

# PROVERBS AND SAYINGS OF THE AUCHTERLESS AND TURRIFF AREA OF ABERDEENSHIRE

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The following collection of about 600 proverbs and proverbial sayings consists of items currently used by speakers in the parishes of Auchterless and Turriff in Aberdeenshire, none being admitted from literary sources. The character of the proverbs is to a great extent conditioned by the agricultural nature of the economy of the district; for example, *A coo's aye a coo by the mou* teaches that a buyer should examine an animal's teeth to ascertain its age before making a purchase, and *He'll neither lead nor ca* is a metaphor based on the behaviour of a stubborn horse.

The proverbs and sayings in the area can be divided into four broad sections:

1. *General British proverbs.* These are current here, as elsewhere, but most have been omitted from this collection as being not specifically Scots. They are recorded in Smith-Heseltine, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* (Oxford 1948).

2. *Mottoes and Maxims.* A large number of these are in everyday use, especially by older ladies, and consist mainly of quotations from literary sources. These are occasionally gathered from the parishioners and published in booklet form to help church funds. The last one to appear in Auchterless—*Auchterless Parish Church. Mottoes and Quotations* (1941) is typical of its class, containing one maxim for each day of the year, thus: "January 5. A smile can light up the darkest way, and it costs nothing." Since these are almost entirely literary in origin, are rarely Scots in language and, above all, are wanting in the frequently ironic sting of the proverb proper, they are also omitted here.

3. *Proverbs also found in other Scottish collections.* A rough collation of these has been made chronologically for the seven main Scottish collections, to ascertain their distribution in

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time, and geographically from North to South for a number of regional collections, to ascertain their distribution in space. For the list of works used for collation, see under *Abbreviations*.

The three earliest books of Scottish proverbs have a common source. They are David Fergusson's manuscript collection, put together before his death in 1598, the first printed edition of his proverbs in 1641, with additional material (these two texts are conveniently edited together by E. Beveridge in the Scottish Text Society edition of Fergusson's *Scottish Proverbs*; in our list of abbreviations, the 1598 manuscript text is distinguished by the letter M, and the 1641 printed text by the letter A), and James Carmichaell's collection, put together before his death in 1628 (edited in 1957 by M. L. Anderson for the Edinburgh University Press). In these two books, the editors have numbered the proverbs consecutively throughout, their numbering being followed in our references. For other texts, our numbers refer to pages.

It will also be convenient to note here that the proverbs in Sir James Wilson's *Lowland Scotch* (1915) are from Perthshire, those in his *Dialect of Robert Burns* (1923) are from Ayrshire, and those in his *Dialects of Central Scotland* (1926) are from Fife and Lothian. We refer to these three books as Wilson A, B, and C, respectively.

Since it is hoped that the system used for this collection will supply a model for similar proverb collections by others in different parts of the country, an analysis follows of a common proverb and its tail of references:

*Athing has an eyn bit a pudden has twa.* Ca 216, 850 A 133 Ke 12 Ra 25 He 76, 110 Hi 90; Beaton 203, Wilson A, B. The references show that the first written appearance of this proverb in Scots is in the Carmichaell Collection of *a* 1628, where two versions are mentioned, number 216 being *All things hes ane end and a staff hes twa*, and number 850 being *Ilk a thing hes ane end, and a pudding hes twa*. It is next found in the printed 1641 text of David Fergusson's *Proverbs* (but as it does not appear in Fergusson's original manuscript of *a* 1598, it is unlikely to have been in the source from which Fergusson and Carmichaell drew), and thereafter in the collections of Kelly, Ramsay, Henderson (where it is duplicated) and Hislop. This brings us to the semi-colon, after which follows the spatial distribution, i.e. it is recorded by H. Beaton in her book *At the Back o' Benachie* for the Garioch district of Aberdeenshire, and by Wilson for Perth, Fife, and Lothian.

The fact that it can be traced without a break from the 16th century means that a fuller investigation will probably show it to be distributed throughout Scotland, along with other proverbs which can be similarly traced.

4. *Purely local proverbs.* These are generally characterised by the use of local names and by reference to customs whose significance is not clear to an outsider. Properly interpreted, such proverbs can tell a great deal. Thus, *Straein yer beets in Moat's soo* is a euphemistic way of saying that a person is dead, from the fact that the kirkyard in Auchterless lies next to the cornyard of the farm of Moat. It preserves a place-name *Moat*, the farm on which the mote hill of Norman times was situated; it preserves a dialect word *soo*, a large rectangular stack of straw (after it is threshed), or of hay; and it perpetuates the custom, not yet obsolete, of *straein one's beets*, i.e. of putting an insole of straw, pulled out straight, into one's tacketty or, more recently, Wellington boots to keep one's feet warm. The farmer who supplied this saying added, "It's a gey tough een that". The imagery clearly brought the coldness of the grave more uncomfortably close to him than the usual time-honoured clichés could. Another local proverb, *They aa like tae gang tae Auchtermair, niver tae Auchterless*, has achieved more than local currency, apparently because the suspicion is so widespread that ministers respond to a call to a rich parish more readily than to a poorer one.

*Method of Collection.* This was, quite simply, to write down a list of proverbs known by us to be current in the area, and to circulate it amongst a number of people likely to be interested, asking for additional proverbs. A personal rather than a postal approach was found to be necessary. In most cases information was given by word of mouth only because of a general unwillingness to write things down. One family in Delgatie, however, regularly sent long lists of proverbs and to them, and to our many oral informants, grateful thanks are due.

Finally, a few characteristics of the collection deserve comment. Irony—which in itself reveals much of the speaker's character—is frequently found, e.g. *Ye needna blame Gweed gin the Deil ding ye ower*, a remark made to a person with thick legs, and one which provides cold comfort; or *Sunday's rain's aafu weetin*, when it is made an excuse for not going to church; or *It's aye kent the mullert keeps fat hogs, bit naebody kens faa feeds them*, clearly referring to the less public activities of millers in the days when, under the system of *thirlage*, tenants of farms were

obliged by their lairds to have their oats ground at one particular mill. Irony is also evident in the numerous tags added to proverbs to qualify the truth of the statement contained in them, e.g. *Changes is lichtsome—an feels is fond o them.*

Comment on the daily round of work is common, thus *Ahin in the mornin, ahin aa day*, and *An hoor in the mornin's worth twa at nicht* ensures an early start; then during the day, when you, remembering that *Hard wirk's nae easy, an wirkin hard's little better*, take a rest, you suddenly start to your feet again at the thought, *This winna dee, an keep the tackie tee.* A hard worker is praised—*She'll work roon ye aa day an thresh yer back aa even—*, and a slacker described, with the irony he deserves, as *Brushin the side o his mither's heid.*

A few contain points of interest to the folklorist, e.g. *Fustlin maidens an craain hens is nae lucky aboot ony man's place*, with its reference to unnatural phenomena; *The cat's scrapin for win*, a proverb which may have travelled inland to this area from the coast; and *The thicker the meal-an-ale, the better the neist year's crap*, containing the only reference found, to the end of harvest celebrations (called The Meal-an-Ale, from the dish supped) in their old function of fertility rites ensuring the future bountiful growth of crops. At the same time, this proverb may be regarded as an injunction to a farmer not to spare his hand when adding whisky to the meal-an-ale.

There is, overall, a considerable dramatic quality produced partly by the immediacy of the imagery as in the aforementioned proverb, *Straein his beets in Moat's soo*, or in *Fobbin like a fat kittlin*, or in *As big's bull-beef*; partly because a great number of the proverbs are in the form of a dialogue between two speakers (here called X and Y); and partly because so many proverbs arise out of an essentially dramatic situation, the tension of which is crystallised into proverb form by one single person (Compare A. H. Krappe, *The Science of Folk-Lore* (London 1931) 144: "Each proverb was coined just once, in a given locality, at a given time, by one mind with some gnomic talent.") As Kurt Wittig recently demonstrated in *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh 1958), this dramatic quality has been characteristic of Scottish literature at all periods.

Comment might also be made on proverbs dealing with women and children, love, health and wealth, etc., but space does not permit. It only remains to note that on the lips of the younger generation the original sense of many of the proverbs is forgotten, as a number used with a jocular,

parodistic or merely silly intention in this collection shows, e.g. *I'll mak ye ower again, as the mannie made his mither* (the meaning is obscure; it may imply the impossibility of the task). Nevertheless, proverbs are still very much alive in the area dealt with, and no doubt will remain so for a very long time.

