

power for evil was ever checkmating the divine beneficence—
Burns rounded up this motley crew and, like King Arthur,

“Rose on and pitched
His tent beside the forest. Then he drave
The heathen; after, slew the beast and fell’d
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight.”

The awful Deil he took in hand, and placed him on his easel
in every style of outrageous caricature till at length the Prince of
the air was ridiculed into a circus clown.

The dreaded witches were clothed in appropriate costumes
and made to dance to the music of auld Nick’s screechy pipes.

All the uncanny tenantry of haunted kirk, of ruined castle,
grey and lonely wood-path were made to join the procession and
pass out into the light of day, where they faded away like mists
before the morning sun.

The destroyer of ghosts meets a quack doctor who soon
suffers the fate of the witches. The thin fabric of sham is
pierced by the pike-thrust of ridicule, and suffers ignominious
collapse. The religious Pharisee is also impaled on the spear
point and held up to the guys and jeers of the populace.

We may say that in every merry measure of the poet there
was a purpose strong. His wit and humor were the keen-edged
weapons with which he served his country and served it well.
To-day, we go to his armoury and find no clumsy suit of mail and
rusty battle-axe, but the light and shining blades, as bright and
keen as when he laid them down long years ago.

It is not our duty to offer an apology for such of Burns’
humor as sounds a little coarse to cultured ears. Wisdom is often
linked with folly. Solomon, with his towering reputation would
not be a suitable model for the emulation of European Princes or
Republican Presidents.

“Dark-brow’d sophist, come not anear;
All the place is holy ground;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.”