



# EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

*David Gillan who  
published his Poems  
in 1789*

A

## BROTHER POET.

*January—*

I.

**W**HILE winds frae off BEN-LO-  
MOND blaw,

And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,

And hing us owre the ingle,

I fet me down, to pass the time,

And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,

In hamely, *westlin* jingle.



While frosty winds blaw in the drift,  
 Ben to the chimla lug,  
 I grudge a wee the *Great-folk's* gift,  
 That live fae bien an' snug:  
 I tent less, and want less  
 Their roomy fire-side;  
 But hanker, and canker,  
 To see their cursed pride.

## II.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r,  
 To keep, at times, frae being four,  
 To see how things are shar'd;  
 How *best o' chieles* are whyles in want,  
 While *Coofs* on countless thousands rant,  
 And ken na how to wair't:  
 But DAVIE lad, ne'er fash your head,  
 Tho' we hae little gear,  
 We're fit to win our daily bread,  
 As lang's we're hale and fier:  
 ' Mair spier na, nor fear na,' \*  
 Auld age ne'er mind a feg;

\* Ramfay.



The last o't, the warst o't,  
Is only but to beg.

## III.

To lye in kilns and barns at e'en,  
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,  
Is, doubtless, great distress!  
Yet then *content* could make us blest;  
Ev'n then, sometimes we'd snatch a taste  
Of truest happiness.

The honest heart that's free frae a'  
Intended fraud or guile,  
However Fortune kick the ba',  
Has ay some cause to smile:  
And mind still, you'll find still,  
A comfort this nae sma';  
Nae mair then, we'll care then,  
Nae *farther* we can *fa'*.

## IV.

What tho', like Commoners of air,  
We wander out, we know not where,  
But either house or hal'?



Yet *Nature's* charms, the hills and woods,  
 The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,  
 Are free alike to all.

In days when Daisies deck the ground,  
 And Blackbirds whistle clear,  
 With honest joy, our hearts will bound,  
 To see the *coming* year :

On braes when we please then,

We'll fit and *sooth* a tune;

Syne *rhyme* till't, well time till't,

And sing't when we hae done.

## V.

It's no in titles nor in rank ;

It's no in wealth like *Lon'on Bank*,

To purchase peace and rest ;

It's no in makin muckle, *mair* :

It's no in books; it's no in Lear,

To make us truly blest :

If Happiness hae not her feat

And center in the breast,

We may be *wise*, or *rich*, or *great*,

But never can be *blest* :



Nae treasures, nor pleasures  
 Could make us happy lang;  
 The *heart* ay's the part ay,  
 That makes us right or wrang,

## VI.

Think ye, that sic as *you* and *I*,  
 Wha drudge and drive thro' wet and dry,  
 Wi' never-ceasing toil;  
 Think ye, are we less blest than they,  
 Wha scarcely tent us in their way,  
 As hardly worth their while?  
 Alas! how aft, in haughty mood,  
 GOD'S creatures they opprefs!  
 Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,  
 They riot in excess!  
 Baith careless, and fearless,  
 Of either Heaven or Hell;  
 Esteeming, and deeming,  
 It a' an idle tale!

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## VII.

Then let us chearfu' acquiesce;  
 Nor make our scanty Pleasures less,  
 By pining at our state:  
 And, ev'n should Misfortunes come,  
 I, here wha fit, hae met wi' some,  
 An's thankfu' for them yet.  
 They gie the wit of *Age* to *Youth*;  
 They let us ken oursel;  
 They make us see the naked truth,  
 The *real* guid and ill.  
 Tho' losses, and crosses,  
 Be lessons right severe,  
 There's *wit* there, ye'll get there,  
 Ye'll find nae other where.

## VIII.

But tent me, DAVIE, *Ace o' Hearts!*  
 (To say aught less wad wrang the *cartes*,  
 And flatt'ry I detest)  
 This life has joys for you and I;  
 And joys that riches ne'er could buy;  
 And joys the very best.



There's a' the *Pleasures o' the Heart*,  
The *Lover* and the *Frien'*;  
Ye hae your MEG, your dearest part,  
And I my darling JEAN!

It warms me, it charms me,  
To mention but her *name*:  
It heats me, it beets me,  
And sets me a' on flame!

IX.

O, all ye *Pow'rs* who rule above!  
O THOU, whose very self art *love*!  
THOU know'st my words sincere!  
The *life blood* streaming thro' my heart,  
Or my more dear *Immortal part*,  
Is not more fondly dear!  
When heart-corroding care and grief  
Deprive my soul of rest,  
Her dear idea brings relief,  
And solace to my breast.

Thou BEING, Allseeing,

O hear my fervent pray'r!



Still take her, and make her,  
THY most peculiar care!

X.

All hail! ye tender feelings dear!  
The smile of love, the friendly tear,  
The sympathetic glow!  
Long since, this world's thorny ways  
Had number'd out my weary days,  
Had it not been for you!  
Fate still has blest me with a friend,  
In ev'ry care and ill;  
And oft a more *endearing* band,  
A *tye* more tender still.  
It lightens, it brightens,  
The tenebrific scene,  
To meet with, and greet with,  
My DAVIE or my JEAN!

XI.

O, how that *name* inspires my style!  
The words come skelpan, rank and file,  
Amaist before I ken!



The ready measure rins as fine,  
As *Phæbus* and the famous *Nine*  
Were glowran owre my pen.  
My spavet *Pegasus* will limp,  
Till ance he's fairly het;  
And then he'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,  
And rin an unco fit:

But least then, the beast then,  
Should rue this hasty ride,  
I'll light now, and dight now,  
His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

