

But to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the grifsle;
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fifsle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing, or whifsle,
Your friend and servant.

TO THE SAME.

April 21st, 1785.

WHILE new-ca'd kye rowte at the
stake,
An' pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor,
To honest-hearted, auld L*****K,
For his kind *letter*.

Forjesket fair, with weary legs,
Rattlin the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
Their ten-hours bite,

My awkart Muse fair pleads and begs,
I would na write.

The tapetless, ramfeezl'd hizzie,
She's fast at best an' something lazy,
Quo' she, 'Ye ken we've been fae busy
 ' This month an' mair,
' That trouth, my head is grown right dizzie,
 ' An' something fair.'

Her dowf excuses pat me mad;
' Conscience,' says I, 'ye thowless jad!
' I'll write, an' that a hearty blaud,
 ' This vera night;
' So dinna ye affront your trade,
 ' But rhyme it right.

' Shall bauld L*****K, the *king o' hearts*,
' Tho' mankind were a *pack o' cartes*,
' Roose you fae weel for your deserts,
 ' In terms fae friendly,
' Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts
 ' An' thank him kindly?'

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
 An, down gaed *stumpie* in the ink:
 Quoth I, ' Before I sleep a wink,
 ' I vow I'll close it;
 ' An' if ye winna mak it clink,
 ' By Jove I'll prose it!'

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
 In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither,
 Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,
 Let time mak proof;
 But I shall scribble down some blether
 Just clean aff-loof.

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge an' carp,
 Tho' Fortune use you hard an' sharp;
 Come, kittle up your *moorlan harp*
 Wi' gleesome touch!
 Ne'er mind how Fortune *waft* an' *warp*;
 She's but a b-tch.

She's gien me monie a jirt an' fleg,
 Sin I could striddle owre a rig;

But by the L—d, tho' I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,
I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I dow!

Now comes the *sax an' twentieth* fimmer,
I've seen the bud upo' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer
Frae year to year;
But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the *city-gent*,
Behint a kist to lie an' sklent,
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent per cent,
An' muckle wame,
In some bit *Brugh* to represent
A Baillie's name?

Or is't the paughty, feudal *Thane*,
Wi' ruffl'd fark an' glancin cane,
Wha thinks himsel nae *sheep-shank bane*,
But lordly stalks,

While caps an' bonnets aff are taen,
As by he walks?

' O *Thou* wha gies us each guid gift!
' Gie me o' *wit* an' *sense* a lift,
' Then turn me, if *Thou* please, *adrift*,
' Thro' Scotland wide;
' Wi' *cits* nor *lairds* I wadna shift,
' In a' their pride!

Were this the *charter* of our state,
‘ On pain o’ *hell* be rich an’ great,’
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead ;
But, thanks to *Heav’n*, that’s no the gate
We learn our *creed*.

For thus the royal *Mandate* ran,
When first the human race began,
' The social, friendly, honest man,
 ' Whate'er he be,
' 'Tis *he* fulfils great Nature's plan,
 ' And none but *he*.

O *Mandate*, glorious and divine!
The followers o' the ragged Nine,
Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine
In glorious light,
While fordid sons o' Mammon's line
Are dark as night!

Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze, an'
growl,
Their worthless nievefu' of a *soul*,
May in some *future carcase* howl,
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting *owl*
May shun the light.

Then may L*****K and B***** arise,
To reach their native, kindred skies,
And *sing* their pleasures, hopes an' joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties
Each passing year!