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ALOWAY KIRK;
OR,
Tam o' Shanter.

A TALE,
AND
MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.
A Poem,

WITH A SKETCH
OF
BURNS'S LIFE, &c.

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 Y R  
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ALONSO BARRA

# Town of ...

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A  
S K E T C H

OF

*Burns's Life, &c.*

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ROBERT BURNS, the Author of TAM O' SHANTER, was born on the 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1759, on the Banks of Doon, about 2 miles from Ayr. The house he was born in is still kept in good repair, and possessed by MILLER GOLDIE, for these 20 years past. The obliging landlord has on the walls of the house painted in bright letters, "*Burns's Cottage. Robert Burns the Ayrshire Poet, was born under this roof, on the 25th January, 1759.*" In one of the largest Rooms, there stands a drawing of the poet on canvas. Many of the Travellers who visit Ayr, walk out to the cottage and the ruins of ALLOWAY KIRK,

the scene of action with Tam o' Shanter and the Witches. The Kirk stands without a roof in the midst of the Burying ground. The walls of the Kirk were repaired a few years ago, by some of the heritors, with a view to keep up the name of the place. The old bridge on which Tam's Mare lost her tail, is still standing, although condemned by the road Trustees, not for age, but for the rising ground, on both sides of the river, and another magnificent bridge is built, about a gun shot from it. The friends of Burns who meet annually in the cottage, to celebrate his birth day, subscribed a sum adequate to the value put on it, as old material, were it taken down; the *auld brig of Doon* now stands as a monument to the poet's memory.

In BURNS's infant days he owed much to an old woman, who resided in his father's family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity and

superstition, she had, he supposed, the largest collection in the country, of tales and songs, concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraths, apparitions, cantrips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. He no doubt believed them, and would sit trembling when he heard these tales at night, until his manly spirit rose above them, which cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on his imagination, that to the end of his career, in his nocturnal rambles, he sometimes kept a sharp lookout in suspicious places; and though nobody could be more sceptical than he was in such matters, yet, he said, it often took an effort of philosophy to shake off these idol-terrors.

BURNS, in the 17th year of his age, to give his manners a brush, went to a country dancing school.



His father, well knew the duty of a parent, had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings, and his going was what, to his last moment, he had to repent, in opposition to his wishes. His father was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in Robert, his father took a dislike to him, which is believed to be one cause of his dissipation, which marked his succeeding years. It is too true, dancing schools have been the ruin of thousands! Not a village but there is a *hop-master*. Parents should strain every nerve to prevent these HOP-MEETINGS, in ale houses. It is well known they are not in the path of virtue.

The first circumstance which induced our youthful poet to warble his "wild, artless notes," is very interesting, on account of the elegant simplicity which distinguishes the following description of his harvest partner. "She was a bonnie, sweet,

sonsie lass." He says, "she altogether, unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and luke warm philosophy, I hold to be *the first of human joys, our dearest blessing* here below. Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill, like a *Æolian harp*; and particularly, why my pulse beat such a furious ratan, when I looked and fingered over her little hand, to pick out the cruel nettle stings and thistles.

"Thus," says he, "with me began love & poetry; which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, my highest enjoyment.

In the course of the poet's life he was received at the tables of the

gentlemen of Nithsdale, with welcome, with kindness, and even with respect. Their social parties too often seduced him from the duties he owed to his family.

But to return to his native spot, the cottage and Alloway Kirk, for the curiosity of travellers, we shall give a short description of the town of Ayr, where Burns fell in with his first friends, whom he held dear till his death.

We come next to the town of Ayr, the county town, and a presbytery seat, is a royal burgh of great antiquity, erected about 1180, containing about 8000 inhabitants. It is situated upon a point of land, between the influx of the rivers of Ayr and Doon, near its junction with the Atlantic Ocean; the buildings on the banks of the river Ayr, are united by two bridges, which joins with the parishes of Newton and St. Evox, the first contains 1724, and the last 2070 inhabitants. This



town formerly could not boast of many advantages in point of appearance. A very great addition has been made to the town, within this twenty years. In the main street fine buildings erected, the streets made straighter, and very much improved by the Magistrates, in 1813, both in paving and lighting. Formerly one person was employed in cleaning the streets, now there are two. More improvement has been made the last two years, in the streets and lanes, than for the last twenty.

