THE PLOUGH MONDAY PLAYS

A Thesis

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by

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The English Plough Monday play is an important variation of the traditional mummers' play. There exist numerous scripts of these plays, but they have never been seriously studied by any student of the theatre, and they have never even been collected and published together, thus making research on them most difficult. This paper will therefore attempt to fill two gaps in the literature of the theatre by gathering together the texts of all extant Plough Monday plays (Appendix II), accompanied by studies of three of their most important characteristics: their origins, the stock phrases, and the sword dances.

The Plough plays are an apt subject for a research paper, for, with the intense mechanization of modern life, they are rapidly fading into oblivion. The extant texts have been published in several different places, and this researcher has even found a previously-unmentioned version which exists only in chapbook form.¹ For any scholar of the English Folk Drama the mere gathering-together of these

¹Anonymous, "Olde FFrends wyth newe Faces" (London, 1882).
plays represents a significant step forward. The last volume to deal even partially with them was E. K. Chambers' *The English Folk-Play*, which was published in 1933. To date this is the definitive work on mummers' plays *per se*; but if a researcher wanted to study only the Plough plays, he would be forced to consult other sources, the best of which is an article by Charles Read Baskervill in *Modern Philology* (XXI, No. 3, February 1924). Other sources would be publications of the English Folk-Lore Society (which are unfortunately in very few American libraries) and chapbooks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Library of The Ohio State University has an extremely limited amount of information about the Plough Monday plays. The nearest library with satisfactory reference material is the Cleveland Public Library, and in particular the folk-lore collection in the John Griswold White Room. This library probably contains as much information about the Plough plays as any other library in the United States; the only other large folk-lore collection in America is at Harvard University. Nearly all references in this paper will be to volumes found in the Cleveland Public Library.

So that the reader will be better able to distinguish Plough Monday plays from other mummers' plays, it is
essential at this point to give a brief description of the origins, incidents and characters of Flough Monday plays in general.

Flough Monday is the first Monday after the Epiphany; E. O. James describes the ritual (but not the play) in his Seasonal Feasts and Festivals, where he states:

On Monday after the Epiphany, when work in the farms was resumed after the Christmas recess, ending with the Twelfth Night, the ploughs to be used in the preparation of the fields for the spring crops were blessed and decorated and carried round the village.2

The ancient origin of these rituals is discussed by Sir James George Frazer in his Golden Bough:

To the primitive mind the obvious way of obtaining a result in nature is to make an imitation of it on a small scale. The pulling of the plough is an imitation of the act of ploughing.3

As time progressed these fertility rites of the soil were accompanied by mummers. On Flough Monday, particularly in many rural villages in Lincolnshire, these mummers perform for the local citizenry. The mummers are described by Enid Welsford as

villagers who disguise themselves at Christmas time and act out a traditional play involving, among other things, a fight, the death of the hero, his revival by the doctor, and a final quête or money collection.4

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This definition is quite apt. Most Plough Monday plays do have a combat in which one of the contestants is killed, and he is later revived. This combat, according to most scholars of medieval England, dates back to the primitive ritual of old king—new king: the old king must be killed before the new king can take over. As this applies to an agricultural festival, winter must be slain before spring may begin. Tiddy, in fact, contends that

The episode which is the heart and essence of the play is the combat of the antagonists and the revival of the fallen by the doctor. The antagonists brag and bluster in a style which in other early literature is associated only with what were clearly great and exalted characters; they are quite evidently an attempt at the heroic.

If we are justified in making any deductions from the folk plays that survive, we may take it as certain that the pagan ritual included an heroic figure who slew his antagonist and that this antagonist was afterwards revived.5

An heroic figure is obviously used in these plays to symbolize the winter season. This character's death is the equivalent of a winter of cold and darkness; as the victim in the Ampleforth Play says after his revival, "I've had such a sleep as the like was never seen."6

Many authorities contend that a sword dance is an integral part of the Plough play; both P. H. Ditchfield and 7 R. J. E. Tiddy share this view. Tiddy even goes so far

6See Appendix II to this paper, p. 68.
7P. H. Ditchfield, Old English Customs Extant at the Present Time (London, 1968), p. 49; Tiddy, op. cit., p. 72
as to state that the Sword Dance play is a separate form of mummers' play, both forms of drama emanating from the same source:

To consider the Mummers' Play in isolation and apart from the Sword Dance Play would be unsuitable and misleading, because in both these forms there is a combat, a death, and a revival, and this common feature is so essential that both forms of play must be attributed to a common origin. 8

This researcher, however, agrees with the distinction made by Douglas Kennedy between these two types of plays. According to Kennedy there are two important features separating them: in a sword dance play,

1. The structure of the play is conditioned by the requirements of the dance.

2. The ritual killing, if any, is carried out by means of the 'lock' of swords placed round the victim's neck, and not as the result of the hand-to-hand combat between two individuals so characteristic of the Mummers' Play. 9

This researcher has found that the presence of a sword dance does not necessarily indicate that a play is a Flough play rather than a mummers' play, though a majority of the Flough plays contain sword dances. Because of their special connection with the Flough play, they will be more

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8 Tiddy, op. cit., p. 72.
fully discussed later. It suffices to say at this moment that the sword dance can be a part of the Plough play, that it most definitely has pagan origins, and that it deals most dramatically with the death of the victim, who is to be revived later in the play.

In some of the Plough Monday plays there is no sword dance, but rather a jumping-about by the performers. Frazer mentions this curious aspect of the performance as follows:

The clue to the meaning of these curious rites is probably furnished by the dances or rather jumps of the men who wore bunches of corn in their hats. When we remember how often on the Continent about the same time of year the peasants dance and jump for the express purpose of making the crops grow tall, we may conjecture with some probability that the intention of the dancers on Plough Monday was similar; the original notion, we may suppose, was that the corn would grow that year just as high as the dancers hopped.  

Finally, some Plough Monday plays have neither sword dances nor hopping of any sort.

A large part of most Plough Monday plays is made up of the sentimental drama, or "Fool's Wooing." Those plays extant which do not have it may be considered to be degenerate versions of earlier plays which included this element. The Fool's Wooing has been completely discussed by Charles

Read Baskervill in his article in *Modern Philology* (XXI, No. 3, Feb., 1924), and the reader is advised to consult this source for an in-depth study of this aspect.

Most Flough plays have essentially the same stock characters (except for the Revesby Play, which is so different that it must be studied separately). The five characters who reappear the most often are the Fool, the Eldest Son, the Lady, the Doctor, and St. George. In some texts quite similar characters appear under different names but give the same speeches. A complete cast list of all the characters has been appended to this paper; it has been compiled since most versions of the Flough plays do not begin with a cast list at all.

The Fool, or Clown, as he is sometimes called, is the presenter and consequently the first speaking character in many of the extant versions. This character may be assumed to be purely dramatic in origin.11 Tiddy, who was writing before Chambers' work on the *Mummers' Plays* was published, considers him merely an instrument of fetichism; he cites the wearing of a calf's tail and the carrying of an animal bladder as proofs of the survival of the belief that the power of an animal could be acquired by wearing his skin. This part is quite standarized, and there is

relatively little variation in the lines from one Plough play to another. His fooling consists mainly of banter and nonsense which is not particularly amusing in itself: its humor comes from the fact that it is nonsense. It reminds one most of all of some sort of ritual which has degenerated to the level of farce: the Fool, then, could be likened to a cleric speaking only mumbo-jumbo.

Saint George is an admirable symbol of the passage of the seasons. In the original legend he was a death-and-revival hero: he was tortured, chopped into little pieces and revived by the Archangel Michael. Tiddy suggests that his introduction into the British canon of saints came about through the popularity of the various cycles of romances; but his passage from there to mummers' and Plough plays is not completely understood, nor is it clear when this happened. It is clear, however, that he fitted the part admirably, and he has never been displaced. It is interesting to note that in about half the plays he is the slayer, and in the other half the slain. He thus is both the agent and the acted-upon, that which causes the passage of the seasons and the passage itself.

If the characters in the Plough plays were ranked in order of importance, the Doctor would come third, immediately

12Tiddy, op. cit., p. 75.
after the two combatants. He is of extreme significance in
the Spring - Winter ritual. In order to complete the ritual-
istic aspect of the play the combatant represents Winter
and must be revived as Spring; without the Doctor this
could not happen. His part is quite similar in all the
plays, as Douglas Kennedy points out:

> His part is recognizable always by the speeches he
> makes concerning his travels through Italy, Germany,
> France, and Spain, and the wonderful cures he can
> accomplish. His dialogue in the Amponsforth and
> Billerby Sword-Dance Plays is reflected faithfully
> in all Mummers' Plays. 13

The Doctor's speech about his travels is comic in tone;
and if we say that the Doctor is the descendant of the
medicine men of primitive races, we can also say that when
the medicine man was no longer feared, he became a comic
object. In only one play(with a death - rebirth cycle)
is there no Doctor, the Revesby Play (the Fool revives
himself); in the remaining plays a doctor is necessary,
and most scholars trace his origin to the pagan medicine
man. It has occurred to this researcher (but to no other
authority ) that his travels link him in some manner to the
Crusades; but this is impossible to prove without further,
exhaustive research.

According to Charles Read Baskervill, a sixteenth-
century interlude entitled the Enterlude of Youth had Youth

13Kennedy, op. cit., p. 17.
saying the following lines:

I am the hayre of my fathers lande
And it is come into my hande
I care for no more.\textsuperscript{14}

In the Revesby Play, the oldest and one of the most developed complete mummers' plays extant, we have Pepper Breeches saying:

I am my father's eldest son,
And heir of all his land,
And in a short time, I hope,
It will fall into my hands.

These two passages show the use of stock phrases coming from the ordinary language of the Middle Ages; but more important, they show the early use of the Eldest Son. Baskervill contends, and this writer agrees, that this character owes his origin to the old king-new king ritual. The Eldest Son is, of course, the new king who is soon to inherit all his father's lands. Baskervill states,

In feasts of misrule, morris dances and folk plays the relation of the two leaders was conventionally represented by that of a father, often a festival lord or king, and his son or heir, who corresponds to the Eldest Son of the Lincolnshire play.\textsuperscript{15}

Most Plough plays have a man-woman character, either Bessy, old Dame Jane, or the Lady. Some have more than one of these characters. This is a man-woman character, of course, since all mummers are men. It is possible that this character

\textsuperscript{14}Charles Read Baskervill, "Mummers' Wooing Plays in England," Modern Philology, XXI, No. 3 (Feb., 1924), 232.
\textsuperscript{15}Baskervill, op. cit., pp. 232-233.
is an entirely dramatic creation, but then one must find a reason why this part is invariably played by a youth disguised as a woman; one could say, for example, that the "man\'woman is the survival of an endeavour to promote fertility by the mere fact of wearing a woman\'s clothes."\textsuperscript{16} Such a ritual is not uncommon among primitive tribes, and this hypothesis must therefore be admitted. Chambers, thinking along similar lines, thought that at some distant period religion was the office of the women, for the men were occupied with hunting and other pursuits. When the men took over the work of agriculture and also the rites of religion, they also adopted female disguise.\textsuperscript{17}

The man-woman could also be explained as the survival of some sort of primitive marriage such as still exists in primitive, rural areas. The part is played by a boy only because it was not considered proper for a woman to appear on stage.

This character is essential for the wooing aspect of the play, which in turn is an integral part of the Plough play, although Tiddy says the contrary.\textsuperscript{18} Baskervill even devotes an entire chapter of his work to wooing, and his logic is unassailable.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16}Tiddy, op. cit., pp. 76-7.
\textsuperscript{17}E. K. Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage (Oxford, 1903), I, 106-7
\textsuperscript{18}Tiddy, op. cit., pp. 76-7
\textsuperscript{19}Baskervill, op. cit., pp. 225-272
It would appear that all the other characters in the Plough plays are, if one can suppose that they have a ritual origin, supernumeraries left over from the ritual dance.

This researcher is primarily interested in the written texts of the Plough Monday Plays. The information recorded in this paper concerning the characters of these plays is sufficient for the understanding of the texts, but is by no means complete. Any reader wishing further information on the characters of the Plough Monday Plays would be wise to consult any of the books by Chambers, Tiddy, or the publications of the British Folk-Lore Society mentioned in the bibliography of this paper. All volumes are available at the Cleveland Public Library.
Chapter II
Stock Phrases

Even a cursory investigation of the Flough Monday plays will reveal an extensive use of stock phrases, i.e., specific dialogue usually spoken by a stock character in mummers' plays. This researcher has found several reasons for the presence of these phrases, including the ordinary speech of the Middle Ages, proximity of localities where they were given, wandering minstrels, games, song and interludes, and religious ceremonies. Consequently this chapter has two purposes, first to show that these phrases cannot be traced to any one of these origins, and, second, to show the great extent of their use in the Flough Monday plays.

The medieval English dialects were fairly uniform, and this could account for the similarity of stock phrases in mummers' plays. For example, the phrasing "I needs must" appears in many morality and miracle plays. This type of phrasing also appears in the Appleforth Play, where the Queen says, "Indeed, I needs must tell you."\footnote{Tiddy, op. cit., p. 134.}
This researcher believes that this was a typical form of address during the Middle Ages. Since the folk were illiterate it stands to reason that they would incorporate their everyday language into their plays. Once the plays had a set form they were handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

Another reason for the similarity of stock phrases in these plays is their geographical location. Almost all the Plough plays come from Lincolnshire, and if the basic dialect is similar throughout the County (as it is), it stands to reason that the language used in the plays would be the same.

A third hypothesis is that the mummers might have borrowed their stock phrases from groups of itinerant players. Charles Read Baskervill, who used the Revesby Play as a basic text, traced the speeches of Blue Breeches, Ginger Breeches and Pepper Breeches to a popular Interlude entitled The Enterlude of Youth. A comparison of ll. 39-58 of The Enterlude of Youth and ll. 308-33 of the Revesby Play reveals striking similarities:
Enterlude of Youth (ll. 39–58)

Youth.
A backe felowes and give me roune
Or I shall make you to auoyde sone
I am goodbye of personne
I am pereles where euuer I come
My name is youth I tell the
I florysh as the vine tre
Who may be likened vnto me
In my youthe and Iolitye
My heare is royall and bushed thicke
My body plyaunt as a hael styck
Myne armes be bothe fayre and strong
My fingers be both faire and longe
My chest bigge as a tunne
My legges be full lighte for to runne
To hoppe and daunce and make mery
By the masse I rekke not a cherie
What so euer I do
I am the heyre of my fathers lande
And it is come into my bande
I care for no more.

Revesby Play (ll. 303–83)

Blue Breeches.
I am a youth of jollitree:
Where is there one like unto me?
My hair is bush'd very thick;
My body is like an hael stick;
My legs they quaver like an ed;
My armes become my body wed;
My fingers they are long and small:
Am not I a jolly youth, proper and tall?

Ginger Breeches.
I am a jolly young man of flesh,
blood and bone;
Give care, my masters all, each one!

Pepper Breeches.
I am my father's eldest son,
And hair of all his hand,
And in a short time, I hope,
It will fall into my hands.

The phrasing of medieval games could also have influenced the dialogue of the mummers. Since their phraseology became fixed during that period, there is no reason to discount the hypothesis that the phraseology of medieval games affected that of the mummers.

In her British Folk-Lore, Folk-Songs and Singing Games Lady Gomme gives an example of a traditional game which developed into a play. Though this is not a Plough play, it stands to reason that if one game could develop into a full

2Baskerville, op. cit., p. 232.
play, then another game or part of a game could have
influenced a Plough play.

Lady Gomme’s description of this “individual” form of
game cannot be improved upon and is therefore given in
full:

There is yet another form of game, which I call
the “individual” form, and which might not at first
be thought to be traditional at all. This is where
the “line” and the “circle” and the “arch” disappear.
The chief characters take each a character and speak
their respective parts, those who have nothing to say
usually being represented as “children” of one of the
characters. The singing, too, has dropped. These
games, or “plays”—for such they are—have customs or
traditions for their story, but the stories are usually
of a later period. A very striking example is known
as “The Witch,” or “Mother, the pot boils over.” Here
we have for characters a “mother,” a “witch,” “a pot,”
an “elder daughter,” and a number of others—at least
seven—who are the mother’s children and young. These
have no words to say. The story is this. A mother is
going out washing: she tells her eldest daughter and
gives her charge of the young ones; tells her to be
careful of the witch and not to let her in, and to be
sure and not allow the pot to boil over. After the
mother has gone the witch appears, and asks for a light
or a coal from the fire, her own having gone out. The
girl gives it, the witch enters and runs off with one
of the children, and the pot boils over. The daughter
calls to her mother, who returns, finds a child gone,
scocks her daughter, gives her directions as before, and
again goes to work. The same thing happens until all
the children have gone. The mother then hears a terrible
noise from the boiling over of the pot, and goes in search
of the little ones. She meets the witch, who misdirects
her, until, finally, she recovers the children and the
witch is taken prisoner. There is not much of the dia-
logue left... but what there is is very spirited and
dramatic.3

3Sir Lawrence and Lady Gomme, British Folk-Lore, Folk-
Songs and Singing Games (London, 1894), pp. 21-22.
Another traditional game which bears strong resemblances to mummers' plays is "Ragman." The game consists of introductions of various characters, and the first two lines closely resemble those of Flough plays:

My ladyes and my maistresses echone,
Lyke hit unto your humbybloc wommanhede....

Traditional songs and poems could very well have been incorporated into the mummers' plays. In the Ampleforth Play, for example, part of the Clown's speech is repetition and sounds very much like a refrain from a song:

She's a sweet and modest creature,
And she's of a noble fame,
She's a sweet and modest creature,
And Susannah is her name.

Also, when Baskervill was studying the Swinderby Play, he discovered that two of the speeches had a very high correlation to a slip-ballad, "Young Roger of the Mill." Examination of the two texts shows that this is indeed the case.

Swinderby Play
(Lady)  O roger you are mistaken
       a damsel i reside
       I am in no such haste
       as to be a ploughmans bride
       I live in hopes to gain a farmers son)
(Husbandman?) If that be it good Mistress
       I will come no more i have done
       you may take your farmers son
       and wed with all my heart
       although my name be roger
       i can follow the plough and cart

4Alice Bertha Gomme, Traditional Games of England
(London, 1894), I, 104-5.
Slip-ballad

"I thank you for your offer," the damsel she replied,
"But I am not in such haste to be a ploughman's bride,
For I do live in hopes to marry a farmer's son."
"If that be so, farewell, I'll go," said Roger,
"for I have done."

"Your horses you have dress'd, I think I've heard you say,
Made all in readiness, and having come this way
Just sit and chat a-while;" "No, no indeed, not I,
For I cannot sit, and cannot chat, as I've other
fish to fry.

"Go take your farmer's son, with all my honest heart,
For though my name be Hodge and I drive the plough
and cart...."

Some scholars also believe that the mummers borrowed
from the medieval interludes, and this researcher is in
agreement. It has already been shown above, for example,
that the Revesby Play did borrow heavily from the "Enterlude
of Youth."

Finally, it has been suggested that elements of
religious ceremonies found their way into the stock phrases
of the Plough plays. Although the following quotation from
Lady Comme deals primarily with the dance, her premise can
easily be applied also to the phrasing of the plays.

