(Held at Burns Supper 2005 in Passau, Bavaria; my very first toast to the lassies.)

Toast to the Lassies

First, it is a great honor for me to give the Toast for the Lassies at this Burns Supper here in Passau, as ignorant as I am of most of the poems and lyrcis of Robert Burns, the Great Bard himself. If I am more qualified to toast the Lassies themselves - well, history will tell. Oh, and: yes, or better: no, I am not even Scottish. So if there are Scottish experts here among the audience, please forgive me pretending I am worth even quoting any of your local hero´s written art of love, life and everything.

Robert Burns himself was - I assume - highly qualified on that topic. At least he has written many beautiful poems about love to the lassie and related problems.

So I will give a few words about this longhaired, loving, honest and intelligent, four-legged beauty named Lassie... oops, sorry, that was yesterday on the tv-series-workshop...

But, on the other hand, those attributes also match with women: loving, warmhearted and sensual ... sorry..... I mean sensous creatures... did I say creatures? Top of creation, I mean.

I think I have to start from scratch.

Let us hear the immortal Bard himself:

(Beware O´Bonie Ann)

The captive bands may chain the hands,
But love enslaves the man:
Ye gallants braw, I rede you a',
Beware o' bonie Ann!

Hmm. What did he want to say with that? Let us dig a little deeper.

Looking around, we read a sign written in a very insensitive way in a New Orleans shops´s window, telling something about our topic. At least on the first glimpse:

"Beware pickpockets and loose women. Police Dept."

Now, are we talking of the same entity?

Have the American brothers in arms used the english tongue properly? Let us analyze:

The Oxfords Advance Learners Dictionary tells us about "loose: (1) not firmly or properly tied (2) not compact (3) free."

It seems like our American friends do not know much about women rather than language. Firstly: Why that weird combination of pickpockets and women?

I have no idea what that´s about? Do you?

Then: not firmly or properly tied.

Have women no rights there? Are women dogs?

In

AMENDMENT XIII of the United Staes Constitution

Passed by Congress January 31, 1865. Ratified December 6, 1865.

we read in

Section 1 „Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.“

That speaks for itself.

Then: not compact? „Beware not compact women“? I think we do not take that serious, now do we?

Then: free?

"Beware free women". No! I think this is shameful for the local authorities in The Big Easy. Nobody, especially no man has to fear free women, now has he?

So let us return to the elvish words of the immortal bard:

(My Luve Is Like a Red, Red Rose)
"...a red red rose
That's newly sprung in June."

Now, the rose is a traditional symbol of secrecy. Words spoken under the rose (sub rosa) are not for the public. Every intelligence agency could talk about that (if they would and they have to shoot you afterwards if they do so).

Legend tells us, Cupido tried to hide the love affair of his mother from Venus, so he sent Harpokrates, the God of Silence, roses and asked for secrecy about that story.

So we end up here in love and spicy secrets, not in the world of pickpockets. qed.

What has the immortal Bard to say about that:

(Bonie Peggy Alison)
And by thy een sae bonie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever, O!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never, O!
And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
And I'll kiss thee o'er again:
And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonie Peggy Alison.

We see a man confessing in a serios way his feelings to a woman. What more true love, frankness and deep devotion a man can show?

Now, it is said,"A woman can make an average man great, and a great man average."

No, we can not accept that, can we? Man himself is the source for his own averageness, if you ask me.

Another misunderstood quote we read in "Tales of Two Cities", where Charles Dickens began:"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times", but this is also firmly believed that it was never to be meant as an expression of his experiences with women.

And even our immortal Bard but had something to say, what could be misinterpreted, if one reads not careful enough between the lines:

(O Aye My Wife She Dang Me)
O aye my wife she dang me,
An' aft my wife she bang'd me,
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Gude faith! she'll soon o'er-gang ye.

On peace an' rest my mind was bent,
And, fool I was! I married;
But never honest man's intent
Sane cursedly miscarried.
O aye my wife, &c.

Some sairie comfort at the last,
When a' thir days are done, man,
My pains o' hell on earth is past,
I'm sure o' bliss aboon, man,
O aye my wife, &c.--

No, he loved his wife. At least I can read this from between those lines. How else could he been so productive if not his wife had inspired him, cared for him and gave him warm love and oatcakes.

So, lads, if you please, stand and raise your glasses,

And we'll toast the bonnie lasses!