A very great addition is now building, called Wellington square, and when finished, will be an ornament to the town.

Before the Reformation there were in this town monasteries of Dominicans and Franciscans; the former founded in 1230, and the latter in 1472. The church of St. John the Baptist stood near the sea; its tower still remains. This venerable structure was converted into

an armoury by Oliver Cromwell, who built a citadel round it, enclosing 12 acres of ground; in front of this ground, an academy is built, and the number of students attending this seminary amounts to near 600. There are two other academics in the county, one in Kilmarnock, under the direction of the Magistrates, and one in Irvine, erected there by the Earl of Eglington, whose public spirit will be long remembered. But the one at Ayr exceeds them, both in point of learning, for men of the first rate abilities are employed as teachers, which raised this seminary to great renown; many of the students are from all quarters of the world. It was instituted by subscription, and the subscribers erected into one Body, political and corporate, by Royal charter, in 1798. The managers and directors in terms of the Charter, are persons or bodies corporate or politic, who may have subscribed.

the sum of £50 or upwards. Seven members from the town council of Ayr, annually chosen. The Sheriff Depute of the county for the time being. The nearest heir male of the deceased John Fergusson of Doonholm, Esq. Five contributors representing the minor subscribers.

The number of teachers are six, besides their assistants. French, Italian and German, taught by a learned gentleman from France.

A flourishing banking company has existed in Ayr for many years. Ayr has a considerable harbour; but navigation is much impeded by a bar, which is occasionally thrown across the mouth of the river, particularly by N. W. winds; a new act of parliament is obtained to improve it; the depth of the water, even at spring tides, seldom exceeds 12 feet. About 6000 tonnage and 500 seamen are employed in the coal and grain trade. This parish claims

also the honour of being the birth-place of Joannes Erigena and Chevalier Ramsay. The royalty contains about 5000 acres, yielding a rental of about £10,000 sterling.

MINISTERS—Two in the parish, one Burgher, one Relief, one Moravian, and one Methodist.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, nine, Lawyers thirty-two, &c. &c.

MAILS—Depart to London, by Glasgow, every morning at seven o'clock. To Glasgow from Ireland, &c. every evening at 9 o'clock. To Galloway, at half past 2, p. m. To Ireland, at 10 o'clock p. m.

Arrivals of the London mails by Glasgow, at 2 p. m. Irish mails, at 9 p. m.

COACHES—Telegraph coach to Glasgow twice a-day, coach to Greenock thrice a week, & a Portpatrick Diligence every lawful day, and a neat Noodie to Kilmarnock twice a-week.

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ALOWAY KIRK, &c.

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**W**HEN chapman billies leave the street,  
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,  
As market days are wearing late,  
And folk begin to tak' the gate :  
While we sit bousing at the nappy,  
And getting fou and unco-happy,  
We thinkna on the lang Scots miles,  
The mosses, waters, slaps and stiles,  
That lie between us and our hame,  
Whare sits our sulky sullen 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 boney 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 siller ;  
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' Kirk on Jean till Monday.  
 She prophesied that, late or soon,  
 Thou wad be found deep drown'd in Doony  
 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 counsels sweet,  
 How many lengthen'it, sage advices,  
 The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our Tale; Ae market-night,  
 Tam had got planted unco right;  
 Fast by an angle, bleezing finely,  
 Wi' reamig 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 Souter tauld her queerest stories,  
 The Landfords laugh was ready chorus:  
 The storm without might rair 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 wi' 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 Borcalis race,  
That flit ere you can point the place ;  
Or like the rainbows 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 key-  
stone,  
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 skelpt on thro' dub and mire,  
Despising wind, and rain and fire ;  
Whiles haddin fast his gude blew bonnet ;  
Whiles crooning o'er an auld Scots sonnet ;

Whiles glowing round wi' prudent cares,  
 Lest bogles catch him unawares ;  
 KIRK-ALLOWAY 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 whims, 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 Maggy stood right sair 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 rafters a' did dirl.—  
 Coffins stood round like open preses,  
 That shew'd the dead in their last dresses,  
 And (by some devilish cantrip slight)  
 Each in its 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 garter, which a babe had strangled ;  
 A knife a father's throat had mangled,  
 Whom his ain son of life bereft,  
 The grey hairs yet stack to the left ;  
 With mair o' horrible and awfu'  
 Which e'en to nane 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 neuk.—

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  
 Till ilka Carlin swat and reekit, [e]leekit,  
 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 hunder linen!  
 Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair.  
 That ance were plush o' gude blue hair,  
 I wad hae gien them aff my hurdies,  
 For ae blink o' the bony burdies!

