

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
 And weary winter comin' fast,
 And cozle here, beneath the blast
 Thou thought to dwell,
 Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
 Out through thy cell.

That wee blt heap o' leaves and stibble
 Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
 Now thou's turned out for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hauld,
 To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
 And cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane
 In proving foresight may be vain!
 The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
 Gang aft a-gley,
 And lea'e us nought but grief and pain
 For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
 The present only toucheth thee.
 But, och! I backward cast my e'e
 On prospects drear!
 And forward though I canna see,
 I guess and fear.

The Greatness of Simplicity

In the domain of true art it is said that the true test of superiority is the nearness to which a representation comes to the objects or themes depicted. That is in reality its truthfulness and its harmony with Nature. It is the same in music and literature as it is in painting. All the greatest things in either of them are the simplest, just because it is by that means that their appeal comes home to all, gentle and simple alike. Any great work of art must not only depict what is to be seen or heard, it must at the same time convey something of the thoughts and sentiments, something of the inner sense and meaning of the thing if it is to touch human emotion at all.

The paintings of Rembrandt, the choruses of Handel are our immortal inheritance just because they fulfil this standard as nothing else in painting or music does. The same may be said of the poetry of Robert Burns. It goes straight to the spot like lighting to its quarry. It deals with natural objects, and it is not the beautiful and magnificent alone that we admire in Nature. The rudest or most uncouth objects are often closely connected with our finest and strongest emotions.

Take for instance, "The Auld Farmer's New Year Address to His Auld Mare."

When thou an' I were young and skelgh,
 An' stable meals at fairs were dreigh,
 How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh,
 An' tak' the road!
 Town's bodies ran, an' stood abelgh,
 An' ca't thee mad.