

TAM O' SHANTER

AND THE 

MERRY MASONS

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**WILLIAM
HARVEY.**



TAM O' SHANTER
... AND THE ...
MERRY MASONS

BY WILLIAM HARVEY.



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PLATE OF SHANTER

MURRY MARSON

BY WILLIAM BARVEY



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NOTE

If Captain Grose had never asked Robert Burns to contribute to his "Antiquities of Scotland," and if Robert Burns had never produced "Tam o' Shanter," the following lines had never been written. Composed for the amusement of one or two "brothers of the mystic tie," they are now committed to print because these good fellows were kind enough to say that the lines deserved a wider circulation.

W. H.

NOTE

It is a well known fact that the
Robert Burns to contribute to his "An-
tiquities of Scotland," and it is Robert Burns
and never produced "John o' Blumberg,"
the following lines had never been writ-
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W. B.

TAM O' SHANTER AND THE MERRY MASONS.

When merry Masons meet at nicht
To crack about Masonic Licht,
An' tell their tales wi' pawky glee,
O' what they say, an' what they see,
When, wi' the Compasses and Square,
They draw droll figures on the flure,
Or paint the Canopy abune
Wi' Sun an' Stars an' Quarter-mune ;
Or curl their nose, or crook their lip,
Or twirl their thooms in Sign an' Grip,
They mak puir bodies blink their een,
As Tam o' Shanter did yestreen,
When, sittin' wi' the Souter haiverin'
In Willie White's Masonic Taivern,
An' thinkin' nocht o' Mells and Trowens,
He got an inklin' o' their doin's.

Now Tam, though aye a blythesome carle
Weel-versed in wonders o' the warl',

Had never brocht himsel' to join
The Brithers o' the Rule an' Line.
At last, yestreen, as I have tauld—
The punch was het the nicht was cauld—
Some cronies gathered for a dram,
An' foremost o' them a' was Tam.
As owre a story they were laughin',
Some chields burst in upon their daffin—
A core o' Masons daft an' crouse,
Wha'd held a Lodge ayont the house,
An' preened upon some billie's sark,
That sign they ca' the Mason's Mark;
What form it took no ane wad tell,
But aye they a' thegither fell
To laughin' owre their mystic ploy,
An' hotched an' giggled in their joy.

“Methinks,” quo' Tam, “your wark the nicht
Has been connected wi' the Licht?”
“Deed that,” quo' they, “an' there he stands
Fresh frae King Solomon's ain hands,
Levelled and Squared as you may see—
A very Prince o' Masonry!
He has the airt o' Fower Degrees,
Kens brawly how to Plumb his P's
And Q's, an' be a' brither fair
To ilka ane that's on the Square.
A man—go search the world around—

A better man will not be found
As lang as he respects the Mark
That we have preened upon his sark."

They joked again but Tam, somehoo—
Though geyly drunk he wasna fou—
Got in his pow that 'neath their laugh
Was, aiblins, mair than idle chaff.
"God, lads," quo' he, "I'm thinkin' some
I'd like to join you on the Plumb,
An' learn the Secrets o' your trade,
An' see juist how a Mason's made;
Wha'll tak my hand some canty nicht
An' lead me to Masonic Licht?"

"I will," said Rab, auld Scotland's bard,
"I hold you, Tam, in high regard;
Your worth, I'll pledge it in the Lodge,
An' faith, guid Sir, if I'm a judge,
The Ballot will be clear for you
And in a crack we'll hae you through."
Weel pleased to get the hand o' Burns
Douce Tam o' Shanter stood twa turns:
First whisky punch cam' steamin' hot,
Syne, reamin' swats gaed round the lot.
In troth, inside the Masons' Inn
Was never heard sic mirth and din;
Wi' merry tales of Auld Lang Syne

They cracked o' Gavel, Plumb and Line;
 Tauld how King Solomon was Sire
 To a' the weedow-wives in Tyre.
 How Boaz kissed his loof to Ruth,
 An' Jachin was a wily youth ;
 How Hiram socht to mak' folk dine
 On Corn wi' Oil—to save the Wine ;
 An' how, when kneelin' at his prayers,
 Some Cowans took him unawares,
 An' riped his pouches for the Mark,
 Yet missed it preened upon his sark.

