**To A Mouse**

On turning her up in her nest with the plough, November 1785.

Robert Burns was a poet, but that was not what earned him his living. As with most artists of his time he had to have some means of earning his keep. In Burns’ case he earned most of his money, sparse though this was, from farming. This is why he is also known as the “Ploughman Bard”. It was his thoughts on what he had done that led to his poem, “To a Mouse”, which contains one of his most quoted lines from the poem. I am sure that you will recognize it, probably not from the Scottish words, but from the translation, lines 4 and 5 from verse 7.

**Burns Original**

Wee, Sleekit, corwrin, 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 thieve;

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.