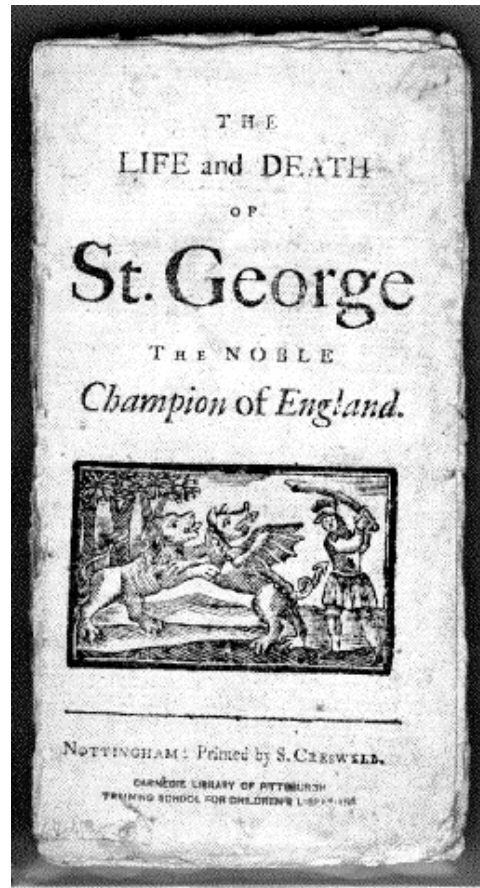


# **Paper Bag Mummers Dorset (Hardy) Plays**



## **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! Contact: [lynnoel@lynnoel.com](mailto:lynnoel@lynnoel.com), 978-985-2707.

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**Sixpenny Handley, Dorset,  
1880s**

S.J.White (1955/56)

**Context:**

Location: Sixpenny Handley, Dorset (ST9917)

Year: Perf. 1880s

Time of Occurrence: Christmas

Collective Name: Mummers

Source: Sydney J. White, The Mummers

The Dorset Year Book, 1955/56, pp.99-102

**Cast:**

- \* Bold Rumour
- \* Father Christmas
- \* Valiant Soldier / Slasher
- \* Turkish Knight
- \* St. George
- \* Doctor
- \* Little Johnny Jack

**Text:**

*{Enter Bold Rumour}*

**Bold Rumour**

Make room, make room, my gallant boys,  
And give us space to rhyme:  
We've come to show St. George's play  
Upon this Christmas time.  
If you don't believe what I do say  
Let old Father Christmas step in and clear the way.

*{Enter Father Christmas}*

**Father Christmas**

In comes I, old Father Christmas, welcome or welcome not,  
I hope old Father Christmas will never be forgot.  
Altho' I've only a short time here to stay  
I'll show you all mirth and pastime before I go away.  
For on this ground there shall be shown  
The dreadfulest battle that ever was known.

*{In comes the Valiant Soldier}*

**Valiant Soldier**

Here come I, the Valiant soldier,  
Slasher is my name  
Is there arne a man who dare to stand  
Before me with my naked sword in hand?

*{Enter the Turkish Knight}*

**Turkish Knight**

Here come I, a Turkish knight,  
Just come from foreign land to fight;  
That valiant soldier I do not fear,  
No matter what sharp sword he do bear.  
If his head is made of brass; and his body made of steel.  
From my shoulder to my knuckle bones  
That's the place to feel.  
I'll clip his wings he shall not fly,  
I'll cut him down or else I die.

*{The Valiant Soldier comes forward}*

**Valiant Soldier**

If thou art a Turkish Knight  
Draw thy sword and let us fight.

*{They fight moving round in circles, and clashing their wooden swords. The Valiant Soldier is killed and falls flat on the floor}*

**The Turkish Knight**

I am come here to fight St. George  
That noble man of courage bold;  
And if his blood runs hot  
I'll quickly make it cold.

*{Enter St. George}*

**St. George**

Here I come I, St. George, a valiant man,  
With naked sword and spear in hand,  
Who fought the Dragon, and brought him to slaughter,  
And for this won fair Sabra, the King of Egypt's daughter.  
Hold on, hold on, my gentleman, thou talkest very bold,  
Thou talkest like that little man of whom I have been told,  
But scarce I'll have three rounds with thee  
I'll bring thee to thy bended knee,  
And bleeding I will leave thee.

*{They fight and the Turkish Knight is killed}*

**Father Christmas**

Oh now, St. George, what hast thee been and done  
Thou hast cut down this knight just like the setting sun.

**St. George**

He gave me the first challenge,  
Why should I deny?  
Draw out thy sword, and fight, said I,  
Pull out thy purse and pay,  
I will have satisfaction before I go away.

