

The Ballad of Harry Masters & His Alternative Career

I shall tell of Harry Masters
And the various disasters,
Which throughout his working life were ever near.
For our Harry sometimes blundered,
Which is why none ever wondered
When he looked for an alternative career.

'Twas at twelve that he departed
From his school and when he started,
Oh so happy, full of joy and full of cheer,
On his adult life a-working,
Earning wages, never shirking,
As he strove to make a glittering career.

At the stores he found employment
And it brought him much enjoyment
As he cycled o'er the town both far and near;
For an errand boy was Harry;
On his rounds he did not tarry
As he wished t' advance his burgeoning career.

But our Harry took delight in
Finding ways by which to frighten
Unsuspecting folk by cycling far too near.
Soon the folks began to grumble,
And Hal's fortunes took a tumble;
So he looked for an alternative career.

And when next he found employment,
Though it brought him less enjoyment,
He was satisfied, though life was somewhat drear;
For an office boy was Harry
To a humdrum actuary.
Would our Harry really take to that career?

For his work was very boring,
Just a-fetching and a-storing
Dusty files whose purpose seemed to him unclear.
To make tea was he expected
Whensoever he was directed.
But our Harry plodded on in this career.

Yet he found no stimulation,
Only cerebral stagnation,
And his thinking grew befuddled and unclear.
So the files became all jumbled,
And when making tea he bumbled,
And so ended this alternative career.

Then our Harry thought that charming
Would be outdoor work, and farming
Was the job, with which he'd surely persevere.
As a farm hand he was hired;
And he said: "I'll not be fired
For at last I've found my fav'ritest career."

But too late he learnt that farming
Meant long hours; 'twas alarming
For to rise before the rays of dawn appear.
For the cows they were awaiting
To be milked. Oh, unabating
Was the toil and sweat and grind of this career.

"Deary me," said Harry sighing,
"All day long I toil, applying
Nought but brawn as muscles ache with pain severe."
Now dismissal was desired,
For he wanted to be fired
And to seek himself a different career.

But the farmer just chastised him
If he faulted and advised him:
"Just you pull yourself together. Is that clear!"
He'd rebuke and chide the shirkers,
But he'd *not* lose any workers;
And so Hal retained his punishing career.

'Twas as Harry was despairing
That our country, by declaring
War, invited men to come and volunteer;
So our Hal said "I'm not barmy;
"I will go and join the army,
"And win glory in a milt'ry career."

But in Flanders Harry Masters,
Overwhelmed by dread disasters,
Was so shattered, shocked and driven mad with fear
That, with brains deranged and addled,
He was prematurely raddled
And was left a helpless wreck by this career.

Then our Harry in confusion,
As he suffered from delusion,
Wandered off so he could truly disappear.
But his senses were all jumbled,
Into no man's land he stumbled;
And so ended Harry's milit'ry career.

For they found him two days later
Blown apart within a crater.
Now in Flanders does he lie with no more fear;
In the sleep of death he's resting
Until Doomsday's final testing,
And he's needing no alternative career.

On a monument in Britain
You will find his name is written
With his comrades who are honoured year by year
On a Sunday in November
When folks gather to remember
Every hero and his glorious career.

While his broken body's lying
Mid the poppies' gentle sighing
In a cemet'ry with tombs in rows austere,
Harry's ghost enjoys the story
How he won a soldier's glory
In his posthumous alternative career.