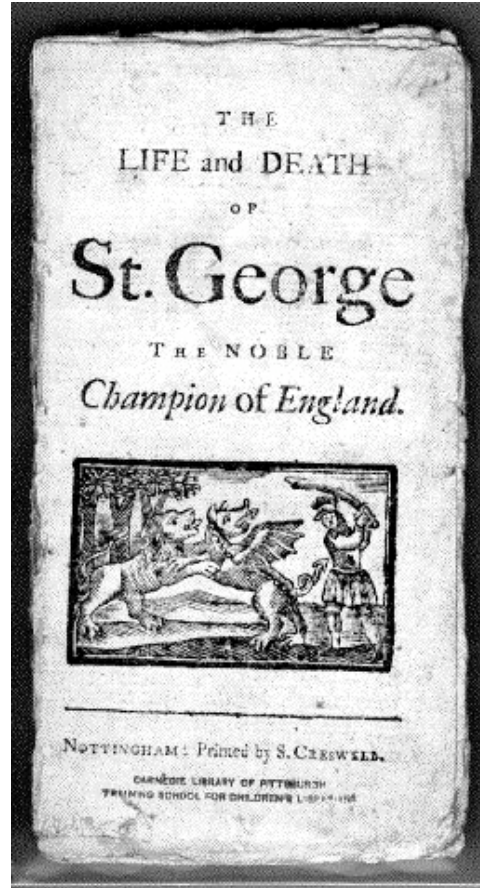


Paper Bag Mummers Souling Plays



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, 978-985-2707.

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Souling Play from Huxley, Cheshire, 1913

A.Helm (1968) pp.24-28

Context:

Location: Huxley, Cheshire, England (SJ5161)

Year: Perf. About 1913

Time of Occurrence: [Not given]

Collective Name: Souling

Source:

Alex Helm, Cheshire Folk Drama

Ibstock, Guizer Press, 1968

Cast:

[Big Head](#)

[King George](#)

[Violent Soldier](#) / [Slasher](#) / [Turkish Knight](#) / [Jack](#)

[Old Woman](#)

[Doctor](#) / [Doctor Brown](#)

[Beelzebub](#)

[Paddywhack](#)

[Tosspot](#) / [Tosspot](#)

Text:

All?] {Song }

Here we are one, two, three hearty lads,
and we're all in one mind.

We have come a-souling good nature to find.

We have come a-souling as it does appear,

And it's all that we are souling for is your ale and strong beer.

For your lanes they are dirty and your meadows grow cold.

It's to find your good nature this night we make bold.

To try your good nature as it does appear,

And it's all we are souling for is your ale and good beer.

Dear master, dear mistress, do not tarry or spin,

But look for a jug to put some beer In.

And when we have got it, how soon we will see.

When we have drunk It, how merry we will be.

Step down in your cellars and there you will find

Both ale, rum, gin and brandy and the best of good wine.

And if you will draw us one jug of your beer

We'll come no more souling until this time next year.

Please open the doors and let all our merry actors in.

For we are all in favour for King George to win.

Whether he sits, stands, rise or fall,

We'll do our best to please you all.

If you don't believe these words I say,

Step in Big Head and clear the way.

Big Head

In comes I that never came yet,
With my big head and little wit.
Although my wits they be so small,
I'll do my best to please you all.
If you don't believe these words I say.
Step in King George and clear the way.

King George

In comes I, King George, that great and noble man of old.
With my sword and spear I won £10,000 in gold.
'Twas I who fought the fiery dragon
And brought him to the altar;
And on that very same day I won the King of Egypt's daughter.
If you don't believe these words I say,
Step in Violent Soldier and clear the way.

Violent Soldier

In comes I, the Violent Soldier,
Slasher is my name.
Sword and buckle by my side,
I hope to win this game.

King George

What art thou but a silly lad?

Violent Soldier

A Turkish Knight, come from Turkey land to fight.
I'll fight thee. King George,
King George, thou man of courage bold.
If thy blood be too hot
I'll quickly fetch it cold.

King George

This battle shall prepare.

{They cross swords, dig in ribs. falls to ground. }

Old Woman

King George, King George, what hast thou done?
Thou hast killed and slain my only son,
My only son, my only heir,
See how he lies bleeding there!

King George

He challenged me to fight and why should I deny?
I knew that in this battle either he or I
would surely have to die.

Old Woman

£10, £10 for a doctor!
Is there never a doctor to be found?

