

By **Robert Burns**, our *Prophetic Poetic Correspondent*



Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,  
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!  
Thou need na start awa sae hasty  
Wi bickering brattle!  
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,  
Wi' murdering pattle.

I'm truly sorry man's dominion  
Has broken Nature's social union,  
An' justifies that ill opinion  
Which makes thee startle  
At me, thy poor, earth born companion  
An' fellow mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thief;  
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!  
A daimen icker in a thrave  
'S a sma' request;  
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,  
An' never miss't.

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!  
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!  
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,  
O' foggage green!  
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,  
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,  
An' weary winter comin fast,  
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,  
Thou thought to dwell,  
Till crash! the cruel coulter past  
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,  
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!  
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,  
But house or hald,  
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,  
An' cranreuch cauld.

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,

In proving foresight may be vain:  
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men  
Gang aft agley,  
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,  
For promis'd joy!

Still thou are blest, compared wi' me!  
The present only toucheth thee:  
But och! I backward cast my e'e,  
On prospects drear!  
An' forward, tho' I canna see,  
I guess an' fear!

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