But wither'd beldams, 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 peris'd mony a bonny boat,  
 And shook baith meikle corn an' bear,  
 And kept the country-side in fear—)  
 Her cutty sark, o' Paisley barn,  
 That while a lassie she had worn,



In longitude tho' sorely scanty,  
 It was her best, and she was vaunty.—  
 Ah, little thought thy reverend Grannie,  
 That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,  
 Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' their riches)  
 Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here 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 ae 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 rallied,  
 Till out the hellish legion galled.—

As bees biz out wi' angry fyke,  
 When plundering herds assail their byke;  
 As open pussies mortal-foes  
 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 eldric 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 key-stane o' the brig ;  
 There at them thou thy tail may toss,  
 A running stream they dare na cross ;  
 But ere the key-stane she could make,  
 The fient a tail she had to shake !  
 For Nanny, far before the rest,  
 Hard upon noble Maggie prest,  
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle,  
 But little kend she Maggie's 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 niöther'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.

*Man was made to Mourn.*

## A DIRGE.

WHEN chill November's surly blast  
 Made fields and forests bare,  
 One ev'ning as I wand' red forth  
 Along the banks of Ayr,  
 I spy'd a man, whose aged step  
 Seem'd weary, worn with care ;  
 His face was furrow'd o'er with years,  
 And hoary was his hair.

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou !  
 (Began the rev'rend Sage ;)  
 Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,  
 Or youthful Pleasure's rage ?  
 Or haply, prest wi' cares and woes,  
 Too soon thou hast begun  
 To wander forth with me, to mourn  
 The miseries of man.

The Sun that overhangs yon moors,  
 Out-spreading far and wide,  
 Where hundreds labour to support  
 A haughty lordling's pride :  
 I've seen yon weary winter-sun  
 Twice forty times return ;

And every time has added proofs,  
That Man was made to mourn.

O Man! while in thy early years,  
How prodigal of time!  
Mis-spending all thy precious hours,  
Thy glorious youthful prime!  
Alternate Follies take the sway:  
Licentious Passions burn;  
Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,  
That man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful Prime,  
Or Manhood's active might;  
Man then is useful to his kind,  
Supported is his right.  
But see him on the edge of life,  
With Cares and Sorrows worn,  
Then Age and Want, Oh! ill match'd pair  
Shew man was made to mourn.

A few seem favourites of Fate,  
In Pleasure's lap carest;  
Yet, think not all the Rich and Great  
Are likewise truly blest.  
But Oh! what crowds in every land,  
Are wretched and forlorn,  
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,  
That man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills,  
Inwoven with our frame!

More pointed still we make ourselves,  
 Regret, Remorse, and Shame!  
 And man, whose heav'n-erected face,  
 The smiles of love adorn,  
 Man's inhumanity to Man,  
 Makes countless thousands mourn.

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd weight,  
 So abject, mean, and vile,  
 Who begs a brother of the earth  
 To give him leave to toil;  
 And see his lordly *fellow-worm*,  
 The poor Petition spurn,  
 Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife,  
 And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave,  
 By Nature's law design'd,  
 Why was an independant wish  
 E'er planted in my mind?  
 If not, why am I subject to  
 His cruelty, or scorn?  
 Or why has man the will and pow'r  
 To make his fellow mourn?

Yet, let not this too-much, my Son,  
 Disturb thy youthful breast:  
 This partial view of human-kind  
 Is surely not the last!  
 The poor, oppressed, honest man,  
 Had never, sure, been born,



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Had there not been some recompence
To comfort those that mourn.

O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The Great, the Wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn;
But Oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn.

FINIS.