



Address To The Unco Guid

or the rigidly righteous

My Son, these maxims make a rule,
An' lump them aye thegither;
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither:
The cleanest corn that ere was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow creature slight
For rand fits o' daffin.
Solomon.--*Eccles. ch. vii. verse 16*

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel',
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neibours' fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water;
The heapèd happer's ebbing still,
An' still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaikit Folly's portals:
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences--
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer;
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What makes the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in;
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It maks a unco lee-way.

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrified, they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
Th' external consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state
Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treach'rous inclination--
But let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human;
One point must still be greatly dark,--
The moving *Why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

Robert Burns

dight=sifted
caff=chaff
daffin=larking
weel-gaun=well-going
heapet=heaped, pile up
happer=hopper
clap=clapper of a mill
core=crowd
douce=sober, respectable
glaikit=stupid
propone=state in a court of law
donsie=unfortunate
niffer=barter, exchange
lave=rest
scud=sail quickly over
unco=uncommon
lug=ear
aiblins=perhaps
kennin=known