Anthropology has taught us that in times of joy
and mirth, sorrow and loss, victory and defeat,
weddings and funerals, plagues and pestilences, famine
and plenty, civilized and savage alike dance, act, and
sing their griefs and their joys. The gods of all
nations have been worshipped by pantomimic dance and

6 Sackervill, op. cit., p. 266.
and song, their altars and temples were encircled by their worshippers, and, as the occasion was one of fear or joy, and the god entertained or terrified by his followers, so would the actions and voices of the dancers be in accord. The god is shown what his people want done, and he is entertained or threatened according to the people's ideas of what is most likely to ensure their wishes being carried out by him.

When once particular actions performed were recognized as successful, fitting, or beautiful, they would tend to become repeated and stereotyped, and the same forms would be used for other gods, other occasions, and other customs where requirements were similar. The circle dance, for instance, after being performed several times, would necessarily become a part of the religious customs, and form a part of ordinary religious observance. It would become particularly associated with the place where it was first instituted or found effectual, and would be used to inaugurate other festivals at other places.

If these customary dances obtained and have survived in religious ritual to the present day, is it not to be expected that we should find survivals in dance form of non-religious customs which also impressed themselves strongly in the minds of the people; or rather, I should say, of other customs formerly held to be religious and to require the sanction of ceremony, but now deemed purely secular? The facts of births, marriages, death, the sowing and gathering in of the food of the people, the protection of man and cattle from disease and from animals of prey, the necessity for water and fire for the house and the village have been surrounded with ceremonials which have lasted and been transmitted from generation to generation—altering to suit later ideas, it is true, but preserving through all some trace of the events which first called them into existence. More especially have their dramatic forms survived. This it is which made them, when no longer needed as religious ceremonies, appeal so strongly to the natural dramatic instinct that they become the "plays" of the people and the children. 7

As can be seen from the previous pages, there is no one source to which scholars can point with certainty as the sole origin of the stock phrases in the Plough Monday plays.

7Same, op. cit., pp. 21-22.
Perhaps the best evidence that these plays did have several sources is the following by E. K. Chambers, speaking about the *Ampleforth Play*, the text of which can be found in Appendix II to this paper.

This curious play bears all the marks of a compilation. The performers are introduced three times and the second attempt borrows the 'big head' and 'iron and steel' formulas of the Nummers' Play. There are two sets of calling-on verses. The Queen is Susannah in the First Part and Rose in the Second Part, and while the Second Part is a variant of the *Fool's Wooing*, the First Part is largely pieced together, as Sharp pointed out to me, from scraps of Congreve's *Love for Love* (1695) iii, 3, although this does not give the name Susannah. The Third Part is chaff about dancing and singing, such as we find in the Plough Plays /Sharp says that this is a Plough Play/. The Fourth Part has a phrase about sticking a heifer, which corresponds to the killing of a bullock at Eardon /This is the only play with such a scene/. The Fifth Part is clearly the same in origin as the slighter version of Eardon, Bellerby, and Sowerby. Its Cure proper also closely resembles some of the more elaborate scenes in the Nummers' Plays. The Land of Cockaigne bit is there. The reputation and suggested burial have also analogues, more or less remote, in the Nummers' Plays, but the 'psalm' used consists of a set of verses, which I have also found independently, with King Arthur instead of King Henry as their subject. The victim's will recalls that of the Fool at Revesby.\(^2\)

In order to show the wide use of stock phrases in the Plough Monday plays it is necessary only to take any one of the characters and compare his speeches in all the extant versions. Since space is limited in this paper, this writer

\(^2\)Chambers, *The English Folk-Play*, op. cit., pp. 149-150.
has decided to limit herself to comparison of the first (or most typical) speech by the Fool in each play. The fact that the speeches of the other characters also are very similar in all versions would be made evident by even a casual perusal of the texts in Appendix II to this paper.

I: The Face Egg (from Acaster).

Room, room, brave gallants, give us room to sport,
For in this room we wish for to resort--
Resort, and to repeat our merry rhyme,
For remember, good sirs, this is Christmas time.
The time to cut up goose-pies now doth appear,
So we are come to act our merry Christmas here.
At the sound of the trumpet and beat of the drum,
Make room, brave gentlemen, and let our actors come.
We are the merry actors that traverse the street;
We are the merry actors that fight for our meat;
We are the merry actors that show pleasant play;
Step in, St. George, thou champion, and clear the way.

II: The Ampleforth Play. /*The Fool or Clown does not make the first speech in this play, for the King does. However, in the Second Part of this play the Clown makes his stock speech.*/

Here comes I, that never come yet,
With great head and little wit.
Though my head be great
And my wit be small,
I've six fine lads
'll please you all.
My head's made of iron,
My heart's made of steel,
My hands and feet of knuckle-bone,
I challenge thee out to feel.
III: The Bassingham Children's Play. \[The text does not give names to the characters, but 'Part the 1st' is usually given by the Fool or Clown.\]

Here comes I that has never been yet.  
with my great head and little wit.  
my head is great my wit is small  
I will act the fools part to please you All.  
I have a few little boys standing at the door  
in ribings neatly drest.  
and for to please you all  
they shall do their best.  
Step in merrymen All.

IV: The Bassingham Men's Play.

Good Evening Ladys and Gentlemen all  
This merry time at Christmas I have made it bold to call  
I hope you will not take it ill what I am going to say  
I have some more Boys & Girls driving on this way  
I have some little Boys stands at the Door  
In Ribons they are neatly dressed  
For to please you all they shall do their best  
Step in Merrymen all.

V: Bulby, Lincolnshire.

In comes I as never bin before,  
There's many more actors at the door;  
Some can laugh and some can sing:  
By your consent they shaw walk in.

VI: A Christmas Play (from Broughton).

Gentlemen and Ladies  
I'm come to see you all  
This merry time of Christmas,  
I neither knock nor call;  
I come in so brisk and bold  
with confidence I say.  
What can you expect of a Fool  
that knows no other way.  
A Fool I know I am
and so do you.
Fools and little children
for most parts speak true.

My name is noble Anthony
I'm as live and as blyth and as mad
and as melancholy as that mantletree
make room for noble Anthony
and all his jovial Company.

VII: Clayworth, Nottinghamshire.

In comes I bold Tom
A live and quick young fellow,
I've come here to taste your meat
Many folks cry they're ripe and mellow
Good evening, good ladies and gentlemen all
It's Plough Monday which makes me so bold and scold
I hope you won't be offended
At these few words I've got to say
Many more pretty boys and girls will pass this way,
Some can dance and some can sing,
By your consent they shall come in.
Hokum pokum France and Spain
We'd meet the recruiting sergeant all the same.

VIII: Clayworth, Nottinghamshire (another version).

In comes I that's never been before
With (any number) actors standing at the door.
Some can dance and some can sing.
If you consent I will walk in.
(Enters) In comes I that's never been yet
With my big head and little wit
My head's so great and my wit's so small
I can act the fool as well as you all.

IX: The Hibaldestow Play.

Good evening, ladies and Gentlemen
I am making rather a bold call;
But Christmas time is a merry time,
I have come to see you all.
I hope you will not be offended
For what I have got to say:
Here is a few more jolly fellows
Will step in this way.
X: The 'Plough Jacks' Play (from Kermington).

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, I have come to give
you a bold call
As Xmas is a merry time I have come to see you all
I hope you won't be offended for what I've got to say--
Presently there will be some more boys and
girls come trapping along this way--
Some can whistle and some can sing
By your consent they will come in--
Hookam, Spookam, Spankam and Spain
In comes the Sergeant of the same.

XI: A Christmas Play (from Keynsham). [This play does not
contain a Fool, but it is interesting to note that
'Father Christmas' does the presenting (a job usually
associated with the Fool) and in so doing uses phrases
reminiscent of the Fool.]

In come I, Old Father Christmas, welcome or welcome not.
I hope old Father Christmas will never be forgot.
   A room, a room
   I do presume
For me and my brave gallants all
Please Sir to give leave to rhyme
For now I am come this merry Christmas time.

XII: Kirton-in-Lindsey. [In this text, as can be seen by
referring to the complete text appended to this
paper, there is no specific part for a Fool or Clown.
However, the speech called 'Part I' contains stock
phrases similar to those given to the Fool in other
versions.]

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen all,
Xmas being a merry time
We thought we would give you a call:
And if you will listen
To what I've got to say,
For in a short time there will be
Some more pretty boys and girls this way.
Some can dance and some can sing;
By your consent they shall come in.
XIII: The Recruiting Ser gent.

In come I noble Antony
as mad and as milde and as blithe
as your old Mantle Tree
make room for nob/le/ Antony
and all his jovell company
I have four mery mery actors stand at the door
some can dance and some can sing,
if you will consent they shall come in

XIV: The Revesby Play.

Come, follow me, merry Men all,
Tho' we have made bold for to call,
It is only once of the Year,
That we are so merry here.

XV: The Swinderby Play.

In comes 1 to velw this noble room to act most bravely
let this room be large or small or of great desarter
wee wish to act in all our acting parts
as for any further abstence a las for him 1 crave
and after mee comes a soldier fine and brave.

XVI: The Typical Text. (This text comes from no particular locality but is simply a version which the author says is performed in some parts of Lincolnshire.)

In come I, Tom Fool,
The biggest fool you've ever seen;
There's five more little boys out here,
By your consent they shall come in.

There also exist three versions of Plough Monday plays which do not contain a part for the Fool or Clown. The Durham text has no such part at all, and the North Lincoln Wolds text is incomplete; in this latter no Fool's part is extant. Finally, the Sword Dancer text has no part for
a Fool, since the introducing is done by the Captain. This may or may not be a Plough play *per se*, but this researcher feels it must be regarded as such; Sharp speaks of a play at Durham with the same set of characters, and Ditchfield's description of the dress of the Plough Boys corresponds closely to that of the characters in this version. This play is also given at Christmas time.

It is in any case apparent from the speeches quoted above that the Plough Monday plays as a whole reflect certain stock phrases which, as was discussed in the first part of this chapter, could have come from one or several common sources.
CHAPTER III
THE SWORD DANCE

In the Plough Monday plays as well as in most mummers' plays the central action is the death and subsequent revival of the slain character. This mimetic death is usually accomplished in the Plough plays by the use of swords placed around the victim's neck and withdrawn in such a manner as to indicate decapitation.

Many of the Plough plays are accompanied by sword dances in which either long swords or rapiers are used. On the following page will be found a table in which the extant Plough plays are broken down into four categories: (a) those which have sword dances, (b) those in which swords are used but no dance is indicated, (c) those in which a dance (but not necessarily a sword dance) is indicated, and (d) those in which no dance at all is indicated. Also, the dances at Sleigh and Flamborough are mentioned since they are performed on Plough Monday; but they do not have a connecting play.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plays which have sword dances</th>
<th>Swords used, no dance indicated</th>
<th>Dance not necessarily a sword dance</th>
<th>Plays with no dance indicated</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Revesby</td>
<td>Bassingham Children's Play</td>
<td>Recruiting</td>
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<td>Ampleforth</td>
<td>Acaster Play</td>
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<td>Christmas Play</td>
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<td>Durham Play</td>
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<td>Typical Text</td>
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<td>Kirton-in-Lindsey</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bassignham Men's Play</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kerlington 'Plough Jacks'</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N. Lincolnshire Wolds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. There is only a dance at Sleigh and Flamborough.
2. In this play swords are used and there is a dance, but from the script there is no indication that it is a sword dance.
3. This is a Wooing play and has no combat.
This chapter will be primarily concerned with the sword dances used in the Plough Monday plays. This writer makes no claim to original work in this field, since Sir Cecil Sharp, the founder of the British Folk-Dance Society, has completely covered this topic. However, the fact that the sword dance is such an essential part of the Plough play makes it necessary to study it at least briefly: without some knowledge of the sword dance the reader could not have a comprehensive view of the Plough Monday plays. This chapter will be divided into two sections, the first tracing the origin of the sword dance and its relevance to the Plough plays, and the second dealing with the common aspects of the long- and short-sword dances, with emphasis on the 'Lock' configuration. The chapter will conclude by showing the relationship between the Plough Monday plays and Attic drama.

Examination of the chart on page twenty-eight will show that some Plough plays do not have a dance or even any mention of one. Also, the reader will see that at Sleigh and Flamborough there is only a dance without a play. Two questions thus come to mind: Which came first, the dance or the play? And second, if a Plough Monday observance lacks either a dance or a play, is this a sign that this observance is a degeneration from a higher quality of performance?
The first question can be answered quite readily: the sword is definitely related to the instrument used in pagan rituals for the killing of the sacrificial animal. It is safe to presume that the ritual surrounding the pagan sacrifice was in fact the origin of the sword dance. Another pagan belief was that the wearing of the skin of the sacrificed animal conferred some power and spiritual kinship with the god and the animal upon the wearer of the skin. From this it follows that if man imitates nature he can make nature do as he wishes: for example, pushing a plow about a field and jumping up and down will make the wheat grow as high as the jump. Sir Lawrence and Lady Gomme aptly point this out in their discussion of the evolution of children's games:

This natural instinct to dramatic action in children is paralleled by the same instinct in grown-up people when in a state of culture where they are chiefly dependent upon their natural capacities for existence. Evidence of this natural dramatic power in the savage and semi-civilized peoples is abundant. Their dances are strongly dramatic. They advance in lines dancing, gesticulating, and singing; they dance in circles, joining hands; they go down on all fours, imitating animal postures and noises; they wear special masks, dresses, and ornaments on these occasions, all of which have significance for their audience and themselves. These dances are ceremonial, and are performed to ensure good results from hunting and fishing expeditions, and from cultivation of the ground. To ensure success to their side in war-time they imitate in ceremonial dances actions they will perform when
fighting, and this is done by them in the belief that it pleases their gods, and will induce them to help them. ¹

Cecil Sharp sums up the evolution of these ritual dances into drama as follows:

That the human instinct of play should draw on these ceremonies, as their meaning waned, for its material, is natural enough, seeing that in them it found, ready to hand, a vehicle of expression easily adapted to its purpose. Out of the debris of ancient faith and cult have issued three forms of folk-art. In the Morris-dance proper we have a dance of grace and dignity, instinct with emotion gravely restrained in a manner not unsuggestive of its older significance; full of complex co-ordinated rhythms of hand and foot, demanding the perfection of unstrained muscular control. In the Mummers'-play the feeling for drama, the world-old love of personification, has been the determining factor; while in the Sword-dance, with its elaborate dexterity of evolution, its dramatic accompaniments of song and interlude, we find drama and dance combined. ²

Close examination of the above citations also makes it possible to come to some conclusion regarding the second question. If these "debris of ancient faith and cult" did indeed develop into three distinct forms of folk-art, it can also be said that these three forms also did combine on occasion, as in the Revesby Play. It cannot, however, be said that if they did not combine they represented

¹Sir Lawrence and Lady Comme, op. cit., p. 25.
degenerate forms of art.

The Revesby Play is often referred to as a Morris-dance, and this is due to the fact that the name "Morris-dancer" was applied indiscriminately to sword-dancers, Morris-dancers and mummers in the period before differences among these groups were noted.³ Although the person who copied down the Revesby Play of 1779 called it "The Morris Dancers at Revesby Oct. 20, 1779," he was in fact talking about a sword dance. To generalize even further, in all of the Plough Monday plays in which the central action is the death and rebirth of a character, the dance connected with this ceremony can only be a sword dance. In the opinion of this researcher this would include any plays listed under column C in the diagram on page 28, which had a death-rebirth cycle.

Sword dances are geographically widespread. This form of folk-art

is found ... from the Humber to the Cheviots, and it extends as far south as Cheshire and Nottinghamshire. Outlying examples are recorded from Winchester and from Devonshire.⁴

In this large area there are two types of sword dances to be found, the long and the short sword dances. The long sword dances found in Yorkshire differ considerably from those of the more northern counties, where the short-sword or rapier is used.

³Cecil J. Shart, Sword Dances of Northern England
⁴Chambers, The Medieval Stage, op. cit., p. 192.
The two species differ in many important particulars; in the form of the dance; the number of the performers; the principle upon which the figures and evolutions are constructed; and in many matters of a technical nature. These differences, though numerous, are, however, superficial, not fundamental, and although in the tide of evolution they have drifted far apart, the two still retain many characteristics that testify to their common origin.

In either dance, as in the mummer's play, all participants are male. The sword dance is primarily an outdoor dance, which is understandable considering the leaps and sword play. In both cases the dance is a performance, and the dancers are not meant to be joined by the onlookers, as sometimes happens at country dances. The athletic nature of both types of dance requires much physical stamina, as well as a good deal of rehearsal.

The swords are usually made of steel, though in some places (for reasons of safety) they have been replaced by wooden ones. There are also some villages where straight sticks with strings attached to both ends are used, thus making the hilt and point maneuvers easier.

Finally, the most persistent and striking characteristic of both types of sword dance is the mimetic death of a victim, as has already been mentioned above.

\[5\text{Sharp, op. cit., p. 37}\]
The 'Lock' configuration is common to both types of sword dances and is the most important of the figures executed in the dances. The description given by Sharp of the Lock in the Grenoside dance (although this is not a Flough play) is quite concise and is the same in most sword dances.

At the conclusion of the Clash the dancers, now linked together by their swords, draw close together, each crossing his right hand well over his left. Each man then drops the tip of his neighbor's sword and, using both his hands, presses the hilt of his own sword under the point of the sword adjacent to it, viz., No. 1's hilt under No. 5's point, No. 2's hilt under No. 6's point, and so forth. In this way the weapons are tightly and securely meshed together in the form of a double triangle, or six pointed star, as shown in the diagram.

\[\text{Diagram of sword lock configuration}\]

\[\text{\# MEN}
\text{SMALL \# = SWORDS}\]

\[\text{\#Sharp, op. cit., p. 52.}\]
(This writer does not pretend to be a dance historian and therefore would advise the reader wishing a more technical explanation of the dances to refer to the *Journal of the English Folk-Dance Society* and to the excellent works of Cecil Sharp.)

The 'Lock' figure is the prelude to the mimetic decapitation of the victim. Using the *Ampleforth Play* as an example, once the 'Lock' has been formed,

An outsider, in ordinary dress, enters the ring, and the Lock is placed round his neck. The dancers now walk round, clockwise, each holding his own hilt in his right hand (4 bars). In the fifth and sixth bars the Clown and the dancers each clap three times. At the beginning of the seventh bar all dance round, clockwise, each holding the hilt of his own sword in his right hand, and, on the second beat of the last bar of the strain, draw their swords smartly from the Lock. The man in the ring at once falls to the ground and feigns death, while the dancers, terrified at what they have done, run away and hide themselves, leaving the Clown and the dead man alone on the stage.7

Reference to the texts of the plays in Appendix II will reveal to the reader that in all versions, following this mimetic death, there is a revival, whether the victim revives himself or is revived by some other character.

This death and resurrection theme, which is so clearly visible in the Flough Monday plays, closely parallels the

7Sharp, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
six steps of ritual procedure which led to Tragic plot, according to Professor Gilbert Murray. These six steps are paraphrased below:

1. An *Agon* or Contest: the Year against its Enemy, Light against Darkness, Summer against Winter.

2. A Pathos of the Year-Daimon, generally a ritual or sacrificial death.

3. A Messenger -- the Pathos is announced by a messenger.

4. A Lamentation.

5-6. An *Anagnorisis*--discovery or recognition--of the slain and mutilated Daimon, followed by his Resurrection or Apotheosis or, in some sense, his Epiphany in glory... generally called *Theophany*.

To illustrate this parallel this writer will make use of the Durham text, for it is a typical Plough play, and it is also a sword dance play. The Agon and Pathos are present in the contest, in which the Parish Clergyman is killed. In other plays either the Fool or an outsider is killed. The Durham text shows the influence of Christianity, and the Clergyman could be considered as personifying Light.