Doctor

Yes! Yes! In comes I, Doctor Brown,
The cleverest doctor in the town.

Old Woman

How came you to be a doctor?

Doctor

By me travels.

Old Woman

Where have you travelled?

Doctor

Through hickity, pickity, all Germany and Spain,
To cure this dead man that lies here slain.

Old Woman

Can you cure my son?

Doctor

I'll try my very goodest.

I have in my inside, outside, frontside, backside, topside,
middleside, a bottle, which my Aunt Jane sent me from Spain,
to cure this dead man that lies here slain.

Here, Jack, take three drops out of this nip nop,

And let it run down thy yip yop.

Then rise and fight thee battle.

Violent Soldier

Oh! my back!

Old Woman

What ails thy back, my son?

Violent Soldier

My back is wounded, my heart is confounded.

He knocked me out of my seven senses into four score and ten,

What never was done in Old England before,

And I hope will never be done again.

If you don't believe these words I say,

Step in Beelzebub and clear the way.

Beelzebub

In comes I, Beelzebub,

On my shoulder I carry a club,

In my hand a frying pan to fry the ham and eggs in.

One day I thought myself a jolly old man,

I courted lasses plenty,

One by one and two by two,

But none so fair as smiling Nancy.

If you don't believe these words I say,

Step in Paddywhack and clear the way.

Paddywhack

In comes I Paddywhack, with Charlie on my back.
Lightweight from Dover,
Pikel steel whirler from Over,
Fought forty-five rounds in a dusthole
And came out without never a scratch.
I'm expected to make spectacles for broken backed ducks,
crutches for blind spiders,
What do you think of me, man?
If you don't believe these words I say,
Step in Tossspot and clear the way.

{Tossspot enters wagging his tail }

{All sing }**All**

The next to come in is old Tossspot you see,
He's a valiant old man in every degree;
He's a valiant old man and he wears a pig's tail,
And all he delights in is drinking strong ale.
Fol-de-de-diddle urn, fol-de-de-de,
Fol-de-diddle urn fol de.

Notes:**Helm's Introduction**

"Collected by Brian Ballinger from Bill Gresty, (72), Newtown, Tattenhall, September 21st, 1958

Costume

Beelzebub - Carried a frying pan, knocking it with a stick. Wore a kilt. Black face.

Tossspot - Had a pigtail and a beard of cow's tail ends. Black face.

King George and the Violent Soldier - Uniforms of Cheshire Yeomanry. Wooden swords.

Old Woman - Woman's clothes, blouse, &c.

Doctor - Top hat and spectacles.

Paddywhack and Violent Soldier also had black faces. Horse's head was made of wood, but the horse was discontinued in the last few years of the Play's existence. When it appeared it was introduced between Paddywhack and Tossopot. Performances ended circa 1913 and the gang went round Huxley, Tattenhall and Weaverton. The music for the songs was not collected, but a melodeon provided the accompaniment."

Notes from Duncan Broomhead

Bill Gresty, whose version Ballinger collected and Helm published, also had his version of the play published in the letters section of the local newspaper, in it he included a whole chunk of extra words in the Doctors speech. He also spelt two of the character names differently to Helm. Paddywhack became Paddy Whack and Paddy-whack and Tossopot became Joss-Pot.

Ballinger also collected the play from Bill Cookson, who could not remember as complete a version of the play as Gresty had but he did remember the Horses head speech which did not get published.

File History:

22nd Feb.2002 - Scanned and Coded by Peter Millington

26th Sep.2005 - Notes added by Duncan Broomhead

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Last generated on 26/09/2005 by P.Millington (Peter.Millington1@virgin.net)

Souling Play from Stapleford, Cheshire, 1908 to 1914

D.Broomhead Collection (1978, J.H.Lee)

Context:

Location: *Stapleford, Cheshire, England (SJ4964)*

Year: *Perf. 1908 to 1914*

Time of Occurrence: *1st November to 6th November*

Collective Name: *Souling*

Source:

James Henry [Harry] Lee

Souling Play from Stapleford, Cheshire

Duncan Broomhead Collection, Col. June & August 1978

Cast:

[Beelzebub](#)

[Little Wit](#)

[King George](#)

[Turkey Snipe / Jack](#)

[Old Woman](#)

[Doctor Brown](#)

[Dick {The Horse }](#)

[Driver](#)

[Pigtail](#)

Text:

{An introductory song sung outside }

We are one, two, three good hearty lads, and we are all in one mind,
we have come a-souling , good nature to find,
And if you will give us one jug of beer,
We will not come a-souling, till this time next year.