[See also additional note on p. 112]

#### TEXT

1. *Aa ahin like the coo's tail*. [Said by or to a late-comer, or when falling behind with work].
2. *Aal (old) age disna come its leen* (alone). Beaton 203, Wilson C.
3. *Aal meen's mist bodes new meen's drift*.
4. *Aa tarred wi ae stick*. Birds of a feather. Ch 366; Angus 170, Beaton 202.
5. *Abody ates a peck o dirt afore they dee* (die). Don't mind if there is some dirt on your food. Ke 157 He 121.
- 6a, b. *A bonny bride's easy* (or *seen*) *buskit*. Ca 78 A 34 Ke 1 Ra 9 He 3 Hi 15 Ch 2; Angus 163, Mowat 6, Beaton 202, Wilson A, B, C.
7. *A bonny picter o loveliness aa tae be wastit on ae man*. [Used ironically of an ugly girl].
8. *A brunt bairn dreids the fire*. Ca 14 A 26 Ke 55 Ra 21 Hi 67; Beaton 204.
9. *A case o the kettle cryin coomie* (grimy, sooty) *tae the pot*. [Said where one is as bad as the other].
10. *Accidents'll happen till a forkytail* (earwig) *crossin the turnpike*. Misfortune may be met with anywhere.
11. *A coo's aye a coo by the mou* (mouth). One who buys a cow should examine its mouth first.
12. *A doo* (dove) *awa bit a deil at hame*. One who is pleasant to others, but not to his own family.
13. *A face that wid soor milk*. A discontented face.
14. *Afa* (awful) *times! canna get yer finger in o a steen*. [Said when times are hard].
15. *A fine mou for sookin blin lumps* (boils). A large mouth.
16. *A fine nicht an sun amon't, tak aff yer sark* (shirt) *an rin amon't*.
17. *A fu man niver had a hungry horse*.
18. *A geein han's aye gettin*.
19. *A gee'n horse shouldna be lookit at in the mou*. Ca 112 A 12 Ke 50 Ra 11 He 28, 67 Hi 23; Beaton 201, Wilson A, C.

20. *A green Eel* (Yule) *maks a fat kirkyard*. Kc 30 Ra 11 He 5  
Hi 24 Ch 11; Angus 163, Firth 159, Beaton 202, Wilson  
A, B, C.
21. *A gweed servant bit a bad maister*. [Used of fire, money, etc.].  
Ca 65 Ke 50 Ra 14.
22. *A gyaan* (going) *fit's* (foot)'s *aye gettin*. M 93 Ca 126 A 97  
Kc 11 Ra 11 He 102 Hi 23 Ch 9; Angus 164, Mowat 4,  
Beaton 202, Wilson A, B, C.
23. *A hairy man's a happy man, a hairy wife's a witch*. He 102  
Hi 26; Wilson A.
24. *Ahin in the mornin, ahin aa day*.
25. *A hoose deil bit a caasey* (causeway, street) *saint*. One who  
is pleasant to others, but not to his own family.
26. *Aiberdeen an time till't*. Beaton 202.
27. *A kiss without a beard's like an egg without saat* (salt).
28. *A lang road an fyow* (few) *hooses—an as unceevil fowk in them*.
29. *A lee in jest's a sin in earnest*. Beaton 201.
30. *A maybe's nae a honey bee*. "Maybe" is not a definite answer.  
Ra 65 He 133 Hi 222 Ch 247; Beaton 201.
31. *A mou that wid tie wi a fit-raip* (a hobble for cattle). A large  
mouth.
32. *A muckle heid an little in't*. A 632 Hi 229.
- 33a, b. *An aal fiddle plays sweetest* (or *the best tune*).
34. *An aal fire's seen kennelt* (kindled). [Used of a renewed  
quarrel or love-affair]. Cf. Ca 236.
35. *Aneuch* (enough) *tae pooshin* (poison) *snipes*. Bad-tasting.
36. *A new besom swypes clean*. Ca 142 A 76 Ra 14 He 68.
37. *An hoor in the mornin's worth twa at nicht*. Ra 10 He 36  
Hi 18; Beaton 203.
38. *An in-deil bit an oot-doo*. One who is pleasant to others but  
not to his own family. Beaton 209.
39. *A penny hained* (saved)'s *a penny gained*. He 15 Hi 57.
40. *A rinnin hare's aye for the catchin*. [Used e.g. of an unmarried  
girl].
41. *As aal's the hills*. Ch 42.
42. *As blunt's a beetle* (hammer). Ch 42.
43. *As bare's the birks* (birch trees) *at Eel even*. Poor, destitute.  
Ca 169, 672, 797, 1726 A 439 Kc *Intro*. Ra 32 He 47  
Hi 131 Ch 157; Beaton 202.
44. *As big's bull-beef*. Boastful, pompous. Beaton 201.
- 45a, b. *As black's a craa* (or *the ace o picks*). Beaton 201.
- 46a, b. *As black's pick* (pitch) (or *sit* [soot]).
- 47a, b. *As blin's a mole* (or *a bat*). Beaton 203.

48. *As braid's the side o a house.* [Said of a fat or broad person].
49. *As busy's a bonnet-makker.*
50. *As coorse as cat's dirt.*
51. *As deaf's a door-nail.* Beaton 203.
52. *As deep as Loch Ness.*
53. *As drunk's a piper.* Beaton 201.
54. *As Earl Marischal says, "Lat them cry".* [MS. Diary of George Gall, Farmer, Oldtown, Atherb, 23 April, 1869. A variation on the motto of Marischal College, University of Aberdeen].
55. *As fat in the heid as a fifty shillin pot.*
- 56a, b. *As fat's a scrapit swine (or soo).*
- 57a, b, c. *As fite's a sheet (or a cloot, or the driven snaa).*
58. *As fushionless (pithless) as a docken.*
59. *As green's kale.*
- 60a, b, c. *As grey's a tod (or the mist, or a road).*
61. *As happy's a bleck amon trycle (treacle).* Beaton 203.
62. *As hielan's a peat, an as coorse as heather.* Uncouth, uncivilised.
63. *A sicht for sair e'en (eyes).* He 105 Hi 41 Ch 25; Angus 165, Mowat 4.
64. *As ill hang't as worriet.* One evil is as bad as another. Ca 773.
65. *Ask nae questions, ye'll be tell't nae lees, shut yer mou an ye'll catch nae flees.* He 53 Hi 15.
66. *As lang as the birdies sing afore Cannlemas, they'll greet as lang aifter't.* Ra 15 He 156 Hi 42 Ch 46.
67. *As licht's a fedder.*
68. *As min (demure)'s a moose.* He 150; Beaton 201.
69. *As peer's the link o the crook.* Thin, emaciated.
70. *As prood's Lucifer.*
71. *As quate (quiet)'s pussy.*
72. *As ready to rowe (roll)'s rin.* Beaton 202.
73. *As reed's a Roseheartie ingin (onion).*
74. *As reed's bleed.*
75. *As sliddery's an eel.*
76. *As soggy's a peat.*
77. *As soor's roddens (rowan berries).*
78. *A stannin seck fulls best.*
79. *As the aal cock craas, the young een learns.* Ch 48; Angus 164.
80. *As thick's the motes in the sieve.*
81. *As ugly's a taid (toad).*
82. *A sunny shooer niver laists bit an hoor.*