In this play, as in all other Plough plays, the deed is enacted in front of the spectators, so in point number three there is no parallel. There is, however, a lamentation which is sung by all:

---

Alas! our parson's dead,
And on the ground is laid;
Some of us will suffer for't,
Young men, I'm sore afraid.

I'm sure 'twas none of me,
I'm clear of that crime;
'Twas him that follows me
That drew his sword so fine.

I'm sure it was not me,
I'm clear of the fact;
'Twas him that follows me
That did this dreadful act.

I'm sure 'twas none of me,
Who say't be villains all;
For both my eyes were closed
When this good priest did fall.9

The group singing of this lamentation represents the guilt
of all.

Since the deed is done in front of the audience, there
is no need for an Anagnorisis or discovery.

The Theophany or Resurrection is accomplished in this
play by the use of the Doctor.

Thus the Flough Monday plays correspond in four out
of six steps to the form of Attic drama. Since the Flough
plays are a primitive form of drama it can be assumed that,
like the early Attic drama, they would have evolved into a
higher form if it had not been for outside cultural events
and influences that superseded them. It must be noted here

9Bell, op. cit., p. 398.
that though the mummers' plays remained basically the same through the centuries, the Disguisings of the Court of Henry VIII and the later, more elaborate Court Masques can also trace their origin to the mummers' plays. In this sense the mummers' plays are like a river which divides into two branches, one (the larger) similar to the mother river, and the other evolving on its own to something greater.
CHAPTER IV
DEGENERATION AND CONCLUSIONS

It is impossible to determine what the original Plough Monday plays were like. The original scripts were doubtless written down by people of uncertain education, and because of this errors crept into them. They were most likely passed on by word of mouth and by fragmentary texts, and they were never seriously studied until the end of the nineteenth century, by which time most of them were no longer performed. By this time degeneration had set in, and speeches which had originally had a purpose and had made sense had become mere nonsense. The fact that these plays originally began in the Middle English period also meant that phonological and semantic developments led to the creation of entire passages which no longer had their original meaning or any meaning at all. Furthermore, it should be noted that the collectors of texts necessarily got their information from the older inhabitants of the villages, whose memories were not always trustworthy; this would also help to explain the relative incoherence of
some speeches. Also, these old people probably tended to eliminate from the original version all speeches and characters which were not absolutely necessary to the absolute coherence of the play; this would explain why some versions are so short. It is only to be regretted that during the period when these folk plays were at their apogee, no one took the trouble to transcribe a performance. The best and most complete texts still extant are those from Ampleforth and Revesby, but even they do not totally reflect their original state.

Plough Monday plays were performed by all-male casts made up of villagers (usually from the county of Lincolnshire), on the first Monday after Epiphany. These plays are variations of the traditional mummers' play and usually contain a combat, the death of the hero, his revival by a doctor, and a final money collection. They are a product of the folk and have definite pagan origins. The central action of these plays is the death and resurrection of a character, which most scholars believe to be a variation of the old king-new king theme: as it applies to an agricultural festival, winter must be slain before spring may begin.
The texts of these plays contain numerous examples of stock phrases which can not be assigned to any definite source. They could have originated from (1) nearness of geographical locality; (2) phrases used in early morality and mystery plays; (3) the common language of the folk; (4) borrowings from itinerant players; (5) phrasing of medieval games; (6) traditional songs and poems; (7) medieval interludes; and (8) religious ceremonies.

Many of the plays are accompanied by a sword dance. It should be restated unequivocally that the presence of a sword dance does not necessarily indicate that a play is a Plough play rather than a mummers' play, although many of the Plough plays contain sword dances. This sword dance can be either of the long or rapier variety, depending on the locality. The main configuration in either variety is the "lock," which is used in the mimetic death. The "lock" configuration has been traced back to its pagan origin. This researcher agrees with Cecil Sharp that the ritual dances which led to the "lock" evolved into three distinct forms of folk-art, the mummers' play, the sword dance, and the sword dance drama (such as Revesby). These three forms of folk-art, like three branches
emanating from the same trunk, are not interdependent even though they have a common source. Thus the Swinderby text is not degenerate simply because it does not have a sword dance; and likewise the dance at Sleigh is not degenerate simply because there is no accompanying play. The Durham Play, on the other hand, is a combination of sword dance and mummers' play; but this does not mean that it came first and that the other texts degenerated from it. In this play the script and dances evolved simultaneously, which did not happen in the cases of the other plays.

The "Fool's wooing" aspects of these plays have not been discussed at length in this paper because of Mr. Baskerville's fine study of this particular question. It should be stated, however, that there is a female character and thus a wooing aspect in all Plough Monday plays; even the Acaster text, where the female character does not appear on stage, has references made to a "fair lady."

Other than the wooing aspects, in actuality there is very little difference between a Plough Monday play and a traditional mummers' play. A Plough Monday play must by tradition be a folk play performed on Plough Monday. In most instances it contains a reference to ploughing.
Many of the groups who performed these plays carried a plough with them. If a play has at least one of these characteristics, it may be considered to be a Plough play.

This researcher has also found that two generalizations made by E. K. Chambers about Plough Monday plays are incorrect. He states on page ninety of *The English Folk-Play* that Clayworth produced two mummers' plays, only one of which being a Plough play. These are both Plough plays, however, as can be seen from the texts appended to this paper. Chambers also states that Father Christmas is unknown in Plough Monday plays, but he is indeed a character in the version from Keynsham.

It remains to be said that there may very well be other extant texts of Plough Monday plays. One can not discount the possibility of other manuscript versions existing, forgotten, in provincial libraries; and there are also two other Plough Monday plays in print which this researcher has not been able to consult, since the volumes in which they are found are not available in North America. A version from Cropwell can supposedly be found in Mrs. Chaworth Musters' *A Cavalier Stronghold* (London? 1890). A text from Somerby is said to be printed in
Drama, X (n.d.). It might be possible to find these volumes in England, but they are seemingly unavailable in the New World.
APPENDIX I
CAST LISTS

The Plough Monday plays do not contain cast lists, thus making it difficult to study the relative frequency of the characters. To remedy this lack this researcher has compiled a list of all the characters in each play, according to their order of appearance in the play.

I: The Mummers' Play from Acaster (Yorkshire).

Fool
St. George
Slasher
Doctor
Prince
King of Egypt
Hector
Beelzebub

II: The Ampleforth Play.

King
Clown
Queen
Progallus
Gentleman from Cork
Hickman
Jerry
Diana
Cupid's brother
Moon's brother
Squire's son
Rakish Youth
Valiant Youth
Brave Young Man
Doctor

III: The Bassingham Children's Play.

Fool
Eldest Son
Farming man
Lady
Lawyer
Old Dame Jane
Bastard
Old Man
Saint George
Doctor

IV: The Bassingham Men's Play.

Eldest Son
The Husbandman
Lady
Lawyer
Dame Jane
Fool
Old Man
St. George
The Old Witch

V: A Christmas Play from Broughton.

Fool
Lady
1st Ribonner
2nd Ribonner
3rd Ribonner
Husbandman
Ancient Man
Jane
Jinny
Old Man
VI: **Bulby, Lincolnshire.**

- Corly
- Tom Fool
- Soldier
- Farmer's Boy
- Old Jane
- Beelzebub
- Doctor

VII: **Clayworth, Nottinghamshire.**

- Clown
- Soldier
- A Farmer's Boy
- A Ploughboy
- Lady
- Doctor

VIII: **Clayworth, Nottinghamshire (another version).**

- Fool
- King George
- Beelzebub
- Another person
- Doctor

IX: **The Durham Play.**

- Bessey
- Captain True Blue
- Squire's son
- Tailor-master Snip
- Prodigal son
- Skipper bold
- Jolly Dog
- Parish Clergyman
- Doctor

X: **Hibaldston.**

- Clown
- Soldier
- Foreign Traveller
Lady
Farmer
Indian King
Hobby Horse
Lady Jane

XI: A Christmas Play from Keynsham.

Father Christmas
Saint George
Slasher
Thomas
Doctor
Shepherdess - Moll
Prince

XII: The 'Plough Jacks' Play from Kirmington.

Fool
Sergent
Music Jack
Indian King
Doctor
Lady
Bold Tom
Lame Jane

XIII: Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lincolnshire.

Part I Fool's speech
Recruiting Sergeant
Lady
First Man
Fourth Man
Second Man
King
Doctor
Old lame Jane

XIV: North Lincolnshire Molds.

The Hobby-Horse
Jane, or Besom Betty
The Soldier
The Fool
The Doctor
The Indian King
The Lady

XV: The Revesby Play.

Fool
Pickle Herring
Blue Breeches
Ginger Breeches
Mr. Allspice
Cicely
Fiddler, or Mr. Musick Man

XVI: The Recruiting Sergeant.

Fool [Called noble Antony]
Lady
Sergeant
Second Riboner [Recruit]
Third Riboner [Recruit]
Dame Jane
Ancient Man
Old Lady
Old Man

XVII: The Swinderby Play.

Fool
Recruit
Sergeant
Lady
Husbandman
Dame Jane

XVIII: The Sword Dancers.

Captain
Squire's Son
Tailor
Sailor bold
Skipper bold
True Blue
Bessy
Rector
Doctor
XIX: The Typical Text.

Fool
Soldier
Woman and baby
Beelzebub
Doctor
The Collector
APPENDIX II
TEXTS

The Pease Egg. (St. George and the Dragon)¹

ACT I

(Enter Actors.)

Fool.
Room, room, brave gallants, give us room to sport,
For in this room we wish for to repast—
Resort, and to repeat you our merry rhyme,
For remember, good sirs, this is Christmas time.
The time to cut up goose-pies now doth appear,
So we are come to act our merry Christmas here.
At the sound of the trumpet and beat of the drum,
Make room, brave gentlemen, and let our actors come.
We are the merry actors that traverse the street;
We are the merry actors that fight for our meat;
We are the merry actors that show pleasant play;
Step in, St. George, thou champion, and clear the way.

(Enter St. George.)

St. George.
I am St. George, who from Old England sprung;
My famous name throughout the world hath rung;
Many bloody deeds and wonders have I made known,
And made the strangers tremble on their throne;
I followed a fair lady to a giant's gare,
Confined in dungeon deep to meet her fate;
Then I resolved, with true knight-errantry,
To burst the door, and set the prisoner free,
When a giant almost struck me dead,
But by my valour I cut off his head.
I've searched the world all round and round,
But a man to equal me I never found.

(Enter Slasher to St. George.)

Slasher.
I am a valiant soldier, and Slasher is my name,
With sword and buckler by my side I hope to win the game;
And for to fight with me I see thou art not able;
So with my trusty broadsword I soon will thee disable.

St. George.
Disable! Disable! It lies not in thy power;
For with my glittering sword and spear I soon will thee devour.
Stand off, Slasher! and let no more be said,
For if I draw my sword, I'm sure to break thy head.

Slasher.
How canst thou break my head?
Since it is made of iron,
And my body's made of steel,
My hands and feet of knuckle-bone,
I challenge thee to field.

(They fight, and Slasher is wounded. Exit St. George.)

(Enter Fool to Stalker.)

Fool.
Alas! alas! my chiefest son is slain,
What must I do to raise him up again?
Here lies he in the presence of you all;
I'll lovingly for a doctor call.
(Aloud.) A doctor! a doctor! ten pounds for a doctor!
I'll go and fetch a doctor. (Going.)

(Enter Doctor.)

Doctor. Here am I.
Fool. Are you the doctor?
Doctor. Yes; that you may plainly see, by my art and activity.
Fool. Well, what's your price to cure this man?
Doctor. Ten pounds is my fee; but, Jack, if thou be an honest man, I'll only take
five off thee.
Fool. (Aside.) You'll be wondrous cunning if you get any. Well, how far have
you travelled in doctrine-ship?
Doctor. From Italy, Tithy, High Germany, France and Spain; and now am
returned to cure the diseases in Old England again.
Fool. So far, and no further.
Doctor. O yes! a great deal further.
Fool. How far?
Doctor. From the fireside cupboard, upstairs, and into bed.
Fool. What diseases can you cure?
Doctor. All sorts.
Fool. What's all sorts?
Doctor. The itch, the stitch, the palsy, and the gout. If a man gets nineteen
devils in his skull, I'll cast twenty of them out. I have in my pockets crutches
for lame ducks, spectacles for blind humble-bees, pack-saddles and pantries
for grasshoppers, and plaisters for broken-backed mice. I cured Sir Harry
of a nang-nail, almost fifty-five yards long; surely I can cure this poor man.
Here, Jack, take a little out of my bottle, and let it run down thy throat;
if thou be not quite slain, rise, Jack, and fight again.
Stalker (rising). Oh, my back!
Fool. What's amiss with thy back?
Stalker.
My back it is wounded,
And my heart is confounded,
To be struck out of seven senses into four score;
The like was never seen in Old England before!
(Enter St. George.)
O hark! St. George, I hear the silver trumpet sound,
That summons us from off this bloody ground;
Farewell, St. George, we can no longer stay.
Down yonder is the way. (Painting.)
(Exit Stalker, Doctor, and Fool.)

ACT II

St. George.
I am St. George, that noble champion bold;
And with my trusty sword I won ten thousand pounds in gold;
Twas I that fought the fiery dragon, and brought him to the slaughter;
And by those means I won the King of Egypt's daughter.

(Enter Prince of Paladine.)

Prince.
I am Black Prince of Paladine, born of high renown;
Soon will I fetch St. George's lofty courage down!

St. George.
Before St. George shall be received by me,
St. George shall die to all eternity.
St. George.
Stand off, thou black Morooco dog,
Or by my sword thou'lt die;
I'll pierce thy body full of holes,
And make thy buttons fly.
Prince.
Draw out thy sword and slay,
Pull out thy purse and pay,
For I will have a recompense
Before I go away.

St. George.
Now, Prince of Paladine, where have you been?
And what fine sights have you seen?
Dost think that no man of thy age
Dare such a black as thee engage?
Lay down thy sword, take up to me a spear,
And then I'll fight thee without dread or fear.

(They fight, and Prince of Paladine is slain.)

St. George.
Now Prince of Paladine is dead,
And all his joy is entirely fled;
Take him and give him to the flies,
Let him no more come near my eyes.

(Enter King of Egypt.)

King.
I am the King of Egypt, as plainly doth appear,
I'm come to seek my son, my only son and heir.

St. George.
He is slain.

King.
Who did him slay? Who did him kill,
And on the ground his precious blood did spill?

St. George.
I did him slay; I did him kill,
And on the ground his precious blood did spill.
Please you, my liege, my honour to maintain,
Had you been there, you might have fared the same.

King.
Cursed Christian! what is this thou'rt done?
Thou hast ruined me and slain my only son.

St. George.
He gave me a challenge, no one it denies,
How high he was, but see how low he lies!

King. O, Hector! Hector! help me with speed,
For in my life I never stood more need.

(Enter Hector.)

And stand not there, with sword in hand,
But rise and fight at my command.

Hector.
Yes, yes, my liege, I will obey;
And by my sword I hope to win the day.
If that be he who doth stand there
That slew my master's son and heir;
If he be sprung from Royal blood,
I'll make it run like Noah's flood.

St. George.
Hold Hector! do not be so hot,
For here thou know'st not who thou'rt got.
'Tis I can tame thee of thy pride,
And lay thine anger, too, aside;
Inch thee, and cut thee as small as flies,
And send thee over the sea to make mince-pies.
Mince-pies hot, and mince-pies cold,
I'll send thee to Black Sam before thou'rt three days old.

Hector.
How canst thou tame me of my pride,
And lay mine anger, too, aside,
Inch me, and cut me as small as flies,
Send me over the sea to make mince-pies?
Mince-pies hot, and mince-pies cold,
How canst thou send me to Black Sam before I'm three days old?
Since my head is made of iron,
My body's made of weed,
My hands and feet of tinkle-bone—
I challenge thee to field.
(They fight, and Hector is wounded.)

I am a valiant knight, and Hector is my name,
Many bloody battles have I fought, and always won the same;
But from St. George I received this bloody wound.

(A trumpet sounds.)

Hark! hark! I hear the silver trumpet sound;
Down yonder is the way. (Fainting.)
Farewell, St. George, I can no longer stay. (Exit.)

(Enter Fool to St. George.)

St. George. Here comes from post old Bold Ben.
Fool. Why, master, did ever I take you to be my friend?
St. George. Why, Jack, did ever I do thee any harm?
Fool. Thou proud, saucy coxcomb, begone!

St. George.
A coxcomb! I defy that name;
With a sword thou ought to be stabbed for the same,
Fool.
To be stabbed is the least I fear;
Appoint your time and place, I'll meet you there.
St. George.
I'll cross the water at the hour of five,
And meet you there, sir, if I be alive. (Exit.)

(Enter Beelzebub.)

Beelzebub.
Here come I, Beelzebub,
And over my shoulders I carry my club,
And in my hand a dripping pan,
And I think myself a jolly old man;
And if you don't believe what I say,
Enter in, Devil Doubt, and clear the way.

(Enter Devil Doubt.)

Here come I, little Devil Doubt,
If you don't give me money I'll sweep you all out;
Money I want, and money I crave,
If you don't give me money I'll sweep you all to the grave.

Note.—I have another printed version of the Mummers' Play
from Rochdale (Lancs.) which is almost identical with the one
THE AMPELEORTH PLAY

FIRST PART

King. Make room, make room for these jovial lads
That are a wooing hound;¹
For I can handle a sword
With any man in town.
Last night I went to see
Miss Madam Molly;
She was so fair and comely
And not adorned with pride;
I am so deep in love with her
Till I don't know how to bide.
Tonight I went in to see
Miss Susannah Parkin;
She was so fine and gay,
But the dogs made such a barking
I forgot all I had to say.
So I pray the² honest Christian
What next must I say to her?

Clown. Thou must give her gallant speeches,
And honestly must woo her.

King. Aye man, her Mother likes me well; she has forty
thousand pound of her own and she'll give it all to
myself.

Clown. I'll stand a friend right Jarvey.
I'll stand thee friend, my lad;
I'll stand thee friend right Jarvey.³
See thee my heart's full glad.

King. And many a better thing she'll give us when we get
wed.

Clown. Come thee ways I'll a want¹ thee we'll get her.

Enter Queen.

Clown Sings. Madam, behold a lover!
You shall quickly see my Son.

Queen Sings. Long time have I been waiting
Expecting Ben would come;
Ben's grown a smart young fellow,
And his face I long to see.

Clown Sings. Here's one that doth me follow,
And perhaps it may be he.
O Ben how dost thou do, my lad?
Thou'st welcome from the seas.

King. Thank you, father, how do you do?
I am very well at ease.

Clown. O Ben let me kiss thee
For with joy I am fit to cry.
King. O father I'd rather kiss
That lady standing by.
Clown. O Ben come shew thy breeding.
Give to her a gentle touch
She's got such a face to feed upon,
The seas could afford none such.
She's a sweet and modest creature,
And she's of a noble name,
She's a sweet and modest creature,
And Susannah is her name.
King. Father that's well remembered.
How is Dick and Val?
Clown. Did not I write last summer
That pale death has closed his sides?  

King. It's as true as I'm a sinner!
I had forgotten quite.
Clown. Then it's o my! will retire,
For fear I'll spoil her sport;
For while I'm standing by yer
Our Ben can't frame to court.
So, madam, don't be cruel,
Since you're a charmer fair,
Spare him as a jewel,
For you'll like to be my heir.

