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ALOWAY KIRK;  
OR,  
TAM O' SHANTER.  
A TALE.

BY ROBERT BURNS,  
THE AYRSHIRE POET.

- “ Ah Tam! ah Tam! thou'll get thy fairing!  
“ In hell they'll roast thee like a herring!  
“ In vain thy Kate awaits thy coming!  
“ Kate soon will be a waefu' woman !!!*



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A L O W A Y K I R K, &c.

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**W**HEN chapman bilies leave the street,  
And drouthy neebors. neebors meet,  
As market days are wearing late,  
And folk begin to tak' the gate ;  
While we sit boufing at the nappy,  
And getting fou and unco happy,  
We thinkna on the lang Scots miles,  
The mosses, waters, slaps and miles,  
That lie between us and our hame,  
Whare sits our sulky fullen dame,  
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,  
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,  
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,  
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,  
For honest men and bonny lasses.)

O Tam ! hadst thou been but sae wise,  
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice !  
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,  
A blethering, blustering drunken bellum ;  
That frae November till October,  
Ae market day thou wast na sober ;  
That ilka melder, wi' the Miller,  
Thou sat as long as thou had filler ;  
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,  
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on ;  
That at the L— d's. even on Sunday,  
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.  
She prophesied that, late or soon,  
Thou wad be found deep drown'd in Doon,

Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,  
By Aloway's auid haunted Kirk,—

AH, gentle dames! it gars me greet,  
To think how many counsils sweet,  
How many lengthen'd, sage advices,  
The husband frae the wife despises.

But to our tale; Ae market night,  
Tam had got planted unco right;  
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,  
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;  
And, at his elbow, Souter Jonny,  
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;  
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;  
They had been fou for weeks thegither,  
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter,  
And aye the ale was growing better:  
The Landlady and Tam grew gracious,  
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious;  
The Souser tauld his queerest stories,  
The Landlord's laugh was ready chorus:  
The storm without might roar and rustle,  
TAM didna mind the storm a whistle.—

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,  
E'en drown'd himself amang the nappy;  
As bees flee home wi' lades o' treasure;  
The minutes wing'd their way with pleasure;  
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,  
O'er a' the ills of life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;  
Or, like the snow falls in the river,  
A moment white—then melts for ever;

Or like the Borealis' rays,  
 That sit ere you can point the place :  
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form,  
 Evanishing amid the storm —  
 Nae man can ether Time or Tide,  
 The hour approaches Tam maun side ;  
 That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,  
 That dreary hour he mounts his beast in,  
 And sic a night he taks the road in,  
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The win' blew as 'twad blawn its last,  
 The rattlin showers rose on the blast ;  
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd,  
 Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd :  
 That night a child might understand,  
 The deil had business on his hand. —

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,  
 A better never lifted leg,  
 Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,  
 Despising wind, and rain and fire ;  
 Whiles haddin fast his gude blue bonnet ;  
 Whiles crooning o'er an auld Scots sonnet :  
 Whiles glowring round wi' prudent cares,  
 Lest bogles catch him unawares ;  
 KIRK ALOWAY was drawing nigh,  
 Where ghaists and howlets nightly cry. —

By this time he was cross the ford,  
 Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd  
 And past the birks and meikle stane,  
 Whare drunken Charlie brake's neck bane ;  
 And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,  
 Whare hunter's fan the murder'd bairn ;  
 And near the thorn aboon the well,



Where Mungo's mither bair'd hissel,  
 Before him Doon pours all his floods:  
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods,  
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole;  
 Near and more near the thunders roll;  
 When glimmering thro' the roaring trees  
 Kik Alloway seem'd in a blaze;  
 Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,  
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring haud' John Barleycorn,  
 What danger thou canst make us scorn;  
 Wi' Tipenny, we fear nae evil;  
 Wi' Usquebae, we'll face the Devil!  
 The swags fae rear'd in Tamie's noddle,  
 Fair play he car'd na deil's a boddle:  
 But Meggy stood right feir astonish'd,  
 Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,  
 She ventur'd forward to the light,  
 And vow! Tam saw an unco sight!  
 Warlocks and witches in a dance,  
 Nae cotillion, brent new frae France,  
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys and reels,  
 Put life and mettle in their heels—  
 At winnock bunker in the east,  
 There sat auld Nick in shape o' beast;  
 A touzie tyke, black, grim and large,  
 To gie them music was his charge,  
 He screw'd his pipes, and gart them skirl,  
 Till roof and ratters a' did dirl—  
 Coffins stood round like open presses,  
 That shew'd the dead in their last dresses,  
 And (by some devilish cantrip slight),  
 Each in his cauld hand held a light—  
 By which heroic Tam was able  
 To note upon the haly table,