*{Father Christmas calls for a Doctor}*

**Father Christmas**

Is there a doctor to be found?  
To cure these two poor men that lie bleeding on the ground?

*{Enters the Doctor}*

**Doctor**

Oh yes, oh yes, there is a Doctor to be found  
To raise the two men that lie bleeding on the ground

**Father Christmas**

Well, doctor, what's thy fee?

**Doctor**

Fifty guineas is my fee,  
But five guineas I will take  
From a poor old man like thee.  
I can cure the itch, the stitch, the palsy and the gout,  
And if the devil's in I'll drive him out.

**Father Christmas**

You're very clever. Doctor, where hast thou bin  
To learn all these yer things?

**Doctor**

I've been all round England, Scotland, Ireland, Portugal and Spain  
And all the regions round about and back again

**Father Christmas**

Thankee Doctor, try thy skill.

**The Doctor**

I carry this little bottle of alicampane  
Three drops on these dead men  
Will bring them back to life again.

*{The Doctor puts a drop on each man's skull and two drops on the breast bone, over his heart}*

Arise you two bold champions and act thy parts  
Show these ladies and gents thy valiant hearts.

*{The Valiant Soldier and the Turkish Knight rise from the ground and stand at the back. Then they all join in singing the following mournful ditty:--}{The Ship that Never Returned}*

**All**

" It never returned, it never returned,  
And its fate is all unknown.  
But from that day to this  
They've been watching, watching, watching  
For the ship that never returned."

*{Father Christmas comes forward and says}*

**Father Christmas**

Christmas comes but once a year  
But when it comes it brings good cheer  
Roast beef, plum pudding and mince pies  
Who likes that better than little Johnny Jack and I

*{Little Johnny Jack shouts (from the back)}*

**Little Johnny Jack**

No one Daddy!

**Father Christmas**

I don't think they do my son.  
So walk in little Johnny Jack and act thy part  
Show these ladies and gents thy bold and gallant heart

*{Enter Little Johnny Jack}*

**Little Johnny Jack**

Here come I, little Johnny Jack  
with my wife and family at my back.

*{He shows some dolls tied on his back}*

Some are here and some are at home  
I'm afeard they'll all be starved before I can come  
With a pocket full of money and a belly full of beer.  
I hope you all had a merry Christmas, and I  
Wish you all a happy New Year.  
Ladies and gentlemen our play is ended  
Our money box is recommended.

*{Father Christmas takes off his box hat and goes round using it as a money box}*

**Father Christmas**

Copper or silver or gold if you can,  
On whatsoever you give there is no ban.

**Notes:**

*White's introduction: "AWAY back in the 'eighties' it was customary, in the North Dorset village of Sixpenny Handley, for the Mummers to go round each Christmas to the principal houses, farms and inns to perform the mediaeval play of St. George. The play is said to date from the 12th century and was not written but handed down verbally from generation to generation. Consequently versions varied in different parts of the country.*

*The Mummers wore a characteristic dress, made of coloured strips of cloth about one foot in length and half an inch wide, sewn on an old suit, each row of such strips overlapping the row below, and extending to the feet. Similar ribbons on the hat obscured the features of the wearer. Thus in Thomas Hardy's novel *The Return of the Native*, the heroine, Eustacia Vye, was able to take the part of the Turkish Knight without being detected.*

*The Mummers fought with long wooden swords and traditional gestures, marching slowly round and round in a circle. Those who were slain fell flat on the floor, and were later brought back to life by the Doctor, with his magic bottle.*

*The performance meant hours of preliminary rehearsal, and, at Christmas, many miles were covered in going from place to place to present the play. At Handley even the schoolboys used to fight in mock combat, repeating some of the rhymed sayings they had overheard.*

*It is difficult now-a-days to get the wording of the play, but the version here given may be taken as a fair sample of that performed in Dorset about the middle of the 19th century."*

*File History: 24th Dec 2001 - Scanned by Peter Millington*

*The recommended URL for this web page is [www.folkplay.info/Texts/88st91ws.htm](http://www.folkplay.info/Texts/88st91ws.htm)  
Last generated on 09/07/2005 by P.Millington (Peter.Millington1@virgin.net)*

**South West Dorset  
Mummers' Play 1880**

**Context:**

Location: South West Dorset, Dorset, England (SY----)

Year: Publ. 1880

Time of Occurrence: Christmas

Collective Name: Mummers

Source:

J.S.Udal

Christmas Mummers in Dorsetshire

Folk-Lore Record, 1880, Vol.III, No.1, pp.87-112

**Cast:**

\* Old Father Christmas / Father Christmas / John

\* Room

\* Turkish Knight

\* King George

\* Marshalee

\* Valiant Solder / Slasher

\* Cutting Star

\* Doctor

\* Old Bet / Dorothy Dame / Dame Dorothy / Bet

**Text:**

*{Enter OLD FATHER CHRISTMAS.}*

**Old Father Christmas**

Here comes I, old Father Christmas,

Welcome or welcome not;

I hope Old Father Christmas will never be forgot.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, if you do not believe what I say,

Walk in my son, Room, and boldly clear the way.