Exit Clown.

King. Madam, my father has declared
You are to be my bride;  
Or otherwise I am inclined
To lead a single life.
For when a man gets married
He's down like a galley slave
Bachelors like sailors,
When the liberties there air.
Queen. O sorrow does compel you
Against your will to wed.
(Indeed, I needs must tell you,
You but a logger's head.
Your check is none so charming
As to kindle Cupid's fire;
You've neither wit nor learning,
Nor beauty to admire.)
King. (Goes up to the Queen) O, madam, do but hear me;
I've got something more to say.
Queen. (Gives him a-prick) Don't stand so near hard by me;
Stand further off, I pray!
I have not lost my hearing,
Nor yet I am not dumb;
But, in spite of all your jeering,
I can exercise my tongue.
King. Says thee so, thou Mistress Cheesemouth?
Thee might give me better words.
Although thou's a genteel causace,1
Thy face to be observed,
Thy cheeks are like two cakes of tallow,
Thy lips are blue all o'er,
Thou's tawny black and yellow,
And forty colours more!

King goes up to the Queen again; she gives him a
prick, and stamps her foot and says—

Queen. Begone, thou piece of valour!
For thou smells of pitch and tar.
Go hang theeself on the mainmast
Where I shall never see thee more.
Take along with thee my wishes
To the bottom of the sea;
Thou's fitter for the fishes,
Than a woman's company.

Exeunt King and Queen.

SECOND PART

Clown. Here comes I, that never come yet,
With great head and little wit.
Though my head be great
And my wit be small,
I've six fine lads
'll please you all.
My head's made of iron,
My heart's made of steel,
My hands and feet of knuckle-bone,
I challenge thee out to feel.

Enter King. King and Clown rattle their swords
together.
King.  How long will this unthinking fool
Disturb us of our private see!
Fair Rose thou may with boldness come
And banish him from our company.

Enter Queen.

Queen.  That would betray for want of skill;
It's good to keep two strings for one bow.
Perhaps I might bear him as much goodwill
As what that I might do to you.

Clown.  O that's well answered, my dear Rose.
I love the girl that's plain and free
Thou may be packed in, a snotty nose;
Small hopes I find there is for thee.

King.  Sure I this woman's worse than mad!
Judge, gentlemen, as well as me
In taking such a snotty lad,
And despising such a spark as me.

King straightens himself up.

Queen.  Spread your affection civilly
And I shall tell you what I think.
In you the small...........
There's no mistake to choose and wink.

Clown.  Fox take her! There's nowt to please her with.
So saving thy debauchery!

King.  I'll call thee liar to the teeth!
I'll will at that accepted be.
I'll make thee lies to the town estate
The captain crown nor his estate.

But if I in my duty fail,
But come to me and I'll call it my fate.

Clown.  Perhaps thou's got some tenement,
Some palace on some Irish shore;
Perhaps thou lives by three ha'pence rent;
It's enough for thee to rent withal.

King.  Now I'm maintained by sailors' wives,
When their husbands are out all in protence,
While you poor ennuchs leads poor lives,
And I am swaggering by my rents.

Queen.  My father calls, I must obey.
Be sure you both in peace remain,
Until you hear further what I say
The next time we meet again.
Exit Queen.

King. Thou art a fool, O then say I,
    My reasons are expounded clear.
    For women may riddle, but none can tell
    By plain subtraction what they mean.
Clown. Still greater fool than half than I!
    If thou would know the certainty
    Of what a woman says,
    Is meant quite contrary way.

Exit King.

Clown. The devil go with them, for now they're gone
    And left me here behind; see if all well at home,
    Faith man! And I'll away an all.

Exit Clown.

THIRD PART

King. I'm a King and a Conqueror too,
    And here I do advance!
Clown. I'm the clown of this noble town,
    And I've come to see thee dance.

King. The clown come to see a King dance!
Clown. A King dance! Ask thee good fellow? didn't I see
    thee tending the swine 'tother day—stealing swine I
    meant to say?
King. Now you've given offence to your Majesty, thee
    must either sing a song, or off goes your head.

    The King gives to knock him about with his sword.

Clown. I only know a lame song.
King. I like a lame song.
Clown sings. How can I be merry and wise,
    And in my heart contented be?
    When bone of my arm is out of place,
    And he mun put his nose where the bone should be.
King. I put my nose where the bone should be?
    You old fool! sing it over again, and sing it right.
Clown. I'll nobbut sing it again.

    Clown sings song as before but indicates another man.

King. As you've sung that so well, you must sing us
    another.
Clown. How can I sing another when I don't know one?
King. I must have one, or off goes your head.
Clown. Let me study a minute. I've studied a love song about murder, my grandmother learned me seven years after she was dead.

King. O I like a love song.

Clown sings. O love it is a killing thing,
Its both for heart and mind
And he that doesn't come before
He needs must come before.

King. You old fool what difference is there between before and before? Sing it over again, and sing it right.

Clown. I'll nobb'd sing it again.

King. Sing it over again, and sing it right, or off goes your head!

Clown sings. O love it is a killing thing,
Its both for heart and mind,
And he that doesn't come before
He needs must come before.

King. What difference is there between before and before?

Clown. It's the way I learned it. Sing it yourself.

King. If I sing it, see that you learn it.
(Sings) O love it is a killing thing,
It's both for heart and mind;
And he that doesn't come before,
He needs must come behind.

King and Clown exscnt.

FORTH PART

Enter King.

King. I'm a King and a King of high renown
I'm sorry that I shall be offended with that ragly fellow that's called a clown.

Enter Clown.

Clown. What needs thou be offended at me,
And make that great, ugly, long face at me?
If thou was hanged in yonder tree,
I could make a far better King than thee.

King. Going up to Dancers who are behind the door.
Come all ye young men and draw your swords straight,
And take this fool clean out of my sight,
For if I talk to him, he talk to me all night.

Dancers rattle their swords. Exit King.

Clown. Ye gentlemen all who in mirth take delight
And intends our sport for to see,
I've come for to tell you that I am the Clown,
And, pray you, how do you like me?
Although I am little, my strength it is great;
I would scorn for to tell you a lie.
I once killed a hedgehog as big as myself
And it made me a rare apple-pie,
(And he made me a delicate fry).
Now my Grandmother; one of the Bambury breed
As big as an old gilt in her twang,
She would serve by the tinker at peddling trade,
If that isn't a lie I'll be hang'd.
My father was tamsman¹ and tideman² three years,
Alas he was tilled so high;
It was all for stealing 3 lusty grey mares.
If that isn't true it's a lie!
As for myself I'm a butcher so good,
I can hit both the mark and the square;
I can stick a young heifer and never draw blood,
And that I can do to a hair.
I always was jovial and always will be,
Always at one time of the year.
Since Adam created both oxen and plough,
We get plenty of store and strong beer.
So now I've told my birth,
And the place from when I come;
So now I will set forth
Our noble dancers on.
Our dancers will appear
In splendour by and bye.
Gooks Bobs! I'll do them here.³

Dancers rattle their swords, and keep out of sight.

Our dancers will appear
In splendour, red and white,
Gooks Bobs! and do them see,
They're coming in to sight.

The King just shows himself.

King comes in first.

Clown. The first that come on is King Henry by name,
He's a King and a Conqueror too;
And with his broad sword he will make them to fall;
But I fear he will fight me enoo.
King and Clown rattle swords together.
(First verse repeated after each verse).

Enter No. 2.

Clown. The next is Progallus, as some do him call,
He's a General to the same King;
And with his broad sword he will make them to fly;
Isn't that a desperate thing?

Enter No. 3.
The third I shall name without any offence;
A gentleman just come from Cork;
He's witty and pretty in every degree,
And amongst the girls he will sport.

Enter No. 4.
The fourth is Hickman, a rival,
Sticks close to his back.
Bewitched already by beautiful lass,
But young Cupid his ruin shall be.

Enter No. 5.
The fifth is Jerry he's a passionate friend,
He follows his master indeed;
He's been a true trudger as ever did bend,
And I wish we'd some more of his breed.

Enter No. 6.
There's little Diana I'd like to forget,
Whose beauty shines much like our own;
But if ever we do get our heads to the pot,
We'll drink till it strikes fourteen at noon.

Exeunt all.

Clown. Go on, my brave heroes!
Our valour has been tried;
From off the plains of Waterloo
These six fought side by side.
They fought against Napoleon bold,
And made him run away;
Sent him to St. Helena,
And there they made him stay.
All you pretty lasses,
That's sitting roundabout,
These are six handsome young lads,
As ever was turned out.
They'll make you loving sweethearts,
For ever they'll be true;
They'll fight for you as manfully
As they did at Waterloo.

Enter No. 1.
The first I do call,
He's a handsome young man,
As ever the sun shone on;
He's like his brother Cupid
Looks on the charming boy
And when he meets with a bonny lass
With her he loves to toy.

Enter No. 2.
The next he is a bashful youth,
He's brother to the moon;
But first he gets his name up
In country and in town.
Amongst the pretty wenches,
He drives a roaring trade;
And when he meets a bonny lass
His valour is displayed.

Enter No. 3.
The next he is a spanking lad,
His father is a Squire;
For Betsy their sweet chambermaid
He got a great desire.
He huddled her, he cuddled her,
Until he made her yield;
But when the truth they came to know,
He was forced to quit the field.

Enter No. 4.
The next he is a rakish youth;
I've heard his Mother say
She would give him good advice
Before he went away.
He was never to kiss a black lass
When he could kiss a white,
And when he met a bonny lass
To stay with her all night.
Enter No. 5.
The next he is a valiant youth,
He's been in all the wars;
When he returned from Waterloo
The bells did loudly ring.
He won the day in splendour,
He fought a valiant man,
His countrymen did all rejoice
When he returned again.

Enter No. 6.
The next he is a brave young man
As ever you did see;
So well did he act his part
For his King and Country.
He had no fear about him;
For ever he'll be true;
He'll fight for you as manfully
As he did at Waterloo.
So lasses prepare your lips,
Else before your eyes
These six lusty lads
Will roll you in their arms.
So speak spectators all,
If you'll not take it amiss,
If these lads will dance their shares,
These lasses I will kiss.
So now you've seen us all go round,
And heard our pedigree,
Gentlemen and ladies all
What do you think of me?
So now you've seen us all,
Think of us what you will;
Music! strike up and play.
'Taud wife of Coverdill.

Here follows the dance.
After the man (not the Clown) is killed at the conclusion of the dance, the dancers leave the stage, the Clown and the dead man being left alone.

FIFTH PART
The Clown walks about and tumbles over corpse.

Clown. It's rough ground.

Clown turns round and tumbles over again.
King enters.

King. Hello! Hello! What's the matter here?
Clown. A man dead!
King. I fear you have killed him.
Clown. No! He has nearly killed me!

Stamps his feet.

Come all you villains and clear yourselves!

No. 2 enters.

No. 2. I am sure it's none of I
    That did this bloody act;
    Its he that follows me
    That did it for a fact.

No. 3 enters.

No. 3. I'm sure it's none of I
    That did this awful crime;
    Its he that follows me
    That drew his sword so fine.

No. 4 enters.

No. 4. Don't lay the blame on me,
    You awful villains all!
    I'm sure my eyes were shut
    When this young man did fall.

No. 5 enters.

No. 5. How could your eyes be shut,
    When I was looking on?
    I'm sure you were with us
    When first our swords were drawn.

Enter No. 6.

No. 6. Our King has done the deed
    And he lays the blame on me!
    Before I'll take the blame
    I'll try my sword with thee!

    King and No. 6 fight and rattle their swords together.

King. O ray! alas! what shall I do?
    I've been the cause of all this war!
    Oray I am that it should happen so,
    That I should slay this poor old man.

Clown. How can he be an old man? Young man like me
    his father. I got him this morning before I got my
    breakfast. Bury him! we'll sing a psalm over him.
All kneel round the dead man.

The Clown then gives out the following psalm.

Clown. When first King Henry ruled this land,
He was a right generous King. (repeated by mourners).
He stole three pecks of barley meal
To make a large pudding. (repeated.)
And when this pudding it was boiled,
They filled it full of plums;
There was lumps of suet in as big
As my two thumbs. (repeated.)
The King and Queen they both did eat,
And gentlemen likewise;
And what they couldn't eat that night
Next morning had it fried. (repeated.)

The Clown now reads his Will.

Clown. God in Heaven take this soul!
Churchyard take his bones!
And that man, that holds my sword,
Take his Wife and bairns!

Clown hands his sword to another man.

King. How can we this man bury
When people all around us stand?
But if we mean to escape a halter
We must send for a doctor.

All shout for a doctor.

King. I have heard of doctors both far and near;
Have heard of one, tho' he lives in Spain,
I'll pay ten pounds if he was here
He would bring this man to life again.
Five, ten, fifteen, twenty pounds for a doctor!

Enter Doctor.

Doctor. See, Sir, a doctor here, who travels much at home.
Take these here my pills; they cure the young, the old,
the hot, the cold, the living and the dead.
What's the matter here?
King. A man dead:
Doctor. How long has he been dead?
King. Seven minutes. Can you cure him?
Doctor. If he has been dead seven years I can cure him!
King. What is your fee?
Doctor. Nineteen pounds, nineteen shillings, eleven pence
three farthings, peck of ginger bread and some oats for
my horse.
King. It is an imposition. I won't give it.

Doctor. Gee ball! Exit.

King. Hi! Hi! Doctor, is that the lowest you'll take?

Enter Doctor.

Doctor. I'll throw off the oats and the ginger-bread.

King. You must try your skill.

The Doctor feels his pulse.

Doctor. He has got a raging pulse.

Clown. How can a dead man have a raging pulse?

The Doctor pretends to give him a pill. The Clown pulls him away.

Clown. Give a dead man physic?

King. Can you cause a stomach in the morning?

Doctor. I can cause a stomach in the morning, make his victuals fly down his throat like a wheelbarrow, and rattle in his throat like a pair of chests of drawers.

King. Can you do anything for a fair lady?

Doctor. Yes! if ever a fair lady in this room wants a husband trimming, bring him to me and soon she shall have one.

King. Can you do anything for a big bellied mare?

Doctor. Yes! I can cure the big bellied mare, the old fools, the geol and the pepper vixit cracks; thousands which I cure is none here I can tell. It's all done with this little voracious box; take that and you well.

King. Well doctor, what is your name?

Doctor. I don't like to tell it to a ragamuffin like you!

King. I must know your name.

Doctor. Well you shall know it, but it takes a good scholar to read it. My name is Ivan-Lovan-tanaman-laddie, seven Son of a new-born doctor. Here I've travelled through 55 kingdoms and now return to my own country; cure men with their heads off, men with their hearts out, the itch, the stitch, the stone, the bone, the pulse and the gout if there was nineteen devils.

King. Hi! Doctor! he's a long time coming to life.

Doctor. Well I must bleed him.

Doctor gives the King the dead man's arm to hold up and then runs at him with his sword. The King falls and knocks his knee cap off, which the Doctor then puts right.

The Doctor then bleeds the dead man.
Doctor. I've travelled for my education.
King. How far have you travelled?
Doctor. All the way from the fireside upstairs and knocked
the chamber pot over and back again.
King. Is that all you've travelled?
Doctor. Oh no! not by a great deal. I've travelled all the
way from Itti Titti where there's neither town nor city,
wooden chimes, leather bells, black pudding for the
bell rope, little pigs running up and down street,
knives and forks stuck in their backsides crying 'God
save the King.'
King. Well doctor, he is a long time in coming to life.
Clown. I will bring him to life.

Clown takes his sword and pulls down the man's
middle. Whereupon the dead man came to life and
jumps up and says:
Good morning, gentlemen,
A sleeping I have been;
I've had such a sleep
As the like was never seen!
And now I am awake,
And alive unto this day,
Our dancers shall have a dance
And the doctor have his pay.

All those standing round now start dancing and this
concludes the entertainment.
Bassingham Childrens play
Xmas 1623

The Play

Part the 1st
Here comes I that has never been yet.
with my great head and little wit.
my head is great my wit is small.
I will act the fools part to please you All.
I have a few little boys standing at the door
in ribings neatly drest.
and for to please you all
they shall do thier best.
Step in merryman All. [They enter]

Lady comes in. we sing.
Good master and good misteress
as you sit by the fire
Remember us poor plowlands
that runs through muck and mire
The mire it is deep.
and we travel far and near
And we thank you for a Christmas box.
and a mug of your strong beer.

Part the 2nd
I am my farther eldest son
the air of all his land
I hope [in] a very short time
it will all fall in my hand.

I was brought up at lincecort
all the days of my life.
there stands a fair lady
I wish she was my wife.

with fingers long and rings upon.
made of the beaten gold.
good master and mistres
I would have you to behold.

1 Charles Read Baskervill, "Hummers' Wooing Plays in England," Modern Philology, XXI, No. 3 (Feb., 1924), 246-250.
Lady

It is my clothing you admire,
not my beauty you desire
so gentle sir I must away.
I have other suitors on me stay.

Part the 5th, the farming man

Here comes I the farming man
up on my princely for to stand.
I am come to woe this lady fair
to gain her love is all my care.

Lady speaks.
to gain my love it will not do.
you speak so clownish for to woo.
wit a man and I will have none.

Farming.
A man for wit I am the best,
and I hope your love I shall reject.

Lady.
a Lawyer I suppose you be
you play your cause so wittely.
but by and by I will tell you plain,
you play your cause it's all in vain.

Part 4th, or old dame Jane

Here comes old dame Jane
being dabbling about the meadows.
jumping about to show such sport
Look about you old maids and widows
long time I have sought you.
but now have I found you
sorvy come take your bastard.

to the eldest son.

[Eldest Son.] bastard you bitch it is non of mine
it is not a bit like me.
I am a valient man just come from Sea
you never seed me before now did you.

Dame no.

Eldest son.
I slew ten men with a mace of mustard seed
and ten thousand men with an old crutch toad.
What do you think to that jiny.
if you dont be off[i] with you I will serve you the same.

Part the 5th, or the old man.

Here comes the poor old ancient man.
I speak for myself the best I can.
my old grey hairs they hang so low.
I must speak for myself the best I know.

Eldest son speaks.
Looks up old man and never fear
wipe thy eyes and thou will see clear

[Old Man, to Lady]
Methinks me sees you stars shine bright.
To you I fixt my harts delight.
Ladis part. A way a way from me begone.
   do you think I should have such an old man as you.
   no I would have one of High degree.

old mans part. Kick me lady out of doors
   for I will be hanged upon our kitchen door.
   If ever I come near you any more.

Part the 6th Or Saint George.
   Here comes Saint George the Champion bold.
   And with my bloody spear
     I won ten thousand pounds in gold
   I fought the dragon and brought him to his slaughter
   and by that means I won King Williams Daughter
   I will turn myself around and see who I can see.
   If I can see that man that dare face me.
   I will hash him and smash him as small as flies.
   and send him into Jamaica to make mince pies.

Fools part. Prithee fellow hold thy noise.
   tell me no more of these lies
   my blood it rise when first I heard that thing.
   I will stand before thy face if thou be some King.

St. Georges part.
   No King am I thou can plainly see
   but with my sword I will answer the.

St. George and the Fool fights. fool drops of his belly

Ladys part. Five pound for the Doctor my husband to cure.

Doctors part. I'm the Doctor man I'm the Doctor

Lady. Pray what can you cure.

Dr. the itch pox losie palsy and the gout
   all agues and pains within and without

Lady. Where did you learn your skill Doctor.