Step down in your cellar, and see what you'll find,
There is ale, rum, gin and brandy, and all kind of wine,
And if you will give us one jug of beer,
We'll not come a-souling, till this time next year.

God bless the master of this house and the mistress also,
And all the little children round the table do go,
Likewise your men and maidens, your cattle and store,
And it's all that lies within you, we will wish you ten times more.

{Play }

The Soulers would enter one at a time when it was their turn to speak, they would then remain in the room until the end of the play.

{Knocking at door, someone says }

Someone

Open this door and let all our brave and gallant actors in,
We are inclined for King George to win.

Beelzebub

In comes I Beelzebub,
On my shoulder I carry a club,
In my hand a dripping tin,
Ring ting ting.

{Hits tin with club }

Little Wit

In comes I that never comes yet
With my big yed and little wits,
Although my wits are very small
I'll do my best to please you all

King George

In comes I King George
The brave and gallentest man of all,
With my broad sword and sheath
I won ten thousand pounds in gold,
And on that very self same day
I won the King of Egypt's daughter
And to the alter brought her.
If you can't believe these words I say,
Step in Turkey Snipe and clear the way.

Turkey Snipe

In comes I the Turkey Snipe,
I comes from Turkey Land to fight,
I'll fight thee King George
Though brave and gallant man of all,
If thy blood be too hot
I'll quickly make it cold.

King George

Stand back thou black Morocco dog,
I'll cut thee, I'll slice thee,
I'll send thee to Turkey Land to make mince pies of,
Mince pies hot, mince pies cold,
I'll send thee to Black Sam,
Before thou are three days old.

{pause }

Now the battle will begin.

{They fight and King George kills Turkey Snipe who falls to the ground }

Old Woman

Oh, King George, King George,
What hast thou done?
Thou has killed and slain my only son, my only heir,
How canst thou bear to see him lying bleeding there?

King George

He challenged me to fight, why should I deny?

Old Woman

Is there a Doctor to be found?

Doctor Brown

In comes I, Doctor Brown,
The best quick quack doctor in the town.

Old Woman

Where has thou travelled?

Doctor Brown

I've travelled high, I've travelled low,
Through Hail, rain, frost and snow.
Hickity, Pickity, Yorkshire and Spain,
Three times to the West Indies,
And back to Old England again
Where little pigs used to run round the streets
with knives and forks stuck in their arse,
Crying out, "Who'll eat me?"
Here Jack, take three drops out of this bottle into thy throttle
And arise and fight the battle.

{Turkey Snipe revives and rises. }

Turkey Snipe

Oh, my back.

Old Woman

What's up with thy back my son?

Turkey Snipe

My back is wounded and my heart confounded,
He knocked me out of seven senses into four score and ten.

{Enter Dick [the horse] with the Driver riding on his back }

Driver

In comes Dick and all his men,
He's come to see you once again
Was once alive and now he's dead,
And nothing but a poor old horse's head,
He was coming down Mouldsworth Hill,
With a cartload of fir bobs,
And one dropped off and pricked Dick's hind leg,
And he kicked the front side, back of the cart out.
Now Ladies and Gentlemen,
Would you kindly put your hand in your pocket
And help to buy Dick a new cart.

{Pigtail then collected money in a tambourine, does not speak. }

Notes:**Broomhead's Notes**

Collected by Duncan Broomhead in June & August 1978 from Mr James Henry (Harry) Lee aged 83 years, of Laburnum Cottage, Willington Lane, Kelsall, Cheshire.

Harry learnt the play from his parents, family and neighbours and started Souling at the age of twelve, performing the play between 1908 and the outbreak of the first World War. Although he knew of Soulers in Kelsall and Delamere he never actually saw any other gangs perform.

Harry and his gang performed their version of the Souling play for five or six nights, starting on November 1st, visiting farms, cottages, large houses and pubs over a wide area, including Stapleford, Tarvin, Hargrave, Dudden, Barrow & Tarporley.

Each year, a couple of weeks before going out Souling, Harry and his gang of friends built themselves a rough wooden hut out of sticks and planks where they could practice the play.

After each performance they took a collection, spending most of the money on fireworks. Occasionally they would receive gifts of homemade cake and if they were lucky, free beer at the pubs. Harry and his gang made a point of visiting Stapleford Hall, knowing that they would be given half a crown to go away.