83. *As weel dream o the deil's the minister.*
- 84a, b. *As yalla's a deuk (duck)'s fit (or gweel [the corn-marigold]).* [Used especially of a jaundiced complexion]. Beaton 202.
85. *As ye mak yer bed sae man (must) ye lie on't.* Ke 16 Hi 46; Angus 163, Beaton 202.
86. *A teem (empty) bowie (barrel) maks maist soun.* [Said of a boaster].
87. *Ate it up an help awa wi't.* [Said as an encouragement to eat unappetising food].
88. *A taylor (tailor) new tae shoo (sew), gie him room, gie him room.* [Said jocularly to one learning to sew, because an inexperienced tailor is apt to use too long a thread and so needs plenty of room]. Beaton 215.
89. *At the Back o Balfuff (faar the grey meer foaled the fiddler).*
90. *Athing has an eyn (end) bit a pudden has twa.* Ca 216, 850 A 133 Ke 12 Ra 25 He 76, 110 Hi 90; Beaton 203, Wilson A, C.
91. *A tipenny cat can look at a king.* A 21 Ra 17 He 49 Hi 13 Ch 28; Beaton 201.
92. *A tongue that wid clip cloots (an pare aal sheen [shoes]).* Ch 294; Beaton 201, Calder II. 10, Wilson C.
93. *A win that wid blaa the horns aff a hummel (hornless) nowt (ox).* [Said of a boaster].
94. *A wiltert (barbed) thing haads (holds) weel.*
95. *A workin wife maks a waach (worthless) dother (daughter).* Ca 56 A 15 Ke 22 Ra 14 Hi 36.
96. *Beauty's bit skin deep (an nae that eence ye start scrapin).* Beaton 204.
97. *Beauty's bit skin deep, an ugliness is tae the been (bone).* He 3.
98. *Be gweed (good) an ye'll grow bonny.* [Said as a farewell remark].
99. *Be servant tae yersel or yer bairns come o age.* Go and fetch something instead of just asking for it.
100. *Better a fortune in her than wi her.* [Said of a hard-working but poor wife].
101. *Better a livin cooard than a deid hero.* Ke 400 Ch 241.
102. *Better a teem hoose than an ill tenant.* Better get rid of something that does more harm than good.
103. *Better beets nor (than) sheets.* Beaton 204.
104. *Better belly rive (burst) nor gweed mait (food) be connached (spoiled).* Ca 363 Ke 63 Ra 19 He 106 Hi 58; Firth 159.

105. *Better deid than pinin.*
106. *Better finger aff, nor aye waggin (on).* Ca 284 A 176 Ke 56 Ra 18 He 71 Hi 56 Ch 56; Beaton 204, Wilson A, C.
107. *Better hain weel than work sair.*
108. *Better oot o the cweets (ankles) than oot o the fashion.* A 209 Ra 19 He 106 Hi 45; Mowat 6, Beaton 204.
109. *Better some fun than aa earnest.*
110. *Bide and see.* Be patient.
111. *Blaan (blown) aff o the earth an doon tae Ellon.* [Said in a strong wind].
112. *Blaa yer ain horn, for neen'll blaa't till ye.*
113. *Boo the wan' fin it's green.* Teach and train people young. M 1260 Ca 1543, 1539 A 789 Ke 63 Ra 169 He 2 Hi 64 Ch 61; Wilson B.
- 114a, b, c, d. *Brocht up in a cairt-shed (or a park [field], or a barn).* Also *born in a barn.* [Said to or of one who always leaves doors open].
115. *Broken breid maks hale bairns.* Beaton 204.
116. *Brushin the side o yer milther's heid.* Working very lazily, without energy.
117. *Ca (drive, push) awa wi yer hurlbarra (handcart) though ye sidna (should not) sell an ingin.* Get on with your own work and not hinder other folk.
118. *Ca canny wi the butter, wir (our) ain fowk.* [Reputedly said by a tight-fisted farmer to his family, meaning that the butter was only for visitors].
119. *Caal (cold) kale het again ('s aye pot-tastit).* The same old story. Ke 79 He 108 Ch 74; Beaton 204, Wilson A, B, C.
120. *Caal kale in Aiberdeen and casticks (kale or cabbage stalks) in Strathbogie.* [Originally from a song probably referring to George Gordon, 1st Earl of Aberdeen (died 1720), of which the original set of words is in a MS. in the National Library, dating from 1728, and published in J. Maidment, *Scotish Ballads and Songs* (Edinburgh 1859), 20. There are a number of versions of the song, including one by Baroness Nairne].
121. *Cast carl ower carl an hae tae tak the warst carl hinmost (last).*
122. *Changes is lichtsome (an feels is fond o them).* Ca 394 A 214 Ke 77 Ra 21 He 75, 108 Hi 71 Ch 75; Beaton 204, Wilson A, B.
123. *Cloot (patch) the aal, the new is dear.*
124. *Come intae the body o the kirk.* Come and join the company.

125. *Crack yer nuts an pu yer stocks an haad yer Halloween.* [Originally from R. Burns Halloween ii].
126. *Dicht* (wipe) *yer ain door steen.*
127. *Dicht yer nib an flee* (fly) *up.* Go to Jericho. Ke 390 Hi 337 Ch 409.
128. *Dingin on* (pouring down) *peer men an pike staves an the pike eyns o them naith-most.* [Said of a sharp, heavy shower].
129. *Dinna dee* (do) *as I dee, dee as I tell ye.*
130. *Dinna hing the cat in the pyock* (bag).
131. *Dinna tak mair in yer mou nor your cheeks'll haad.* Don't take on more than you're sure you're fit for.
132. *Dinna tak the doo or ye hae the doocot.* Don't be precipitate. [Usually of marriage].
133. *Dirt gyangs* (goes) *afore the besom.* [Said to one going in front].
134. *Dirt's luck.* ["To cause bad luck to the tenant of a new house, it was only necessary to sweep it clean and take away the sweepings. In the old days, the floor was of earth, and to leave the house clean was to ensure misfortune to the newcomers. 'Dirt's luck' was the proverb." (J. M. McPherson *Primitive Beliefs in the North-East of Scotland* (London 1929)). *Dirt* in this context is gen. used of the faeces]. M 1062 Ca 1173 A 367 Ke 247 Ra 23 He 13 Hi 80 Ch 89.
135. *Dreams are aye conter* (contrary).
136. *Ee* (you) *claa* (scratch) *my back an I'll claa yours.* Ke 76, 227, 290 He 108 Hi 72 Ch 76; Wilson A, B, C.
137. *Een mair, een less.* One more thing done is one less to do.
138. *Eence mair, eence less.*
139. *Efterneen thunner bodes drucht* (drought).
140. *Eneuch's as good's a feast.* A 104 Ra 24 He 110 Hi 87; Angus 167, Beaton 205.
141. X: "*Faar are ye for the day?*" Y: "*Turra, Turra, faar sorra idder?*" Beaton 205.
142. *Faar the dyke's laich* (low) *it's easy loupit* (jumped).
143. *Faar there's reek* (smoke) *there's heat.*
144. *Facts are chiels that winna ding* (be beaten down).
145. *Fair exchange is nae robbery.* Ra 25 He 111 Hi 92; Beaton 206.

146. X: "*Fa tell't ye?*" Y: "*A little bird tell't me.*"
- 147a, b. *February fulls the dyke, either black or fite* (white) (or *be it black or be it fite*). M 418 Ke 107 Hi 95 Ch 103.
148. *Fin the drink's in the wit's oot*. He 14 Hi 317; Beaton 206.
149. *Fine day for the deuks* (ducks) *bit nae for the stooks*. [A common remark of greeting on a rainy day]. Beaton 202.
150. *Finnin* (finding)'s *keepin*.
151. *Fireside sodjers niver won a war*.
152. *First come best sair'd* (served). Ra 26 He 112 Hi 96; Beaton 205, Wilson A, B, C.
153. *Fit canna be cured man* (must) *be endured*. Ra 76.
154. *Fit d' ye expect fae a soo bit a grumph?* Ch 404; Beaton 219, Wilson A, B, C.
155. *Fit folk disna ken disna anger them*. Beaton 206.
156. *Fit gweed's an umbrella fin yer sheen lets in?*
157. X: "*Fit'll I get till ma denner?*" Y: "*Sliver an sharp teeth.*" Ke 239.
158. *Fit's deen's nae tae dee*. Beaton 206.
159. *Fit's fun* (found)'s *free tae keep*.
160. *Fit's yer name fin ye're at hame?* [A jocular way of asking one's name].
161. *Fit's yours is mine an fit's mine's ma ain*. Hi 316; Wilson C.
162. *Fit the e'e disna see the hairt disna grieve for*. Ca 1291, 1592 A 704 Ke 341 He 145; Firth 158.
163. *Fit ye've niver ha'en ye niver miss*. M 569.
164. *Flee* (fly) *heich* (high) *an ye'll lan amon dirt*.
165. *Flee laich* (low), *flee lang*. He 107 Hi 68 Ch 71; Firth 158, Beaton 206.
166. *Fobbin* (panting) *like a fat kittlin* (kitten). Beaton 205.
167. *For greed, come ben!* [An exclamation at extreme greed].
168. *Fun* (found) *gear's gweed tae keep*.
- 169a, b, c. *Fustlin* (whistling) *maidens an craain hens is nae lucky about ony man's place* (or *should aa be shot, or should aa get their necks thraan* [twisted]). Ke 33 He 65, 68 Hi 16; Beaton 201, Firth 159.
170. *Gae hame an thresh yer Sunday's strae*. [Said about a minister seen going about on Saturday, when he should have been preparing his sermon].
171. *Gang tae Buckie* (an *bottle skate*)! Beaton 207.
172. *Gart* (forced) *girse* (grass) *is ill tae grow* (an *fite steens is ill tae chow*). [Said when one threatens to make another do a thing]. Beaton 206.