Dr. I travell'd for it.

Lady. Where have you travell'd for it.

Dr. I travell'd from my bed side to my old Grandfathers bread and cheese
cupbord and there's had a many a rare piece of bread and cheese.

Ladys part. Try your skill Doctor.

Dr. I will see if of this mans pulleth

Doctor puts the bottle to his nose.

Fe part. t tak a little of my snifflasy and snif up your snifflasy
   this man he his not dead but in a trance.
   So rise up my lads and take a dance.

fooles rise. foole and lady and Doctor dances.

Feols part. I an come to invite you all to my wives weding what you like
   best you must bring on with you. how should I know what every
man likes some likes fish others likes flesh but as for myself I like
some good potatoy gruel so what you like the best you must bring
on with you.
Lady and Joel Sings.

We will have a jovial wedding, the fiddle shall merrily play.
ri forlaurel laddy ri forlaurel lay
We'll have long ruddy porridge a pudding of barley meal.
ri forlaurel laddy ri forlaurel lay.
We'll have a good salt herring and relish a quart of ale.
ri forlaurel laddy ri forlaurel lay.
We'll have a limb of a lark and We'll have a louse to roast.
We'll have a farthing loaf and cut a good thumping toast.
ri forlaurel laddy ri forlaurel lay
We'll have a jovial wedding the fiddle shall merrily play.

St George and the Eldest Son and the Farmer Men. Sings this song.
Good master and good mistress now our fool is gone.
We will make it in our business to follow him along.
We thank you for sobility1 as you have shown us here.
So I wish you all your healths and a happy new year.
[Enter Fool]

Good Evening Ladys and Gentlemen all.
This merry time at Christmas I have made it bold to call
I hope you will not take it ill what I am a going to say.
I have some more Boys & Girls drawing on this way
I have some little Boys stands at the Door
In Ribbons they are neatly dressed
For to please you all they shall do their best
Step in Merrymen all.

[The players enter and sing together]

Good Master and good Mistress
As you sit by the Fire
Remember us poor Ploughlads
That runs through Mud and Mire
The mire it is deep
And we travel far and near
We will thank you for a Christmas Box
And a mug of your strong Beer.

[Eldest Son]

I am me Fathers eldest Son
And Heir of all his land
I hope in a short time
It will all fall in my hand
I was brought up in Lissy Coat
All the Days of my Life
There stands a fair Lady
I wish she was my Wife

---

1 Charles Read Baskerville, "Kummers' Wooing Plays in England," Modern Philology, XXI, No. 3 (Feb., 1924), 241-245.
With fingers long and rings upon
  All made of beaten gold
Good master and good Mistress
  I would have you to behold

[The Husbandman]
Here comes the Farming Man
Upon my principle for to stand
It come to woo this Lady fair
To gain her Love his all my care

Enter Lady
To gain my Love it will not do
You speak too Clowndish for to woo
Therefore out of my sight be gone
A witty man or I have none

Enter Lawyer
A man for wit I am the best
So Chase me from amongst the rest

[Lady]
A Lawyer I suppose you be
You plead your Cause so witty
But by and by I tell you plain
You plead a Cause thats all in vain

[Dame Jane]
Here comes old Dame Jane
Comes dabling about the Meadow
Comes Jumping about, to show you such sport
Look about you old Maids and Widows
Long time I have sought you
But now I have found you
Sarah come take your Bastard.

[Fool]
- Bastard you Jade its none of mine
Its not a bit like me.
I am a Valient Hero lately Come from Sea
You never see me before, now do you
I slew Ten men with a Seed of Mustard
Ten thousand with an old Crush’d Toad!
What do you think to that Jane
If you don’t be off’l I serve you the same.

[Old Man]
Here comes the poor old ancient Man
I speak for myself the best I can
My old grey Hairs they Hang so low
It do the best for myself the best I know.

[Fo Lady]
Me thinks me see that star shine bright
Oh you I’se fix’d my heart’s delight
In comes the Lady
Away Away from me be gone
Do you think If Marry such a Drone
No If have one of high degree
And not such an helpless wretch as the

Old Man
Kick me Lady out of the room
If be hang3 over our Kitchen Door

[St. George]
In comes Saint George
The Champeon bold
With my bloody spear
I have won Ten Thousand pounds in Gold
I fought the finest5 Dragon
And brought him to a slaughter
And by that means I gain5
The King of Egypt's Daughter
I ash him and smash him as small as Flys
Send him to Jamaica to make Minch pies.

[Fool]
You hash me and smash me as small as flys
Send me to Jamaica to make Minch Pies

[St. George]
Yes If hash you and smash you as small as Flys
And send you to Jamaica to make Minch Pies

[They fight; the Fool falls]
The old Witch6
Five Pounds for a Docter my Husband to cure

The Docter

Is the Doctor

[The old Witch]
pray what can you cure7

[The Doctor]
I can cure the Itch and the Veneral & the Gout
All akes within and pains without
You may think I am mistain
But I can bring this Man to Life again.

The old Witch Says8
where have you learnt your skill Doctor

The Docter
I have traveled for it.

The Old Witch says
Where have you traveled.

The Docter says
I have traveled from my Old Grandmothers Fireside, to her Bread & Cheese Cupboard Door, And there had a many a rare piece of Bread & Chee.
try your skill Doctor;

The Doctor says
I will feel of this Man's Pulse. Very bad. Very bad. Indeed take a little of this Medicine.

This Man is not DEAD but in a Trance
Arise my Lad and take a Dance.

The finishing Song

[Fool]
Come write me down the power above
That first created A man to Love
I have a Diamond in my eye
Where all my Joy and comfort lie.

If give you Gold If give you Pearl.
If you can Fancy me my Girl
Rich Castles Robes you shall wear
If you can Fancy me my Dear

[Lady]
Its not your Gold shall me entice
Leave off Virtue to follow your advice
I do never intend at all
not to be at any Young Mans call.

[Fool]
Go you away you Proud and scornful Dame
If you had been true I should of been the same
I make no doubt but I can find
As handsome a fair one too my mind

[Lady]
O stay Young Man you seem in haste
Or are you afraid your time should waste
Let reason rule your roving mind
And perhaps in time she'll proof more kind

[Fool]
Now all my sorrows is come and past
Joy and comfort I have found at last
The Girl that use to say me nay
She comforts me both Night & Day.
A Christmas Play [from Broughton]¹

Enter Fool."³

Gentlemen and Ladies

I'm come⁴ to see you all
This merry time of Christmas,
I neither knock nor call;

I come in so brisk and bold
With confidence I say.
What can you expect of a Fool
That² knows no other way.
A² Fool I know I am
And so do you.³
Fools⁴ and little children
For most parts speaks true.

My name is noble Anthony
I'm⁵ as live and as blyth and as mad
And as melancholy as that⁶ mantlstreet
Make room for noble Anthony
And all his Jovial Company.

Lady.

When I was a maid in blooming years
My pleasure was all in pride.
My taftling tongue could never lie still
In service to abide.

I thought it long all in my Arms
A young man to embrace
But⁷ instead of a man I meet⁸ with a Clown
Is not that a sad pitiful Case.

Fool² a pitiful case indeed Madam.¹⁰ Hey, ho! wert's all this paltry poor;
Still paltry in this place, and yet not perfect for shame, step forth
Peoples eyes look's dim with a very red expectation.

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¹Charles Read Baskervill, "Mummers' Wooing Plays in England," Modern Philology, XXI, No. 3 (Feb., 1924), 250-258.
1st Ribboner. How now m'e Amorous George still as live and as blyth and as mad and as melancholy as that Mantletree. What play have you got here today.

Fool play boy,

[1st Rib] Yes play I look upon the Tittle of the spectimony once a year you old scallishush nothing but parch pennyworth turf coal talyely old callynut's you rolling, bolling bangling fool stand out of my sight.

Fool Zounds what a man have I got here

[1st Rib] man you mistake in me. I'm no talker I am a Juggler. I can show you the trick of the twelves, as many tricks as there are days in the year stoles and moils and motes in the Sun. I have them all upon my Finger end Jack in the loft quick and be gone.

Fool now man I'll warrant the

[1st Rib] Hey now man I see thou can do something. hold thy hand, here's a Shilling for thy labour; take that to the poity of the poor and throw unto them. say thou hast quite lost the title of this play, callynutkin jest shall stene our sight and you shall hear a new delight.

1st Rib. to the Lady.

Well meet Lady in this place, the exercise that is in the will over shade the fairest face, when beauty comes on high degree since once to you I've told my mind I pray fair Lady don't be unkind it is your beauty makes me say I shall go blind and lose my way.

Fool I will lead you Sir

Lady Courteous Knight how must this be. You will no answer take of me you look so great I do declare you come to me but in a jeer.

1 Rib. Again A jeer dear love it is not so. I'll make it known before I go before I go hence from this place, I will obtain your comely face.

Lady. Away away from me begone a witty man or I'll have none

2nd Rib A man for wit I am the best that ever did to you express I have such causes underhand no man like I can understand.
Lady
A lawyer I suppose you be
you plead your cause so wittily
but by and by I'll tell you plain
the cause you plead is all in vain

2 Rib.
My wit it never did me fail,
if not for hopes it would prevail
If not for hopes my heart would burst
and in your love I put my trust

Lady
Away away out of my sight,
go talk along with your fair Knight

Two Rib.* Sing
be she gone be she gone
farewell I care not
for if she's a pretty thing
I've had my share on't,
For if she has more land than I
by one half acre
I've plow'd and sown in her ground
let the Fool take her-

[Fool
I have more wisdom than them all
& by your Wisdom you may fall,

3 Rib.
I am my Father's eldest Son
and heir of all his Lands
and hope in a short time
it will all fall in my hands.
I was brought up at Linsecourt
all the days of my life,
I'm walking with this Lady fair
I wish she was my wife.
Her fingers long with rings upon
all made of pure Gold.
good Master and good Mistress
I'd have you here behold.

Lady
It is my clothing you admire
its not my company you desire
so farewell I'll bid adieu.
Step in kind sir here's room for you.

Enter* Husbandman
Here comes I the Husbandman
upon my principal for to stand.
I'm come to woo this Lady fair
to gain her love that's all I care

Lady
To gain my love that never will do
you speak so clownish I to woo.
Harman
I've cart, I've plow, I've husbandry,
If we Gold and Silver enough for the,
I've something else will do the good
will nourish thy veins and warm thy blood.
I've something else for the beside
if thou'll consent to be my bride

Lady
My fathers working at his loom
my Mothers spinning hard at home
their Dinners they've got
their Suppers they want
so I pray you be gone and give me your room.¹

Ancient Man.
Here comes I the old Ancient Man
to speak for myself the best I can,
my old Grey locks tallow hang so low
I'll speak for myself the best I know.

Lady
Cheer up old man and never fear
Wipe thy Eyes and thou'll see clear,

Ancient Man
Hey Hey² me thinks me see the stars shine bright
mee's come to y'-a my Arts delight.³

Lady
why dost thou think I can⁴ fancy such an Old man
as thee.⁵
No I'll have one of a higher⁶ degree.

Ancient Man
Kick my¹ Ladis out of the room.
I'll be hang'd over our Kitchen door
if ever I² come to court y'a any more.

Lady
Take your porridge face away.

Ancient Man
My porridge face is as handsome as y'-rs and ugly enough too.

Jane
In comes Jane with along neck'd Crane
come dappling over the meadow,
she's fib'd before to show you some sport
look about you old Maids and Widows

Fool⁴
long time I've sought but now I've found⁵
my joy and only asurst³.

Jane
but since you've said so and call'd me your Whore⁶
Sarah come take your Bastard

Fool—
Bastard T'is none of mine its not abit like me,
I'm a valient Knight just come from sea
you never heard talk of me before did ye.
I kill'd ten men with a mess of mustard,
ten thousand with my bright Sword.

Jinny
I have a sheep skin
to lap them in⁴
look about you old maids and Widows,

[Fool]
had I been aman in this country known,
and my valour had been¹ shown

Sound Musick Sound. I'm just agoing (row de dow)⁵¹

Fool
Stop abit I have abit of a Song to Sing to my Lady before I go I'll Sinte² my Eyes and clear my Nose and see what I can do before I go. Sings
My love My dear My Dove My Duck²
one pleasant smile my heart will cheer
but if on me you cast one frown
I greatly fear it will knock¹ me down

[Old Man aside
then ya may get up again.³¹
Lady

Indeed kind Sir since you say so
to banter me will never do.
when I become a Married Wife,
there after follows care and Strife

Fool sings again

Alas sweetheart you are mis-tain
for more than that I'll tell you plain,
A maiden she must run and go
toll and moil through care and woe
whereas a married wife may sit and rest
pray tell me which life the best.

Lady

Indeed kind Sir since you say so
Along and along with you I'll go.
I'll wed with none but only you
to all other gallants I'll bid adieu—

Fool

Adieu and Adieu to all but you my Dear.
You may all behold and see
'Tis the Fool that leads away the fair Ladie——

Fool

In come to invite you all to my Wifes Wedding and mine and what
you like best you may bring along with you how the duce should. I
know what you all like some likes fish some likes flesh some likes
kissing and some likes frummity but as for my part I'm a good deal
the nature of my old Granny mother she talks short tongue'd and I
learnt to talk after her. But I'll tell you what m'ee Ladie and I
likes and we will have it too
we will have a long tailed porridge thicken'd with barley meal
we will have a good salt herring to relish a quart of ale,
we will provide for the wedding as fast as ever we may
we will have a jovial wedding the fiddle shall merrily play

Fool says

Hedge about boys and I'll knock down stakes.

Ancient Man

and I'll help to bind.

Fool

so now our sport is ended
you will hear our voices ring,
I hope you're well contented
so God save the King.

we're not those London actors
that Hacks in London court,
we are the Country plow lads
just com'd from plow and cart
[we are not the London acters
I told you so before
we have done the best we can
so the best can do no more]
So I hope you're well contented
with what we have shown you here
I wish you a Merry Christmas
and a happy New Year,
and what you please to my box
and a sup of your strong Beer.

3 Ribboners Sing  God bless the Master of this House
and send him long to reign
a many merry Christmas's
we wish to see him again,
amongst our Friends and Neighbours
that live both far and near.
We wish you a merry Xmas
and a happy New Year

Finish
BULBY, LINCOLNSHIRE

Four miles from Corby.

Tom Fool. In comes I as never bin before,
   There's many more actors at the door:
   Some can laugh and some can sing:
   By your consent they shall walk in.
Soldier. In comes I the Recruiting Sergeant,
   I've arrived here just now
   With orders from the King,
   To test all you jolly fellows
   That follows horse or plough.
   Tinkers, Tailors, Pedlars, Nailers,
   Does any one advance?
   More I hear the fiddle play
   The better I could dance.

Farmer's Boy. In comes I the Farmer's Boy,
   Do n't you see my whip in hand?
   Straight I go from end to end,
   Scarcely make a baulk or bend,
   To my horses I attend
   As they go marching round the end,
   Gee woo!

(?...sings.) Behold a lady bright and gay,
   Sad fortunes and sweet charms,
   So scornful I've been torn away
   Right out of my true love's arms;
   He swears if I won't wed with him,
   As you may understand.
   He'll list for a soldier
   And go to some foreign land.
Soldier. Come all young men that's a mind for listing,
   List and do not be afraid,

Your hats shall be neatly decked with ribbons
Likewise this pretty fair maid.

Old Jane. In comes I old Jane
My neck as long as a crane
As I go dib dub over the meadows
Seeking all the old maids & widows.
Long time I've sought thee Tom
And now I've found thee,
And pray, Tommie, take thy Charlie.

(She hands him a wooden doll.)

Tom Fool. It's not mine and I won't have it!

Old Jane. Look at its eyes, nose, cheek and chin,
It's the picture of you as ever it can grin.
Take a spoon and feed it.

Tom Fool. Get out of my sight; I'll talk to you to-morrow

Beelzebub. In comes I Beelzebub,
Over my shoulder I carry my club,
In my hand a white leather dripping pan.
Do n't you think I ain't a funny old man?
What old woman can stand before me?

Old Jane. I can.

My head's made of brass,
My body's made of steel,
My fingers are made of knucklebone,
No man can make me feel.

Beelzebub. If your head's made of brass
If your body's made of steel,
If your fingers are made of knucklebone,
I can make you feel.
I'll slash you, slash you
To small mince pies
And send you to Jamecas
To make mince pies.

(Beelzebub knocks Jane down on the floor.)

Tom Fool. O Belze, o Belze, what hast thou done?
Thou killed the finest young woman under the sun

Five pounds for a doctor.

Beelzebub. Ten pounds to keep him away.

Tom Fool. Fifteen pounds. He must come in a case like this.

Doctor (outside). Wo, boy, take hold of my 'orse; hold him by his tail. He's only a donkey: take care he does n't kick. (He comes in) In comes I the doctor.

Tom Fool. You the doctor?

Doctor. Yes, I'm the doctor.
Tom Fool. What pains can you cure?
Doctor. Ypesy, Pipsy, Palsy, Gout,
Pains within and pains without,
Heal the sick, cure the lame,
Almost rise a dead man to life again.
Tom Fool. Well, Doctor, is them all the cures you can do?
Doctor. No: when I was up down under in York I cured old
Mrs. Cork: She tumbled upstairs: empty tea-pot half full
of barley-meal grazed her shin again her elbow, made her
stocking bleed and I set that.
Tom Fool. Well, Doctor, try your experience on this young
woman.
Doctor. Ill feel of her pulse.
(He feels her pulse and then the back of her neck.)
Tom Fool. Is that where you feel of a young woman's pulse?
Doctor. Yes: where would you have me feel?
Tom Fool. Why, back of the neck underneath her elbow of
course.
Doctor. (after feeling her again) She's in a very low way,
very low indeed! She won't get any lower than I'll look for
her. Been trying a new experiment.
Tom Fool. What's that, Doctor?
Doctor. Swallowed the donkey and cart last night, and
the wheels are n't digested. But the young woman's
not dead: she's only in a trance. Rise up and let's have a
dance.
If she can dance, we can sing,
Rise her up and let's begin:

Then they all sing.
Good master and good mistress
As you sit round the fire
Remember us poor plough boys
Ploughs through mud and mire.
The mire it is so wet and deep,
We travel but far and near;
So what you please into our box
And a pitcher of your best beer!

Tom Fool. Be steady about your beer; we've nought in the
hopper yet.
Farmer's Boy. What do you want in the hopper, Tommy?
Tom Fool. A good old piece of pork-pie, mince-pie; I'm as
hungry as you're dry. Go round with your hat & so
collect money.
Then they all sing.

Here's a health unto our master,
Our mistress also,
Likewise the little children
Around the table go:
Let's hope that they may never want
While nation does provide
Us happiness and plentiness
And attend to the fireside.
You hear our song is ended.

(Exit Tom Fool.)

And you see our fool is gone:
We make it our business
To follow him along:
And we thank you for civility
And for what you gave us here:
We wish you all good night
And another Happy New Year.
CLAYWORTH, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Five and a half miles from Gainsborough.

A PLOUGH MONDAY PLAY

Enter Clown. In comes I bold Tom
A live and quick young fellow,
I've come here to taste your meat
Many folks cry they're ripe and mellow
Good evening, good ladies and gentlemen all.
It's Plough Monday which makes me so bold and scold
I hope you won't be offended.
At these few words I've got to say,
Many more pretty boys and girls will pass this way,
Some can dance and some can sing,
By your consent they shall come in.

