

A Dedication : To Gavin Hamilton, Esq.

Expect na, sir, in this narration,
 A fleechin, fleth'rin Dedication,
 To roose you up, an' ca' you guid,
 An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
 Because ye're surnam'd like His Grace-
 Perhaps related to the race:
 Then, when I'm tir'd-and sae are ye,
 Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
 Set up a face how I stop short,
 For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do-maun do, sir, wi' them wha
 Maun please the great folk for a wamefou;
 For me! sae laigh I need na bow,
 For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;
 And when I downa yoke a naig,
 Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg;
 Sae I shall say-an' that's nae flatt'rin-
 It's just sic Poet an' sic Patron.

The Poet, some guid angel help him,
 Or else, I fear, some ill ane skelp him!
 He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
 But only-he's no just begun yet.

The Patron (sir, ye maun forgie me;
 I winna lie, come what will o' me),
 On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
 He's just-nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
 He downa see a poor man want;
 What's no his ain, he winna tak it;
 What ance he says, he winna break it;
 Ought he can lend he'll no refus't,
 Till aft his guidness is abus'd;
 And rascals whiles that do him wrang,
 Ev'n that, he does na mind it lang;
 As master, landlord, husband, father,
 He does na fail his part in either.

But then, nae thanks to him for a'that;
 Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
 It's naething but a milder feature
 Of our poor, sinfu' corrupt nature:
 Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
 'Mang black Gentoos, and pagan Turks,
 Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
 Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
 That he's the poor man's friend in need,
 The gentleman in word and deed,
 It's no thro' terror of damnation;
 It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
 Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!
 Vain is his hope, whase stay an' trust is
 In moral mercy, truth, and justice!

No-stretch a point to catch a plack:
 Abuse a brother to his back;
 Steal through the winnock frae a whore,
 But point the rake that taks the door;
 Be to the poor like ony whunstane,
 And haud their noses to the grunstane;

Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving;
No matter-stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile pray'rs, an' half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang, wry faces;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own;
I'll warrant they ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
For gumlie dubs of your ain delvin!
Ye sons of Heresy and Error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror,
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath.
And in the fire throws the sheath;
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till Heav'n commission gies him;
While o'er the harp pale Misery moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, sir, for this digression:
I maist forgat my Dedication;
But when divinity comes 'cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, sir, you see 'twas nae daft vapour;
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, sir, to you:
Because (ye need na tak it ill),
I thought them something like yoursel'.

Then patronize them wi' your favor,
And your petitioner shall ever-
I had amaist said, ever pray,
But that's a word I need na say;
For prayin, I hae little skill o't,
I'm baith dead-sweer, an' wretched ill o't;
But I'se repeat each poor man's pray'r,
That kens or hears about you, sir-

"May ne'er Misfortune's gowling bark,
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the clerk!
May ne'er his genrous, honest heart,
For that same gen'rous spirit smart!
May Kennedy's far-honour'd name
Lang beet his hymeneal flame,
Till Hamiltons, at least a dizzen,
Are frae their nuptial labours risen:
Five bonie lasses round their table,
And sev'n braw fellows, stout an' able,
To serve their king an' country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May health and peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the ev'ning o' his days;
Till his wee, curlie John's ier-oe,
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow!"

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
With complimentary effusion;
But, whilst your wishes and endeavours
Are blest with Fortune's smiles and favours,
I am, dear sir, with zeal most fervent,
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent)
That iron-hearted carl, Want,
Attended, in his grim advances,
By sad mistakes, and black mischances,
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
Make you as poor a dog as I am,
Your humble servant then no more;
For who would humbly serve the poor?
But, by a poor man's hopes in Heav'n!
While recollection's pow'r is giv'n-
If, in the vale of humble life,
The victim sad of fortune's strife,
I, thro' the tender-gushing tear,
Should recognise my master dear;
If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, sir, your hand-my Friend and Brother!