173. *Gettin throwe the meer (muir) o hecklepins* (the teeth of a flax or hemp dressing comb). Getting a row.
- 174a, b. *Gie him an inch an he'll tak a mile (or an ell)*. He 114.
175. *Gie him't het an reekin!* Give him a good row.
176. *Gie's back ma lames* (broken pieces of earthenware). [Said when one repents of making a gift, as after a quarrel].
177. *Gie them a fit an they'd tak a faddom*. [A Banff proverb].
178. *Gin aa tales be true that een's nae lee naither*. [A comment on a tall story]. Hi 162; Beaton 206, Wilson C.
179. *Gin I be pottie ee're* (you're) *pannie*. You are as bad as me.
180. *Gin ye'd faan* (fallen) *in the door ye'd hae been ahin*. You were only just in time. Beaton 209.
181. *Gither yer clods or pey for yer peat road*. If you don't do your share you can't reap the benefits.
182. *Glowrin at's as gin I wis yer midder an nae breid in the hoose*. [Said of one frowning angrily].
183. *Glowrin like a deuk hearkenin thunner*. Ch 132.
184. *Greater losses at Culloden!* [Said when someone complains of a small loss].
185. *Growin loons are aye hungry*.
186. *Gweed gear gangs in little bouk* (bulk). Hi 108; Beaton 206, Wilson A, B, C.
- 187a, b. *Gweed midders hiv e'en* (eyes) *in the back o their heid (or in the howe [hollow] o their neck)*.
188. *Gweed nicht, soun sleep, an a futret* (ferret)'s *wakenin!*
189. *Gyang tae pot an bile yer heid an mak blockheid broth*. [A schoolchild's retort].
190. *Haad* (hold) *on yer bonnet, the win's risin!* [Said to a boaster].
191. *Haad oot o ma licht an in o ma sicht till I see ma dother dancin*. [A nonsense way of telling someone not to block the light].
192. *Haad up, haad ower, the bed haads fower* (four)! Move over a bit.
193. *Hae faith an ye'll win throwe*.
194. *Hain* (save) *a spunk* (match) *an buy a drifter*. [A Banff proverb, = *Mony a little maks a muckle*].
195. *Hain yer ain an weer yer neeper's* (neighbours).
196. *Hair an hair maks the carl beld*.
197. *Hair an horn grows weel on shargars* (stunted or ill-thriven creatures). Neither hair nor horn are profitable as compared with beef.

198. *Han's like feet an feet like fail (turf) dykes.* [Said of one having large hands and feet].
199. *Hard wirk's nae easy, an wirkin hard's little better.* Calder I. 10.
200. *Hearkeners should be hang't.*
- 201a, b. *He aye has a finger in the pie (or he has a finger in ilky pie).* Always interfering. Ra 30 He 116.
202. *He aye turns up like the ill penny.*
203. *He canna mak saat (salt) till his kale.* Unable to earn a living.
204. *He canna redd (clear) his feet.* In debt, and not able to get clear.
205. *He canna see an inch afore his nose.* Improvident. Hi 114.
206. *He didna ken which side o's tail tae sit on.* Extremely hard-up.
207. *He disna aye ride fin he saiddles.* He doesn't always carry out a promise. Ra 30; Beaton 207.
208. *He disna care a docken (dock).*
- 209a, b. *He disna ken a bee fae a beetle (or a bull's fit).* Ca 787.
210. *He gi'ed him the reet (root) and the rise o't.* He explained the reasons for a thing.
211. *He hisna a lease o's mou—it's fae 'ear tae 'ear.* [Said of a large mouth, with a pun on *ear* and *year*].
212. *He hisna the spunk o a moose.* Ch 136.
213. *He hisna his sorrows tae seek.*
214. *He hisna the wit o a sookin teuchat (lapwing).* Hi 331 Ch 136; Calder I. 14.
215. *He kens the richt side o a penny.* Shrewd in bargaining.
216. *He kens fin he has a gweed soo by the lug (ear.)* He knows when he is on to a bargain.
217. *He kens fit's fit an fa's Donalie's faither.* [Said of a would-be shrewd person]. Ca 487.
218. *He kens fit side his breid's buttered on.* Ra 31 He 10, 117.
219. *He kens muckle that kens fan tae speak, bit far mair that kens tae haad his tongue.*
220. *He'll ca his pack till a pirn (reel).* He'll go bankrupt. M 728, 729 A 440 Ke 368 Ra 81 He 147 Hi 329.
221. *He'll neither lead nor ca.* Stubborn.
222. *He loot (let) the cat oot o the pyock (bag).*
223. *He needs a lang speen that wid sup wi the deil.* A 350.
224. *He niver said "Collie will ye lick?"* He didn't offer a share.
225. *Here for a day an a denner.* Here today and gone tomorrow.
226. *Here the day an awa the morn.*
227. *He's a bittie stan-yont.* Rather stand-offish.

228. *He's an ill guide o himsel.*
229. *He's aye thinkin about his belly.* Ca 793.
230. *He's feel* (foolish) *for himsel.* He acts contrary to his own interests.
231. *He's got girsy stibbles tae lie on.* Well off.
232. *He's his ain warst freen* (friend). [Said esp. of one who drinks].
233. *He's mair sense in his little finger than you have in yer hail heid.* Hi 119.
234. *He's nae as black's he's paintit.*
235. *He's nae sae blate* (backward, sheepish)'s *he looks.* He 10.
236. *He's nae tae ride the watter on.* Untrustworthy. Beaton 208.
237. *He's nae the berry nor yet the buss* (bush) *it grew on.* Beaton 208.
238. *He's set doon the barra.* Gone bankrupt.
239. *He starts at straes an lets winlins* (bundles of straw) *gang.*
240. *He's surely been by* (past) *the smiddy.* [Said of a sharp-tongued person]. Cf. Ca 1740, 1756.
241. *He's surely het at hame.* [Said of one who goes visiting on a bad night].
242. *He that grieves maist, grieves maist for wastit time.*
243. *He that has rowth* (plenty) *o butter may butter his breid on baith sides.*
244. *He that lives langest'll lauch last.*
245. *He widna mak a patch till his fadder's breeks* (trousers).
246. *He widna say Boo till a goose.*
247. *He winna even pairt wi the dirt below his nail.* Very greedy.
248. *He winna full his ain pooch.* He'll never make himself rich.
249. *He winna sell's hen on a rainy day, nor yet his dog in drift.* He is shrewd at selling when the market is good.
250. *He wis tearin in as if he was gaan tae redd fire.* Working fast.
251. *He's worth the watchin.* [Because he would cheat if he could].
- 252a, b. *Hingin be the breers o the e'en* (eyebrows) (or *be the back teeth*). On the verge of bankruptcy.
253. *His nest's weel fedder't* (feathered).
254. *Hoppin aboot like a hen on a het girdle.* Hi 340; Calder I. 12, Wilson A, B, C.
255. *Hunger's gweed kitchie* (seasoning). Ca 648, 649 A 298 Ke 127 Ra 38 He 35 Hi 158 Ch 175; Mowat 5, Wilson A, B, C.
256. X: "I canna see." Y: "If ye come tae ma mou I'll tell ye." [Said when it turns dark in the course of a meal].