(Opens door) Hokum pokum France and Spain
We'd meet the recruiting sergeant all the same.

Enter soldier. In comes I the recruiting sergeant
I've arrived here just now,
I've got orders from the Queen
To list any young men
Such as Tinkers Tailors Soldiers Sailors
Any man to my advance
The more that the fiddle plays
The better I can dance.

Clown. What you dance?
Soldier. Yes we dance.

Clown. If you begin to dance, I quickly march away.

A Farmer's Boy. Woa, woa, old man, don't go away in despair.
Perhaps in a short time a lady will appear.

A Ploughboy. In comes I the Farmer's man
I've come here to plough the land,
To turn it upside down.
I go straight from end to end
I scarceley a boaks' bend
And to my horse I attend
As they go marching to the end.

Enter the Lady (sings her part).
In comes I, a lady bright and gay
With fortunes and sweet charms,
All scornfully I've been thrown away
Right out of my true love's arms.
He swears if I don't wed with him
As you do understand.
He will list all for a soldier
And go unto some foreign land.

Clown. Do you love me, my pretty maid?
The Lady. Yes, Tommy love.
We'll shake hands
And put in banns
And then we'll be wed-to-morrow.

(Singing) Whack fall ly laddy O
Whack fall ly laddy O
We'll be wed to-morrow.

Enter old Eezum-Squeezum.
In comes I old Eezum Squeezum
On my shoulder I carry a besom,
In my hand a frying pan,
So don't you think I'm a jolly old man.
If you don't, I do.
My head is made of iron,
My body is made of steel,
My hands and toes of knuckle-bones
And no mortal man can make me feel.

Soldier. Stop, stop old man, don't talk like that,
You say your head is made of iron,
Your body is made of steel,
Your hands and toes of knuckle-bones
No mortal man can make you feel.
Stand up to me like a man
I'll make your bones rattle.

(They fights and spors round like for a bit and then old Eezum Squeezum falls down dead.)

Clown. Is there a doctor to be found
To cure this deep and deadly wound?
Doctor (speaking from outside).
  Woa, woa, hold my pony
  Give him a good stiff feed of water and a drink of chaff.
(Enters) In comes I the doctor.
Clown. What, you the doctor?
Doctor. Yes, me the doctor.
Clown. How came you to be a doctor?
Doctor. I've travelled for it.
Clown. How far have you travelled?
Doctor. Hokum, Pokum, France and Spain
  Nine times round the world and back again.
Clown. No further than that, doctor?
Doctor. Yes, much further than that
  From bedside to fireside
  To my old grandmother's cupboard
  And many pieces of mince pie and pork pie out (of)
  there
  That's what made me such a big man.
Clown. You're a big man now doctor.
Doctor. I'm as big as any man in this town under my size.
Clown. What pains can you cure?
Doctor. Pipsy Pipsy palsy gout
  Pains within and pains without.
  By this young lady taking hold of my hat stick and
gloves (gives to lady)
  I'll commence feeling this man's pulse. (Firmly
  *E-S's heel).
Clown. Do the pulse lie there, Doctor?
Doctor. Yes, I thought so; where should you have felt?
Clown. Back o' the head, against this elbow.
Doctor. My mistake.
Clown. Great mistake too, Doctor.
Doctor. This young man's not dead
  He's only in a trance,
  Been trying an experiment.
Clown. What's that, Doctor?
Doctor. . . . . up a green potato tops
  Boiled fourteen days over a fortnight
  Last night he swallowed Sam Snowden's1
  Wheelbarrow, donkey and cart, and he
  Can't get shut o' the wheel.
Cough, young man.

  Eezum-Squezum coughs faintly.
Doctor. Very faint, put out your tongue—
Very much inflamed, take a drop out of my bottle
And let it run down your throat.
It will do your body and soul a world of good.
I'll also have a box of my pills.

Clown. Pills are they, doctor?
Stop, doctor, read the resurrection of those pills.

Doctor. These pills are virgin pills
One to be taken to-night, two to-morrow morning.
Swallow the whole box next day at dinner time.

Clown? This young man can't dance, so we'll sing.
Raise him up and let's begin.

All sing to tune (more or less) of wassail song:
We are not the London Actors
That act upon the stage

We are the country plough lads
That ploughs for little wage.
Good master and good mistress,
As you sit round the fire,
Just think of us poor plough lads
That plough through mud and mire.
The mire it is so very deep,
The water runs so clear.
We thank you for a Christmas box
And a pitcher of your best beer.
You see our tale is ended,

(Exit Fool) You see our fool is gone,
We'll make it in our business
To follow him along.

(Exeunt omnes.)
CLAYWORTH, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

ANOTHER VERSION OF A PLOUGH
MONDAY PLAY

Enter Fool at door. In comes I that's never been before
With (any number) actors standing at the door.
Some can dance and some can sing.
If you consent I will walk in.

(Enters) In comes I that's never been yet
With my big head and little wit
My head's so great and my wit's so small
I can act the fool as well as you all.

Enter King George. In comes I King George,
A champion stout and bold,
I fought the fiery dragon
With my bright sword
And brought it to a slaughter;
*By these deeds I won the King of Egypt's daughter.

Beelzebub. In comes I Beelzebub:
On my shoulder I carry a club,
In my hands a wet-leather frying pan:
Don't you think I'm a nice old man?

King George disputes this and starts boasting, saying
where he has been &c.
They fight. Beelzebub falls.

Fool. Five pounds for a doctor.
Another person. Ten pounds to stop away.
Enter Doctor. In comes I a doctor.
Fool. You a doctor?
Doctor. Yes—me a doctor.
Fool. What can you cure?

---

Doctor. The ipsy the pipsy the palsy and the gour,
    Pains within and pains without,
The deaf the dumb, the blind the lame
    And bring the dead to life again.
Fool. Just try your skill on this man. There, he's dead enough.
    Doctor takes bottle from pocket. Beelzebub revives.
Doctor. You're only in a trance. Rise up and take a dance.
    
Everyone then performs the dance.
    Then end as in preceding version.
Enter Dancers, decorated with swords and ribbons; the Captain of the head wearing a cocked hat and a peacock's feather in it by way of cockade, and the Clown, or 'Bossy,' who acts as treasurer, being decorated with a hairy cap and a fox's brush dependent.
The Captain forms with his sword a circle, around which he walks.
The Bossy opens the proceedings by singing—

Good gentlemen all, to our captain take heed,
And hear what he's got for to sing;
He's lived among music these forty long year,
And drunk of the elegant* spring.

The Captain then proceeds as follows, his song being accompanied by a violin, generally played by the Bossy—

Six actors I have brought
Who were ne'er on a stage before;
But they will do their best,
And they can do no more.

The first that I call in
* He is a squire's son;
He's like to lose his sweetheart
Because he is too young.

But though he is too young,
He has money for to rove,
And he will spend it all
Before he'll lose his love.

Chorus. Fuh loh de rol, loh de dal, fuh loh de ra rol da.

Followed by a symphony on the fiddle, during which the introduced actor walks round the circle.
The Captain proceeds—

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1 Robert Bell, Early Ballads; Also Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England (London, 1885), pp. 395-401.
The next that I call in
He is a tailor fine;
What think you of his work?
He made this coat of mine!

Here the Captain turns round and exhibits his coat, which of course is ragged, and full of holes.

So comes good master Snip,
His best respects to pay;
He joins us in our trip
To drive dull care away.

Chorus and symphony as above,
Here the Tailor walks round, accompanied by the Squint’s box. This form is observed after each subsequent introduction, all the new comers taking a part.

The next I do call in,
The prodigal son is he;
By spending of his gold
He’s come to poverty.

But though he all has spent,
Again he’ll wield the plow,
And sing right merrily
As any of us now.

Next comes a skipper bold,
He’ll do his part right weel—
A clever blade I’m told
As ever posed a keel.

He is a bonny lad,
As you must understand;
It’s he can dance on deck,
And you’ll see him dance on land.

To join us in this play
Here comes a jolly dog,
Who’s sober all the day—
If he can get no grog.

But though he likes his grog,
As all his friends do say,
He always likes it best
When other people pay.

Last I come in myself,
The leader of this crew;
And if you’d know my name,
My name it is ‘True Blue.’

Here the Bessy gives an account of himself.

My mother was burnt for a witch,
My father was hanged on a tree,
And it’s because I’m a fool
There’s nobody meddled wit’ me.
The dance now commences. It is an ingenious performance,
and the swords of the actors are placed in a variety of grace-
ful positions, so as to form stars, hearts, squares, circles,
&c. &c. The dance is so elaborate that it requires fre-
guent rehearsals, a quick eye, and a strict adherence to
time and tune. Before it concludes, grace and elegance
have given place to disorder, and at last all the actors are
seen fighting. The Parson Clergyman rushes in to prevent
bloodshed, and revives a death-blown. While on the ground,
the actors walk round the body, and sing as follows, to a
slow, solemn-like tune—

Alas! our parson's dead,
And on the ground is laid;
Some of us will suffer for't,
Young men, I'm sore afraid.

I'm sure 'twas none of me,
I'm clear of that crime;
'Twas him that follows me;
That drew his sword so fine.

I'm sure it was not me,
I'm clear of the fact;
'Twas him that follows me;
That did this dreadful act.

I'm sure 'twas none of me,
Who say't be villains all;
For both my eyes were closed
When this good priest did fall.

The Bassy sings—

Cheer up, cheer up, my bonny lads,
And be of courage brave,
We'll take him to his church,
And bury him in the grave.

The Captain speaks in a sort of recitative—

Oh, for a doctor,
A ten pound doctor, oh.

Enter Doctor.

Doctor. Here I am, I.
Captain. Doctor, what's your fee?
Doctor. Ten pounds is my fee!
But nine pounds nineteen shillings eleven pence
three farthings I will take from thee.
The Bassy. There's go-no-ro-si-ty!

The Doctor sings—

I'm a doctor, a doctor rare,
Who travels much at home;
My famous pills they cure all ills,
Fast, present, and to come.
My famous pills who'd be without,
They cure the plague, the sickness & gout,
 Anything but a love-sick maid;
If you're one, my dear, you're beyond my aid!
Here the Doctor occasionally salutes one of the fair spectators, he then takes out his snuff-box, which is always of very capacious dimensions (a sort of miniature warming-pan), and empties the contents (flour or meal) on the Clergyman's face, crying at the time—

Take a little of my nit-nuit,
Put it on your tif-taf;

Parson rise up and preach again,
The doctor says you are not slain,
The Clergyman here sneezes several times, and gradually recovers, and all shake him by the hand.
The ceremony terminates by the Captain singing—

Our play is at an end,
And now we'll taste your cheer;
We wish you a merry Christmas,
And a happy new year.
The Beaxy. And your pockets full of brass,
And your collars full of beer!

A general dance concludes the play.
HIRALDSTOW, LINCOLNSHIRE

PLOURMOYS.

Clown, (1st act.)
Good evening, ladies and Gentlemen,
I am making rather a bole call;
But Christmas time is a merry time,
I have come to see you all.
I hope you will not be offended
For what I have got to say:
Here is a few more jolly fellows
Will step in this way.

Soldier, No. 2nd.
I am a Recruited seagant
Arriving here just now:
My orders is to enlist all
Who follow the cart and plough.

Foreign Traveller, 3rd.
O endeed, mr seagant,
As I suppose you are,
You want us bold martial lads
To face the Boer war.
Will (We'll) boldly face the enemy
And do the best we can,
And if they dont prove civil
We will slay them every one.
I am a Foreign traveller,
I have travelled land and sea,
And nothing do I want but a wife
To please me the rest part of my life.

Lady, 4th.
I am a lady bright and gay,
The fortune of my chara,
And scornfully I'm thrown away
Into my lover arms.

1 Mrs. Gutch and Mabel Peacock, "Examples of Printed Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire," County Folk-Lore, V, Printed Extracts No. 7 (1908), 178-181.
3rd (i.e. the Foreign Traveller).

I have meet my dearest jewel;
She is the comforts of my life,
And if she proves true to me
I intend her been my wife.

Farmer, 5th.

Madam, it is my desire,
If I should be the man
All for to gain your fancy, love,
I will do the best I can.
I have got both corn and cattle,
And everything you know,
Besides a team of horses
To draw along the plough.

Lady.

Young man you are deceitful,
As any of the rest;
So for for (sic) that reason I will have
Them I love best.

Soldier (sic).

Come me lads, who is bound for listing,
And gan along with me;
You shall have all kinds of liquor
While you are in our company.

Indian King, No. 6.

War out! me lads, and let me come in!
For I am the old chap called Indian King.
They all have been trying me to stay;
But you see I am alive to this very day.

Holy Horse, No. 7.

In comes a four year old colt,
A fine as ever was bought:
He can hotch and he can trot
14 miles in 15 hours just like nought.

Lady Jane No. 8.

In comes Jane with a long leg crayn
Rambling over the widow:
Once I was a blooming young girl,
But now I am a down old widow.

No 2 (i.e. the Soldier).

Gentlemen, and ladies,
You seen our fool is gone;
We'll make it our business
To follow him along;

We thank you for civility
That you have shown us here;
We wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy new year.
A Christmas Play [from Keysall]

_Father Christmas—_
In come I, Old Father Christmas, welcome or
welcome not
I hope old Father Christmas will never be forgot.
     A room, a room
     'I do presume
For me and my brave gallants all
Please Sir to give leave to rhyme
For now I am come this merry Christmas time.

_Activity of Youth, Activity of Age_
The like was never seen before, nor acted on the
stage.

     As I walk down
     In Warwickshire
     To view the red Deer
     Which runs here and there
And there I saw bold Robin Hood¹
And with my staff all on my shoulder
     So soon I cleared the way
     With my one two and three²
     I made them for to flee
     Any man do more than me.
     Walk in Saint George.³

_Saint George—_ In come I, Saint George that noble Knight[es]
Which lost my blood in English fight
     This is the reason
That makes me carry this bloody weapon.
     Any man do more than me.

_Father Christmas—_²
Walk in the valiant Soldier.

Slasher— In come I the valiant Soldier bold
And Slasher is my name
Sword and buckler by my side
I warrant to win the game.

Saint George— Very likely!

Slasher— And very likely too!—And what makes your nose
look so red?!

Saint George— And what makes your nose look so red?

Slasher— You eat more bread and cheese and drink more ale
And that will keep you from looking pale.

Saint George— Slasher, Slasher, don’t be so hot
For in this place you know not whom you’ve got

Slasher. A battle, a battle let thee and I try
Which on the ground first shall lie.
They fight, and St George is slain.

Slasher. Five pound I would give it a noble Doctor can be found.

Enter Doctor.

Doctor. See Sir, see Sir, here comes this noble Doctor who travels much at
home: Don’t go about like your little Quack Doctors. I
go about for the good of the country more to cure than I do
to kill. Bring me an old woman that has lain’t in the grave.
If she will arise & take one of my pills, I will be bound in a
fifty pound bond her life to save. Thomas!

Enter Thomas

Thomas. Yes, Sir.

Doctor. This man is not dead.

Thomas. Not dead! Sir. He has only got the tooth-ache. I think you
had better draw it, Sir.

Doctor (pretends to draw an immense tooth which he exhibits)

Gentlemen, Gentlemen all
Is not this enough to kill any man at all.
I have travelled through Ireland Scotland &
Franco
Rise up, St. George, and have a dance.

Saint George. Terrible, Terrible, the like was never seen
Enough to frighten any man out of seven senses into
seventeen.

Any man do more than me.

Father Christmas. Walk in the Shepherdess.
Once I was a Shepherd walking on the plain
Courting of my Shepherdess all among the swain
See, see, who comes here. What chining beautys this
Which takes my delight all in the shady bliss.

Shepherdess. Tis I and my harmless damsel walking on the plain
If am lost, I am lost, I fear I shall not be found again.

Father Christmas.

Miracle thy beauty, I am sure you are no less
Mistress take this little bottle and quench your thirst.

Shepherdess. Yes kind Sir let me thank you for it first
It is very good indeed Sir,—much better may you be.
I thank you kind Sir for giving it to me.

Father Christmas.

If I had a thing as I could call my own
How proud and loft I should be

Shepherdess. Thou hast said enough to shoot the dart
So let us gain the prince's heart.

Prince. Good morrow, Moll, this morning gay
Where art thou going so soon this way
I have something to say to thee if thou wilt stay.

Shepherdess. What hast thou got to say to me
Come tell me quick and true
For here I stand spending my time to thee
I know not how.

Prince. Thy father and thy mother too
Told me that we should married, married be
And so pull down thy swathful look
And swop thy love on me.

Shepherdess. I will never marry with a cloud
But I will have a handsome young man
To lie in bed with me.

Prince. What dost thou talk of now
Am I not handsome enough for thee
Pray look another twich.
THE 'PLOUGH JACKS' PLAY

From Kirmington in North Lincolnshire.

Fool.
Good evening ladies and gentlemen, I have come to give you a bold call
As Xmas is a merry time I have come to see you all
I hope you won't be offended for what I've got to say—
Presently there will be some more boys and girls come tripping along this way—
Some can whistle and some can sing
By your consent they will come in—
Hookam, Spookam, Spankam and Spain
In comes the Sergeant of the same.

Sergeant.
In comes I the recruiting Sergeant, arriving here just now
I have come to list all those who can follow horse cart or plough
Tinkers, tailors, peddlers nailers, all at my advance.

Fool.
Is there anything else at your advance?

Sergeant.
Yes my advance
Is to see a fool dance
Either dance sing or play
Or I will shortly march away.

Fool.
One day I tried to stop a pig
And what a lark we had Sir
The pig says 'umph' and away he went
Right through my stunning legs Sir—

Sergeant.
Do you call that singing?

Fool.
Yes, plenty good enough for a man like you—

---

Sergeant.
I can sing better than that myself.

Music Jack.
In comes I old music Jack
'I'll give you a tune before I go back.'

Indian King.
Ware out my lads, let me come in
For I'm the Chap they call Indian King
They have been seeking me to slay
But I'm here this very day
I fought the fiery dragon and brought it to the slaughter,
And by those means I won King George's daughter.

Sergeant.
Slaughter, Slaughter, no more to be said,
For in one instant I'll fetch off your head.

Indian King.
How can'st thou fetch off mine head?
My head is made of iron and my body of steel,
My limbs are made of knuckle bone, I challenge thee
to feel.

Sergeant.
'Slaughter'—(He knocks down Indian King).

Fool.

Five pounds for a doctor.

Sergeant.
Ten to stop away—

Fool.

Fifteen, he must come on a case like this.

Doctor.
In comes I the Doctor.

Fool.

How came you to be a doctor?

Doctor.
I travelled for it from bedside to fireside
and from fireside to my mother's cupboard
that's where I get all my pork pies and sausages from:—

Fool.

But can you cure this man?

Doctor.
Yes, certainly, take hold of my bottle and stick
While I feel this man's pulse—

(Feels his stomach.)

Fool.

Is that where a man's pulse lies?
\textit{Doctor.}

Yes, it is the strongest part of a man's body he's not dead but in a trance, he's swallowed a horse and cart and can't get rid of the wheels—Jump up Jack and we'll have a dance.

\textit{Sergeant's Song.}

Come, my lads it's time for listing—
Listing do not be afraid—
You shall have all kind of liquor
Likewise kiss the pretty maid.

\textit{Lady.}

I am a lady bright and fair
My fortune is my charms
It's true that I've been borne away
Out of my dear lover's arms,
He promised for to marry me
As you will understand,
He listed for a soldier
And went into foreign land.

