

## A Toast to the Lassies

I understand that the time-honored gentlemen's Toast to the Lassies should touch but LIGHTLY on the weaknesses of women. For Rabbie Burns himself says:

Then gently scan your brother Man,  
Still gentler sister Woman;  
Tho' they may gang a-kennin wrang,  
To step aside is human.

- Address to the Unco Guid, stanza 7

But after pondering this matter at length, I have come to the conclusion that women have NO FAULTS whatsoever. And I think I speak for every one of the gentlemen here when I say that women are perfect, and MOST PARTICULARLY our own wives!

BUT doesn't this contradict what Rabbie himself says? For example, LISTEN to his description of the journey home for gentlemen (such as ourselves) who have spent an evening at the local pub engaged in the noble pursuit of conviviality:

We think na on the long Scots miles,  
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,  
That lie between us and our hame,  
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,  
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,  
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

- Tam o' Shanter, stanza 1

Now this is obviously a fable. No woman I know is quarrelsome or ill-tempered, or would even THINK of saying a cross or critical word to her OWN HUSBAND!

On the other hand, women are NOT subservient; they stand on their own two feet; they are as upright as can be. They have EVEN been known to become Preachers! (That's an inside joke among members of the Talisker Literary Society present here.)

PLUS it is a well-known fact that all the greatest intellects and most creative minds of the western world have been women. (I won't mention any names for fear of putting to shame the gentlemen here assembled.)

Believe it or not, we gentlemen ought actually to pay attention to women when they speak! For Rabbie himself says:

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet  
To think how monie counsels sweet,  
How monie lengthen'd, sage advices  
The husband frae the wife despises!

- Tam o' Shanter, stanza 4

So, gentlemen, fill your glasses extra full and drink extra deep. For Rabbie himself says:

Auld Nature swears the lovely dears  
Her noblest work she classes, O;  
Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,  
And then she made the lasses, O!

- Green Grow the Rashes, stanza 5

Gentlemen, please rise and join me in a toast — To the Lassies!