{Enter ROOM.}

**Room**

Here comes I, gallant Room, pray give me room to enter,  
For I have brought some sport to while away the winter;  
An old act, a new act, that was never acted before,  
Since I left my poor old grey-headed grandfather down  
at my old back door.

If you do not believe what I say,  
Walk in Turkish Knight and boldly clear the way.

**Turkish Knight**

Here comes I that Turkish Knight,  
Just come from that Turkish land to fight;  
If King George do meet me here,  
I will try his courage without fear.

**King George**

Here comes I, King George,  
With my glittering sword and spear;  
I fought the dragon boldly and brought him to the slaughter,  
But 'twas thus I gained the fairest maid of all, the King of Egypt's  
daughter.

**Turkish Knight**

I pray, King George, do not make so bold,  
If thy blood is hot, I will soon make it cold.

**King George**

My blood is hot as any fire,  
And so cold as any clay,  
And with my glittering sword and spear,  
I'll take thy life away.

**Turkish Knight**

Thee and I will a battle try

**King George**

If I conquer, thou must die.

*{They fight. TURKISH KNIGHT is killed.}*

Thy first son, Old Father, is dead;  
Call in thy second son Marshalee, that champion whom I dread.

*{Enter MARSHALEE}*

**Marshalee**

Here comes I Marshalee,  
I am the man who will conquer thee;  
My head is lined with iron,  
My body is lined with steel,  
I will fight thee, King George,  
If it is not against thy will.

**King George**

If it's not against thy will, Marshalee,  
Or yet against thy might;  
If thou could'st fight against King George,  
Then draw thy sword and fight?

*{They fight. MARSHALEE is wounded.}*

Thy second son, Old Father, is wounded ;  
Call in thy third son, the Valiant Soldier,

*{Enter VALIANT SOLDIER}*

**Valiant Soldier**

Here comes I, that Valiant Soldier,  
Slasher is my name;  
With sword and pistol by my side  
I hope to win the game.  
One of my brothers I have seen wounded,  
And another I have seen slain;  
I'll fight thee, King George,  
On the British plain.

**King George**

Thee and I will a battle try

**Valiant Soldier**

If I conquer, thou must die.

*{They fight. VALIANT SOLDIER falls wounded.}*

**King George**

Thy third son, Old Father, is wounded;  
Call in thy fourth son, the Cutting Star,  
That champion whom I dread.

*{Enter CUTTING STAR}*

**Cutting Star**

Where is King George, that champion bold?  
If his blood is hot, I will soon have it cold.

**King George**

Here am I, King George. I am come here,  
And will try thy courage without fear.

**Cutting Star**

Here comes I, the Cutting Star,  
Just come from that dreadful war;  
I have fought many a battle with the French,  
And come to encounter thee, King George, so bold.

**King George**

Thee and I will a battle try

**Cutting Star**

If I conquer, thou must die.

*{They fight CUTTING STAR falls.}*

**King George**

I have a little bottle by my side called the Liptupain; [?]  
If that soldier is alive, let him rise and fight again.

**Turkish Knight**

Oh! pardon me, King George. Oh! pardon me, I crave;  
Pardon me this night, and I will be thy slave.

**King George**

I never will pardon thee, Turkish Knight;  
Therefore rise thou, Turkish Knight,  
Draw thy sword, and we will fight.

**Room**

Hold thy hand, butcher, and kill no more,  
For I fear for their poor wives and families.

**King George**

Are you the brother of these dead men  
That lie bleeding on the ground?

**Room**

Yes, I am, and come to try thy might.

**King George**

If you are come to try my might,  
Draw thy purse and pay thy part:  
And draw thy sword and we will fight.

**Old Father Christmas**

What wild moans and wild groans there are in the field of battle!  
Is there a doctor to be found  
Can rise these dead men from the ground,  
And have them for to stand?

**King George**

Yes, Father, there is a doctor to be found  
Can rise these dead men from the ground,  
And bring them for to stand.

**Father Christmas**

Doctor! Doctor! Doctor!

You had better call him, King George,

**King George**

I will warrant he will answer to my first call. Doctor!

**Doctor**

Oh yes! Father, there is a doctor to be found,  
Can rise these dead men from the ground,  
And have them for to stand.

**Father Christmas**

What canst thou cure?

**Doctor**

I can cure the itch, the stitch, the palsy, and the gout  
All pains in, and all pains out,  
And if the devil is in thy sons,  
I will quickly pull him out.

**Father Christmas**

What's thee [thy?] fees?

