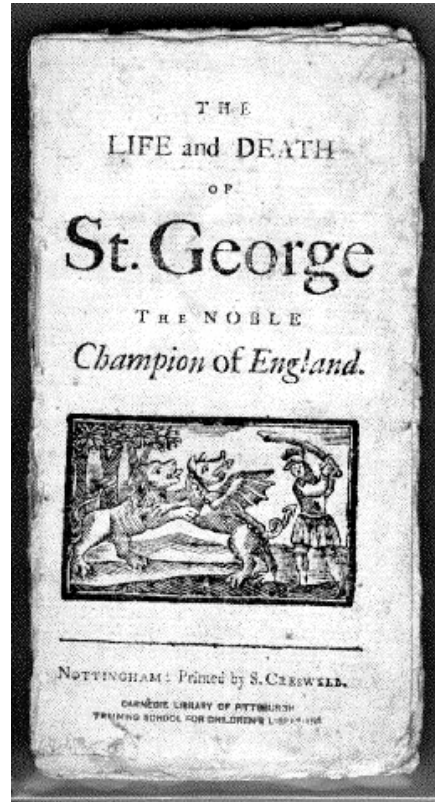


Paper Bag Mummers Galoshins Plays



Chapbook Edition

Formatted and reprinted by Lynn Noel (*Squire and Fool, Paper Bag Mummers*) from online archives of the Traditional Drama Research Group, University of Sheffield, UK
<http://www.folkplay.info>.

The Paper Bag Mummers of Arlington, Massachusetts explore traditional folkplay texts as improvisational performance and street theatre.

Our motto: we never rehearse, we only perform!

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Christmas Gysarts Play from Bowden - 1815

T.Wilkie (1815)

Context:

Location: Bowden, Borders, Scotland (NT5530)

Year: Dated 1815

Time of Occurrence: Christmas; Fasternse'en

Collective Name: Guisarts; Gysarts

Source:

Thomas Wilkie, *Ancient Customs and Ceremonies of the Lowland Scots*
National Library of Scotland MS 123, 1815, pp.148-54

Cast:

* 1 / Servant

* 2 / Redd Room

* Commander

* Alexander of Macedon

* Galashen / Slashen

* St George of England / St George of England / Poor Jack / Jack

* Boy

* Doctor

Text:

{Scene first. Enter a servant with a besom who sweeps the floor, singing as follows:}

1. [Servant]

Red up rocks redd up reels

[or 'Redd up stocks redd up stools']

Here comes in a pack o' fools

A pack o' fools was never here before

Meikle head and little wit stands behind the door,

2. Or Redd Room

Redd room, and redd room
And gie's room to sing
We'll shew ye the best sport
Acted at Christmas time.

{Sometimes one and sometimes all of them repeat at the same time, when they first enter into a house, the preceding verse. Enter the commander of the band.}

Commander

Activous and activage,
I'll shew you the best sport
Ever acted on any stage
If you don't believe the word I say
Call for Alexander of Macedon
And he will shew ye the way.

{Enter Alexander of Macedon}

Alexander Of Macedon

Here comes I, Alexander of Macedon
Who conquered the world, all, but Scotland alone,
And when I came to Scotland
My heart it grew cold, my heart it grew cold
To see that little nation, sae crowse and sae bold,
Sae crowse and sae bold, sae frank and sae free,
A call for Galashen, and he will fight wi' me.

{Sometimes I have heard Galashen pronounced Slashen. Enter Galashen who kills Alexander.}

Galashen

Here comes I, Galashen
Galashen is my name
Wi' sword and buckler by my side
I hope to win the game,

My head is clothed in iron
My body's clothed we' steel,
My buckler's made o' knuckle-bone [huckle-bone]
My sword is made o' steel.
I call for great St George of England and he will fight wi' me.

{Some Gysarts in the character of Galashen, repeat the lines thus. 'My head is made o' iron, my bodies made o' steel, my a-e is made o' knuckle-bone' etc. Galashen is next killed by St George. Enter St George of England}

St George

Here comes I, great George of England,
See my bloody weapon, it shines clear,
It reaches up to my very ear,
Let any man come fence me here.

{Enter a boy}

Boy

As I was at a fencing school,
I saw a boy turn out a fool
A fool, a fool, as you may see,
I deliver him up to fight wi' thee.

{This dragon, of a boy, enters the list with St George and stabs him, to the astonishment of the party present. He falls down on his knees, repeating as he looks at the dead body of St George.}

Boy

Ohon, ohon, I've kill'd a man,
I've killed my brother's eldest son.

{The servants are ordered to take up the body of St George, but, to their surprise, he says:}

St George

I am, I am, I am not slain,
For I'll rise and fight that boy again.

{The boy says to him:}

Boy

To fight wi' me ye are not able,
For my sword will split your haly table.

{The boy transfixes him with his spear, as he is in the act of rising to fight him.}

{A Doctor is next called for, by another of the company, and a second cries}

[Another]

'fifty pounds for a doctor'.

{Enter a doctor.}

Doctor

Here comes I, a doctor, as good a doctor as Scotland ever bred.

[Someone]

What diseases can you cure?

Doctor

I can cure the itch, the stitch, the maligrumphs,
the lep [probably leprosy] the pip, the roan,
the blaen, the merls, the nerels,
the blaes, the splaes, and the burning pintle.

{Another asks him:}

[Another]

What more diseases can you cure?

Doctor

I can cure a man that has lain seven years in his grave and more.

They

What will you take to cure this man?

Doctor

I will take £10 to make a complete cure.

{They offer him six pounds which he refuses, then eight, lastly nine.}

Doctor

Nine and a bottle of wine will do.

{And immediately he touches him with a small rod or wand, orders him to}

Doctor

rise up, Jack.

{The other killed chieftains are reanimated with a touch of the Doctor's wand, and instantly spring up, all except Poor Jack, who rises slowly and complaining of a severe pain, in the lumbar regions of his back.}

Doctor

What ails your back?

Jack

There is a hole in it wad hold a head of a horse three fold.

Doctor

This is nonsense, Jack, you must tell me a better tale than this.

Jack

I have been east, I have been west

I have been at the Sherckle-dock

And many were there, the warse for the wear

And they tauld me, the Deel there, marries a' the poor folk.

They

What did you see at the Sherckle-dock?

