

THE  
WHISTLE,

A

POEM,

BY

ROBERT BURNS,

THE AYRSHIRE POET.

---

“ I sing of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth—

“ I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the North,

“ Which was brought to the Court of our good Scottish King;

“ *And long with this Whistle all Scotland shall ring.*

---

---

It is presumed that the following Poem, the production of the celebrated Scotch Bard, Mr. BURNS, cannot fail to gratify the Public, being fresh from his fertile Pen, and on a subject equally singular and unknown in song, and suited to the genius of his eccentric Muse.

### A R G U M E N T.

IT seems, that, some centuries ago, a Danish Chief appeared at the Court of Scotland, challenging the convivial Sons of Caledonia to try their strength with him at the bottle, and offering, as a spur to their emulation, and a trophy of victory, a very curious and valuable Whistle to the vanquisher. After many unsuccessful contests on the part of the Scottish Adventurers, the Whistle was won by an ancestor of the present Chieftain of Glenriddel, who, according to the terms of the defiance, blew upon the Whistle *clear and strong*, after his adversary was entombed below the table. It has remained a household-god in this family, till very lately, that two worthy champions dared its possessor to a trial of drinking for it, one of whom has fairly won it, in presence, it appears, of Mr. BURNS, who was chosen umpire on the occasion.

The loss is a severe mortification to its late owner, to whom, as an Antiquarian, delighting to canvass the precious rusty remains of old times, this antique must have been dear and invaluable. The Reader will learn, from this history, the origin of the phrase, *Wetting one's Whistle*, which no doubt was derived from this fact.

---

T H E W H I S T L E.

---

I.

**I** Sing of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth—  
I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the North,  
Which was brought to the Court of our good  
Scottish King;  
And long with this Whistle all Scotland shall ring.

II.

Old Loda, still rueing the arm of FINGAL,  
The God of the Bottle sends down from his Hall  
“ This Whistle’s your challenge—to Scotland  
“ get o’er,  
“ And drink them to Hell, Sir! or ne’er see me  
“ more!

## III.

Old Poets have fung, and old chronicles tell,  
 What champions ventur'd—what champions  
 fell;

The Son of great LODA was conqueror still,  
 And blew on the Whistle their requiem shrill:

## IV.

Till ROBERT, the Lord of the Cairn and the  
 Scaur,

Unmatch'd at the bottle, unconquer'd in war,  
 Had drank his poor Godship as deep as the sea;  
 No tide of the Baltic e'er drunker than he.

## V.

Thus, ROBERT, victorious, the trophy has  
 gain'd,

Which now in his house has for ages remain'd;  
 Till three noble Chieftains, and all of his blood,  
 The jovial contest again have renew'd—

## VI.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of  
 flaw;

CRAIGDARROCH, so famous for wit, worth,  
 and law;

And trusty GLENRIDDEL, so versed in old coins;  
 And gallant Sir ROBERT, deep read in old wines.

## VII.

CRAIG DARROCH began with a tongue smooth  
 as oil,

Desiring GLENRIDDEL to yield up the spoil;  
 Or else he would muster the heads of the Clan,  
 And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

## VIII.

By the Gods of the Ancients! GLENRIDDEL  
 replies,

Before I surrender so glorious a prize,  
 I'll conjure the ghost of the great RORIE MORE\*,  
 And bumper his horn with twenty times more.

## IX.

Sir ROBERT, a soldier, no speech could pretend,  
 But he ne'er turn'd his back on his foe or his friend:

\* RORIE MORE—a Chieftain of the M'LEOD Family, mentioned in Dr. JOHNSON'S Tour to the Hebrides, who kept a horn of a quart measure in his Hall, which those who aspired to a connexion with his Clan were compelled to drink off at a draught, in proof of their belonging to his doughty race.

Said, Toss down the Whistle, the prize of the field,  
And, knee-deep in claret, he'd die or he'd yield.

## X.

To the board of GLENRIDDEL our Heroes repair,  
So noted for drowning both sorrow and care;  
But for wine and for welcome, not more known  
to fame,  
Than the sense, wit, and taste, of a sweet lovely  
dame.

## XI.

A Bard was selected to witness the fray,  
And tell future ages the feats of the day—  
A Bard who detested all sadness and spleen,  
And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

## XII.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,  
And ev'ry new cork was a new spring of joy:  
In the bands of old friendship and kindred well set;  
And the bands grew the tighter, the more they  
were wet.

## XIII.

Gay pleasure ran riot, till bumper run o'er;  
Bright PHOEBUS ne'er witness'd so joyous a core,

And vow'd, that to leave them he was quite  
forlorn;

Till CYNTHIA hinted, he'd find them next morn.

XIV.

Six bottles a piece had well wore out the night,  
When gallant Sir ROBERT, to finish the fight,  
Turn'd o'er at one bumper a bottle of red,  
And swore 'twas the way that their Ancestors did.

XV.

Then worthy GLENRIDDEL, so cautious and  
sage,  
No longer the warfare ungodly would wage;  
A high Ruling Elder to wallow in wine!  
He left the foul business to folks less divine.

XVI.

The gallant Sir ROBERT fought hard to the end;  
But who can with Fate and quart bumpers  
contend?  
Tho' Fate said, A Hero shall perish in light—  
So, up rose bright PHOEBUS—and down fell  
the Knight!

XVII.

Next, up rose the Bard, like a Prophet in drink—

“ CRAIGDARROCH, thoul't soar when creation

“ shall sink;

“ But if thou would'ft flourish immortal in rhyme

“ Come, one bottle more--and have at the sublime!

XVIII.

“ Thy line that has struggled for freedom with

“ BRUCE,

“ Shall heroes and patriots ever produce.

“ So, thine be the Whistle, and mine be the bay;

“ The field thou hast won, by yon bright God

“ of Day!”