There are two Stapleford's in Cheshire, Bruen Stapleford and neighbouring Foulk Stapleford. Although Harry Lee did not specify which one he meant, I am assuming that it is Bruen Stapleford which contains both Stapleford Hall and the hamlet of Stapleford.

Costume:

All costumes were home made.

Beelzebub - Ragged, black face, club.

Little Wit - Large smiling mask, cloths that do not fit.

King George - Blue velvet jacket, blue trousers with yellow paper stripes. pointed hat with crease in centre also with yellow stripes and a medal on the side. Home made sword.

Turkey Snipe - Brown face, own cloths but smart, hat with feathers in the band at the front. Home made sword.

Old Woman - Bloomers, stockings, blouse, bonnet with strings.

Doctor Brown - Tight coat, top hat, white shirt, bag containing bottles.

Horse - A broom handle for a leg and two brush heads minus bristles for the head. [The horse was of the three legged 'mast horse' type - typical of Cheshire. The operator leant forward in a stooped position holding the leg with one hand and working the head with the other

Driver - Dressed like a huntsman, red coat, whip, reins.

Pigtail - Own cloths, pig mask.

File History:

12th Oct.2005 - Digitised by Duncan Broomhead

14th Oct.2005 - Encoded by PTM

7th Nov.2005 - Corrections and amended notes from Duncan Broomhead

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Rudheath (Cheshire) Souling Play [1949]

A.Helm (1965) pp.5-12

Context:

Location: Rudheath, Cheshire, England (SJ7470)

Year: Col. 1949

Time of Occurrence: All Souls

Collective Name: Souling

Source:

Alex Helm [Ed.] *Five Mumming Plays for Schools*
London, English Folk Dance and Song Society, and The Folk-Lore Society, 1965, pp.5-12

Cast:

[King George](#)

[Black Prince / Black Prince of Paradise / Jack](#)

[Old Lady / Mary](#)

[Doctor / John Brown](#)

[Beelzebub](#)

[Dairydoubt](#)

[Wild Horse / Dick](#)

[Driver](#)

Text:

Tune from the *Guilden Sutton Play*.

D D
 We are one two three good heart - y lads, and we're
 Em A D D
 all in one mind, this night we come a -
 D G D g# A
 soul - ing, good na - ture to find, This
 D D G D
 night we come a - soul - ing as it does ap -
 A A7 D Em A D
 pear And I hope you'll re - member 'Tis soul caking time, 'Tis
 Em A7 D
 soul - cak - ing time.

We are one, two, three good hearty lads, and we're all in one mind,
 This night we come a-souling, good nature to find.
 This night we come a-souling as it does appear,
 And I hope you'll remember 'tis soulcaking time,
 'Tis soul caking time.

So the first that is a lady so gay,
 From her native country she strayed away,
 With her hat and her feathers she looks very fine
 And all that she delights in is drinking port wine.
 Is drinking port wine.

So the next that steps up is Lord Nelson you see.
 With a bunch of blue ribbons right down to his knees.
 He's a star on his forehead like silver doth shine,
 And all that he delights in is drinking strong ale.
 Is drinking strong ale.

Go down to your cellar and see what you can find,
If your barrel be not empty I'll hope you'll provide;
I hope you'll provide with your money and strong beer,
So we'll come no more a-souling until next year.

{Knock at door. Await entrance }

{Enter King George }

King George

Here I am, King George, the Champion Bold;
I've won 10,000 pounds in gold,
And by such means I've won the King of Egypt's daughter.
If you can't believe these words I say
Step in Black Prince and clear the way.

{Enter Black Prince }

Black Prince

In comes I, Black Prince of Paradise,
Born of fiery nown [Note 1]
so I will fetch King George's courage down.
If that be him that dost stand there
That slew my master's son and heir,
Soon will I make his blood
Run like nose blood.[Note 2

King George

Mind what thou sayest.

Black Prince

What I say I mean.

King George

Stand back thou black morocco dog,
And by my sword thou'll die,
I'll pierce thy body full of holes,
And make thy buttons fly.

Black Prince

How canst thou pierce my body full of holes,
When my head is cased in iron,
My breast in steel,
My toes and fingers of knuckle bone.
I challenge thee to yield.
Prepare!