Jack

I saw roast upo' rungs,
 t~ [tits?] upon tongues,
 ladies p~ng [pissing?] spanish needles, ten ells lang;
 auld wives flying in the air, like the peelings o' ingins [onions]
 swine playing upo' bagpipes;
 cats gaun upon pattens,
 and hens drinking ale.

{Scene last. At the termination of Jack's speech, the gysarts are desired to drink with the family, after which they are presented by each person in the house with a small sum of money for their trouble. They lastly form themselves into a ring, and as they dance round, all of them sing the following carol.}

[They]

As we came by yon well we drank
 We laid our gloves upon yon bank
 By came Willie's piper to play,
 Took up our gloves and ran away;
 We followed him from town to town,
 We bad him lay our bonny gloves down,
 He laid them down upon yon stone,
 Sing ye a carol, ours is done.

{Sometimes each of the gysarts sings a carol of the preceding sort.}

Notes:**Wilkie's Notes:**

"In the southern counties of Scotland, a number of young men dress themselves in a fantastic manner and paint or disguise their faces and in this situation go through towns, villages, farmsteads etc., enter into every house, where they think the inhabitants will allow them a small pittance, for which they perform a kind of dramatic game and call themselves "Guisarts". Tradition says that it is very unlucky to let the gysarts go out of the house, where they have performed that tragedy (which they sometimes call Galatian, or Alexander of Macedon) without giving them some money to drink , to the success of the family.

The Gysarts always dress themselves in white. They appear like so many dead persons, robed in their shrouds, who have risen from their narrow homes, and the simile is still improved from their faces being all painted black or dark blue: their matches are sometimes adorned with ribbons of diverse colours, but these seldom enter into their dress, which they wear below their shroud or gown. The evening is the usual time that the Gysarts make their appearance, though I have seen them perform in the sunshine, in some villages.

Every evening from Christmas to Faste'ne'en is allowable for the Gysarts to make their perambulations.

The extract is called 'The Game of Guisarts'. In a list of performers, all except the boy are labelled 'servants'."

PTM's Notes:

Taken by me from the transcript in B.Hayward (1992) Galoshins : The Scottish Folk Play. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, ISBN 07486 0338 7, pp.124-129.

Hayward Notes:

"I have ventured to ascribe this text to Bowden, where Wilkie was born c.1789, in the belief that he is writing from his own experience.

This is the earliest detailed account of the Scottish folk play, and extremely valuable for the picture it gives of the Border custom about the turn of the century.

Wilkie may be mistaken in thinking 'Slashen' to be a variant of 'Galatian'; it is more likely a corruption of 'Slasher' who slashes with his scimitar, shable or sabre (see for example LEITH).

The significance of the carol which closes the performance may be in the symbolism of the well and gloves. Wells were symbols of purity: gloves were used in contracts of vassalage by enfeoffing with a glove, or by securing a fief by presenting a glove. In view of the feudal colouring of the custom, it may be that the carol remembers the presentation of a glove by vassals renewing their tenancy, and therefore demonstrates the use of the folk pastime to decorate social transactions."

File History:

1st Oct.1999 - Entered by Peter Millington

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Hogmany Play from Falkirk - J.W.Reddock, 1825

W.Hone (1827, J.W.Reddock)

Context:

Location: Falkirk, Stirlingshire, Scotland (NS8880)

Year: Comm. 1825

Time of Occurrence: Daft Days; Hogmany; Hogmenay

Collective Name: Guisards

Source:

William Hone, The Every-day Book and Table Book... : Vol.II
London, Thomas Tegg & Son, 1827, Col.13-21

Cast:

- * [Introducer]
- * King of Macedon / Jack
- * Galgacus / Chief
- * Doctor
- * Judas

Text:

[Introducer]

Rise up gudewife and shake your feathers
Dinna think that we're beggars,
We are bairns com'd to play
And for to seek our hogmenay ;
Redd up stocks, redd up stools,
Here comes in a pack o' fools.
Muckle head and little wit stand behind the door,
But sic a set as we are, ne'er were here before.

King Of Macedon

Here comes in the great king of Macedon,
Who has conquer'd all the world but Scotland alone.
When I came to Scotland my heart grew so cold,
To see a little nation so stout and so bold,
So stout and so bold, so frank and so free !
Call upon Galgacus to fight wi' me.

{Enter Galgacus}

Galgacus

Here comes in Galgacus - wha doesna fear my name ?
Sword and buckler by my side, I hope to win the game !

{They close in a sword fight, and in the "hash smash" the chief is victorious. He says :}

Down Jack ! down to the ground you must go -
Oh O ! what's this I've done ?
I've killed my brother Jack, my father's only son !
Call upon the doctor.

{Enter Doctor (saying)}

Doctor

Here comes in the best doctor that ever Scotland bred.

Chief

What can you cure ?

{The doctor then relates his skill in surgery.}

Chief

What will ye tak to cure this man ?

Doctor

Ten pound and a bottle of wine.

Chief

Will six not do ?

Doctor

No, you must go higher.

Chief

Seven !

Doctor

That will not put on the pot, &c.

{A bargain however is struck, and the Doctor says to Jack,}

Doctor

Start to your feet and stand !

Jack

Oh hon, my back, I'm sairly wounded.

Doctor

What ails your back ?

Jack

There's a hole in't you may turn your toungue ten times round it !

Doctor

How did you get it ?

Jack

Fighting for our land.

Doctor

How mony did you kill ?

Jack

I killed a' the lons save ane, but he ran, he wad na stand.

{Here, most unfortunately, there is a "hole i'the ballad",...}

Judas

Here comes in Judas - Judas is my name,
If ye pit bought sillar i'my bag, for gudesake mind our wame !
When I gaed to the castle yett and tirl't at the pin,
They keepit they keys o' the castle wa', and wad na let me in.
I've been i' the east carse,
I've been i' the west carse,
I've been to the carse o' Gowrie,
Where the clouds rain a' day wi' peas and wi'beans !
And the farmers theek houses wi' needles and prins !
I've seen geese ga'in' on pattens !
And swine fleeing i' the air, like peelings o' onions !
Our hearts are made o' steel, but our body's sma' as ware,
If you've onything to gi' us, stap it in there !