257. X: "I canna see." Y: "Pit yer finger in yer e'e an mak starnlicht."
258. *I changed ma mind an bocht a scone.*
259. *I dinna ken if ma heid or ma heels is eemost (uppermost). Muddled.*
260. *I doot I doot I'll niver win oot, I wish I'd niver gaen in.*
261. *If ae sheep gangs ower the dyke the rest seen follows.*
- 262a, b. *If Mairch comes in like a lion it'll gang oot like a lamb— [and vice versa]. Ch 246.*
263. *If the cat washes ower its lugs there's gaan tae be rain.*
264. *If! If the lift (sky) should fa an smore (smother) the laverocks (larks), faar wid ee (you) be?*
265. *If ye dinna behave, ye'll gang doon the Kintore road. [A threat to a mischievous child].*
- 266a, b. *If ye sing afore brakfist (or syven), ye'll greet (weep) afore even (or elyven).*
267. *If ye wid be a lang liver, aye sweel (wash) the kale fae yer liver.*
268. *If ye wint tae be thrifty, tak a saat herrin tae yer brakfist and ye'll live on watter aa day.*
269. *I ken a trick worth twa o that.*
270. *Ilky blade o girse has its ain drap o dew. Hi 171 Ch 200.*
271. *Ilky doggie has its day.*
272. *Ilky een thinks his ain craa (crow) the fittest. Ke 91 Ra 24 Hi 90 Ch 200; Beaton 210.*
273. *Ilky little maks a muckle. [The commonly used mickle for little is erroneous].*
274. *I'll be rotten or ee (you) be ripe.*
275. *I'll dance at your weddin. [A jocular promise of reward for a favour].*
276. *Ill dee-ers (doers) are aye ill dreaders.*
277. *I'll gar (make) you claa (scratch) where you're nae yokie (itchy). He 152.*
278. *I'll gie ye a scone fin I bake. [Said by a man as a jocular promise of reward].*
279. *I'll gie ye yer supper wintin (without) a speen. I'll give you no supper.*
280. *I'll kaim (comb) your heid tae ye. I'll give you a scolding or thrashing.*
281. *I'll kiss you fin ye're sleepin (gar ye dream fin ye're deid). [A jocular promise of reward for a favour]. Ke 398 He 159.*
282. *I'll lat ye see the bonny side o the door. I'll put you out.*
283. *I'll lat ye see the hole the mason left. [Idem].*
284. *I'll mak ye ower again, as the mannie made his midder.*

285. *I'll need tae throw in ma bonnet.* [Said by one arriving late, or who has long delayed a visit].
286. *I'll need tae wash ma face an gie the soo a drink (it hisna gotten mait [food] for a fortnicht).* Beaton 218.
287. *I'll pey ye fin aa (every) man peys idder.* [Said on receiving a slight favour].
288. *I'll pit daar (dare) ahin the door an dee't (do it).*
- 289a, b, c. *I'll see ye by the hen's mait (or dish, or troch).* [Said when seeing someone out of the house].
290. *I'll see yer coffin bleckit wi herrin scales first.* I'll never do such-and-such a thing for you [A Banff proverb].
291. *I'll tak a rung an rizzle (beat) yer riggin (head) wi't.*
292. *I'm happy cos ma hert's ma ain an naebody's seekin't.*
293. *I'm nae sae green's I'm cabbage lookin.*
294. *I'm nae sure o the bit that's gaan tae ma mou.*
295. *I niver loot dab.* I never said anything.
296. *I niver loot on, bit aye loot ower.* [Idem].
- 297a, b, c, d. *I niver said cheese (or echie nor ochie, or soo's egg, or Jim Hielanman).* [Idem].
298. *I niver said soo's egg wis pork.* [Idem].
299. *"I see" said the blin man. "Ye're a damn leear" said the dummie.* A 244 Kc 87 Ra 23 He 109 Hi 83.
- 300a, b. *It blecks (or cowes [beats]) the cuddy wi the timmer leg.* It beats everything. Ch 203; Beaton 205.
- 301a, b. *It cowes the gowan (daisy) (or it cowes aa).* [Idem]. Ch 203.
302. *It dang doon (poured down) sax ooks (weeks) on eyn an niver upplet (let up) nor divalled (stopped).* It never stopped raining for six weeks. Beaton 209.
- 303a, b. *It gangs roon yer hert like a hairy worm (or like a new bit flannen).* It tastes good.
304. *It'll aa be the same a hunner 'ear (years) aifter this.*
305. *It'll aa come richt in the tail o the day.*
306. *It'll be dry on Friday tae dry the priest's sark.* [Said if it has rained all the week].
307. *It'll dry fin the drucht (drought) rises.* [Said of something one is too lazy to dry properly, e.g. a washed floor].
308. *It'll nedder rug (pull) nor rive (tear).* [Said e.g. of tough meat]. Calder I. 9.
309. *It niver rains bit it poors.*
310. *It rins in the bleed like a timmer leg.* M 890.
311. *It's a bad sign speakin tae yersel.* [Because it is thought to show approaching insanity]. He 78.

312. *It's aa een tae Paddy fither (whether) he sups his brose or drinks them.* Beaton 210.
313. *It's an aafu thing sweerty (laziness).*
314. *It's an ill win that blaas naebody gweed.*
315. *It's a peer belly that canna heat a caal drink.*
316. *It's a peety tae spile a story in the tellin o't.*
- 317a, b. *It's a sair sicht fin the moose leaves (or teets oot o) the gernel wi a tear in its e'e.* He 84 Hi 182 Ch 248; Wilson A, B, C.
318. *It's as chape (cheap) sittin's stannin.* [Said to one who refuses a seat].
319. *It's aye a feast or a famine wi them.*
320. *It's aye kent the mullert (miller) keeps fat hogs, bit naebody kens faa feeds them.*
321. *It's better tae live in hopes than dee in despair.* Ra 19 He 34 Hi 60.
322. *It's aye better tae hae tae pit on yer hat an coat tae gang an see yer freens (relations).* It's better to have to dress to visit relations than to have to stay with them.
323. *It's better than a steen ahin the lug.* It's nothing much, but it will do.
324. *It's easy pairtin wi the thing that's nae yer ain.*
325. *It's feels laachs at their ain fun.* Ke 201 Ra 36 He 22, 121 Hi 98.
326. *It's gane aa tae dirt like the mannie's muck-midden (dunghill).* [Said of something that has gone wrong or gone to ruin].
327. *It's gey kittle (difficult) work, makin a feel o a feel.*
328. *It's like the Gamrie man's herrin, it'll need mair than twa breees.* It will need a lot of washing. [A Banff proverb].
329. *It's like the laddie's heid—it wis crackit afore.* [Said when one breaks a dish].
330. *It's me that'll get the bree (blame) o't.* I'll be blamed.
331. *It's nae that I'm greedy, I jist like a lot.*
332. *It's nae lost fit a freen gets.* Ca 904 A 518 Ra 46 He 25 Hi 189 Ch 218; Beaton 210, Wilson A, B, C.
333. *It's nae muckle eese (use) tryin tae tak twa bites o a cherry.*
334. *It's the aal that wins the new.*
335. *It's the belly that haads up the back.*
336. *It's the biggest lear gets the biggest chair.*
337. *It's the hicht o bad manners an greed tae tak butter an jam on a biscuit.*
338. *It's the soor soo that sooks up the draff.* A 49.
339. *It taks aa kin o fowk tae mak a warld.*

340. *It taks a wise man tae act the feel.*
341. *It winna hurt ye tae speak.* Ke 29.
342. *I've a craa tae pluck wi ye (an ye've tae ate the fedders o't).*  
Ke 397.
343. X: "*I've forgotten fit I was gaan tae say.*" Y: "*It's surely been a lee.*"
344. *I've neither time nor daylight.* I'm extremely busy.
345. *I widna ken him if I got him in ma pottitch (porridge)—I'd jist ken he sidna be there.*
346. *I winna pey a doggie tae bark for me an bark masel.* I won't pay a servant and do the work myself.
347. *I wish ye readier mait nor a rinnin hare.*
348. *I wisna shut up, I wis brocht up.* [A re ponse to one who says "Shut up!"]].
349. *Jealousy'll get ye naewye (nowhere).*
350. *Jist haadin thegither by the help o the rags.* [In answer to the question, "Foo are ye?"]].
351. *Kale an kale-bree an a wee puckle seys (chives), is fine for the laddies that work on the leys (lea fields).*
352. *Kale an kale-brose an a wee suppie ream (cream), sen's ye asleep as seen as they're deen (done).*
353. *Kale at hame's nae kitchie (something savoury).*
354. *Keep a calm sooch (appearance).* Don't get flustered.
355. *Keep a thing seyven year an ye'll fin a eese for't.* He 16, 52  
Hi 199 Ch 224; Wilson A, C.
356. *Keepin saa's (salves) for sairs.* Keeping things unlikely to be of use.
357. *Keep the bonny side tae the laird.* Cf. Ca 441.
358. *Keep the day an the wye alike.*
359. *Keep the pottie bilin.* Keep going [Specif. said by boys sliding quickly one after the other on ice]. Beaton 211.
360. *Keep yer ain fish-guts tae yer ain sea-maas (sea-gulls).* Ke 118  
He 52, 113 Hi 199 Ch 224; Wilson A, B, C.
361. *Keep yer breath tae cweel (cool) your pottitch.* [Said to one talking angrily]. Ke 229 He 130 Hi 200 Ch 224; Beaton 211, Wilson C.
362. *Keep yer taants tae tocher (dower) yer dothers (for fear that yer maidens be few).* Beaton 211.
363. *Lang may yer fit gang roon the gate (path), an niver strick a steen.*