**Doctor**

Fifty poun', Father.

**Father Christmas**

What's say, half-crown?

**Doctor**

Fifty poun', Father.

**Father Christmas**

I ain't got so much money as that.

**Doctor**

I can't do it no less.

**Father Christmas**

Nory [ne'er a] trifle less at all?

**Doctor**

Fifty poun' is my fee,  
But ten less, I'll take of thee.

**Father Christmas**

Try thee skill.

**Doctor**

I have a little bottle by my side, called the dicky-whip [?]  
I put a drop to each soldier's heart,  
Rise! Champions, rise! and all pay your part.

**Father Christmas**

I have travelled o'er hills and valleys  
where the winds never blow,  
nor the cock never crow,  
nor the Devil never sound his horn-pipe.  
That was never in your time,  
and nobody else's time;  
time when little birds used to build in old man's beards,  
but ain't got norry [ne'er a] one in mine yet.

**King George**

I've heard a great deal about your old travels.  
Did you never get a partiner? [partner.]

**Father Christmas**

I should think I did.

**King George**

What may your partiner's name be?

**Father Christmas**

Old Bet.

**King George**

Call her in, in the old fashion - Bet -

**Father Christmas**

Bet! Bet! Bet!

**King George**

Call her a little louder.

**Father Christmas**

I wish you to call her, King George.

**King George**

Dorothy Dame!

*{Enter OLD BET.}*

**Old Bet**

Here comes I, little Dame Dorothy,  
I wish you all a very good morrety [morn t'ye].  
My head is big, my body is small,  
I'll endeavour my best to please you all.

**Father Christmas**

Wher'st thou been, Bet?

**Bet**

In the land of Nod, John,  
Where there's devil, man, nor dog, John.

**Father Christmas**

Dissen [didn't ye] see nobody at all there, Bet?

**Bet**

No, John, only an old man chewing baccy.

**Father Christmas**

Didener [didn't he] gee [give] thee norry [ne'er a] quid, Bet?

**Bet**

Yes, John.

**Father Christmas**

Where's my sher [share]?

**Bet**

Up in higher cupboard.

**Father Christmas**

Not there, Bet.

**Bet**

Down in lower cupboard.

**Father Christmas**

Tidden ['tɪsn't] there, Bet. Oh! you lying old hag!

**Bet**

I have fired it through a nine-inch wall,  
knocked down a puppy dog;  
hear 'un say "bow wow" nine times aäder [after] he was dead.

*{FATHER CHRISTMAS, enraged, beats BET round the house, and finally kills her.}*

**Father Christmas**

What wild moans and wild groans there are in a field of battle!  
Is there any doctor to be found  
Can rise my dead wife from the ground,  
And bring her for to stand?

**King George**

Oh! yes, there is a doctor to be found,  
Can rise your dead wife from the ground,  
And bring her for to stand.

**Father Christmas**

Doctor! doctor! doctor

**King George**

Call her a little louder, Father.

**Father Christmas**

Doctor! doctor! doctor! doctor!  
I can't call him any louder. You call him, King George.



**King George**

Doctor!

*{Enter DOCTOR.}*

**Doctor**

Yes, Father, there is a doctor to be found  
Can rise your dead wife from the ground,  
And have her for to stand.

**Father Christmas**

What canst cure?

**Doctor**

I can cure the itch, the stitch, the palsy, and the gout,  
All pains in and all pains out ;  
And if the old man is in thy wife I'll quickly turn him out.

**Father Christmas**

What's thee [thy] fees?

**Doctor**

Fifty poun', father.

**Father Christmas**

I ain't got so much money as that.

**Doctor**

Fifty poun' is my fee,  
Father, but ten less I'll take of thee.

**Father Christmas**

Can't you cure norry [ne'er a] bit more?

**Doctor**

Yes, Father, all young women that have the heartache,  
give them a pill of mine,  
That will set them all right in a decline.

**Father Christmas**

Cans't thou rise my dead wife from the ground?

**Doctor**

Bleed her in the eye vein, Father.

*{FATHER CHRISTMAS goes to her feet, and then to her head to bleed her feet.}*

Now, Bet, dance with John?

*{BET gets up.}*

**Father Christmas**

Fal the dal! my wife's alive;  
Where's thee ben [been] to, Bet?

**Bet**

Where's thee ben to, John?

**Father Christmas**

Ich ben [I've been] hunting.

**Bet**

What'st catched, John?

**Father Christmas**

Wold [old] dry Jack hare.

**Bet**

Howse [How are you] going haven [have it] cooked, John?

**Father Christmas**

I shall haven fried.

**Bet**

I shall haven griddled [grilled].

**Father Christmas**

I shall haven fried.

**Bet**

I shall never have a wold [old] Jack hare fried.