{One of the guisards who has the best voice, generally concludes the exhibition by singing an "auld Scottish sang"...}

Notes:

File History:

23r May 1998 - Entered by Peter Millington

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"Galation" from the Abbotsford Collection

Text (a) 1812-1832

Abbotsford Collection (1812-1832a)

Context:

Location: Abbotsford, Roxburghshire, Scotland (NT5034)

Year: Col. 1812 to 1832

Time of Occurrence: Christmas; Hogmany; New Year

Collective Name: Guisards

Source:

Anon.

Galation

National Library of Scotland: Abbotsford Collection, MS 893 (Ballads and Songs), ff. 85-90.

Cast:

- * Judas
- * Belzebub
- * Black Knight / King of Macidonia
- * Prince George
- * Poor Jack / Farmer's son
- * Galation
- * Doctor

Text:

{Personages}

{Judas - carrying the bag or purse}

{Belzebub, Black Knight, Prince George, Farmer's Son, Galation, The Doctor - in appropriate dress}

{Enter Judas}

Judas

Had awa rokes had awa reels
Had awa stocks and spinning wheels
Red chairs red stools here comes in a pack of fools.
Sic as was never seen here before.
Red room for Gorlings
Red room in a ring
And I will let you see the prettiest show
That was ever seen in Christmas time.
I call upon Belzebub - Belzebub!

{Enter Belzebub}

Belzebub

Here comes in Belzebub
Over my shoulder I carry my club
And in my hand my drying pan
Don't you think I'm a jolly young man.

Judas

I call upon Black Knight - Black Knight!

{Enter Black Knight}

Black Knight

Here comes in Black Knight the great King of Macedonia
come to conquer the whole world but Scotland alone
his courage is so great.
He is so bold and so stout and so couragious and able
His head is made of Brass and his body of steel
and his back of Rumpel bone.

Judas

I call upon Prince George - Prince George!

{Enter Prince George}

Prince George

Here comes in Prince George
Without a right without reason.
Here I draw my bloody weapon
My bloody weapon shines so clear
It makes my body venture here or venture there.

Judas

I call upon poor Jack - poor Jack!

{Enter poor Jack}

Poor Jack

Here come I Poor Jack
I am a Farmer's son
And I am like to lose my love
Because I am too young
Although I be too young
I've got money for to rove
And I will freely spend it all
Before I lose my love

Judas

I call upon Galation - Galation!

{Enter Galation}

Galation

Here comes in Galation
Galation is my name
With sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game

{Here Galation and the Farmer's son draw their swords and fight - Poor Jack falls}

Galation

Alack Alack whats this that I have done
I have slain his fathers only son.
And now he's dead and died in his gore
He will never rise to fight me more

Farmer's Son

Oh you dirty dog you are mista'n,
Although I'm hurt I am not slain
I'll rise and fight with you again.

Galation

You dirty dog you are not able
You with my sword I will dischevle
I'll fill thy body full of wounds
And make thy buttocks fly.

Judas

Ten Pounds For A Doctor

{Enter doctor}

Doctor

Here comes in a Doctor
The best that Scotland ever produced.
I have gone from nation to nation to learn my trade.
And now I've come back to Scotland to cure the dead.

Judas

What can you cure?

Doctor

I can cure the pox and the blue Devils

The rumelgumption in an old man's belly
The rumpel-grane and the Brandy-whirtelz
And can raise the man fresh and hale
That had lain seven year in his grave.

Judas

What will you take to cure Poor Jack.

Doctor

Ten pounds

Judas

Will not seven do?

Doctor

No.

Judas

Will not eight do?

Doctor

No.

Judas

Will nine not do? I'll give you nine.

Doctor

Yes - I have a little bottle here that hangs by my side they call it Hoxy
Croxy
now I'll put a little to his nose

{The Doctor here suits the action to the words}

And a little to his Bum and I say

Jack rises up and fight again and it is done.

{Jack here springs from the ground and all the actors that can sing join in some Christmas or popular song.}

Notes:

PTM's Notes:

This text was scanned from the transcript designated Abbotsford Collection(a) in B.Hayward (1992) *Galoshins : The Scottish Folk Play*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, ISBN 07486 0338 7, pp.93-97,99.

Hayward's Notes:

"Gorlings' (nestlings) is recorded in Kirkcudbright, Dumfries, the Carlisle area and the Cumbrian/Northumberland border (*Linguistic Atlas of Scotland* (1977), p.24). It is resembled only by the 'Gorlands' of PEEBLES(a) : both may be corruptions of 'gallants' or 'garlands'." (p.97)

"These two texts were found among Scott's paper, with no indication of their provenance. The ABBOTSFORD(b) information shows that one of Scott's visitors had left a copy of one of the performances in Scott's keeping. It is possible that this refers to the ABBOTSFORD COLLECTION(b) text, which resembles the description given in ABBOTSFORD(a)." p.99

Further Indexer's Notes:

Walter Scott purchased his estate at Abbotsford in 1812, and died in 1832. Whilst, as Hayward states, the provenance of these two texts is not given, they are both to a lesser or greater extent consistent with two descriptions relating to the Abbotsford custom, quoted by Hayward. These are a journal entry dated 1825 from Basil Hall (B.Hayward, 1992, p92) and a letter from Walter Scott to Thomas Sharp dated 1826 (B.Hayward, 1992, pp.92-93). As both descriptions mention performances by numerous sides of actors, it is possible that both texts could have come from Abbotsford.

File History:

9th October 2000 - Encoded by P.Millington

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Falkirk Play, 1841

Context:

Location: Falkirk, Stirlingshire, Scotland (NS8880)

Year: Publ. 1841

Time of Occurrence: [Not given]

Collective Name: [Not given]

Source:

Robert Chambers, *Select Writings of Robert Chambers*, Vol.VII.,
Edinburgh, W. & R. Chambers, 1841, pp.299-304.

Cast:

* [Introducer]

* King of Macedon

* Prince George of Ville

* Slasher

Text:

[Introducer]

Open your door and let us in,
We hope your favour for to win;
We're none of your roguish sort,
But come of your noble train.
If you don't believe what I say,
I'll call in the King of Macedon,
And he shall clear his way!

{Enter King.}

King Of Macedon

Here in come I, the great King of Macedon;

I've conquered this world round and round;
But when I came to Scotland, my courage grew so cold,
To see a little nation so stout and so bold:

{ . . }

If you don't believe what I say,
I'll call in Prince George of Ville, and he shall clear his way!

