rhyme</i>
Whyles daez't wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,	<i>sometimes dazed with</i>
Wi' jads or masons;	<i>women; freemasons</i>
An' whyles, but ay owre late, I think	<i>sometimes; always too</i>
Braw sober lessons.	<i>fine</i>
Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,	<i>all; of</i>
Commen' me to the Bardie clan;	<i>commend; minor poet</i>
Except it be some idle plan	
O' rhymin' clink,	<i>of rhyming sound</i>
The devil-haet, that I sud ban,	<i>devil a bit; should curse</i>
They never think.	