**Father Christmas**

Goo [go] and get the hobby-hoss, Bet.

*{The hobby-horse is brought in, upon which FATHER CHRISTMAS mounts.}*

**Doctor**

Now, ladies and gentlemen,  
you can plainly see that I am not one of these Italian doctors  
running from door to door, telling a pack of lies,  
for I can cure the sick and rise the dead right plain before your eyes,  
and bring them for to stand.

*{Here follows a Song, after which exeunt OMNES.}*

**Notes:**

*Udal's Preamble:*

*"The second version, which I will now give, appears to me to be useful not only in showing the difference in the characters themselves that exists in a representation that must have taken place almost side by side with the other, but also in affording here and there a few words of the old Dorset vernacular, to which I have added translation in a parenthesis, for the benefit of those readers of the 'Folk-Lore Record' who may not have met with the words before.*

*Udal's Epilogue:*

*"The play over, and the actors regaled with such good cheer as the hospitable hearts of the Dorsetshire folk seldom refused, the Mummers passed on to the next parish, where to a fresh and ever-delighted audience they went through a repetition of their performance; and though, if the night were wet, and the wind cold, they experienced rough usage at times, yet their welcome was all the warmer at their next halting-place, so that none could doubt for a moment but that they came in for no small share of the delights of a 'merry Christmas.'*

*J.S.UDAL.Inner Temple."*

*Indexer's Notes (with help from Peter Robson):*

*This is the second of two Dorsetshire texts published by Udal in this paper. The location of neither is identified in the paper, other than saying that they come from "two distinct parishes in the south-west of Dorset" (p.87). The first has been identified from other sources as coming from Symondsbury, but the location of this second text remains unknown. From his knowledge of other plays local to Symondsbury, Peter Robson suggests that it may hail from Burton Bradstock or Powerstock/West Milton.*

*Udal uses the uncapitalised word "mummers" throughout this paper, which taken in isolation would raise doubts as to whether this was the actual name used locally for the actors.*

*File History:*

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*Last generated on 09/07/2005 by P.Millington (Peter.Millington1@virgin.net)*

# **Symondsburry Mummers' Play 1880**

**Context:**

Location: Symondsburry, Dorset, England (SY4493)

Year: Publ. 1880

Time of Occurrence: Christmas

Collective Name: Mummers

Source: J.S.Udal, Christmas Mummers in Dorsetshire Folk-Lore Record, 1880, Vol.III, No.1, pp.87-112

**Cast:**

- \* Old Father Christmas / Jan / Uncle Jan
- \* Room
- \* Egyptian King / King of Egypt / Anthony
- \* St. George
- \* St. Patrick
- \* Captain Bluster
- \* Gracious King
- \* General Valentine
- \* Colonel Spring
- \* Doctor / Mr. Martin Dennis / Mr. Doctor
- \* Old Bet / Dame Dorothy,
- \* Servant-Man

**Text:**

*{SCENE:-The servants' hall or kitchen of the mansion or farmhouse in which the performance is to take place. The actors are grouped together at the back of the stage, So to speak, and each comes forward as he is required to speak or to fight, and at the conclusion falls back upon the rest, leaving the stage clear for other disputants or combatants. This is the "enter" and "exit" of the mummers.}*

*{Enter OLD FATHER CHRISTMAS.}*

**Old Father Christmas**

Here comes I, Father Christmas, welcome or welcome not,  
I hope Old Father Christmas will never be forgot.  
Although it is Old Father Christmas  
he has but a short time to stay  
I am come to show you pleasure and pass the time away.  
I have been far, I have been near,  
And now I am come to drink a pot of your Christmas beer;  
And if it's not your best,  
I hope in heaven your soul will rest.  
If it is a pot of your small,  
We cannot show you no Christmas at all.  
Walk in Room, again I say,  
And pray good people clear the way.  
Walk in, Room.

*{Enter ROOM.}*

**Room**

God bless you all, ladies and gentlemen,  
It's Christmas time, and I am come again.  
My name is Room, one sincere and true,  
A merry Christmas I wish to you.  
King of Egypt is for to display,  
A noble champion without delay.  
St. Patrick too, a charming Irish youth,  
He can fight or dance, or love a girl with truth.  
A noble Doctor I do declare,  
and his surprising tricks bring up the rear,  
And let the Egyptian King straightway appear.

*{Enter EGYPTIAN KING.}*

**Egyptian King**

Here comes I, Anthony, the Egyptian King.  
With whose mighty acts all round the globe doth ring

No other champion but me excels,  
Except St. George, my only son-in-law.  
Indeed that wondrous knight whom I so dearly love,  
Whose mortal deeds the world dost [well?] approve,  
That hero whom no dragon could affright,  
A whole troop of soldiers couldn't stand in sight.  
Walk in St. George, his warlike [ardour?] to display,  
And show Great Britain's enemies dismay.  
Walk in, St. George.

