

Instituted 1921



Federated 1921

John Kennedy (d.1812) was factor to the Earl of Dumfries at Dumfries House near Cumnock, in Ayrshire, when Robert Burns met him in 1786, at a time when the poet was engaged in preparing his poems for publication.

TO JOHN KENNEDY, DUMFRIES HOUSE

Now, Kennedy, if foot or horse
E'er bring you in by Mauchlin corss
(Lord, man, there's lasses there wad force A hermit's fancy; An' down the gate
in faith they're worse, An' mair unchancy).

But as I'm sayin, please step to Dow's,
An' taste sic gear as Johnie brews,
Till some bit callan bring me news
That ye are there;
An' if we dinna hae a bouze,
I'se ne'er drink mair.

It's no I like to sit an' swallow,
Then like a swine to puke an' wallow;
But gie me just a true good fallow,
Wi' right ingine,
And spunkie ance to mak us mellow,
An' then we'll shine.

Now if ye're ane o' warl's folk,
Wha rate the wearer by the cloak,
An' sklent on poverty their joke,
Wi' bitter sneer,
Wi' you nae friendship I will troke,
Nor cheap nor dear.

But if, as I'm informed weel,
Ye hate as ill's the very deil
The flinty heart that canna feel-
Come, sir, here's to you!
Hae, there's my haun', I wiss ye weel,
An' gude be wi' you.

Robt. Burness. Mossgiel, 3rd March, 1786.

Glossary: Corss – Cross
Unchancy – dangerous
Dow's - the Whitefoord Arms, Mauchline, now demolished
Spunkie - wit; sklent - look askance.