{Enter Prince George of Ville.}

Prince George Of Ville

Here in come I, Prince George of Ville,
A Ville of valiant light
Here I sit and spend my right ... and reason:
Here I draw my bloody weapon,
My bloody weapon shines so clear,
I'll run it right into your ear.
If you don't believe what I say
I'll call in the Slasher, and he shall clear his way!

{Enter Slasher.}

Slasher

Here in come I, Slasher; Slasher is my name;
With sword and buckler by my side, I hope to win the game.

Chambers' Notes:

"The... commencement of the play, as performed in the neighbourhood of Falkirk."

PTM's Notes:

Taken by me from the transcript in B.Hayward (1992) Galoshins : The Scottish Folk Play. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, ISBN 07486 0338 7, pp.167-168

File History: 09/10/1999 - Encoded by Peter Millington

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Galatian, a New-Year Play [from Peebles] 1841

R.Chambers (1841b)

Context:

Location: Peebles, Peeblesshire, Scotland (NT2540)

Year: Publ. 1841

Time of Occurrence: New-Year

Collective Name: Guizards

Source:

Robert Chambers

Select Writings of Robert Chambers, Vol. VII,
Edinburgh, Chambers, 1841, Vol.VII, pp.299-384

Cast:

- * Talking Man
- * Black Knight / King of Macedon
- * Galatian / Jack / John
- * Young Man
- * Doctor / Dr Brown
- * Judas

Text:

{Talking Man enters}

Talking Man

Haud away rocks, and haud away reels,
Haud away stocks and spinning wheels,
Redd room for Gorland, and gi'e us room to sing,
And I will show you the prettiest thing
That ever was seen in Christmas time.

Muckle head and little wit, stand ahint the door;
But sic a set as we are, ne'er were here before.
Show yourself, Black Knight!

{Black Knight enters}

Black Knight

Here comes in Black Knight, the great King of Macedon,
Who has conquered all the world save Scotland alone.
When I came to Scotland my heart it grew cold,
To see a little nation so stout and so bold -
So stout and so bold, so frank and so free:
Call upon Galatian to fight wi' me.

{Galatian enters}

Galatian

Here comes I, Galatian., Galatian is my name;
Sword and buckler by my side, I hope to win the game.
Black Knight
The game, sir, the game, sir, it is not in your power;
I'll hash you and slash you in less than half an hour.
My head is made of iron, my heart is made of steel,
And my sword is a Ferrara, that can do its duty weel.

{They fight, and Galatian is worsted, and falls.}

Down Jack, down to the ground you must go.
Oh! Oh! what is this I've done?
I've killed my brother Jack, my father's only son.

Talking Man

Here's two bloody champions that never fought before;
And we are come to rescue him, and what can we do more?
Now, Galatian he is dead, and on the floor is laid,
And ye shall suffer for it, I'm very sore afraid.

Black Knight

I'm sure it was not I, sir, I'm innocent of the crime.
'Twas this young man behind me, who drew the sword sae fine.

Young Man

Oh, you awful villain! to lay the blame on me;
When my two eyes were shut, sir, when this young man did die.

Black Knight

How could your two eyes be shut, when you were looking on?
How could your two eyes be shut, when their swords were drawn?
Is there ever a doctor to be found?

Talking Man

Call in Dr Brown,
The best in all the town.

{Doctor enters}

Doctor

Here comes in as good a doctor as ever Scotland bred,
And I have been through nations, a-learning of my trade-,
And now I've come to Scotland all for to cure the dead.

Black Knight

What can you cure?

Doctor

I can cure the rury scurvy,
And the rumble-gumption of a man that has been
seven years in his grave or more;
I can make an old woman of sixty look like a girl of sixteen.

Black Knight

What will you take to cure this dead man?

Doctor

Ten pounds.

Black Knight

Will not one do?

Doctor

No.

Black Knight

Will not three do?

Doctor

No.

Black Knight

Will not five do?

Doctor

No.

Black Knight

Will not seven do?

Doctor

No.

Black Knight

Will not nine do?

Doctor

Yes, perhaps nine may do, and a bottle of wine.
I have a little bottle of inker-pinker [small beer] in my pocket.

{Aside to Galatian} Take a little drop of it.

By the hocus-pocus, and the magical touch of my little finger,
Start up, John.

{Galatian rises and exclaims:}

Galatian

Oh, my back!

Doctor

What ails your back?

Galatian

There's a hole in it you may turn your nieve ten times round in it.

Doctor

How did you get it?

Galatian

Fighting for our land.

Doctor

How many did you kill?

Galatian

I killed a' the loons but ane, that ran, and wadna stand.

{The whole party dance, and Galatian sings.}

Oh, once I was dead, sir, but now I am alive,
And blessed be the doctor that made me revive.
We'll all join hands, and never fight more,

We'll a' be good brothers, and we have been before.

{Judas enters with bag}

Judas

Here comes in Judas, Judas is my name;
 If ye put not silver in my bag, for guid's sake mind our wame!
 When I gaed to the castle yett, and tirded at the pin,
 They keepit the keys o' the castle, and wadna let me in.
 I've been i' the east carse,
 I've been i' the west carse,
 I've been i' the carse of Gowrie,
 Where the clouds rain a' day pease and beans
 And the farmers theek houses wi' needles and prins.
 I've seen geese gawn on pattens,
 And swine fleeing i' the air like peelings o' ingons!
 Our hearts are made o' steel, but our bodies sma' as ware -
 If you've onything to gi'e us, stap it in there.

{All sing}

[All]

Blessed be the master o' this house, and the mistress also,
 And all the little babies that round the table grow-,
 Their pockets full of money, the bottles full of beer -
 A merry Christmas, guizards, and a happy New Year.

Chambers' Notes:

"Dramatis Personae - Two Fighting-men or Knights, one of whom is called Black Knight, the other Galatian (sometimes Galatius or Galgacus), and alternatively John; a Doctor; a fourth Personage, who plays the same talking and demonstrating part with the Chorus in the Greek drama; a Young Man, who is little more than a bystander. and Judas, the purse-bearer.