*{Enter ST. GEORGE.}*

**St. George**

Here am I, St. George, an Englishman so stout,  
With those mighty warriors I long to have a bout;  
No one could ever picture me the many I have slain,  
I long to fight, it's my delight, the battle o'er again.  
Come then, you boasting champions,  
And hear that in war I doth take pleasure,  
I will fight you all, both great and small,  
And slay you at my leisure.  
Come haste, away, make no delay,  
For I'll give you something you won't like,  
And like a true-born Englishman  
I will fight you on my stumps.  
And now the world I do defy,  
To injure me before I die.  
So now prepare for war, for that is my delight.

*{Enter ST. PATRICK, who shakes hands with ST. GEORGE.}*

**St. Patrick**

My worthy friend, how dost thou fare, St. George?  
Answer, my worthy knight.

**St. George**

I am glad to find thee here;

In many a fight that I have been in, travelled far and near,  
To find my worthy friend St. Patrick, that man I love so dear.  
Four bold warriors have promised me  
To meet me here this night to fight.  
The challenge did I accept, but they could not me affright.

**St. Patrick**

I will always stand by that man that did me first enlarge,  
I thank thee now in gratitude, my worthy friend St. George;  
Thou didst first deliver me out of this wretched den,  
And now I have my liberty I thank thee once again.

*{Enter Captain BLUSTER.}*

**Captain Bluster**

I'll give St. George a thrashing, I'll make him sick and sore,  
And if I further am disposed I'll thrash a dozen more.

**St. Patrick**

Large words, my worthy friend,  
St. George is here.  
And likewise St. Patrick too;  
And he doth scorn such men as you.  
I am the match for thee,  
Therefore prepare yourself to fight with me,  
Or else I'll slay thee instantly.  
Captain Bluster  
Come on, my boy! I'll die before  
I yield to thee or twenty more.

*{They fight, and ST. PATRICK kills CAPTAIN BLUSTER.}*

**St. Patrick**

Now one of St. George's foes is killed by me,  
Who fought the battle o'er,  
And now for the sake of good St. George,  
I'll freely fight a hundred more.



**St. George**

No, no, my worthy friend,  
St. George is here,  
I'll fight the other three;  
And after that with Christmas beer  
So merry we will be.

*{Enter GRACIOUS KING.}*

**Gracious King**

No beer or brandy, Sir, I want my courage for to rise,  
I only want to meet St. George or take him by surprise;  
But I am afraid he never will fight me,  
I wish I could that villain see.

**St. George.**

Tremble, thou tyrant, for all thy sin that's past,  
Tremble to think that this night will be thy last.  
Thy conquering arms shall quickly by thee lay alone,  
And send thee passing to eternal doom.  
St. George will make thy armour ring;  
St. George will soon despatch the Gracious King.

**Gracious King**

I'll die before I yield to thee or twenty more.

*{They fight, ST. GEORGE kills the GRACIOUS KING.}*

*{Enter General VALENTINE.}*

**St. George.**

He was no match for me, he quickly fell.

**General Valentine**

But I am thy match, and that my sword shall tell,  
Prepare thyself to die and bid thy friends farewell.  
I long to fight such a brave man as thee,  
For its a pleasure to fight so manfully.

*[Note 1]*

Rations so severe he never long to deceive [receive?]  
So cruel! for thy foes [are?] always killed;  
Oh! what a sight of blood St. George has spilled!  
I'll fight St. George the hero here,  
Before I sleep this night.  
Come on my boy, I'll die before  
I yield to thee or twenty more.  
St. George, thou and I'll the battle try,  
If thou dost conquer I will die.

*{They fight. ST. GEORGE kills the General.}*

**St. George.**

Where now is Colonel Spring? He doth so long delay,  
That hero of renown, I long to show him play.

*{Enter Colonel SPRING.}*

**Colonel Spring**

Holloa! behold me, here am I!  
I'll have thee now prepare,  
And by this arm thou'lt surely die-  
I'll have thee this night beware.  
So see what bloody works thou'st made,  
Thou art a butcher, Sir, by trade.  
I'll kill, as thou didst [kill?] my brother,  
For one good turn deserves another.

**St. George.**

Come, give me leave, I'll thee battle,  
And quickly make thy bones to rattle.

**Colonel Spring**

Come on my boy, I'll die before  
I'll yield to thee or twenty more.  
St. George, so thee and I  
Will the battle try.

*{They fight. ST. GEORGE kills the COLONEL.}*

**St. Patrick**

Stay thy hand, St. George, and slay no more;  
for I feel for the wives and families of those men that you have slain.

**St. George.**

So am I sorry.

