

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

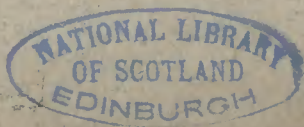
BY ROBERT BURNS,  
THE AYRSHIRE POET.

*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!!!*



PAISLEY:  
Printed by J. NEILSON,

1822.



A LOWAY KIRK, &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 housing at the nappy,  
And getting fou and unco happy,  
We think o' on the lang Scots miles,  
The mosses, waters, slaps and stiles,  
That lie between us and our hame,  
Whare sits our sulky fallen 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 wauld 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 eat 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 auld 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,  
I am 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 cronny;  
I am lo'ed him like a vera brither;  
They had been fou for weeks thegither;  
The night drave on wi' sange and clatter,  
And aye the ale was growing better:  
The Landlady and I am 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,  
I am didna mind the storm a whistle. —

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,  
Then drown'd himself amang the nappy;  
His bees hie home wi' lades o' treasure;  
The minutes wing'd their way with pleasure;  
Sings may be blest, but I am was glorious,  
Tyer 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 tether Time or Tide,  
 The hour approaches Tam maun ride ;  
 That hour, o' night's black arch the keystane,  
 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 listid leg,  
 Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,  
 Despising wind, and rain and fire ;  
 Whiles hadding fast his gude blue bonnet ;  
 Whiles crooning o'er an auld Scots sonnet :  
 Whiles glowing round wi' prudent cares,  
 Le-t bogles catch him unawares ;  
 K:RK 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,

Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel',  
 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 ;  
 Whan glimmering thro' the groaning trees  
 Kirk Alloway seem'd in a bleeze ;  
 Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,  
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bauld John Barleycorn,  
 What danger thou canst make us scorn ;  
 Wi' Tipenny, we fear nae evil ;  
 Wi' Usquebae, we'll face the Devil !  
 The swats sae ream'd in Tamie's noddle,  
 Fair play, he car'd na deil's a boddle ;  
 But Meggy stood right fair 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 s'ew 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 rafters 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, wee unchristened bairns ;  
 A thief, new cutted frae a rape,  
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape ;  
 Five tomahawks, wi' blud red-rusted :  
 Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted ;  
 A porter, which a babe had strangled ;  
 A knife a father's throat had mangled,  
 Whom his ain son of life bereft,  
 The grey hairs yet stuck to the heft :  
 Wih 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 clout ;  
 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 quick 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 flanen,  
 Been snaw white, seventeen hundred linen !  
 Their breeks o' mine, my only pair  
 That ance were plush o' gude blue hair,  
 I wad hae gien them aff my hordies,  
 For a blink o' the bony burdies !

But wither'd bedlams, auld and droll,

Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,  
 Louping and flinging on a crummock,  
 I wonder did na turn thy stomach —  
 But Tam 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 sark, 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 flang,  
 (A souple jade she was and strang)  
 And how Tam 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' thegither  
 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 faillied —

As bees biz out wi' angry fyke,

When plundering herds assail their byke ;  
 As open pussies mortal toes  
 When pop, she starts before their nose :  
 As eager rins the market croud,  
 When " Catch the thief ! " resounds aloud :  
 So Maggie rins, the witches follow  
 Wi' mony an elderic 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 waefu' 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 sient a tall she had to shake !  
 For Naney, far before the rest,  
 Hard pouon noble Maggie's prest,  
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle,  
 But little kend she Maggie mettle :  
 Ae spring brought aff her Master hale,  
 But left behind her ain grey tail ;  
 The Carlin 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 :  
 Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd  
 Or Cutty Sark's rin in your mind,  
 Think,—ye may buy the joys o'er dear ;  
 Remember TAM O' SHANTER'S MARE.

F I N I S.