Galatian is (at the royal burgh of Peebles) dressed in a good whole shirt, tied round the middle with a handkerchief, from which hangs a wooden sword. He has a large cocked-hat of white paper, either cut out with little human profiles, or pasted over with penny valentines. The Black Knight is more terrific in appearance, his dress being, if possible, of tartan, and his head surmounted by an old cavalry cap, while his white stockings are all tied round with red tape. A pair of flaming whiskers adds to the ferocity of his aspect. The doctor is attired in any faded black clothes which can be had, with a hat probably stolen from a neighbouring scarecrow."

PTM's Notes:

Scanned by me from the transcript in B.Hayward (1992) *Galoshins : The Scottish Folk Play*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, ISBN 07486 0338 7, pp.258-262.

Hayward's Notes:

"William Chambers was born in 1800, and his brother in 1802. They lived at Peebles until 1814, and there is a possibility of personal experience of the folk-play custom. There are strong resemblances between the FALKIRK b account and this PEEBLES version (for example, in the Judas speech), and I suspect that Chambers was aware of the FALKIRK version, published fifteen years earlier."

File History: 18/10/1999 - Encoded by Peter Millington

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Guisards Play from the Abbotsford Collection Text (b) 1812-1832

Abbotsford Collection (1812-1832b)

Context:

Location: Abbotsford, Roxburghshire, Scotland (NT5034)

Year: Col. 1812 to 1832

Time of Occurrence: Hogmany ; New Year

Collective Name: Guisards

Source:

Anon.

National Library of Scotland: Abbotsford Collection, MS 893 (Ballads and Songs), ff. 85-90.

Cast:

* 1. / Alexander

* 2. / Farmer's Son

* 3. / Galoshin / Jack

* Doctor

Text:

Alexander.

Silence silence gentlemen

Upon me cast an eye

My name is Alexander

I'll sing a tragedy.

My own actors they are but young

And they never fought before

But they will do the best they can

What can the best do more

The first that I call in
He is a Farmers son.
And he is like to lose his love
Because he is but young.

Farmer's Son.

Altho I am but young
I've got money for to rove
And I will freely spend it all
Before I lose my love.

Alexander.

The next that I call in
Is galoshin of renown
With sword and pistol by his side
He hopes to gain the crown.

Galoshin.

Here comes galoshin
Galoshin is my name
With sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game.
Will you take my love from me
Yes and I'll have her too.

{Fight}

Alexander.

Now Galoshin you have killed
And on the ground is laid
Young man you'll suffer for it
I'm very sore afraid.

Farmer's Son.

Oh you villain bold
Don't lay the blame on me
I'm sure that both my eyes were shut
When this young man did die.

Alexander.

Oh how could your two eyes be shut
When I stood looking on
I saw you slip behind his back
And draw your sword so fine

Farmer's Son.

If galoshin I have killed
Then Galoshin I will cure
Galoshin shall be cured
In the space of half an hour.

Alexander.

Are there doctors to be found here,
I say are there any doctors?

{Enter Doctor}

[Doctor]

Yes, here come I, as good a doctor as ever Scotland bred.

[Alexander.]

What can you cure?

[Doctor]

The clap and the gangrene
and an old man in his grave seven years and twenty more.

[Alexander.]

What will you take to cure this dead man?

Doctor

Ten pounds

[Alexander.]

Will nine not do?

Doctor

Yes, perhaps nine and a bottle of wine.

I will have a bottle of Hoxy-Croxy at the head of my breeches.

Put a little in his nose
and a little in his bum.

Rise up jack and fight.

Galoshin.

Now once I was dead

But now I am alive

And blessed are the hands of those

That made me to revive.

Farmer's Son. And Galoshin.

Now we will shake hands

And we will fight no more

And we will gree like brothers

As once we did before.

Bless the master we all sing together

And the mistress also

and the pretty babies

That round the table go.

Bless the men and maidens

That ever were here

I wish you all a good Xmas
Likewise a good new year.
There are four of us all
And merry boys are we
And we are gone a rambling
Your houses for to see.
Your house for to see
And pleasure for to have
And what you freely give to us
We freely will receive.

PTM's Notes:

This text was scanned from the transcript designated Abbotsford Collection(b) in B.Hayward (1992) Galoshins : The Scottish Folk Play. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, ISBN 07486 0338 7, pp.97-99.

Hayward's Notes:

"These two texts were found among Scott's paper, with no indication of their provenance. The ABBOTSFORD(b) information shows that one of Scott's visitors had left a copy of one of the performances in Scott's keeping. It is possible that this refers to the ABBOTSFORD COLLECTION(b) text, which resembles the description given in ABBOTSFORD(a)." p.99

Further Indexer's Notes:

Walter Scott purchased his estate at Abbotsford in 1812, and died in 1832. Whilst, as Hayward states, the provenance of these two texts is not given, they are both to a lesser or greater extent consistent with two descriptions relating to the Abbotsford custom, quoted by Hayward. These are a journal entry dated 1825 from Basil Hall (B.Hayward, 1992, p92) and a letter from Walter Scott to Thomas Sharp dated 1826 (B.Hayward, 1992, pp.92-93). As both descriptions mention performances by numerous sides of actors, it is possible that both texts could have come from Abbotsford.

File History: 9th October 2000 - Encoded by P.Millington

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Crieff Guisers' Play, 1884

M.J.P.Lawrence (1956)

Context:

Location: Crieff, Perthshire, Scotland (NN8621)

Year: Perf. about 1884

Time of Occurrence: [Not given]

Collective Name: Disguisers; Guisers

Source:

M.J.P.Lawrence

Guisers' Play

Scots Magazine, NS 66, Dec.1956, No.3, pp.197-201

Cast:

* Macglashan / Jack

* King

* Doctor Brown

* Johnny Funny

Text:

{But now the ring is formed and the play begins. Jack Macglashan swaggers forward and pronounces in a round voice:}

Macglashan

Macglashan, Macglashan, Macglashan is my name,
My sword and buckler by my side, I hope to win the game.

The King

The game, sir, the game, sir, is not within your power,
I'll draw my bloody dagger and slay you to the floor.

{A brisk fight ensues, and Jack falls wounded.}

Then call for Doctor Brown,
the best old greasy doctor in the town.

{Out springs Doctor Brown with suitable medical props.}

Doctor

Here am I, Doctor Brown,
The best old greasy doctor in the town.