I'll freely give any sum of money to a doctor  
to restore them again.

I have heard talk of a mill to grind old men young,  
but I never heard of a doctor to bring dead men to life again.

**St. Patrick**

There's an Irish doctor, a townsman of mine,  
who lived next door to St. Patrick, he can perform wonders.  
Shall I call him, St. George?

**St. George.**

With all my heart.

Please to walk in Mr. Martin Dennis.

Its an ill wind that blows no good work for the doctor.

*{Enter DOCTOR.}*

**St. George.**

If you will set these men on their pins,  
I'll give thee a hundred pound, and here is the money.

**Doctor**

So I will my worthy knight,  
and then I shall not want for whiskey for one twelvemonth to come.  
I am sure the first man I saw beheaded,  
I put his head on the wrong way.  
I put his mouth where his poll ought to be,  
and he's exhibited in a wondering nature.

**St. George.**

Very good answer, Mr. Doctor.  
Tell me the rest of your miracles and raise those warriors.

**Doctor**

I can cure love-sick maidens,  
jealous husbands,  
squalling wives,  
brandy-drinking dames,  
with one touch of my pepble [triple?] liquid,  
or one sly dose of my Jerusalem balsam,  
and that will make an old crippled dame dance the hornpipe,  
or an old woman of seventy years of age conceive and bear a twin.  
And now to convince you all of my exertions,  
rise Captain Bluster, Gracious King,  
General Valentine, and Colonel Spring!  
Rise, and go to your father!

*{On the application of the medicine they all rise and retire.}*

*{Enter OLD BET.}*

**Old Bet**

Here comes I dame Dorothy,  
A handsome young woman, good morning to ye.  
I am rather fat but not very tall,  
I'll do my best endeavour to please you all.  
My husband he is to work and soon he will return,  
And something for our supper bring,  
And perhaps some wood to burn.  
Oh! here he comes!

*{Enter JAN or OLD FATHER CHRISTMAS.}*

**Old Bet**

Well! Jan.

**Old Father Christmas**

Oh! Dorothy!

**Old Bet**

What have you been doing all this long day, Jan?

**Old Father Christmas**

I have been a hunting, Bet.

**Old Bet**

The devil a hunting is it!

Is that the way to support a wife?

Well, what have you caught to-day, Jan?

**Old Father Christmas**

A fine jack hare, and I intend to have him a-fried for supper;  
and here is some wood to dress him.

**Old Bet**

Fried! no, Jan, I'll roast it nice.

**Old Father Christmas**

I say I'll have it fried.

**Old Bet**

Was there ever such a foolish dish!

**Old Father Christmas.**

No matter for that.

I'll have it a-done;

and if you don't do as do bid,

I'll hit you in the head.

**Old Bet**

You may do as you like for all I do care

I'll never fry a dry Jack hare.

**Old Father Christmas**

Oh! You won't, wooll'ee? [will you]

*{He strikes her, and she falls.}*

Oh! what have I done! I have murdered my wife!  
The joy of my heart, and the pride of my life.  
And out to the gaol I quickly shall be sent.  
In a passion I did it, and no malice meant.  
Is there a doctor that can restore?  
Fifty pounds I'll give him, or twice fifty more.

*{Some one speaks.}*

**Room**

Oh I yes, Uncle Jan, there is a doctor just below,  
and for God's sake let him just come in.  
Walk in, Doctor.

*{Enter DOCTOR.}*

**Old Father Christmas**

Are you a doctor?

**Doctor**

Yes, I am a doctor - a doctor of good fame.  
I have travelled through Europe, Asia, Africa, and America,  
and by long practice and experience I have learned the best of cures  
for most disorders instant [incident?] to the human body;  
find nothing difficult in restoring a limb, or mortification,  
or an arm being cut off by a sword,  
or a head being struck off by a cannon ball,  
if application have not been delayed till it is too late.

**Old Father Christmas**

You are the very man, I plainly see,  
That can restore my poor old wife to me.  
Pray tell me thy lowest fee.

**Doctor**

'Tis no wonder that you could not bring the dead to life.  
A hundred guineas I'll have to restore thy wife.

**Old Father Christmas**

That's a large sum of money for a dead wife!

**Doctor**

Small sum of money to save a man from the gallows.  
Pray what big stick is that you have in your hand?

**Old Father Christmas**

That is my hunting-pole.

**Doctor**

Put aside your hunting-pole, and get some assistance to help up your wife.

*{OLD BET is raised up to life again.}*

**Old Father Christmas**

Fal, dal, lal! fal, dal, lal! my wife's alive!

