

TIBBY TAMSON O' THE BUCK

*Or, A Cabrach Wife's Views on
Things in General*



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Gordon

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TIBBY TAMSON O' THE BUCK

A Cabrach Wife's Views on Things in General

I'M Tibby Tamson o' the Buck, jist come tae Aiberdeen,
Tae hae a look about me an' tae see my dother Jean;
Her man's a Gordon Heelander fae roon about Braemar,
Tho' noo he's ower the seas tae France tae help them wi'
the war.

They surely were sair pitten till't tae tak' the like o' him—
A little-bookit, bowdle-leggit aiblach, gley't an' grim—
Gweed kens fat Jean saw in him, for she's neither blate nor
blin',
Tho' aince a lassie's he'rt is won she's nae tae haud nor bin':

She'll wyve romance aroon the heids o' natir's queerest freaks,
An' mairry ony mortal thing in kilt or tartan breeks;
For fae the plooman at the pleuch tae king upon the throne,
Love's glamour gilds wi' glittrin' gowd the form it lichts upon.

TIBBY TAMSON

Jean thinks a hantle o' 'im tho', an' haith, tae hear 'er speak,
She'd gar ye think if he'd commaun' the war wid en' neisht
week;
It's Jock said this, an' Jock did that, an' Jock's the hefty chiel,
That fears na' man or mither's son o' German, Turk, or deil.

She's rale consairnt about 'im, tae, an' that's fat brocht me
here,
Tae keep her oot o' langer in the forenichts lang an' drear;
For sin' the hinner-en' o' hairst she hisna heard a cheep,
An' warslin' wi' the worry o't's clean ca'ed her aff her sleep;
Sae as my kye hid a' gaen yeel, I bribet Betty Law
Tae min' my curnie hens an' deuks the time that I'm awa'.

An' that's weel min't, for I brocht in a twa-three dizzen eggs
Tae gie the wounit lads a treat as lang's they laist, for fegs,
I doot I'll hae tae thraw their necks—the hens', I meant tae
say—
For meat's sae dear they're eatin' aff their heids maist ilka day.

'N I daurna peel my tatties noo, nor gie them neeps or kail,
'N I hae tae claw the pottie oot an' eat it a' masel';
I dinna jist see daylight throu't, the logic's gey ajee,
For I aye thocht b' keepin' hens that they were keepin' me.

An' wow's me, for the wee bit pig, that ate the orrals up,
Wi' the sweelins o' the cogie an' an antrin bite an' sup;
Its bed an' boord wis never misst, bit noo it's plain tae see
A teem troch for the grumphie means a teem pigstye for me.

TIBBY TAMSON

Fat needs I girn or grum'le tho', they've deen their best, nae
doot,
Tae han'le men an' maitters that they kentna ocht about;
A starnie sugar for oor tea's noo byous ill tae get,
Tho' Farfar rock is raffy, an' there's routh o' pandrops yet.

The fite bread—weel, it's dirty fite, like water fae the Dee,
It's stodgy on the stammick an' it disna please the e'e;
Bit aye the price gangs loupin up, for bakers like their fun,
As they squeeze anither penny oot o' crumpet, scone, an' bun.

An' as the brewer turns the maut, an' sowfs ower "Scots
wha hae,"
He thinks, weel if the Scots *will hae*, the Scots will hae *tae*
pay;
As for the publican, peer stock, he's dowie an' depresst,
An' gey sair grippet wi' the war, the 'oors, an' a' the rest.

Bit we may fairly lippen him tae jine the game o' spoof,
As he claps a penny on the gill at fifty un'er-proof,
The ane blames Lord Dumdaberdon, the ither Davy port,
Bit 'tween the twa they're keepin' meat an' drink baith unco
short.

They've commandeert the tatties, an' they've commandeert
the hay,
They've commandeert the aits an' meal, forbyes the neeps
an' strae,
They've commandeert the fusky that keeps oot the caul an'
wet,
If they'd commandeer some common-sense, we'll get tae
Berlin yet.