King

How far have you travelled?

Doctor

Oh, round the world and back again.

King

What did you see there?

Doctor

Mountains of porridge and rivers of butter milk.

King

Anything else?

Doctor

Yes, cocks and hens with knives and forks in their backs,
running down the streets calling out,
'who'll eat me? Who'll eat me?'

King

Anything more?

Doctor

No.

King

Anything less?

Doctor

No.

{.....}

King

What'll you take to cure a man?

Doctor

Ten pounds and a bottle of wine.

King

I'll give you three.

Doctor

Ten pounds and a bottle of wine.

King

I'll give you three.

Doctor

Ten pounds and a bottle of wine.

King

Cure him then.

{.....}

Doctor

Two drops to your nose and one to your toes.

Rise, Jack, and sing.

Crieff

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Macglashan

I can't.

Doctor

Why not?

Macglashan

I've got a hole in my side that would let a coach and four through it.

Doctor

How did you get that?

Macglashan

Fighting the French.

Doctor

How many did you kill?

Macglashan

All but one.

Doctor

What happened to him?

Macglashan

He ran away.

{The Doctor once more stoops over Jack with a slightly stronger potion.}

Doctor

Three drops to your nose and two to your toes.

Rise up. Jack, and sing.

Jack (And All)

Once I was dead and now I'm alive,
Blessed be the doctor that made me alive.
We'll all join hands and we'll never fight no more,
And we'll be as brothers as we were before.
Bless the master of this house and bless the mistress, too,
And all the little children around the table too.
With their pockets full of money and their bottles full of beer,
We wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

{Clapping and congratulations.}

Johnny Funny

Here am I, wee Johnny Funny,
Wi' my tunny,
I'm the man that takes the money.

Notes:

Lawrence's Notes:

"An old man's memory - the Guisers' play of Macglashan as performed in Crieff, Perthshire, about 1884 ... the last night of the year that saw the performances of the Disguisers or Guisers. There were several large families in Crieff in the eighties. Some time before the end of the year, a group of boys get together from one or two families of playmates, and prepare the well-known Guisers' play. The leader would take the part of Macglashan. That is the Galgacus character, according to E.K. Chambers, although it has been suggested that he is Mac, that is to say the son of, the Galatian, Saint George himself.

. . . other parts of the King, the Doctor and Johnny Funny . . . There were also a few supernumeraries. The play was rehearsed . . . disguisings, crude ones, were chosen ... a grown-up jacket, turned out, and old grown-up hats squashed or folded upon the head.

. . . performances were mostly to grown-ups at home, or to friends of the family, as anything like begging was frowned upon by his mother.

. . . The boys would be invited into the kitchen. Mother would certainly remain as audience and any any grown-ups who could be bothered with the plays of children. The age of the players was much younger than the (Thomas) Hardy band . . ."

Indexer's Notes:

Scanned from the transcript in B.Hayward (1992) Galoshins : The Scottish Folk Play. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, ISBN 07486 0338 7, pp.134-138.

Hayward's Notes:

"The custom in Crieff may not be ancient. The town was completely destroyed in 1716, and repaired in 1731. The town became an industrial centre for a while in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and a spa later in the nineteenth century. The interruption in the town's history, and the cause for immigration in the nineteenth century, may well mean that the play in this location is a relatively recent transplant."

File History:

22nd February 2002 – Scanned and Coded by Peter Millington

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The New Year Mummers' Tale of Galaschin - Forfarshire 1888

W.G.D. (1888)

Context:

Location: [Unlocated], Forfarshire, Scotland (NO~~----~~)

Year: Publ. 1888

Time of Occurrence: New Year

Collective Name: Mummers

Source:

W.G.D.

The New Year Mummers' Tale of Golaschin

The Scotsman, 31st December 1888, No.14192, p.5d

Cast:

* Sir Alexander

* Farmer's Son

* Admiral

* Golaschin

* Doctor / Doctor Brown

Text:

Sir Alexander {Sings}

Good people all come round

And listen to my song

My name is Sir Alexander

I won't detain you long;

There are but five of us, sirs,

And merry boys are we,

And we are going a-hunting

Some houses for to see:
Some houses for to see, sirs,
Some pleasure for to have,
And what you freely give to us
We freely shall receive,
The first young man that I call in,
He is a farmer's son,
He is afraid he'll lose his love
Because he is too young.

{Calls, Farmer's Son enters.}

Farmer's Son {Sings}

Though I be too young, sirs,
I've money for to rove;
And I will freely spend it all
Before I lose my love.

Sir Alexander {Sings}

The next young man that I call in
He is a hero fine;
His cap is to the Admiral,
And all his men are mine.

{Calls Admiral, who enters.}

Admiral {Sings}

Here come I, the Admiral,
The Admiral stout and bold,
Who fought the battle on the deck,
And gained three crowns of gold.

Sir Alexander {Sings}

The next young man that I call in,
Golaschin is his name,

The bravest knight in all the land
Of glory and of fame.

{Calls Golaschin, who enters.}

Golaschin {Sings}

Here come I, Golaschin,
Golaschin of renown;
With sword and pistol by my side,
And hope to gain the crown.

Admiral {Sings}

The crown, sir, the crown, sir,
Is not into your power;
I'll slay you and slash you
In less than half-an-hour!

Golaschin {Sings}

Me head is made of fire, sir,
My body is well steeled,
And with my bloody weapon
I'll slay you on the field.

Admiral {Sings}

I'll do the best that I can do
While I have power to stand;
While I have power to wield my sword
I'll fight with heart and hand.

Sir Alexander {Sings}

Here are two champions going to fight
That never fought before;
I'm not going to separate them,
Pray, what could I do more?

Fight on, fight on, my merry boys,
Fight on, fight on with speed
I'll give any man a thousand pounds
To lay Golaschin dead.

{They fight, Farmer's Son joining the melee. Golaschin is slain.}

Sir Alexander

Oh what is this, oh what is this,
Oh what is this you've done,
You have slain Golaschin
And on the ground he's lain!

Farmer's Son

It was not me that did the deed,
Quite innocent of the crime,
It was the fellow behind my back
That drew his sword so fine.

Admiral

Oh you are the villain,
To lay the blame on me,
For my two eyes were shut, sir,
When that young man did dee!