*{Enter SERVANT-MAN, who sings.}*

Singing the Travels (more or less as arr. Silly Sisters)

Singing the Travels

MELODY

Well met, my bro- ther dear, all a- long the high- way

HARMONY

ri- i- ding, So so- lemn I was wal- king a- long

So pray come tell to me, what call- ing yours may

be, and I'll have you for a ser- vant man

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Singing the Travels'. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has two staves: a top staff for the melody and a bottom staff for the harmony. The music is in 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the melody staff. The first system has the lyrics 'Well met, my bro- ther dear, all a- long the high- way'. The second system has 'ri- i- ding, So so- lemn I was wal- king a- long'. The third system has 'So pray come tell to me, what call- ing yours may'. The fourth system has 'be, and I'll have you for a ser- vant man'. The melody staff uses a treble clef and the harmony staff uses a bass clef. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some rests.



Well met, my brother dear, all along the highway riding  
So solemn I was walking along  
So pray come tell to me what calling yours may be  
And I'll have you for a servant man.

Some serving men do eat the very best of meat  
Such as cock, goose, capon and swan  
But when lords and ladies dine, they drink strong beer, ale and wine  
That's some diet for a servant man.

Don't you talk about your capons, let's have some rusty bacon  
And aye, a good piece of pickled pork  
That's always in my house, a crust of bread and cheese  
That's some diet for a husband man.

When next to church they go with their livery fine and gay  
And their cocked hats and gold lace all around  
With their shirts as white as milk, and stitched as fine as silk  
That's some habit for a servant man.

Don't you talk about your livery nor all your silken garments  
That's not fit for to travel the bushes in  
Give me a leather coat, aye, and in my purse a groat  
That's some habit for a husband man.

So we must needs confess that your calling is the best  
And will give you the uppermost hand  
So now we won't delay but pray both day and night  
God bless the honest husband man.

*[Exeunt OMNES.]*

**ORIGINAL SYMONDSBURY SONG TEXT****Servant-Man**

Well met, my brother dear!  
All on the highway  
Sall and I were a walking along,  
So I pray come tell to me  
What calling you might be;  
I'll have you for some servant-man.

**Old Father Christmas**

I'll give thee many thanks,  
And I'll quit thee as soon as I can;  
Vain did I know  
Where thee could do so or no,  
For to the pleasure of a servant-man.

**Servant-Man**

Some servants of pleasure  
Will pass time out of measure,  
With our hares and hounds  
They will make the hills and valleys sound;  
That's a pleasure for some servant-man.

**Old Father Christmas**

My pleasure is more than for to see my oxen grow fat,  
And see them prove well in their kind,  
A good rick of hay and a good stack of corn to fill up my barn,  
That's a pleasure of a good honest husbandman.

**Servant-Man**

Next to church they will go with their livery fine and gay,  
With their cocked-up hat and gold lace all round,  
And their shirt so white as milk,  
And stitched so fine as silk,  
That's a habit for a servant-man.

**Old Father Christmas**

Don't tell I about thee silks and garments  
that not fit to travel the bushes.  
Let I have on my old leather coat,  
And in my purse a groat,  
And there, that's a habit for a good old husbandman.

**Servant-Man**

Some servant-men doth eat  
The very best of meat,  
A cock, goose, capon, and swan;  
After lords and ladies dine,  
We'll drink strong beer, ale, and wine;  
That's a diet for some servant-man,

**Old Father Christmas**

Don't tell I of the cock, goose, or capon, nor swan;  
let I have a good rusty piece of bacon,  
pickled pork, in the house,  
and a hard crust of bread and cheese once now and then;  
that's a diet for a good old honest husbandman,  
So we need must confess  
That your calling is the best,  
And we win give you the uppermost hand;  
So no more we won't delay,  
But we will pray both night and day,  
God bless the honest husbandman.  
Amen.

*{Exeunt OMNES.}*

**Notes:**

*Udal's Preamble:*

*"I will now proceed to give the entire rendering of the first version as it was obtained for me some few years ago by an old Dorsetshire lady, who is now dead, and in this the dramatis personae are as follows:-*

Udal's Footnote 1:"Line Missing."

*Indexer's Notes (with help from Peter Robson):*

*This is the first of two Dorsetshire texts published by Udal in this paper. The location of neither is identified in the paper, but in his 'Christmas Mummers in West Dorset', in Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries, 1904, Vol.9, pp.9-19 (p.9) he states:-*

*"I refer him to a paper.....in the Folk Lore Record.....in which he will find the libretto, as it is obtained in a West Dorset parish (Symondsburry),.....and also another one from a local source..."*

*Other versions have been collected later from Symondsburry. See Peter Kennedy (1952) 'Symondsburry Mumming Play' in Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, Dec.1952, Vol.VII, No.1, pp.1-12.*

*Udal uses the uncapitalised word "mummers" throughout this paper, which taken in isolation would raise doubts as to whether this was the actual name used locally for the actors.*

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