364. *Lang may yer lum* (chimney) *reek* (smoke) *wi ither fowk's coal*. Beaton 211, Wilson A, B, C.
365. *Lang sick, seen hale*.
366. *Lang spangs* (strides) *an mony o them*. [How to run fast].
367. *Lang steek* (stitch) *an pu hard*. [Said of rough sewing]. Beaton 211.
368. *Learn young, learn fair, learn aal, learn sair*. A 570; Beaton 211.
369. *Let that flee stick tae the waa*. Say no more about it.
370. *Let the saa* (salve) *sink tae the sair*. Beaton 211.
371. *Let the win beat upo ticht leather*. Eat well before going out in stormy weather.
372. *Let weel abee* (alone). He 52.
- 373a, b. *Like Feel Jock, I'll ken better (or be wiser) neist time*. Ca 97.
374. *Like mony anither man, stannin greatly in yer ain licht*.
375. *Like the cock in the midden, scrapin hard for a livin*. [In answer to the question, "Foo are ye?"].
376. *Little gars* (makes) *a feel laach*.
377. *Little's fun till a feel*.
- 378a, b. *Little wit in the heid maks muckle traivel tae the feet, or little in the pow maks muckle wark for the feet*. A 569 Ke 230 Ra 51 He 85; Mowat 7, Beaton 211.
379. *Livin on love an chaain* (chewing) *daylicht*. Ca 1790 Ke 367 Ra 51 He 133 Ch 240; Beaton 211, Calder II. 12.
380. *Lo'e me a little, lo'e me lang*.
381. *Look afore ye loup* (jump). Ra 51 He 81 Hi 217.
382. *Lookin as gin butter widna melt in her cheek*. Ra 61 Hi 335.
383. *Ma ain han's aye sickerest* (surest).
384. *Ma belly's like tae cut ma throat*. I'm very hungry.
385. *Ma fingers is aa thoombs*.
386. *Mair by luck than gweed management*. [Said when an intricate job is completed without trouble]. He 23, 133 Hi 219 Ch 243; Angus 168, Beaton 210, Wilson A, B, C.
387. *Mair holy than righteous*. [Said of a garment full of holes].
388. *Mair siller than sense (said the teyler wi his lang threid)*. It is also senseless to sew with a long thread.
389. *Mair tae be peetied than envied*. Hi 58.
390. *Mak a dear o a divot* (sod) *an turn the heathery side tae ye*. Make the most of the available resources.
391. *Mak a kirk or a mull o't*. Make the best of it. Beaton 212.
392. *Makin a speen or spilin a horn*.

393. *Makin siller (money) like sclate steens.* Ch 375; Beaton 212.
394. *Mak yer feet yer freen.* Take to your heels. Ch 58; Beaton 212.
395. *Mak yersel at hame, for I wish ye wis.*
396. *Ma son's ma son till he gets a wife, bit ma dother's ma dother aa her life.* Ra 55; Beaton 212.
397. *May the birdie shit in the prophet's mou.* [Said when someone forebodes bad weather, etc.].
398. *May ye aye hae a fu aamrie (pantry).*
399. *Merry go hyne (hence, away), wi a fish hyeuk in yer tail.*
400. *Money's made roon tae gang roon.*
401. *Money's made roon tae roll.*
402. *Money's made tae rowe (roll).*
403. *Mony a een despises the dish they'd fainest lick.*
404. *Motty (full of motes) saace is gweed eneuch for hairy butter.* Angus 167, Firth 159, Beaton 212. [Saace is should properly be saat (salt)'s].
405. *Mony a een speers (asks) the road tae Foggyloan (Aberchirder) that kens't braa weel.*
406. *Muckle skirlin, little oo (wool), (as the deil said fin he clippit the soo).* Ke 47 Ra 11; Beaton 202, Wilson A, B.
407. *Mull o Rora's roller rolled three times roon the park unrolled.* [A tongue twister].
408. *Nae eese bidin in Rome an strivin wi the Pope.* Adapt yourself to your circumstances.
409. *Nae eese o haein an wintin baith.*
410. *Nae fit tae bite yer ain thoomb.* Drunk.
411. *Nae sae hielan tae be sae far north.* [In answer to the question "Foo are ye?"]. Beaton 213.
412. *Nae winner (wonder) ye're aal-like (old-looking), ilky thing fashes (bothers) ye.*
- 413a, b, c, d, e. *Nae worth a docken (or a fart, or a fiddle, or a flech [flea], or a sid [the inner covering of grain]).* Ch 218; Calder II. 9.
414. *Near deid niver helpit the kirkyaird nor yet the bellman's pooch.* Calder I. 9.
415. *Nearest the door first oot.*
416. *Nedder tae haad nor bin (bind).* Irrepressible.
417. *Neither fish, nor flesh, nor gweed reed-herrin.* Wilson A, C.
418. *Niver's a lang time.* Ke 260 He 135.
419. *Niver say sids.* Don't say a word.

420. *Oat mou an bere doup* (bottom) *an mashlick* (mixture of peas and oats) *in the middle*. [A deception or cheat]. Beaton 213.
421. *Oh hoch hum, I niver saa a bonny lad bit fit I liket some*. [Said when yawning].
422. *Onything dis* (does) *at hame*. Cf. *The Hávamál* 6: *Dælt er heima hvat* (Ed. by D. E. N. Clarke, Cambridge 1923).
423. *Onything sets a weel-faar't* (good-looking) *face, though it wis only (a neuk [corner] o) the dishclood*. He 3 Hi 243 Ch 272; Mowat 6, Beaton 213, Wilson C.
424. *Or the girse grow the aal horse may be deid*. Don't delay.
425. *Ower aal a sparrow tae be teen* (taken) *wi caff* (chaff). Beaton 207.
426. *Ower sair* (sorely) *bett* (beaten) *a roadie niver grows corn*. It doesn't pay to get into a rut.
427. *Pairt smaa an ser'* (serve) *aa*. M 351 Ke 90 Ra 22 He 52 Hi 76; Beaton 214, Wilson C.
428. X: "*Penny for yer thochts*." Y: "*Tippence an ye'll get them*."
429. *Piggie* (water jug) *geed* (went) *aye tae the wall* (well) *till ae day*. One may do a thing too often. M 1246 Ke 313; Beaton 216.
430. *Pit a patch abeen a patch an that'll turn the win about*.
431. *Pit a stoot hert till a stey* (steep) *brae*. M 1205 Ca 1342 Ke 287 Ra 61 Hi 258; Firth 159, Beaton 214, Wilson A, B.
432. *Pit canna in yer pooch an try*.
433. *Pittin the gentleman on abeen the beggar*. [Said e.g. of putting blacking over dirt on boots]. Ke 186 Ra 40 Hi 174 Ch 189.
434. *Please yersel an buy berries an pismeal wi yon penny*.
435. *Pottie canna cry black airsie tae the pannie*. One is as bad as the other. Ke 69 Ra 20; Firth 159, Beaton 214.
436. *Profits winna hide*. [Said jocularly to one who buys an expensive new thing].
437. *Reed, fite, an blue's aneuch tae gar* (make) *ye spew*. [Perhaps in reference to the French tricolour, and if so dating from the Napoleonic wars].
438. *Rowe yer ain gird* (hoop). Be independent.
439. *Sane mithers hiv feel loons* (boys).

