

The Great Calamity

Banjo Paterson

MacFierce'un came to Whiskeyhurst
When summer days were hot,
And bided there wi' Jock McThirst,
A brawny brother Scot.
Gude Faith! They made the whisky fly,
Like Highland chieftains true,
And when they'd drunk the beaker dry
They sang 'We are nae fou!'

'There is nae folk like oor ain folk,
Sae gallant and sae true.'
They sang the only Scottish joke
Which is, 'We are nae fou.'

Said bold McThirst, 'Let Saxons jaw
'Aboot their great concerns,
'But bonny Scotland beats them a',
'The land o' cakes and Burns,
'The land o' partridge, deer, and grouse,

‘Fill up your glass, I beg,
‘There’s muckle whusky i’ the house,
‘Forbye what’s in the keg.’

And here a hearty laugh he laughed,
‘Just come wi’ me, I beg.’
MacFierce’un saw with pleasure daft
A fifty-gallon keg.

‘Losh, man, that’s grand,’ MacFierce’un cried,
‘Saw ever man the like,
‘Now, wi’ the daylight, I maun ride
‘To meet a Southron tyke,
‘But I’ll be back ere summer’s gone,
‘So bide for me, I beg,
‘We’ll make a grand assault upon
‘Yon deevil of a keg.’

MacFierce’un rode to Whiskeyhurst,
When summer days were gone,

And there he met with Jock McThirst

Was greetin' all alone.

'McThirst what gars ye look sae blank?

'Have all yer wits gane daft?

'Has that accursed Southron bank

'Called up your overdraft?

'Is all your grass burnt up wi' drouth?

'Is wool and hides gone flat?'

'McThirst replied, 'Gude friend, in truth,

"Tis muckle waur than that.'

'Has sair misfortune cursed your life

'That you should weep sae free?

'Is harm upon your bonny wife,

'The children at your knee?

'Is scaith upon your house and hame?'

'McThirst upraised his head:

'My bairns hae done the deed of shame —

"Twere better they were dead.

'To think my bonny infant son

‘Should do the deed o’ guilt —

HE LET THE WHUSKEY SPIGOT RUN,

AND A’ THE WHUSKEY’S SPILT?’

Upon them both these words did bring

A solemn silence deep,

Gude faith, it is a fearsome thing

To see two strong men weep.

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