Sir Alexander

Why could your eyes be shut, sir,
When I was looking on,
When could your two eyes shut be
When both the swords were drawn?

Admiral

If I have slain Golaschin,
Golaschin I will cure,

And I will make him rise and sing
In less than half an hour.

{shouts}

Call for the doctor. Is there any doctor to be found?

{Enter Doctor Brown, stout and portly.}

Doctor {Speaks}

Yes, here come I, Doctor Brown
The best doctor in all the town.

Admiral {Speaks}

What makes you so good, sir?

Doctor

Why, for my travels.

Admiral

And where have you travelled?

Doctor

From Hickerty-pickerty-hedgehog,
three times round the West Indies, and back to old Scotland.

Admiral

Is that all, sir?

Doctor

No, sir.

Admiral

What more?

Doctor

Why, I've travelled from fireside to chairside,
from chairside to stoolsideside,
from stoolsideside to tablesideside,
from tablesideside to bedsideside,
from bedsideside to press-sideside,
and got many a good lump of bread and butter from my mother,
and that's the way my belly's so big.

Admiral

Is that all, sir?

Doctor

Yes, sir.

Admiral

What will you take to cure a dead man?

Doctor

Nine pounds and a bottle of wine.

Admiral

I'll give you six.

Doctor

Six won't do.

Admiral

I'll give you eight.

Doctor

I wouldn't take it.

Admiral

Nine, then, and a bottle of wine.

{Doctor takes bottle, and, putting it to Golaschin's nose, says:}

Doctor

Put the smell of the bottle to his nose,
and make him rise and sing.

Golaschin {Rises And Sings}

Once I was dead, sir
And now I am alive;
Blessed be the doctor
That made me revive.

{And Then With Hands Joined, Dance Round, Singing:}

Bless the master of this house,
The mistress good also
And all the little children
That round the table go.
We'll all shake hands

We'll never fight no more;

With our pockets full of money,
And our barrels full of beer,
We'll all go a-drinking
Around the Spanish shore.
Hooray, for a Happy New Year!

Notes:

WGD's Notes:

"Hamilton, December 27, 1888.

Sir,

The following version of this ancient and curious play (of which, I believe, traces are found in most countries in Europe) I have taken down from the lips of an old lady relative, according as she remembers it to have been said, sung and acted in her young days' in Forfarshire and the eastern counties of Scotland.

I do not know whether it has ever been printed in its present form, but it is worth preserving. Though the rhyme is somewhat halting, I give it in its original doggerel form as recited to me.

Dramatis Personae: Sir Alexander, Farmer's Son, Admiral, Golaschin, Doctor Brown.

I am etc., W.G.D.

PTM's Notes:

Scanned by me from the transcript in B.Hayward (1992) Galoshins : The Scottish Folk Play. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, ISBN 07486 0338 7, pp.100-105.

Hayward Notes:

"Forfarshire' is now known as 'Angus', in which the only known play location is Arbroath. Otherwise this ascription to 'Forfarshire and the eastern counties' is unsupported by particular evidence. The text given here closely resembles STIRLING(a) , and may represent the version favoured c.1820 in east central Scotland."

09/10/1999 - Encoded by Peter Millington

28/12/1999 - layout adjusted by PTM

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Culross play, 1893

G.B.C. (1920)

Context:

Location: Culross, Fife, Scotland (NS9885)

Year: Perf. 1893

Time of Occurrence: [Not given]

Collective Name: [Not given]

Source:

G.B.C.

[Title unknown]

Border Magazine, Jul.1920, Vol.25, No.295, p.108

Cast:

* King of Macedonia

* Gallachen

* Doctor Brown

Text:

[King Of Macedonia]

Here come I, the great King of Macedonia,

Conquered all the world round.

When first I came to Scotland my heart was so cold

To see this little nation so proud and so bold,

So proud and so bold, so frank and so free,

That I called upon Gallachen to fight along with me.

[Gallachen]

Here come I, Gallachen -

Gallachen is my name -

My sword and pistol by my side,

I hope to win the game.

[King Of Macedonia]

The game, sir, the game, is not within your power,
For with this little weapon I'll slay you in less than half an hour.

[Gallachen]

What's that you say?

[King Of Macedonia]

I say what I mean.

[Gallachen]

Well, let us begin, {dead man}

[Unknown]

Any doctors in this town?

[Doctor Brown]

Yes, here come I, the little Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

[Unknown]

What can you cure?

[Doctor Brown]

The rout, the gout, the ringworm, and the scurvy!

[Unknown]

Do you think you could cure a dead man?

[Doctor Brown]

Oh, well, I'll try.

Here's a little box of inkey-pinkey
I got from my great-grandmother-in-law.
Put a little on his back,
put a little on his head.
Rise up. Jack, and sing a song.

[Loser]

Once I was dead, but now I'm alive -
Blessed be the doctor who made me alive! -
And we'll all join hands, and we'll never fight no more,
And we'll be happy comrades, as we were before.

Notes:

Indexer's Notes:

Scanned from the transcript in B.Hayward (1992) Galoshins : The Scottish Folk Play. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, ISBN 07486 0338 7, pp.138-139

Hayward's Notes:

The informant was taught the text by an uncle from Culross in 1893.

File History:

22nd February 2002 – Scanned and Coded by Peter Millington

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Scremerston, Northumberland

T.F.Ordish (no date, Rutter)

Context:

Location: Scremerston, Northumberland, England (NU0149)

Year: Col. Before 1913

Time of Occurrence: Christmas

Collective Name: Guizards

Source:

Miss Rutter

Guizard's Song from Scremerston

T.F.Ordish Collection, Northumberland, 10, no date

Cast:

* Slasher

* Goliath / Jack

* Dr Brown / Doctor

Text:

[All?]

Redd [Note 1] sticks, redd stools!

Here comes in a pack of fools,

A pack of fools behind the door,

Step in, Slasher.

{Enter Slasher}

[Slasher]

Slasher is my name!

With sword and pistol by my side

I hope to win the game.

{Enter Goliath [Note 2]}

[Goliath]

The game, sir, the game, sir!
It's not within your power.
I'll strike you into inches
Within this half an hour.

Chorus

Fight on, fight on, ye gentlemen!
Fight on, fight on with speed!
Fight on, fight on yer warriors,
And slay Goliath dead.