440. *Seein's believin.* Ra 61 Hi 157.
441. *Seener yokit seener deen.*
- 442a, b. *Self praise is no honour (or is very honourable).* He 48  
Hi 257.
443. *Sell yer pig an buy a can.* Get something better.
444. *She disna think she's smaa drink nor yet the gruns o porter.*  
She has a high opinion of herself. Hi 176 Ch 151.
445. *She'd skin a loose an mak breeks o its skin an cannles o its  
tallow.* He 2 Hi 155 Ch 153; Firth 158, Wilson C.
446. *She geed throwe the wid (wood) an lan't wi a scrog (shrub).*  
She had many rich suitors but married a poor one.
447. *She'll work roon ye aa day an thresh yer back aa even.* She is a  
much better worker than you.
448. *She lookit for the hats an loot (let) the bonnets gae by.* [Said  
of an unmarried woman who was too choosy about a  
husband].
449. *She niver said "Hiv ye a mou?"* She offered nothing to eat.  
Ch 257.
450. *She thocht her aal bress wid buy a new pan.* She married a  
rich old man, hoping he would die so that she might  
marry a young man. Beaton 208.
451. *She wears the breeks.* She is master in the house.
452. *She winna sell her hen in a rainy day nor yet her cock in win.*  
She is a good bargainer. M 1575 Ke 373 Ra 31, 83  
He 52 Hi 126; Angus 169, Beaton 219.
453. *She winna tine (lose) a preen (pin) an nae look for't.* She is  
thrifty.
- 454a, b. *Shinin like sharn (cow-dung) on the heid o a hill (or on a  
ley-rig).* Ke 378 Ra 86 Hi 346.
455. *Short an sweet like the donkey's gallop.* Hi 16.
456. *Sic mannie, sic horsie.* Ca 1364, -5, -7, -70 A 738 Ke 336  
Ra 62 Ch 298; Beaton 215.
457. *Sing! sing! the cat's awa wi ma singin string.* [Said by some-  
one asked to sing in company].
458. *Sittin swytin (sweating) supping sowens.* [A tongue-twister].
459. *Slow at mait (food) slow at work.* Ra 59 He 138 Hi 262.
460. *Snap up the speen-mait (food for which a spoon is needed),  
the breid'll keep.*
461. *Some fowk's aye seein fairlies (wonders).* He 22.
462. X: "So they say." Y: "O aye, they say athing bit their  
prayers, an they fustle (whistle) them."
463. *Speak fin ye're spoken till (an bark fin the doggie bids ye).* Ra 63  
He 54 Hi 265, 266 Ch 303; Firth 159.

- 464a, b. *Speakin oot o a hole in your heid (or neck)*. [Talking nonsense].
- 465a, b. *Spit ower yer thoomb an say "Troth, thoomb" (or an say "Troth" three times ower)*. [As an act of good faith].
- 466a, b. *Steal a needle steal a preen, steal a coo or aa be deen (or afore ye're deen)*. M 1377; Beaton 215.
467. *Sticks an steens'll brak ma beens, bit nicknames winna touch me*. He 53 Hi 69; Wilson A, C.
468. *Still waters rin deep*. Ra 62 He 90 Hi 263.
469. *Straein (putting straw into) yer beets in Moat's soo (straw stack)*. [Dead, because the graveyard in Auchterless is next to the cornyard of the farm of Moat].
470. *Stravaigin (sauntering, strutting) aboot like a wull (roused) turkey*.
471. *Sunday's rain's aafu weetin*. [A sarcastic comment when someone will not go to church because of rain].
472. *Sup yer brose (an oatmeal dish), the breid'll keep*.
- 473a, b. *Sweer (lazy) fowk's aye bodin coorse (or ill) widder (weather)*. [I.e. as an excuse for not going out to work].
474. *Tae dream o the deid's tae hear o the livin*.
475. *Tak chowp for a change*. You must make do with nothing.
476. *Tak fit ye hiv an ye'll niver wint*. Make do with what you have.
477. *Tak mustard, it'll keep o itself*.
478. *Tak yer heels ower yer shooders*. [Said when the roads are bad].
479. *Tea begrudged an water bewitched*. Very weak tea.
480. *Tell the truth an shame the Deil*.
481. *That'll be a knife (etc.) lang ahin ye hinna a sair heid*. [Said of something with long-lasting qualities].
482. *That'll haad ye oot o langer (tedium) an in o anger*. [Said of a trying job]. Ra 58.
483. *That's the clean back lick*. The very limit.
484. *That winna mak me nor brak me*.
485. *The back o beyond faar the hens rin barfit*.
486. *The back o yer heid's a treat*. I'm glad to get rid of you.
487. *That story's obleeged tae the upmakker*. [Said of an embroidered story].
488. *The better the day, the better the deed*. He 72 Hi 58, 275; Beaton 216.
489. *The cat's scrapin for win*. [Said if the cat is seen scratching].

490. *The cat's sneezin, there's gaan tae be drift.* [Also said in fun if a person sneezes].
491. *The corn's surely risin.* [Said to a man with his cap set well back on his head].
492. *The Deil rock them in a creel that disna wish us aa weel.*
493. *The Deil's aye gweed till his ain.* Ra 66 Hc 12 Hi 278; Angus 164, Beaton 217, Wilson C.
494. *The East win's a caal win fitiver airt (direction) it blaa fae.*
495. *The fashion here's 'twis afore, hinmist (last) in shuts the door.* [Said to farm servants going in for a meal].
496. *The fat soo's airse is aye weel creeshed (greased).* M 1200 Ca 475, 1143, 1400, 1787, 1794 Ke 93 Ra 24.
497. *The feel (foolish) an the wise aye tig thegither—till the feel gethers wit.*
498. *The hetter war the seener peace.*
499. *The kep (cap) haps (covers) aa the faimily.* [Said of a married couple with no children].
500. *The Lord helps them that helps themsels.* A 313 Hc 32.
501. *The mair ye hiv the mair ye get.* A 333.
- 502a, b. *The mair ye hiv (or get) the mair ye wint.* Ca 1612 A 637 Ke 245 Ra 35 He 30.
503. *The meen's neen the waar (worse) though the doggie bark at it.*
504. *Them that burns their airse has tae sit on the blister.*
505. *Them that guides fin they hae, can guide fin they hinna.*
506. *Them that has a lang nose are aye takin till them.* If the cap fits, wear it. Beaton 216.
507. *Them that lives langest sees maist fairlies.* Ca 1603, 1447 A 798 Ke 313 Ra 67 He 34 Hi 282; Angus 164, Beaton 217.
508. *Them that's aye gyaan (going)'s aye gettin.*
- 509a, b. *The nearer nicht (or e'en) the mair beggars.* M 1379 Ra 56 He 92, 135 Hi 235 Ch 262.
- 510a, b. *The nearer the Kirk the farrer (further) fae Gweed (or grace).* A 650; Beaton 213.
511. *The proof o the puddin's the preein (tasting) o't.* He 58 Hi 286; Angus 165, Wilson A, B, C.
512. *There's a lot o killin in a cyard (vagabond).*
513. *There's as gweed fish intae the sea as ever yet cam oot o't.* [Encouragement to one who has lost a sweetheart. The line occurs in the ballad *Mormond Braes*].
514. *There's a time an a place for athing.*
515. *There's (aye) a midse (middle) in the sea.* Ke 314.
516. *There's aye a something.* Nothing is ever perfect.

517. *There's aye a weet an slippery steen at ilky body's door.* Ke 305  
Ra 71; Beaton 217, Wilson A.
518. *There's aye some water faar the stirkie (steer) droons.* Ke 309  
Ra 69 He 6 Hi 290 Ch 357; Angus 165, Firth 159,  
Beaton 217, Wilson A.
519. *There's great stots (young bull or ox) in Ireland, bit they  
canna get them shippit for their lang horns.* [Said to a boaster].
520. *There's mair in him than the speen pits in (an the been kaim  
rugs oot).*
521. *There's mony a thing made for the penny.*
522. *There's mony a true word spoken in jest.* He 59.
523. *There's nae feels like aal feels.* Ca 1190, 1518 A 816 Ra 55  
He 22 Hi 231, 293; Angus 165, Wilson C.
524. *There's nae motes in the moss.* [Said to one who drops his  
"piece" when working at the peat]. He 13.
525. *There's nae place bit fit there's a hail shooer in files (whiles).*  
There's an occasional row in every house.
526. *There's nae proof till a trial.*
527. *There's naething gotten bit far it is.*
528. *There's niver a hicht bit there's a howe (hollow).*
529. *There's niver an ill bit there's a waar (worse).*
530. *The snail an the swalla win aa alike at even.*
- 531a, b. *The souter's wife (an the smith's meer, or shalt)'s aye warst  
shod.* Ca 1444 A 790 Ke 258 He 93; Beaton 217,  
Wilson A, B, C.
532. *The thicker the meal-an-ale, the better the neist 'ear's crap.*  
[Meal-an-ale, consisting of oatmeal, ale, sugar and  
whisky, is eaten at the end-of-harvest celebration, itself  
called the *meal-an-ale*].
533. *The truth tells best, an it tells twice.*
534. *The world's ill-pairted.* Hi 180 Ch 208.
535. *The willin horse aye gets the teuchest (toughest) rug (pull).*  
He 92 Ch 350; Beaton 216.
536. *The win an the water are baith against him.* [Overwhelmed  
by misfortune].
537. *They aa like tae gang tae Auchtermair, niver tae Auchterless.*  
[Said of ministers looking for a rich parish].
538. *They dinna measure yer mou.* They feed you well.
539. *They niver bodit for a silk goon bit got een.*
540. *They niver see green cheese bit fit their teeth's aye waterin.*  
[Said of jealous people].
541. *They're far ahin that daarna follow.* Never say die. Beaton  
217.