Bambazed wi' a' their Mason lore,
 Tam thocht it time to end the splore.
 “ Now, Rab,” quo he, “ I'll hae to gang,
 Or Kate may think my comin' lang,
 And aiblins meet me wi' a rung,
 For Listening Ear an' Silent Tongue
 Were never attributes o' hers,
 Though, truth to tell, she micht be worse.”

“ Weel, Tam,” says Rab, “ a man that's
 mairrit,
 Maun guide his footsteps by the Skirrit—
 That straucht undeviatin' **Line**
 Which Masons count a sacred sign—
 An' though I say't, I'd never keep
 A husband frae his virtuous sleep ;

But ere you leave our Circle, Tam,
Let's souther friendship wi' a dram—
Ae pairtin' gless" Burns cried in glee ;
"Let's drink it, chaps, wi' three times three,
An' show to Tam our high regard,
Count, Wardens, count!" cried Scotland's
Bard.

Dumfounded, Tam o' Shanter stood,
He thocht the chields had a' gane wud.
First, wi' a maist unchancy skirl,
They garred the very rafters dirl ;
Syne, wi' their loofs made fearsome play,
An' roared, "Hurray ! Hurray ! Hurray !"

Weel mounted on his faithfu' mare,
Wi' thochts o' Compasses and Square,
Tam took the road wi' easy canter,
Kennin' that sune the farm o' Shanter
Wad rise before him, an' his dame
Wad smile, weel pleased to see him hame.
But lang ere Tam got hame that nicht
I swear he saw Masonic Licht ;
He fand the Point within the Centre
Which Unenlightened daurna enter,
An' learned whaur Masons first are made,
An' how they follow out their trade
By Level steps, and Plummet actions,
Avoidin' plots, an' ploys, an' pactions,

Syne climb the Steps—Three, Five, an'
Seven—

To reach auld Hiram's neuk in Heaven.

As canny on the mare gaed trottin',

Tammused—a' worldly thochts forgotten—

On a' the Mysteries divine

That linger round the Rule and Line :

How goats wi' horns, an' men wi' rapes,

An' monsters of unearthy shapes,

And officers wi' sharpened swords,

Attended on the Masons' words.

Thus musin' at the midnight hour,

Tam saw afore him three or fower

Big buirdly chaps—their leader, Rab—

Breenge at his mare, an' mak a grab

At him. "Come on, strip to the sark,

This nicht you'll get the Masons' Mark,"

They cried to Tam. "Handowre your whip,

We'll gie you now the Sign and Grip."

Tam, naething laith, threw doun his bon-
net,

Syne cuist his coat an' vest upon it.

"My breeks?" quo he. "Ay! an' your
shoon!"

Nae suner said than a' was dune.

"There, now, my lads," says Tam, "prepare
To yield the Secrets o' the Square!"

But then to Tammy's wonderment,
Ae deevil, slippin' up ahent,
Played wallop wi' a Tow, an' said,
"Now, Tammas, lad, coup heels owre
head !"

Tam keekit at his naked shanks,
"God, chaps," quo' he, "nae idle pranks !
Fair hornie now ! Nae silly lark !
Tak tent ! I'm only in my sark."
"Ah Tam, ah Tam !" cried Robbie Burns,
"See how your ain mischief returns
Upon your head. The tither nicht,
Ise wad, you saw a pleasant sicht,
When Cutty Sark danced i' the mirk
Of Alloway's ghaist-haunted kirk.
Now, Tam, for auld acquaintance sake,
Juist follow in fair Nannie's wake,
An' prove you're naither stiff nor bowdie
By feenishin' wi' heels owre gowdie."

"Weel, lads," quo' Tam, "you're naewise
blate ;

It's guid for me the hour is late,
An' few folk on the road to see
Thir awfu' pranks o' Masonry ;
But if it's Hiram's wull, here gaes !
Juist stand atower—aside my claes—

Mak twa strokes on the road for swords,
And I'll win a' your Masons' Words."
They gied him room, an' Tam begood ;
Fegs ! in a crack he drew a croud.
The mair he danced the mair it grew—
A queer, uncanny, eldritch crew.
Black witches cam' frae every airt,
Some auld an' dune, some trig an' smart,
An', foremost o' the core he saw
The limmers o' Kirk Allowa'!

Tam swat for shame—looked for his breeks
As Nannie wi' the winsome cheeks
Cried, "Tam, I trow, your cutty sark
Will sune receive the Masons' Mark,
An' mak you fit to haud the Plumb
Wi' Jubelo an' Jubelum."