A murderer's banes in gibbet airns ;  
 Twa span long, wec unchristened bairns ;  
 A thief, new cutted frae a rape,  
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gap :  
 Five tomahawks, wi' blud red-rusted :  
 Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted ;  
 A garter, which a babe had strangled :  
 A knite a father's throat had mangled,  
 Whom his ain sou of life bereft,  
 The grey hairs yet stack to the heft :  
 With mair o' horrible and awfu'  
 Which e'en to name wad be unlawfu'  
 Three lawyers' tongues, turn'd inside out.  
 Wi' lies seem'd like a beggar's cloot ;  
 Three Priests hearts, rotten, black as muck,  
 Lay stinking, vile, in every neuck.—

As Tamie glowr'd, amaz'd and curious,  
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious ;  
 The piper loud and louder blew ;  
 The dancers quik and quicker flew ;  
 They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,  
 Till ilka Carlin swat and reekit,  
 And koost her dudies to the wark,  
 And linkit at it in her sark !

Now, Tam, O Tam ! had they been queens  
 A' plump and strapping in their teens ;  
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flann,  
 Been snaw white, seventeen hundred linn !  
 Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair  
 That ance were plush o' gude blue hair,  
 I wad hae gien them aff my hurdies,  
 For a blink o' the bony burdies !

But wither'd bedlams, awid and droff,

Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,  
 Louping and flinging on a crummock,  
 I wonder did na turn thy stomach —  
 But I am kend what was what fu' brawly,  
 There was ae winsome wench and wally,  
 That night inlisted in the core,  
 (Lang after kend on Carrick shore;  
 For mony a beast to dead she shot,  
 And perish'd mony a bonny boat,  
 And shook baith meikle corn an' bear,  
 And kept the country side in fear—)  
 Her cutty fark o' Paisley harn,  
 That while a lassie she had worn,  
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,  
 It was her best, and she was vauntie—  
 Ah, little thought thy reverend Grannie,  
 That sark she cost for her wee Nannie,  
 Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' their riches)  
 Wad ever grace a dance of witches!

But hear my muse her wing maun cour,  
 Sic flights are far beyond her power;  
 To sing how Nannie lap and slang,  
 (A souple jade she was and strang)  
 And how I am stood like ane betwitched,  
 And thought his vera een enriched:  
 Even Satan glowr'd, and fig'd fu' fain,  
 And hotch'd, and blew wi' might an' main;  
 Till first a caper—syne anither—  
 Tam lost his reason a' thegether.  
 Then roars out—“Weel done Cutty sark!”  
 And in an instant all is dark;  
 And scarcely he has Maggie railed,  
 Till out the hellish legion sallied—

As bees biz out wi' angry fyke,

When plundering herds assail their byke ;  
 As open pussies mortal oes  
 When pop, she starts before their nose :  
 As eager rins the market crowd,  
 When • Catch the thief !' resounds aloud :  
 So Maggie rins, the witches follow  
 Wi' mony an elderie shout and hollo.—

Ah Tam ! ah Tam ! thou'll get thy fairing ?  
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herring !  
 In vain thy KATE awaits thy coming !  
 KATE soon will be a wae fu' woman !  
 Now, do thy speedy utmost MEG,  
 And win the keystane o' the brig ;  
 There at them thou thy tail may toss,  
 A running stream they darena cross ;  
 But ere the keystane she could make,  
 The first a tail she had to shake !  
 For Nanay, far before the rest,  
 Hard upon noble Maggie's prest,  
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle,  
 But little kend she Maggie mettle :  
 At spring brought aff her Master hale,  
 But left behind her ain grey tail ;  
 The Catlin claught her by the rump,  
 And left poor Maggie scarce a stump —

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read ;  
 Ilk man and mother's son take heed :  
 Where'er to drink you are inclin'd  
 Or cutty Sarks rin in your mind,  
 Think.—ye may buy the joys o'er dear ;  
 Remember TAM O' SHANTER'S MARE.