To A Louse

On Seeing One On A Lady's Bonnet, At Church

1786

Ha! whaur ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?

Your impudence protects you sairly;

I canna say but ye strunt rarely,

Owre gauze and lace;

Tho', faith! I fear ye dine but sparely

On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,

Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,

How daur ye set your fit upon her-

Sae fine a lady?

Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner

On some poor body.

Swith! in some beggar's haffet squattle;

There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,

Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,

In shoals and nations;

Whaur horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle

Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,

Below the fatt'rels, snug and tight;

Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,

Till ye've got on it-

The verra tapmost, tow'rin height

O' Miss' bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,

As plump an' grey as ony groset:

O for some rank, mercurial rozet,

Or fell, red smeddum,

I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,

Wad dress your droddum.

I wad na been surpris'd to spy

You on an auld wife's flainen toy;

Or aiblins some bit dubbie boy,

On's wyliecoat;

But Miss' fine Lunardi! fye!

How daur ye do't?

O Jeany, dinna toss your head,

An' set your beauties a' abread!

Ye little ken what cursed speed

The blastie's makin:

Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,

Are notice takin.

O wad some Power the giftie gie us

To see oursels as ithers see us!

It wad frae mony a blunder free us,

An' foolish notion:

What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,

An' ev'n devotion!