Slasher

Is there a Doctor in this town?

{Enter Dr Brown}

[Dr Brown]

Here come I, Dr Brown,
The best doctor in the town.
From nation to nation I've learnt my trade,
And come to England to cure the dead.

Slasher

What can you cure?

Doctor

Coughs and colds. Pox and Scurvy and many things more.
I have a little bottle by my side called Inky-Pinky- [Note 3]
I give this man three drops.

{Gives them to Goliath}

Rise up Jack and fight again.

{Goliath jumps up and fights again}

[Goliath]

Once I was dead but now I'm alive,
Bless the kind doctor that made me alive!
We'll all shake hands and never fight no more.

{Each crosses his hands and join hands in a circle, all dance round continuing to shake hands in a circle.}

[All]

But be as good brethren as we were before.
Health to the master, the mistress also,
And all the little children that round the table go.
With your pockets full of money and your cellar full of beer,
We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

{Hats carried round during this song.}

Notes:

Indexer's Notes:

scanned from A.Helm (1981) The English Mummers' Play. Woodbridge, D.S.Brewer, 1981, pp.66-67.

Helm's Notes:

Costumes

White shirts, smutted cheeks, or corked moustaches, &c., high paper caps, wooden swords or sticks.

Footnotes to Scremerston Text

- 1. Prepare.*
- 2. This is a variant of 'Galations' (see p. 31).*
- 3. Elecampane.*

Northumbrian versions are extremely short and confine themselves to the bare action required. There is usually an absence of Quete characters, but the actual begging is not omitted as this version demonstrates. The disguise is simple, merely dressing in character, with an attempt at blackened faces, and very often the performers were children. Only three characters are mentioned in this version which would permit them not only to move round the district more quickly but also to have an increased share in whatever collection was taken. The ceremony has largely disappeared from the versions, and the object of begging has become of supreme importance.

The entry in the Folklore Society's "Ordish Papers: Checklist of Contents" reads:

10. Guizard's Song from Scremerston communicated by Miss Rutter.

The item is undated, but from correspondence and biographical information, the period of Ordish's active interest in folk drama dated from 1889 to 1913. He died in 1924.

File History:

18th February 2002 - Scanned and coded by Peter Millington

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**"Sword Dancers" play, Haughton-le-Skerne,
Durham [1913-1915]**

S.Smith (1913-1915)

Context:

Location: Haughton-le-Skerne, Durham, England (NZ3015)

Year: Publ. 1913 to 1915

Time of Occurrence: [Not given]

Collective Name: Sword Dancers

Source:

[Stanley Smith]

Folk Play : Performed by the "Sword Dancers" at Haughton-le-Skerne,
Aberystwyth, W.Jones, Y Ddraig Goch Press, [1913-1915]

Cast:

- * Alexander
- * The Admiral / King
- * Gallosa
- * The Doctor / Doctor Black
- * Beelzebub

Text:

Alexander.

Good people all, come round and listen to my song,
My name is Alexander, and I won't detain you long;
There are but five of us, sir, and merry men are we,
For we have come a hunting, some houses for to seek,
Some pleasures for to find, and what you freely give us,
Sir, we think you kind.
The first young man that I call in is hero-find

His cap is to the Admiral, and all his men are mine.

The Admiral.

In comes I, the Admiral, the Admiral stout and bold,
Who fought on deck and won the crowns of gold.

Alexander.

The next young man that I call in, Gallosa is his name -
The finest knight in all the land of glory and of fame.

Gallosa.

In comes I, Gallosa - Gallosa is my name,
With sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the crown.

The Admiral.

The crown, sir, is not within thy power,
I slay thee and slash thee in less than half-an-hour.

Gallosa.

My head is made of iron, sir, my body well steeled,
And with this faithful weapon I'll slay thee on the field.

Alexander.

There are two champions going to fight,
Who never fought before.
I'm not going to stop the fight.
What can I do or more!

{GALLOSHA and THE ADMIRAL begin to fight.}

Fight on, fight on, my merry men,
Fight on, fight on with glee;
I'll give any one a thousand pounds who
Slay Gallosa on the field.

{GALLOSHA falls.}

Alexander.

Oh King, Oh King, what hast thou done?
Thou hast slain my father's best beloved son.

The Admiral.

He gave me the challenge, how could I him deny?
If Gallosa did I slay, I'll make him rise and
Sing again in less than half-an-hour.
Is there not a doctor to be found?

The Doctor.

Yes, Doctor Black.
In comes I, old Doctor Black -
Although I'm very old, still I can quack.

The Admiral.

How came you to be a doctor?

The Doctor.

By my travels.

The Admiral.

How far have you travelled?

The Doctor.

From Italy, Spitaly, France, and Spain,
Over the hills and back again.

The Admiral.

Is that all?

The Doctor.

No! from the top of my grandmother's stairs to the bottom.

The Admiral.

What can you cure?

The Doctor.

Any thing.

It there is nine pins in a man's eye
I'll pull eleven out.

The Admiral.

What will you cure this dead man for?

The Doctor.

A thousand pounds and a bottle of wine.

The Admiral.

I will not give it thee.

The Doctor.

Then I must be going.

The Admiral.

Ill give you a thousand pounds and a bottle of wine
If you give me the first drink of it.

The Doctor.

In my inside pocket I have a little bottle
Which contains Oakham Scoakham allegon paint.
Here, young man, take a drink and rise again.

Gallosa.

I was once a dead man, sir, and now I am alive,
Blessed be the doctor that made me to revive.

Alexander.

The next young man that I call in, Beelzebub is his name.

Beelzebub.

In comes I, Beelzebub,
Over my shoulder I carry my club;
And I think myself a jolly old man,
for I ought to be. .
I have six sons as big as he,
Some tall, some small, and I think myself above them all.
I have a little box under my arm,
And a few spare coppers will do you no harm.

Notes:

Indexer's Notes:

This text was discussed by Paul Smith in his paper entitled "The Stanley Smith Collection of Traditional Plays", presented at the International Conference on Traditional Drama, Sheffield, 7th March 1998. Stanley Smith had this text printed as a "broadside" sometime around 1913 to 1915, which he then sent with enquiries when he was collecting plays in the Gower peninsular, Wales.

File History:

18th February 2002 - Scanned & encoded by Peter Millington

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