{Fight starts with wooden swords. Carried on a few rounds when down goes Black Prince, wounded }

{Enter Mary }

Old Lady

King George, King George, what hast thou done?
Thou hast killed and slain my only son,
My only heir, see how he lies down bleeding there.

King George

Why, Mary, he challenged me out to fight,
And why should I deny?

Mary

Ten pounds for the best quack doctor in this town.
Five if he is a good one.

{Enter John Brown, doctor }

Doctor

Here I am, John Brown,
The best quack doctor in this town,
From the continent I come
To cure thy son King George hath slain.

Mary

{whimpering }

What sort of diseases can you cure?

Doctor

The All sorts.

Mary

What's the allsorts?

Doctor

The Ipps, the Pips, the Pops, the Gout,
A man having nineteen devils in his body,
It is bound to knock twenty out.

Mary

Cure him then.

Doctor

Here, Jack, take three drops out of this bottle,
And rise and fight the battle.

Mary

O you silly man, the dead man never stirs.

Doctor

O Mary, I quite forgot.
I have taken the right cork off the wrong bottle.
I have another bottle in my inside, outside, jacket coat, waistcoat
pocket,
which my great, great grandfather sent from Spain,
called the inny-minny oky poky
and will bring any dead man to life again.

Mary

Cure him then.

{Black Prince rises }

Black Prince

O my back, my back!

Mary

What ails thy back my son?

Black Prince

My back is broken, my heart's confounded,
knocked seventeen senses into four score,
The like was never seen in Old England before.
And if you can't believe me what I say,
Step in, Beelzebub, and clear the way.

{Enter Beelzebub }

Beelzebub

In comes I, Beelzebub,
On my shoulder I carry my club,
In my hand a dripping pan,
I reckon myself a jolly old man.
Rink Tink Tink, a sup more drink,
I drink the barrel dry.
If you can't believe these words I say,
Step in, Dairydoubt, and clear the way.

{Enter Dairydoubt }

Dairydoubt

In comes Dairydoubt,
With his shirt flap hanging out.
Five yards in and five yards out.
And if you can't believe these words I say,
Step in, Wild Horse, and clear the way.

{Enter Wild Horse and Driver }

Driver

In comes Dick and all his men,
He's come to see you once again.
He was once alive but now he's dead,
But now he's nothing but a poor old horse's head.
Stand up, Dick.

This horse has travelled high, he's travelled low,
He's travelled both through frost and snow,
He's travelled where houses are thatched with pancakes;
Walls built with penny loaves;
Streets paved with dumplings growing up apple trees.
Stand up, Dick.

This horse has an eye like an hawk
A neck like a swan,
He's tongue like a ladies' pocket book,
Now read it if you can.
Every time he opens his mouth, his head's half off.
Stand up. Dick.

Over going down yon hill last night,
Poor old Dick fell down and broke both shafts off.
Now, ladies and gentlemen, open your hearts
and see what you can give towards Dick a new cart;
not for him to draw, but for me to ride in.
Stand up, Dick.

This horse has only one leg and he is obliged to beg,
But what he begs it is but small,
But is obliged to serve us all.
Stand up, Dick.

{Dairydoubt sits on Dick's back singing following Song: }

Dairydoubt

"Murphy and his donkey," I hear the colliers cry,
The lads go shouting "Bar Bow" as I go riding by,
I never use a whip because he trots along so fast,
Although his age is 99, he came up to the last.
I went one morning early to make my donkey's bed,
But when I got to the stable, I found him lying dead.
But when the people heard the news that Murphy's ass was dead,
They swore to make a monument and put it on his head.

Driver {to Dick }

Make your obedience to your best friends.

{Horse turns on Driver }

Now to your worst if you dare.

{Music }

{Coon songs can be fitted in if necessary with banjos or melodeon to accompany it.}

Notes:**Helm's Introduction**

Mr.Lever could not remember the music for the introductory Song, but the tune, from the Guilden Sutton Play is suggested as an alternative.

Collected by Alex Helm from Mr.E.Lever, 29.11.49

COSTUME

King George - Soldier's Dress, with medals "for fun."

Black Prince - Soldiers Dress.

Mary - Shawl, dress.

Doctor - Tall hat, frock coat, white waistcoat, riding breeches, top boots, cushion stuffed under waistcoat.

Beelzebub - Jacket turned inside out, ragged trousers.

Dairydoubt - Coat turned inside out, shirt hanging out.

Driver - Top hat, red coat, riding breeches, top boots.