542. *They're fond o fish that fries the scrubber.*
543. *They've up aa their back teeth. They are astute.*
544. *They widna clip butter though it wis meltit.* [Said of a blunt pair of scissors].
545. *Thicker an faister an mair o't.*
546. *Things winna bide an gyang tee.*
547. *This winna dee, an keep the tackie (tenancy) tee.* [Supposedly said by a crofter's wife when her husband sat down for a rest].
548. *Thocht can kill an thocht can cure.*
549. *Though ye're peer, dinna let the placie (one's landholding) ken't.* Always manure your land well, whatever else you can't afford to do.
550. *Thunner maks the widder or braks the widder.*
551. *Time aboot's fair play.*
552. *Tire an faa tee again.*
553. *Turn yer tail tae Turra.* [A way of saying "Turn round"].
554. *Twa heids is better than een (though een o them shid be bit a sheep's heid).* Ra 54 He 96 Hi 308 Ch 380.
555. *Twa puddocks an a pleuch, my sang's lang eneuch.* [Said by one refusing to sing in company].
556. *Twine the rash fin it's green.* Train children young.
557. *Water made waar.* [Said of weak tea].
558. *We're aa Jock Tamson's bairns.*
559. X: "*Were ye at the kirk the day?*" Y: "*Aye, tae the kirk o crack-aboot, an the kail-pot for the minister.*" [I.e. they chatted round the fire and looked at the pot on the crook].
560. *Willie dis a lot.* Where there is a will to do things, much can be done.
561. *Wint fin ye hae, an wint fin ye hinna, that's eternal wint.* Hi 186 Ch 213.
562. *Wise ahin time.* A 137 He 89, 132 Hi 60, 132 Ch 25.
563. *Ye can caa's fit ye like, as lang's ye dinna caa's ower.*
564. *Ye canna be twa wyes at eence.*
565. *Ye canna fish twa sides o the water at eence.*
566. *Ye canna mak a feel o a born idiot.* Beaton 219.
567. *Ye canna pit an aal heid on young shooders.*
568. *Ye canna see naething for athing.* You can't see the wood for the trees.

569. *Ye can see his heid, bit nae his hicht.* [Said of a conceited person].
- 570a, b. *Ye change yer mind as aften as ye change yer sark* (shirt), *or ye change yer mind wi the win.*
- 571a, b, c. *Ye could sheet peys throwe them* (or *read the Bible, or smaa print, throwe them*). [Said of trousers, etc. worn thin].
572. *Ye'd fustle the laverocks oot o the lift.* [Said to a flatterer].
573. *Ye'd gar* (make) *a body believe the back o their heid wis afore.*
574. *Ye'd gar a body believe the meen wis made o green cheese.*
575. *Ye'd like yer breid buttered on baith sides.* You expect too much.
576. *Ye'd speer* (ask) *the breeks aff a hielanman.*
- 577a, b. *Ye'd speer the tail* (or *hips*) *fae a peer wife, syne* (then) *speer faar she tint* (lost) *it* (or *them*). Fe 63.
- 578a, b. X: "*Ye ken fit thocht did?*" Y: "*Shit* (or *pished*) *the bed an blamed the bowster.*" Ke 244, 306.
579. *Ye ken yersel faar yer ain shee* (shoe) *grips ye.* Ca 478, 986 A 256, 551 Ra 24 Hi 89 Ch 98; Angus 167.
580. *Ye'll be a man afore yer midder yet.* Ke 174 Ch 414.
581. *Ye'll be waar or ye be better.* Ch 206.
582. *Ye'll dance till a different tune gin I come till ye.*
583. *Ye'll get yer kail throwe the reek.* You'll get a row.
584. *Ye'll jist need tae be like the mannie that turned his sark an shook it an said, "A clean dud's healthsome".* [Said by a wife when she can't get the washing dried in bad weather].
585. *Ye'll live lang ahin ye're laachen at.* Wilson A.
586. *Ye'll niver learn younger.*
587. *Ye'll niver mak the warld by speed o fit.*
588. *Ye'll sleep yer heid intae train-ile.* Calder II. 14.
589. *Ye man* (must) *cweel* (cool) *in the skin ye het in.* Ke 80 Ra 49 He 131 Hi 207 Ch 233; Beaton 210.
590. *Ye man learn tae creep afore ye can craal.*
591. *Ye micht as weel speak till a steen waa.* [Said when someone won't listen]. Calder II. 12.
592. *Ye mith* (might) *gang farrer an fare waar.* Ch 57; Wilson A, B, C.
593. *Ye needna blame Gweed gin the Deil ding ye ower.* [Said of a person with fat legs]. Ke 384 He 99 Ch 410.
594. *Ye needna greet* (cry) *ower skail't* (spilt) *sowens.*
- 595a, b. *Ye niver heard a cadger wife cryin stinkin fish* (or *herrin*).
596. *Ye niver miss the water till the wall rins dry.* Hi 314.
597. *Ye pu'd a stick tae brak yer ain back.* You did a good turn which will be repayed with ill. Ca 790, 819, 1175 A 455.

598. *Ye're aa eeksie-peeksie.* Each is as bad as the other.
599. *Ye're aye at hame at mait-time.* [Said to a lazy person who likes his food].
600. *Ye're aye half deid or ye be weel sick.*
601. *Ye're better o help tae athing bit mait.*
- 602a, b. *Yer een's bigger nor yer belly (or kite).* You take more than you can eat. [Also fig.]. Hi 348.
603. *Ye're weel aff an disna ken't.* Calder II. 13.
604. *Yer face wid fley (scare) the French a mile awa.*
605. *Yer heid'll niver hain (save) yer heels.* You don't think before you act.
606. *Ye're niver ower aal tae learn.* Ra 57.
607. *Yer tongue's aye in the tilley (lifting-pan), (though it be lip-fu [brimming over] o dirt).* Said of a person who speaks out of turn.
608. *Ye think ye shid get athing your side o the dish.*
609. *Ye've aiten a coo an worriet on the tail.* [Said to one who leaves a very little on his plate, or fig. of one who boggles at a trifle].
610. *Ye've a heid like a hen, ye jist min (remember) fin ye're hungry.*
611. *Ye've droont the mullert.* You've put too much boiling water on the brose-meal, or too much water in whisky.
612. *Ye've gotten yer baikie (tethering stake) oot.* On the loose.
613. *Ye've nae mair feet nor a hen.* You're awkward.
614. *Ye've surely been at the smiddy gettin sharpit.* [Said to one who gives short answers].
615. *Ye've the butter aa your side o the dish.* You have it all your own way.
616. *Ye've the greed o ninety-nine times nine.*
617. *Ye've the heft an the blade in yer ain han.*
618. *Ye've tint the best pairt o yer heid.* [Said to one who loses his cap].
619. *Ye widna get water though I sent ye tae the sea for't.* A 769; Beaton 219.
620. *Ye winna learn an aal horse new tricks.*
621. *Ye winna play Jock Needle Jock Preen wi me.* Cf. Ca 1838; Beaton 209, Calder I. 13.
622. *Ye winna tak oot if ye dinna pit in.*
623. *Ye wis niver a mile fae a coo's tail.* [At the coast: you have never been out to sea; inland: you have never been far from home].

ABBREVIATIONS

A	Fergusson 1641 (in Beveridge 1924)
Angus	Angus 1914
Beaton	Beaton 1915
Ca	Carmichaell <i>a</i> 1628 (in Carmichaell 1957)
Calder I	Calder 1920 <i>a</i>
Calder II	Calder 1920 <i>b</i>
Ch	Cheviot 1896
Firth	Firth 1920
He	Henderson 1832
Hi	Hislop 1870
Ke	Kelly 1721
M	Fergusson MS. <i>a</i> 1598 (in Beveridge 1924)
Mowat	Mowat 1916
Ra	Ramsay 1776
Wilson A	Wilson 1915
Wilson B	Wilson 1923
Wilson C	Wilson 1926
X	First speaker
Y	Second speaker

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