\textit{Sergeant's Song.}

Madam, I've got gold and silver
Madam I've got house and land
Madam I've got world and treasure,
Everything at thy command—

\textit{Lady.}

What care I for your gold and silver
What care I for your house and land
What care I for your world and treasure
All I want is a nice young man.

\textit{Bold Tom.}

In comes bold Tom a brisk and nimble fellow
Forty gallons of your best ale will make us nice and mellow.
A piece of your pork pie. For believing me I'm telling no lie
For we're all hungry as well as dry.

\textit{Lame Jane.}

In comes I lame Jane, with a neck as long as a crane—
Once I was a young maid—now I'm a down old widow—
A wig behind and a wig before
Wear out my lads and I'll sweep the floor.
Fool.

O. I'm the nice young man you want, Miss—Friends I've come to invite you to me and my wife's wedding—and that which you like best you'll have to bring with you for we are going to have a leg of a louse and a neck fried, a barley chaff dumpling buttered with wool, and those who can't rag it will have it to pull—The tail chine of a cockerel and 18 gallons of your best butter milk to rinse all down—Sing about lads while I draw stakes.

Last Song.

Good master and good mistress
As you sit round your fire
Remember us poor plough boys
Who plough the muck and mire.
The muck it is so nasty
The mire it is so near
We thank you for civility
For what you've given us here.
We wish you a merry X'mas
And a Happy New Year.
Good master and good mistress
You see our fool's gone-out
We make it our ability
To follow him about.
KIRTON-IN-LINDSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE

PART I.
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen all,
Xmas being a merry time
We thought we would give you a call:
And if you will listen
To what I've got to say,
For in a short time there will be
Some more pretty boys and girls this way.
Some can dance and some can sing;
By your consent they shall come in.

PART II.
In comes a recruiting sargant,
As I suppose you are.
You want some bold militia men,
To face the raging war.

We will bravely face the enemy,
And do the best we can,
And if they don't prove civil,
We will slay them every man.

PART III. (Lady sings.)
In comes a lady bright and gay,
Good fortunes and sweet charms;
I've scornfully being thrown away
Out of some lover's arms.
He swears if I don't wed with him,
As you all understand,
He'll list all for a soldier,
And go to some foreign land.

First Man says,
Pray madam if them be his thoughts
... let him go,
He never means to wed with you,
But prove your overthrow.

When poverty once begins to pinch,
In which it will some day,
He'll have another sweetheart
And with her he'll run away.

Lady.
Thank you, kind sir, for your advice
Which you have given to me.
I never meant to wed with him,
But have him for to know
I'll have another sweetheart
And along with him I'll go.

4th Man.
In comes I, King George,
With courage stout and bold.
With this bright sword I won
Ten thousand pounds in gold.
I fought a fiery dragon,
And brought him to the slaughter,
And by that means I won
The queen's eldest daughter.
I dashed him and smashed him as small as flies,
And sent him to Jamaica to make mince-pies.

2nd Man says,
Thou dashed me and smashed me as small as flies,
And sent me to Jamaica to make mince-pies.
Held thy flies or my blood will rise!
If thou art the King I dare face thee.

Then arises a duel between the 2nd man and the King. The King knocks the 2nd man down.

King.
Five pounds for a Dr.
No Dr. under ten.
Ten pounds for a Dr.
In comes I, the Dr.
How comes you to be the Dr.?
By my travels.
Where have you travelled from?

Dr.
From the fireside to the bedside, and from the bedside to the old corner cupboard, where there I have had many a nice bit of pork-pie and mince-pie, that makes me such a bold fellow as I am.

King.
What can you cure?
Almost anything.

*Dr.*

The itch, the pitch, the palsy, gout,
Pains within, and aches without.
If this man as got 19 diseases within him I will fetch 21 out.
Take hold of this bottle while I feel on this man's pulse.

*King.*

Where do you feel on his pulse?

*Dr.*

Where it beats the strongest.
This man's not dead he his only in a trance
Rise up my good man and have a dance.

(The lady and the 2nd man dances.)

6th Man.

In comes poor old lame Jane
Leaping over the meadow;
Once I was a blooming girl,
But now I am a down old widow.
You see my old hat his boath greacey and fat,
And that you can tell by the shineing;
There his holes in the crown, and holes all round,
And not much sleeve left in the lining.

*Then all sing.*

Good master, and good mistress,
As you sit round the fire,
Remember us poor plough-boys
That go through mud and mire:
The mire is so deep,
And the water runs so clear:
We wish you a merry Xmas,
And a happy New Year.
NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS

PLough-JAGS' DITIES.

The Hobby-Horse.
Here comes a four-year-old colt (cowt)
As fine a filly as ever was bought (bowl)
He can 'och an' he can trot,
An' he can carry a butter-pot
Nine miles high without touching the sky.

Jane, or Besom Betty.
In comes Jane with a long-legged crane,
Creeping over the meadow;
Once I was a blooming maid,
But now a down-owd widow.
(She sweeps about with her broom.)

The Soldier.
I'm a recruiting sergeant
Arrived 'ere just now;
My orders are to 'list all
That fellow cart and plough,
Likewise fiddles, tinkers,
And all that can advance.
I should like to see our foot dance.
Ah! but I can sing.
Come all you lads, that's a mind for listenin'!
Come with me and be not afraid:
You shall have all kinds of liquor,
Likewise dance with a pretty maid.

The Fool

is supposed to kill one of the men, and then they shout, 'Dead! and where's the doctor?'

The Doctor.

Here I am, the doctor;
I can cure the itch, the stitch
The blind, the lame,
And raise the dead to life again.

1Mrs. Gutch and Mabel Peacock, "Examples of Printed Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire," County Folk-Lore, V, Printed Extracts No. 7 (1906), 182-185.
I once cured a man that had been in his grave nine years.
Take hold of my bottle till I feel his pulse—
And every time he stirr'd his bagpipes played—
Cheer up, Sam, and let's have a dance.

_The Indian King._

(He appears as a black man with a white dress.)
Where out! my lads, let me come in,
I'm the chap they call 'the Indian King.'

_The Lady._
I'm a lady bright and gay,
The truth to you I'll tell.

What did the Fool say?
Recruiting Sergeant

[Fool] In comes I noble Antony
as mad and as milde and as blithe
as your old Mantle Tree,
make room for noble Antony
and all his jovial company
I have four merry merry actors stands at the door
some can dance and some can sing,
if you will consent they shall come in

Lady When I was a maid in blooming years
my pleasure was all in Pride,
my talking tongue would never be still
in service to abide,

I thought it long a young man
all in my arms to embrace
instead of a young man I met with a Clown,
was not that a sad pitiful case.

Fool a pitiful case indeed but how can we help it I ho! I ho! where's
all this paulting poor still paulting in this place yet not perfect,
Farshame, Farshame, step forward and let your voices ring

Sergent I am a Noble Sergent
arrived just now,
My orders are to enlist all
that follow the Cart or the Plow,
likewise the noble Tradesman
their fortune to advance

Fool I boy and I am a fool
to come to see you dance.

Sergent you a fool come to see me dance
faith I can sing and dance fool,

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1 Charles Read Baskerville, "Hummers' Wooling Plays in England," Modern Philology, XXI, No. 3 (Feb., 1924), 259-262.
[ Fool ]
I can neither dance sing nor say
but if you begin to sing I shall go away.

Sergeant
Good people give attention
and listen to my song
I will tell you of a young man,
before it be long,
he is almost broken hearted
the truth I do declare,
and beauty [h]as enticed him
and drawn him in as scare

Second Riboner
In comes the champion bold,
with my bludy spere,
I won ten thousand pounds in gould,
I fought the fry dragoon
and beat him to a slawter,
and by that means I gain'd
the King of Egipets Dauter
I turned my self round and if any man dare face me
I will ash him and smash him as small as flies,
I will send him to Jamaack to make mince pies.

Sergeant
Though talk about ashing and slashing as small as flies
pray the fellow let us have none of these lies,
thou will raise my blood if thou say's that thing.
I will stand before the if thou be some king

[Second Riboner]
No! No! no King am I you plainly see
but with my sword I will answer thee

Dance.

[Third Riboner, or Recruit]
Behold me now I have lost my mate
my drooping wings is on fate
pity my condition I do declare
for this false girl I am in despair

Sergeant
Cheer up man don't be in despair
for in a short time the Lady will there.

Lady
Behold me now my lady
with fortune and with charmes
so shamefully how I was throughn away,
into this looby's arms.
He swears if I don't marry him
as you may understand,
he will list for a soldiuer
into some foreign land

Sergeant
Madame if he consent to marry you
as once perhaps he may
he will list for a Soldier
and from you run away
Lady

I thank you Kind Sir
for the good advice you give
I never mean to marry him
while on this earth I live,
I never mean to marry him,
I would have you for to know
I will have another sweetheart
and with him I won't go

Fool
Stand back cock me dow let my Lady and me have a little discourse together

Madam if you will consent to marry Me
we will marry off at Hand
I have gold and silver
and that will please thee
You shall have a servent Maid
to wait at your command
if you will consent to marry me;
we will marry [off] at hand

[Servant]
Come my Lads that has a [m]ind for listing,
Come and go along with me
You shall have all kind of liquors
When you list in Company,
And ten Guines then shall be your Bounty
If along with me you will go,
Your hat shall be so neately dressed
And we will cut a gallant show.

[Recruit]
I then kind Sir, I will take your offer
The time away will sweetly pass,
Dash me if I will grieve any longer
For a proud and saucy lass.

Dame Jane
In comes the Old dance Jane,
Dabbling about in the middows,
Jumping about to shew you such sport,
Look about you old Maids and widows
Long time I have sawght you
But now I have found you,
Sorree come take you[p] bastard

Ancient Man
In comes the poor old ancient man
I will speek for my self the best I can.
My old grey hairs they hang so long.
I will speek for myself the best I know,

Old Lady
Look up old man and never fere
Wipe your Eyes and you will see clere,

Old Man
Me thinks me sees ye stars shine bright
Unto you I fix my hearts delight
[Lady]  Away! Away! from me be you,  
do you think I will fancy an old man like you,  
I look of high degree  

[Old Man]  Kick my Lady out of the door,  
for I will be hang'd upon our Kitchen door  
before I will come nigh you any more
THE REVESBY PLAY

THE FLOW BOYS, OR MORRIS DANCERS.

Enter Foot.
You gentle Lords of honour,
Of high and low I say,
We all desire your favour,
For to see our pleasant Play.
Our Play it is the best, kind Sirs,
That you would like to know;
And we will do our best, Sirs,
And think it well bestowed.
Thee' some of us be little,
And some of a Middle sort,
We all desire your favour
To see our pleasant sport.
You must not look on our Actions,
Our Wit they are all to seek,
So I pray take no exceptions
At what I am a-going to speak.
We are come over the Mire and Moss,
We dance an Hobby Horse,
A Dragon you shall see,
And a wild Worm for to Flew.
Still we are all brave jovial Boys,
And takes delight in Christmas Toys.
We are come both for Bread and Beer,
And hope for better cheer;
And something out of your Purse, Sir,
Which I hope you will be never the worse, Sir.
Still we are all brave jovial Boys,
And takes delight in Christmas Toys.

---

Come, now, Mr. Musick Man, play me my delight.

Piddler. What is that, old Father?

Fool. Ah, Boy! Times is hard, I love to have Money in both Pockets.

Piddler. You shall have it, old Father.

Fool. Let me see it.

[The Fool then calls in his Five Sons: first Pickle Herring, then Blue Britches, then Ginger Britches, Pepper Britches, and last calls out

Come, now, you Mr. Allspice!]

[They loot it once round the Room, and the Man that is to ride the Hobby Horse goes out, and the rest sing the following Song:]

Come in, come in, thou Hobby Horse,
And bring thy old Fool at thy Arse,
Sing Tanderday, sing Tanderday,
Sing heigh down, down, with a Derry Down a.

[Then the Fool and the Horse fights about the Room, whilst the following Song is singing by the rest:]

Come in, come in, thou bonny wild worm,
For thou hast ta'en many a lucky turn.
Sing Tanderday, sing Tanderday,
Sing heigh down, down, with a Derry Down.

[The wild Worm is only sprung 3 or 4 Times, as the Man walks round the Room, and then goes out, and the Horse and the Fool fights again, whilst the following Song is sung:]

Come in, come in, thou Dragon stout,
And take thy compass round about.
Sing Tanderday, sing Tanderday,
Sing heigh down, down, with a derry down.

Now you shall see a full fair fight,
Betwixt our old Fool and his right.
Sing Tanderday, sing Tanderday,
Sing heigh down, down, with a derry down.

Now our Serindge is almost done,
Then you shall see more sport soon.
Sing Tanderday, sing Tanderday,
Sing heigh down, down, with a derry down.
The Fool. Up well hark, and up well hind,
Let every man then to his own kind.
Sing Tantertday, sing Tantertday,
Sing heigh down, down, with a derry down.
Come, follow me, merry Men all,
Tho' we have made bold for to call,
It is only once by the Year,
That we are so merry here.
Still we are all brave jovial Boys,
And takes delight in Christmas Toys.

[Then they all foot it round the Room, and
follows the Fool out.
The y all re-enter, and lock their Swords to
make the Glass; the Fool running about the
Room.]

Pickle Herring. What is the matter, now, Father?

Fool. Why, I tell the what, Pickle Herring; as I was a-looking
round about me through my Wooden Spectacles, made of a great
huge little tiny bit of leather, placed right behind me, even before
me, I thought I saw a feat Thing ——

Pickle Herring. You thought you saw a feat Thing; what
might this feat Thing be, think you, Father?

Fool. How can I tell, Boy, except I see it again?

Pickle Herring. Would you know it if you see it again?

Fool. I cannot tell the, Boy, let me get it looked at.

[Pickle Herring, holding up the glass, says]

Is this it, Father?

[The Fool, looking round, says]

Why, I protest, Pickle Herring, the very same Thing; but what
might thou call this very pretty Thing?

Pickle Herring. What might you call it? You are older than
I am.

Fool. How can that be, Boy, when I was born before you?

Pickle Herring. That is the reason that makes you older.

Fool. Well, what dost thou call this very pretty Thing?

Pickle Herring. Why, I call it a fine large looking Glass.

Fool. Let me see what I can see in this fine large looking Glass;
here's a hole through it, I see; I see, and I see.

Pickle Herring. You see, and you see; and what do you see?

Fool. Marry, c'en a fool, just like the.

Pickle Herring. It is only your own face in the Glass.
Fool. Why, a Fool may be mistaken sometimes, Pickle Herring; but what might this fine large looking Glass cost the?

Pickle Herring. That fine large looking Glass cost me a Guine.

Fool. A Guine, Boy, why I could have bought as good a one at my own Door for three half-pence.

Pickle Herring. Why Fools and Cuckolds has always the best luck.

Fool. That is as much to say thy Father is one.

Pickle Herring. Why, you pass for one.

[The Fool, keeping the Glass all the while in his Hands, says]

Why was thou such a Ninnie, Boy, to go to ware a Guine, to look for thy Beauty where it never was, but I will show thee, Boy, how foolish thou hast wavel a deal of good money.

[Then the Fool flings the Glass upon the floor, jumps upon it; then the dancers, every one]

draws out his own Sword, and the Fool dancing about the Room; Pickle Herring takes him by the collar, and says

Father, Father, you are so merrily disposed this good Time, there is no talking to you; here is very bad News.

Fool. Very good News; I am glad to hear it; I do not hear good News every Day.

Pickle Herring. It is very bad News.

Fool. Why, what is the matter now, Boy?

Pickle Herring. We have all concluded to cut off your Head.

Fool. Do mercyfull to me, a Sinner; if you should do as you have said, there is no such Thing; I would not lose my son Pickle Herring for Fifty Pounds.

Pickle Herring. It is your son, Pickle Herring, that must lose you; it is your Head we desire to take off.

Fool. My Head; I never had my Head taken off in all my life.

Pickle Herring. You both must and shall.

Fool. Hold, hold, Boy, thou seemst to be in good earnest, but I'll tell thee where I'll be buried.

Pickle Herring. Why where will you be buried but in the Church Yard, where other People are buried?

Fool. Churchyard, I never was buried there in all my life.

Pickle Herring. Why, where will you be buried?

Fool. Ah, Boy, I am often dry; I will be buried in Mr. Mufin's Ale Cellar.

Pickle Herring. It is such a place as I never heard talk of, in all my life.
Fool. No, nor nobody else, Boy.

Pickle Herring. What is your fancy to be buried there?

Fool. Ah, Boy, I am often dry, and when they come to fill the Quart, I'll drink it off; and they will wonder what is the matter.

Pickle Herring. How can you do so when you will be dead? We shall take your Head from your Body, and you will be dead.

Fool. If I must die, I will dye with my face to the light for all you.

[Then the Fool, kneeling down, with the swords round his neck, says]

Now, Gentlemen, you see how ungrateful my Children is grown; when I had them all at Home, small, about as big as I am, I put them out to good learning, I put them to Coxcomb Colledge, and then to the University of Loggerheads, and I took them Home again this good time of Christmas, and I examin'd them all one by one altogether for shortness, and now they are grown so proud and so presumptions they are a-going to kill their old Father for his little means; so I must dye for all this.

Pickle Herring. You must dye, Father.

Fool. And I will dye for all the tother; but I have a little something, I will give it amongst you as far as it goes, and then I shall dye quietly.

Pickle Herring. I hope you will.

Fool. So to my first Son Pickle Herring, I'll give him the reded Nag, and that will make the Rogue brag, And to my second Son, I'll give him the brindled Cow; And to my Third Son, I'll give him the swelled Sow, and hope I shall please you all now; And to my fourth Son, I'll give him the great ruff Dog, for he always lives like a Hog; And to my Fifth Son, I'll give him the Ram, and I'll dye like a Lamb.

[Then they draw their Swords, and the Fool falls on the floor, and the Dancers walk once round the Pool, and Pickle Herring stamps with his foot, and the Fool rises on his knees again, and Pickle Herring says]

How now, Father?

Fool. How now, then, Boy, I have another squeak for my life.

Pickle Herring. You have a many.

[Then the Dancers, putting their Swords round the Fool's neck again,]

Fool. So I must dye.

Pickle Herring. You must dye, Father.
Foot. Hold! I have yet a little something more to leave amongst you, and then I hope I shall die quietly. So to my first Son, Pickle Herring, I'll give him my Cap and my Coat, a very good Sute, Boy; and to my second Son, I'll give him my Purse and Apparel, but, be sure, Boys, you do not quarrel; As to my other Three, my Exeutors they shall be.

[Then, Pickle Herring puting his Hand to his Sword,

Foot. Hold, hold, Boy! Now I submit my Soul to God.

Pickle Herring. A very good thought, old Father.

Foot. Marcham Church Yard, I hope, shall have my Bones.

[Then the Dancers walk round the Fool with their Swords in their Hands, and Pickle Herring stamps with his foot and says,

Heigh, old Father.

Foot. Why, Boy, since I have been out of this troublesome World I have heard so much Misick of Fiddles playing and Bells singing, that I have a great fancy to go away singing, so prithee, Pickle Herring, let me have one of thy best Songs.

Pickle Herring. You shall have it, old Father.

Foot. Let me see it.

[They sing

Good People all, I pray you now behold
Our old Fool's Bracelet is not made of Gold,
But it is made of Iron and good Steel,
And unto Death we'll make this old Fool yield.

Foot. I pray forbear, my Children small,
For as I am lost as Parent to you all,
O, let me live a while your Sport for to advance,
That I may rise again, and with you have a dance.