Dick - Horse's head, ribbons, martingales with brass ornaments, harness, chequer fastened to pole underneath to lead horse in.

All had black faces except King George, Doctor, Driver.

Helm's Footnotes

Note 1 - renown

Note 2 - Noah's flood

File History:

23rd Aug.2005 - Transcribed by Duncan Broomhead

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Soulcaking Play performed at Lymm 1930

Collected from Jack Gilbert, April 13th 1980

http://www.thelwallmorris.org.uk/lymm_book/soul_caking/play_1.htm

Characters:

Letter-in, King George, Black Prince, Old Woman, Quack Doctor, Beelzebub, Derry Doubt.

The [song](#) is sung before the action and again at the end.

The Lymm Soul-Caking Song.

Collected from Jack Gilbert April 13th 1980

We are one two three hearty lads all of one mind.
We have all come a-souling, good nature to find,
With your ale rum gin and brandy, and all kinds of wine.

God bless the master of this house, and the mistress also.
And the dear little children that gather round your door.
With your ale rum gin and brandy, and all kinds of wine.

Go down in your cellar for some apples and pears.
And give us a few - for you'll never be the worse.
With your ale rum gin and brandy, and all kinds of wine.

Please put your hand in your pocket and pull out your purse,
And give us a souling, for better or for worse.
With your ale rum gin and brandy, and all kinds of wine.

Go down in your cellar and bring us some beer.
And we'll not come a-souling till this time next year.
With your ale rum gin and brandy, and all kinds of wine.

http://www.thelwallmorris.org.uk/lymm_book/soul_caking/play_1.htm

LETTER-IN

In comes I, Letter-in. Strike a fire and make a light,
'Cause in this house there's going to be a terrible fight,
'Tween King George and the Black Prince.
If you don't believe these few words I say,
Step in King George and clear the way.

KING GEORGE

'Twas I who fought the fiery dragon, and brought it to the slaughter,
And by these means, won the King of Egypt's daughter.
If you don't believe these few words I say,
Step in Black Prince and clear the way.

BLACK PRINCE

In comes I, Black Prince, born of high renown.
This night I come to take King George's life and courage down.
If that be him that standeth there, That slew my master's son and
heir,
If that be him of royal blood, I'll make it flow like Noah's Flood.

KING GEORGE

Stand back thou black Morocco dog, Or by my sword you'll die.
I'll pierce thy body full of holes, And make thy buttons fly.

BLACK PRINCE

How cans't thou pierce my body and make my buttons fly,
When my body's covered with steel?

KING GEORGE

On guard!

(They fight, and the Black Prince is defeated)

If you don't believe these few words I say,
Step in Old Woman and clear the way.

OLD WOMAN

Oh! King George, King George, what hast thou done?
Thou'st killed and slain my only son, my only heir.
See how he lies bleeding there.

KING GEORGE

Well, Old Woman, he challenged me to fight.
Better to fight than to die.
If you don't believe these few words I say,
Step in Quack Doctor and clear the way.

QUACK DOCTOR

In comes I, Quack Doctor. Here I come from the continent,
To cure this man which King George has slain.
In my inside, outside, backside pocket,
I've some ooky-pooky-snooky,
It will bring a dead man back to life again.

(Doctor revives Black Prince with small bottle)

If you don't believe these few words I say,
Step in Beelzebub and clear the way.

BEELEBUB

In comes I, Beelzebub. On me showlder I carries me club.
In me 'and me dripping pon. I reckon mesel' a reg'lar owld mon.
If you don't believe these words I say,
Step in Derry Doubt and clear the way.

DERRY DOUBT

In comes I, Derry Doubt, with me shirt-lap hanging out.
Five yards in and five yards out. Out goes I, little Derry Doubt.

End with the [souling song](#) again.

Text © 2002 [Geoff Bibby](#)

Site maintained by [Andrew White](#), Thelwall Morris Men

http://www.thelwallmorris.org.uk/lymm_book/soul_caking/play_1.htm

The "Horses Head" Play - The Lymm Version

Sent by Mrs. M. E. Leather of Chapel Lane, Partington to Mrs. Yarwood of Oughtrington in the November of 1950

Characters:

Letter-In, King George, Turkish Champion, Old Woman, Doctor, Be-elzebub, Dick the Horse.

Text:

Opening Chorus

Here come one, two, three hearty lads and we are all in one mind.
This night we come a-souling, good nature to find.
For it's all that we are souling for, 'tis the time of the year.