TIBBY TAMSON

An' noo they're fichrin' wi' some fads 'boot plooin' parks an'
plots,
An' ilka ane's a gair'ner fae Lan's En' tae John o' Groats;
Balgownie's goufin' links they'd saw wi' cabbages an' beans,
An' plant pitaties, leeks, an' kail on Murcar's bonnie greens.

They'd saw ait-seed on Tap o' Noth, an' bere on Benachie,
An' barley on the Brimmon Hill wid nane astonish me;
It's scunnerfu' the things they say an' waur the things they
vrite,
An' sair tae see the brains o' Britain bummlin' ower sic styte.

Stravaigin' doon the toon ae day we drappit in tae Hay's—
Jean's unco weel upon't, ye ken, and caresna fat she pays—
“Here Jeems,” says she, “we'll hae the tabble dottie, if you
please”;
Says Jeems, “Ye'll jist hae broth an' beef, forbyes some
breid and cheese;

“For that's the Food Controller's hinmaist order an' decree,
That twa coorses sall be luncheon an' for the denner three;
Bit I'll gie you twa bowls o' broth an' sync twa plates o' meat,
Sac fat's the diff'rence if ye get as muckle's ye can eat?”

“Weel, weel,” says Jean, “there's nae ill deen, an' jist tae
mak up for't,
“We'll warm the cockles o' oor he'rts an' hae a gless o' port.”
“A gless o' port,” says Jeems, “My wurd, d'ye ken it's half-
past twa,
An' fae that time till sax o'clock ye get nae drink ava'?
They'd fine me for the sellin' an' fine you for the drinkin' o't,
An' I daursay they'd fine us baith jist for even *thinkin' o't*.”

TIBBY TAMSON

I thocht we'd baith fa' throu' the fleer wi' fair black-burnin'
shame—

Sae cannily we got oor trocks an' took oor wyes for hame.
“Deil tak yer meat an' drink control,” says I, -as fac' as
death,

The neisht we'll hae will be a boord tae regilate oor breath,
Tae hain the caller air we draw in case that it rins short,
An' them that needs an extra whiff maun get a leeshins
for't.

Sae Jean,” says I, “fat needs ye tchauve an' trauchle here
yer leen?

Ye're fairly fochen aff yer feet an' worn tae skin an' bein;
Ye needna fash aboot McPhee, for yon's a wily wratch,
He'll jink the German Geordies, an' come back athoot a
scratch.

Sae draw your blin's an' steek your doors an' leave things ticht
an' snod,

The neebor wife will tak' the cat, an' we will tak' the road,
Tae faur controllers dinna fash tae mak' bad intae worse,
An' fouk jist eat an' drink fat suits their palate an' their
purse.”

Sae het-fit tae the hills we hied, wi' loupin' he'rts aflame,
An' feet sac lightly liftin', for they kent the road wis hame;
We daidelt not by murm'rin' streams, green howes, or
shady dells,

For hill-fouks' he'rts aye hanker for the smell o' heather-
bells.

TIBBY TAMSON

My bield's nae muckle bookit, jist a cosy but an' ben,
But aye I'm weel contentit for my warl's jist—The Glen;
The Dev'ron's eerie sechin sooch, the birr-bick o' the groose,
Is mair tae me than gowd or gear, braw freens, or muckle
hoose.

Ay, sweet's the soun' in Heelan' lugs tae hear the whirrin'
flicht
O' muircocks i' the gloamin' as they're reistin' for the
nicht.

An' couthy fouk are Cabrach fouk, an' kin'ly, weel-a-wyte,
For tinkler, tramp, or beggar-wife need never wint a bite;
There's nae haud-in o' meal an' milk, it's eat an' aye come
back,
As roon a roarin' kitchie fire they claik the country's clack;

An' halesame is the hamely fare in ilka hoose an' ha',
For galshachs an' clamjamfry trash we canna thole ava',
An' buirdly chiels an' strappin' deems we rear wi' pride an'
care
On parritch, brose, an' barley meal, an' sic-like country fare

As birselt bere-meal bannocks byaukit wi' a suppie whey,
Weel thoom't wi' butter fae the kirn, sweet as the new-mown
hay,
A knievalock o' a murlie kebbuck rossen at the fire,
Sweel't ower Wi' wauchts o' foamin' milk jist feshen fae the
byre.

