

## Auld Man tae the Oak Tree

Auld Man tae the Oak Tree

1.

Says the auld man  
Tae the oak tree,  
"Young and lusty was I  
When I kenned thee.

"I was young an lusty,  
I was fair an clear,  
Young an lusty was I  
Mony a lang year.

"But sair failed am I,  
Sair failed noo,  
Sair failed am I  
Sin I kenned you."

2.

Young and souple was I, when I lap the dyke;  
Now I'm auld and frail, I douna step a syke.  
Buy broom &c.

Young and souple was I, when at Lautherslack,  
Now I'm auld and frail, and lie at Nansie's back.  
Buy broom &c.

Had she gien me butter, when she gae me bread,  
I wad lookit baulder, wi' my beld head.  
Buy broom &c.

---

(1) Montgomerie SNR (1946), 126 (no. 162), pretty much as in Ritson, Gammer Gurton's Garland ("Says t' auld man ti't oak tree," etc.). Bell RNB (1812) 257, has a slightly fuller version, thus:

I was young and lusty,  
I was fair and clear;

I was young and lusty,  
Many a long year.  
Sair fail'd hinny,

Sair fail'd now;  
Sair fail'd hinny,  
Sin' I kend thou.

When I was young and lusty,  
I could loup a dyke;

But now at five and sixty,  
Cannot do the like.  
Sair fail'd hinny,  
Sair fail'd now,  
Sair fail'd hinny,  
Sin' I kend thou.

Then said the awd man  
To the oak tree;

Sair fail'd is 'e,  
Sin' I kend thee.  
Sair fail'd hinny,  
Sair fail'd now;  
Sair fail'd hinny,  
Sin' I kend thou.

Sir Cuthbert Sharpe (Bishoprick Garland, 1834, slightly edited--e.g. 3.3 Sair fail'd is I) says "This song is `far north;' it is admitted in Bell's Northern Bards, and may very possibly belong to the bishoprick, where it is well known." Slightly fuller in Bruce and Stokoe (1882), 92, with music; whence Whittaker (1940), 63.

(2) Kinsley, Burns 913-14, no. 626 B; tune, "Buy Broom Besoms" (q.v.). A traditional version collected by Burns. St. 1 comparable to Bruce & Stokoe's 2 (not counting chorus):

When aw was young and lusty,  
Aw cud lowp a dyke;  
But now aw'm awd an' stiff,  
Aw can hardly step a syke.

MS