Letter-In

Please open all these doors and let our gallant actors in,
For it is in favour that King George shall win.
Whether he sit, stand, fight or fall,
We do our best to please you all.
Room gallants, room I do require.
If you don't believe these words I say,
Step in King George and clear the way.

King George

In comes King George the champion bold,
'Tis I that won ten thousand pounds in gold.
'Tis I that fought the fiery dragon,
and dragged him to an alter (sic) altar?
And by means of death and slaughter
I mean to win the King of Egypt's daughter.
If you don't believe these words I say,
Step in the Turkish Champion and clear the way.

Turkish Champion

In comes I the Turkish Champion both gallant and brave.
I have come here to fight King George by money or by means.
I'll cut him, I'll slash him,
I'll send him off to Turkish lands to make mince pies of.
What art thou but a silly lad?

King George

Call me no silly lad, but a brave and gallant soldier.
Stand back thou black Morrocan dog,
Else I will make thy buttons fly
With this broad sword and buckles by my side. Prepare!

They fight and the Turkish Champion is slain

Old Woman

Oh! King George, what hast thou done?
Thou hast gone and slain mine only son, mine only son!

King George

He boldly challenged me to fight, why should I deny?
For in this great battle, either him or I would surely have to die.
Is there a doctor to be found?

Doctor

I'm a doctor.

Old Woman

Come in doctor.

Doctor

In comes I, John Brown, the best quack doctor in this town.
I have come here to cure the man that King George has slain.

Old Woman

How coms't thou to be a doctor?

Doctor

By my travels.

Old Woman

Where hast thou travelled?

Doctor

Through Hiccaty Piccaty, Iceland and Spain,
Germany and France and back again.
I've seen houses thatched with pancakes high,
Roads paved with dumplings,
Black puddings growing on gooseberry trees,
Little pigs running about with knives and forks in their backs
Crying "Who'll eat me?"

Old Woman

Can thou cure my son?

Doctor

I'll try my goodest. here Jack, open thy throttle,
Take a little of this bottle. Rise up and fight the battle,
The battle thou art sure to win.

Turkish Champion

Oh! My back.

Old Woman

What ails thy back my son?

Turkish Champion

My back is broken, my head is confounded,
Knocked out at seven score and ten,
Which has never been done in England,
And will never be done again.
If you don't believe these words I say,
Step in Be-elzebub and clear the way.

Be-elzebub

In come I, Be-elzebub,
On my shoulder I carry my club,
In my hand a dripping pan,
I think myself a jolly old man.
With a ring ting ting, I'll drink the barrel dry.
I'll saddle and bridle my old black snail,
And make my whip of a mouse's tail.
If you don't believe these words I say,
Step in wild Horse and clear the way.

Dick the Horse

In comes Dick and all his men,
led by his master He's come to see you once again.
He once was alive, but now he's dead,
He's nothing now but a Horse's Head.
Stand up Dick!

Poor old Dick, he's one of the finest colts travelling.
His age is rising three,
Good colour, good action, eye like a hawk, neck like a swan,
Tooth like a ladies' pocket book, and read it if you can.
And he's as many wrinkles and jinkles in his forehead
As there is in an acre of well ploughed land.
Stand up Dick!

Poor old Dick, he has but one leg,
And for his living he's obliged to beg.
What he begs for be it great or small,
It has to keep poor Dick and maintain us all.
Stand up Dick!

Closing Chorus

God bless the master of this house, and the mistress also,
And the dear little children that stand round your door.

Put your hand in your pocket and pull out your purse,
And give us a trifle for you'll ne'er be no worse,
For 'tis all that we are souling for, 'tis the time of the year.

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TRDG LIMERICK COMPETITION 2005

First Prize

Corrine Male, Leicestershire, England:

It started three centuries ago
So the meaning's not easy to know;
Is it comic or tragic
Or midwinter magic
Or merely a medicine show?

Second Prize

Robert Walden, Brafront Guisers, Bedfordshire, England:

The Brafronts from fair Bedford shire,
Put their Doctor on eBay for hire
He received just one bid
So you know what they did?
They offered his part to the buyer!

Third Prize

Charlie Leslie, Brafront Guizers, Bedfordshire, England:

Like life, the play's done in a flash
And it all seems a bit of a hash:
Two knights have a fight,
The Old mother takes fright,
And the Devil ends up with the cash.