TIBBY TAMSON

On snawy days the orra loon will girn a baud or twa,
Forbye's there's aye a hen tae pluck for freens that chance
tae ca'—

A hoch o' braxy mutton noo an' than's nae a wa'-cast,
An' fish is nae a fairly wi' the Rooster rinnin' past.

At Aul' New Year the Merchan's mairt is shot for at Brigen',
An' fan the Mullert's soo is kill't it's pairtet throu' the Glen
Aul' Dusty cairts it roon himsel' we's shalt an' shoggly gig,
An' shoggly tae's the Mullert b' the time he pairts the pig—

A towmon syne he tum'let heelster-gowdie in the lade,
An' gin they got 'im oot, peer sowl, he'll ne'er be nearer
dead;

The siller that he'd gotten for the pork wis tint or spent,
An' Bell's aul' bonnet hid tae dae anither Sacrament.

Losh guides! I'm surely ravelt noo, an' haverin' lots o' styte
'Boot Mullert's pigs, an' Merchan's mairts, an' things nae
worth a dyte,

My lyaugin' tongue wags deavin' on, nor dackles or devauls,
Tho' gie't its due, it's nae the ane that aften flytes or scauls.

Weel, as I said, Jean's browlies noo, an' losh, I'm gled tae see
The roses in her cheeks again, the sparkle in her e'e;
An' fa cam hirplin' in thestreen a' clairtet ower wi' glaur,
Confooselt an' confuffelt wi' the cloors an' scaurs o' war?—
Bit wee McPhee, her sojer-lad, dischairged an' hame for
gweed,

An' wi' a teem sleeve hingin' limply fae his shooterheid.

TIBBY TAMSON

Jean near han' gaed deleerit wi the sudden sicht an' shock,
Syne scaupit aff the dubs an' dirt until she cam tae Jock;
She clappit him, an' straikeit him, an' kisst him ower the
croon—

For love's the pooer that keeps the warl' gaun furlin'
roon an' roon—

An' aifterhin he taul's aboot the battle o' the Aisne,
An' hoo he focht a hale platoon an' kill't them ane b' ane,
Till deil a German Hun wis left tae cairry on the fray,
Sae pickin' up his ither airm he stoppit for the day.

I widna conter Jock McPhee for a' this warl's gear,
I widna gang as far as say that Jock McPhee's a leear;
He maybe raxed a thochtie far, tho' troth, it's hard tae tell,
For aince a Gordon's birse is up, he'll face the deil 'imself'.

Jist lat 'im hear the pipers blaw a mairch or Heelan' reel,
An' Heaven help the foe that waits tae taste his wee bit steel,
For lat the odds be fat they may, the Gordons "cairry on,"
It's a wye they hae the lads that hail fae Dev'ron, Dee, an'
Don.

An' Jock's a wicket, wittrous wratch, that aye cud stan' his
grun',
An' jist the contermashous kin' that likes a fecht for fun;
But noo wi' medals on his breist an' strips upo' his airm,
He'll fecht his battles ower again gaun pottrin' roon the
fairm.

TIBBY TAMSON

An' if ye e'er set fit aroon the shoother o' the Buck,
Jist speer your wye tae Bodiebae—ye're welcome tae pot-luck;
An' tho' I dinna haud wi' drink nor bibblin aye wi' drams,
I keep a knaggie in the press for incomes, stouns, an' dwaums;
An' ower a feuch o' bogie an' a' skirp o' barley-bree
Ye'll hear the story o' the war fae Sergeant John McPhee.

An' fan my day's darg's at an en' an' fir-logs lowin' bricht,
I'll tak my shank an' wirset-clew, an' wyve wi' a' my micht;
God help my willin' fingers for it's a' that I can dae, '
Tho' my he'rt's among the kilties far across the grey Nor' Sea.