At Nannie's words Tam's taes took fire,
"As sure as Hiram lived in Tyre,
An' Solomon had twenty wives,
An' Masons fret awa' their lives
Because like sport they daurna hae,
I'll dance," he cried, "till skreich o' day."
Wi' that he nodded to the witch,
An' syne his feet began to itch
About the spot whaur strokes were crossed,

A single step Tam never lost,
But danced among the swords sae free
That even Nannie glowered in glee.
Frae Keelum Callum into reel
Tam danced as though to please the deil;
He "hooched!" an' gied his thooms a crack,
The while his sark gaed owre his back,
For Tam, lost now to sense o' shame
Cared naither for his doup nor wame.
Each moment saw him fleeter whirl,
Each second saw him faster birl,
Each instant saw him in the wind—
Berfit before an' bare behind—
Doze like a peerie on its point;
Then, like a lad wi' double joint,
He lap his height, an' wi' a "Damn!"
Cried, "Rab, what think you now o' Tam?"
Syne wi' a breenge, to win the Square,
Gaed heels owre gowdie owre the mare.

That waukened Tam.

"Guid guide us a'!"

He gied his tousy head a claw,
Syne picked himsel' frae aff the stanes,
An' fand a' owre for broken banes,
Then cannily remounted Meg,
An' made for hame what she could leg.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man an' mother's son tak heed :
If e'er to Masonry inclined,
An' Grips an' Signs run in your mind ;
If Hiram and the king o' Tyre
Beget in you a grand desire
The true Masonic Licht to see
Shun a' the wiles o' barley bree :
In sober sense mak your advance—
Remember Tam o' Shanter's dance.



GLOSSARY

Ahent, behind
Aiblins, perhaps
Atower, aside
Ayont, beyond

Bambazed, mystified
Begood, began
Billie, brother, comrade
Bowdie, bent
Brawly, finely
Breeks, breeches
Breenge. spring at
Buirldy, stoutly built

Canty, happy, merry
Chaps, fellows
Coup, turn over
Cowans, masons not
regularly apprenticed
Crack, converse
Crouse, lively
Cuist, cast
Cutty, short

Daffin, sport
Daft, merry
Dirl, rattle

Doze, spin
Doup, bottom

Eldritch, wild, hideous

Fair hornie, fair play
Fegs, faith
(exclamation)

Garred, made
Geyley, rather
Ghaist, ghost
Glowered, gazed
Heels ower gowdie,
somersault
Hooched, shouted
with delight
Hotched, shook with
laughter

Ilka, every

Keekit, glanced at

Lap, leaped
Loof, palm

TAM O' SHANTER

Mells, mallets

Neuk, corner

Peerie, top

Pleys, quarrels

Pouches, pockets

Pow, head

Preened, pinned

Rapes, ropes

Reamin, foaming

Riped, searched

Rung, stout stick

Shanks, legs

Skreich o' day, dawn

Souther, cement

Splore, convivial party

Swat, sweated

Swats, new ale

Tak tent, beware

Thir, these

Thooms, thumbs

Tither, other

Tousy, untidy

Tow, rope

Trowens, Trowels

Wallop, to strike
swiftly

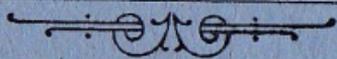
Wame, belly

Wud, mad





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Provincial Grand Lodge of Forfarshire

William Harvey, J.P., F.S.A. Scot. (1874-1936)

His mother Lodge was Stirling Royal Arch No.76. He was a founding member of Lodge Progress No. 967, Dundee, and was R.W.M of that lodge from 1914 to 1916.

Installed as Provincial Grand Master of Forfarshire on the 23rd January 1935.



Born in Stirling in 1874 He was trained as a law clerk but moved from law to journalism and joined John Leng & Co, Ltd, Dundee. He was appointed general editor of the firms extensive series of novels. In 1904 he joined the staff of the 'Peoples Journal' and became assistant editor. From 1908 to 1912 he was literary editor of the 'Dundee Advertiser'.

He was a prolific writer of Masonic articles and books - his 'Harvey Manual of Degrees' is frequently used within the Lodges of Forfarshire.



Provincial Grand Lodge of Forfarshire

He was at Glamis when H.R.H. The Duke of York (the future King George VI) became an affiliate member of the Lodge of Glamis No. 99

He died on the 5th July 1936



The occasion of the affiliation of H.R.H. The Duke of York (later King George VI) into the Lodge of Glamis No. 99 on the 2nd June 1936