[The Sons sing

Now, old Father, that you know our Will,
That for your estate we do your Body kill,

Soon after Death the Bell for you shall toll,
And wish the Lord he may receive your Soul.

[Then the Fool falls down, and the Dancers with their Swords in their Hands sings the following Song;

Good People all, you see what we have done,
We have cut down our Father like ye Evening Sun,
And here he lies all in his purple gore,
And we are afraid he never will dance more.
[Fool rises from the floor, and says]

No, no, my Children, by chance you are all mistaken,
For here I find myself; I am not slain;
But I will rise your Sport then to advance,
And with you all, brave Boys, I'll have a dance.

Then the foreman and Cicely dances down,
The other Two Couples stand their ground,
After a short dance called "Jack the brisk young Drummer," they all go out but the
Fool, Fiddler, and Cicely.

Fool. Hear you, do you please to hear the sport of a Fool?
Cicely. A Fool, for why?
Fool. Because I can neither leap, skip, nor dance, but cut a Caper
Thus high, sound Musick, I must be gon, the Lord of Fool draws nigh.

Enter Pickle Herring.

Pickle Herring. I am the Lord of Fool, and here begins my
measure,

And after me a Fool,
To dance a while for pleasure
In Cupid's School.

Fool. A Fool, a fool, a fool, a Fool, I heard thou say,
But were the other way,
For here I have a Fool
Will make a Maid to play,
Although in Cupid's School,
Come all away.

Enter Blue Britches.

Blue Britches. I am the Knight of Lee,
And here I have a Dagger,
Offended not to be,
Come in thou needy Beggar,
And follow me.

Enter Ginger Britches.

Ginger Britches. Behold, behold, behold,
A man of poor Estate,
Not one Penny to infold.

Enter Pepper Britches.
Pepper Britches. My money is out at use, or else I would.

   Enter Mr. Allspice.

Allspice. With a Hack, a hack, a hack,
   See how I will skip and dance,
   For joys that we have found,
   Let each man take his chance,
   And we will all dance round.

[Then they dance the Sword Dance, which is called “Nelly’s Gig,” then they run under their Swords, which is called “Bowing Battle,” then Three Dancers dances with 3 Swords, and the foreman jumping over the Swords, then the Fool goes up to Cicely.

Fool. Here comes I that never come yet,
   Since last Time, lovy.
   I have a great Head but little wit.
   Tho’ my Head be great, and my Wits be small,
   I can play the Fool for a while as well as best of ye all.

My name is noble Anthony, I am as Melancholy as a Mantle Tree, I am come to show you a little sport and activity, and soon, too.

Make room for Noble Anthony and all his good Company, drive out all these proud Rogues, and let my Lady and I have a parl.

Cicely. O, ye Clown, what makes you drive out my Men so soon?

Fool. O, Pardon, Madam, pardon, and I will never offend you more; I will make your Men come in as fast as ever they did before.

Cicely. I pray you at my Sight, and drive it not till Night,
   That I may see them dance once more, so lovely in my Sight.

Fool. A Faith, Madam, and so I will; I will play the Man,
   And make them come in as fast as ever I can.

But, hold Gip, Mrs. Clasars, how do you sell Geese?

Cicely. Go’ look, Mister Midgecock, twelve pence apiece.

Fool. Oh, the pretty Pardon!

Cicely. A Gip for a frown.

Fool. An Ale wife for an Apparitor.

Cicely. A Rope for a Clown.

Fool. Why all the devise in the Country cannot pull this down.
   I am a valiant Knight,
   Just come from the Seas,
   You do know me, do you?
   I can kill you Ten Thousand, tho’ they be but fleas,
   I can kill you a Man for an ounce of Mustard,
   Or I can kill you Ten Thousand for a good Custard.
I have an old Sheep skin,
And I lap it well in.
Sword and Buckler by my side, all ready for to fight.
Come out, yow Whores and Chattins all, for had it not been in this
Country I should not have shewn my Valour amongst you; but, sound Music, for I must be gone.

Enter Pickle Herring.

Pickle Herring. In first and foremost do I come,
All for to lead this race;
Seeking the Country far and near
So fair a Lady to embrace.
So fair a Lady did I never see,
So,comely in my sight,
Drest in her gandy Gold,
And silver shining bright.
She has fingers long, and Rings
Of honor of beaten Gold.
My Masters all behold.
It is now for some pretty dancing Time,
And we will fost it fine.

Blue Britches. I am a Youth of Jollitree,
Where is there one like unto me?
My hair is bush'd very thick,
My Body is like an Hasel stick,
My Legs they quaver like an Eel,
My Arms become my Body well,
My fingers they are long and small,
Am not I a jolly Youth, proper and tall.
Therefore, Mister Musick Man,
Whatever may be my chance,
It is for my Lady's Love and mine,
Strike up the Morris Dance.

[Then they foot it once round.

Ginger Britches. I am a jolly young Man of flesh, blood, and
bone,
Give ear my Masters all each one;
And especially you, my Lady dear,
I hope you like me well.
Of all the Gallants here
It is I that doth so well.
Therefore Mister Musick Man,
Whatever may be my chance,
It is for my Lady's Love and mine,
Strike up the Morris Dance.

[Then they foot it round.

PEPPER BRITCHES. I am my Father's eldest Son,
And Heir of all his Land,
And in a short Time I hope
It will fall into my Hands.
I was brought up at Lindsey Court,
All the Days of my Life.
Here stands a fair Lady,
I wish she was my Wife.
I love her at my Heart,
And from her I will never Start.
Therefore, Mr. Musick Man, play up my part.

FOOL. And mine, too.

[Enter Allspice, and they foot it round. Pickle.

PICKLE HERRING. Sweet Ciss, if thou wilt be my Love,
A Thousand Pounds I will give thee.
CICELY. No, you're too old, Sir, and I am too young,
And, alas! old Man that must not be.

PICKLE HERRING. I'll buy the a Coyn of violet blue,
A Petticoat embroidered to thy knee,
Likewise my love to thee shall be true.

CICELY. But, alas, old Man, that must not be!

PICKLE HERRING. Thou shalt walk at thy pleasure, love, all the Day,
If at Night thou wilt but come home to me,
And in my House bear all the sway.

CICELY. Your Children, they'll find fault with me.

PICKLE HERRING. I'll turn my Children out of Doors.

CICELY. And so I fear you will do me.

PICKLE HERRING. Nay, then, sweet Ciss, no't trust me more,
For I never loved Less like the before.

Enter Fool.

FOOL. No, nor behind, neither.

Well met, sweet Ciss, well over ta'en.
CICELY. You are kindly welcome, Sir, to me.

FOOL. I will wipe my eyes, and I'll look again;
Methinks, sweet Cis, I now the see.

CICELY. Ref, what has thou to pleasure me?

FOOL. Why, this, my dear, I will give thee,

And all I have it shall be thine.

CICELY. Kind Sir, I thank you heartily.

PICKLE HERRING. (To the Fool.) Stand back, stand back, thou silly old Swain,

This Girl shall go with none but me.

FOOL. I will not.

PICKLE HERRING. Stand back, stand back, or I'll cleare thy brain.

[Then Pickle Herring goes up to Cis, and says]

O, now, sweet Cis, I am come to thee!

CICELY. You are as welcome as the rest,

Wherea you brag so lustily.

FOOL. For a Thousand Pounds she loves me best,

I can see by the twinkling of her Eye.

PICKLE HERRING. I have store of Gold whereas I boast,

Likewise my Sword, love, shall fight for the;

When all is done, love, I'll seeker the Coast,

And bring in Gold for thee and me.

CICELY. Your Gold may gain as good as I,

But by no means it shall tempt me,

For Youthful Yeare and Frozen Age

Cannot in any wise agree.

[Then Blue Britches goes up to her, and says]

Sweet Mistress, be advised by me,

Do not let this old Man be denyed,

But love him for his Gold in store,

Himself may serve for a Cloke, beside.

CICELY. Yes, Sir, but you are not in the right,

Stand back, and do not counsel me,

For I love a Lad that will make me laugh

In a secret place, to pleasure me.

FOOL. Good Wench!

PICKLE HERRING. Love, I have a beard so white as milk.

CICELY. Ne'er better for that, thou silly old man.

PICKLE HERRING. Besides my skin, love, is soft as silk.

FOOL. And thy face shines like a dripping Pan.

PICKLE HERRING. Rafe, what hast thou to pleasure her?

FOOL. Why, a great deal more, Boy, than there's in the.

PICKLE HERRING. Nay, then, old Rogue, I thee defy.

CICELY. I pray, dear Friends, fall not out for me.

PICKLE HERRING. Once I could skip, leap, dance, and sing,

Why will not you give place to me?
Fool. Nay, then, old Rogue, I thee defy,
For thy Nose stands like a Maypole Tree.

[Then goes up Ginger Breeches to Cisley, and says]

Sweet Mistress, mind what this Man doth say,
For he speaks nothing but the truth;
Look on the Soldier, now, I pray,
See, is not he a handsome youth?

Cisley. Sir, I am engaged to one I love,
And ever constant I will be;
There is nothing that I prize above.

Pickle Herring. For a Thousand Pounds, she's gone from me.
Fool. Thou may lay Two.

Cisley. (To Pickle Herring.) Old Father, for your reverence,
Stand you the next Man unto me,
Then He that doth the Weapon bear,
For I will have the hind Man of the Three.

Fool. (To Pickle Herring.) Old Father, a fig for your old Gold,
The Soldier, he shall bear no Swear,
But you shall see, and so shall we,
Tis I that carries the Lass away.

[Then the Dancers take hold of their Swords
and feet it round the Room; then every Man makes his Obeisance to the Master of
the House, and the whole concludes.

Finis.
Swinderby Dec' 31st 1841

[Fool.] In comes I to view this noble room to act most bravely

let this room be large or small or of great desart

we wish to act in all our acting parts

as for any further absence alas for him I crave

and after mee comes a soldier fine and brave

[ Sergeant.] I am a noble sergeant arrived here just now

my orders is to list all men that follows the cart

and plough

likewise all other trades that wishes to advance

[Fool.] I am a fool comes to see you dance

[ Sergeant.] You fool com to see me dance

[Fool.] Yes

[ Sergeant.] faith I can sing

[Fool.] I can neither dance sing nor say

but if you begin to sing I shall go away

[ Sergeant.] Good people give attention

and listen to my song

I will tell you of a young man

before the time be long

he is almost brokenhearted

the truth I do declare

for beauty has enticed him

and drawn him in a snare.

[Recruit.] Behold those drooping wings that hangs over my pate

pity my condition and dont me disdain

pray fales girl I am in Pain

[Sergeant.] O come tell me youth this maid provd false
with all her vows and flattering oaths betrayd
did her soft soothing speech ingage you to beleive
did she swear vows and then deceive

[Recruit.] the heavy pay[n]t that i feel and bad enouhg to boy that is my part but i care little about no nor i nor never did

[Lady.] Behold the lady bright and gay
her fortune and her charms
so scornfull i was thrown away
into that stubbya harms

[Recruit.] I dont like your song maddam

[Lady.] You dont like the truth sir

[Recruit.] Would you wish to offend me

[Lady.] Would you have me tell a lie

[Recruit.] get out of my sight you saussy baggage

New since you have been so scornfull
the truth to you i will tell
i will list for a solger
and bid you farewell

[Sergeant.] If these be is thoughts maddam
pray let him go
he never means to marry you
he will prove your overthrow
when poverty begins to pinch[ei]
as once perhaps bit may
he will list for a soldier
and from you run away

[Lady.] I thank you kind sir
for the good advice you gave
i never mean to marry him
while on this earth i live
i never mean to marry2 Him
as you may understand
you may list for a soldier
into some foreign land

[Sergeant.] Come you lads that his bound for listing
come and do not be afraid
you shall have all kinds of liquor
liquewise kiss the pritty maid

[Recruit.] Now kind sir i like your offer
time away shall sweetly pas
dush me if i will greive any longer
for a proud and saussy lass.

[Sergeant.] Ten guineas i will give you bounty
if a long with me you will go
your hat it shall be drest like mine
likewise cut a gallant show
[Lady.] So now my love has listed
and entered volunteer
I never will grieve for him
nor for him shed one tear
I never will grieve for him
I will let him to [k]now
I will have a nother sweetheer
and with him i will not go

[Fool.] I will give the gold i will give the girl
if thou can fancy me my girl

[Lady.] It is not your gold that will me entice
to leave off] roving to follow your advice
for I never do attend stail
to be at any young mans call

[Fool.] O go you proud and saussy dame
if you had been true i should been the same
i make no dought but i can find
as handsom a fair one to my mind

[Lady.] Stop stay young man you seem in haste
as though you thought your time should waste
let reason rule your roving mind
and perhaps in time i shall prove more kind

[Fool.] So now my sorrows is over and past
joy and comfort is found at last
the girl that use to say me nay
she comforts [me] both night and day
day and night.
she is my joy and hearts delight
Come right me down the powers above
that first created a man to love
I have a daimond in my eye
where all my joy and comfort lie

[Husbandman?] Madam if though will consent to marry me
I have got gold and silver and that as will please the
thou shall have a servant maid [to] wait at thy command
and we will be married and married out of hand

[Lady.] O Roger you are mistaken
a damsle i reside
I am in no such haste
as to be a plougman's bride
I live in hopes to gain a farmers son

[Husbandman?] If that be it good Mistress
I will come no more i have done
you may take your farmers son
and wed with all my heart
although my name be Roger
i can follow the plough and cart
[Psal] Stand out you smug clown let me lady and I have a bit of a song together
Maddam as I walked down the dale
one morning very soon
drest in my best apparel
liquefied my cloghted shoes
for as I have come a going
to the my buckle some nell
if thou loves me as I love the
thou loves the person well.

[Lady.] Go get your horses drest
weel fed with corn and hay
put on your best apparel
and then step on this way.

[Paul.] O no me troth not I
I have neither come to sit nor chat
I have other fish to fry
I need not tarry long
before I get a wife
here is buckle some Jonas
she is very well now
she loves me as her life

[Dame Jane.] I do my dear

[Lady.] Why talks the of Jones
I cant I please the as well
for she as got no money
and I am buckle some Nell
for I have got forty shillings
and that is a glorious thing
it will get a lass a sweetheart
as I am buckle some Nell

[Paul.] If thou as got forty shillings love
with I suppose you may
we will no longer tarry
than the next quarter day
for I have got fifty more love
and that a cow will buy
so we will shake hands in wedlock bands
so sing rare be Nell and I

So now we will provide for a wedding dinner as quick as we can
We will have a long tailed chicken
a barley pudding a salt red earring
a limb of a lark and a boose to roast
we will have a farning loaf
and off[?] a that cut a good thumping toast
wee will have a josta conch
and the fiddle shall merrily play

so edge about
[All sing.]

So now our sport is ended
you have heard our voices ring
I hope you are well contented
and god save the Queen

I wish you a merry Cristmas
and a happy new year
and what you please to my box
and a jug of your best beer.

[Exit Fool.]

[The rest sing.]

Good Master and good Miss
now our fool is gone
we make it in our business

to follow him a long

we thank you for Sivility
that you have shown us here
se i wish you all your health,
and a happy new Year.
SWORD DANCERS

The Captain and dancers form in line and bow to the company, the fiddler (or musicians) and "Bessy" stand at one side. The Captain then sings:

Captain: SONG

Six actors I have brought
Who were never on stage before;
But they will do their best,
And the best can do no more.

The Captain walks round in front of the line, to bars of music, and, pointing to number one, recites:

Captain: The first that call in,
He is a Squire's son;
He's like to lose his love,
Because he is too young.

But though he be too young,
He has money for to rove;
And he will spend it all
Before he'll lose his love.

At the end of the verse all strike their swords together, and No. 1 stands apart from the others. The same process is repeated till the dancers are all called out by their assumed names.

Captain: The next that I'll call in,
He is a Tailor fine:

---

1 Anonymous Chapbook, "Olde P'Prelies wyth newe Faces" (London, 1632), n. p. n.
What think you of his work?
He made this coat of mine.

So comes good master Snip,
His best respects to pay;
He joins us in our trip
To drive dull care away.

The next that I call in,
He is a Sailor bold;
He's come to poverty
By the lending of his gold.

But though his gold's all gone,
Again he'll plough the main,
With heart both light and brave
To fight both France and Spain.

Next comes the Skipper bold,
He'll do his part right well;
A clever blade I'm told
As ever pouded a keel.

Oh, the keel lads are bonny lads,
As I do understand;
For they run both fore and aft,
Wi' their long sets in their hands.

To join us in this play,
Here comes a jolly dog,
Who's sober every day
When he can get no grog.

But, though he likes his grog,
As all his friends can say,
He always likes it best
When he has nowt to pay.

Last, I come in mysel;
I make one of this crew,
And if you'd know my name,
My name it is True Blue.

[After having introduced the fine noble heroes, the Captain retires to one side, and at this point the "Bessy" sometimes considers it necessary to give an account of his own genealogy:]

Bessy: My father he was hang'd
        My mother was drooned in a well;
        An' now I' se left alone
        All by my own sel.
The dance then begins in slow and measured cadence, which soon increases in spirit, and at length bears the appearance of a furious assay, terminating with one of the dancers holding up the whole of the swords firmly interlaced.

[Song]

The Rector, alarmed, rushes forward to prevent bloodshed, and in his endeavours to separate the combatants, he receives a mortal blow, and falls to the ground. Then follows the lament—the general acclamations—and denial:

All: Alas! our Rector's dead,
And on the ground is laid:
Some of us must suffer for't,
Young men, I'm sore afraid.

I'm sure 't was none of I—
I'm clear of the crime;
'Twas him that follows me
That drew his sword so fine.

I'm sure 't was none of I—
I'm clear of the fact;
'Twas him that follows me
That did this bloody act.

I'm sure 't was none of I,
Ye bloody villains all!
For both my eyes were shut
When this good man did fall.
Then cheer up, my bonny, bonny lads,
And be of courage bold;
For we'll take him to the churchyard,
And bury him in the mould.

Captain: Oh! for a Doctor, a right good Doctor---
a ten-pound Doctor, oh!

Doctor: Here am I.

Captain: Doctor, what's your fee?

Doctor: Ten pounds is my fee;
But, nine pounds, nineteen shillings
and eleven pence three-farthings,
Will I take from thee.

Sings: See here — see here — a Doctor rare,
Who travels much at home;
Come, take my pills — they cure all ills,
Past, present, and to come.
The plague, the palsy, and the gout,
The devil within and the devil without—
Everything but a love-sick maid,
And consumption in the pocket.
Take a little of my nif-naf,
Put it on your tif-taf.
Parson, rise up and fight again;
The Doctor says you are not slain.

[The Rector gradually recovers, which is the signal for general rejoicing and congratulations.]

Captain: (sings) You've seen them all call'd in,
You've seen them all go round;
Wait but a little while---
Some pastime will be found.

Cox-green's a bonny place
Where water washes clean;
And Pamshaw's on a hill,
Where we have merry been.

Then, fiddler, change thy tune,
Play us a merry jig;
Before that I'll be beat.
I'll pawn both hat and wig.

[A general dance concludes the performance to the old and favourite tune--"Kitty, Kitty, Bo, Bo!"]
THE TYPICAL TEXT

(THE COMMON VERSION USED

IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTY)\(^1\)

The principal characters are Beelzebub, a fool, a doctor, a woman and baby, a soldier, a collector, etc.

They commence by singing outside a house:

\textquote{Good master and good mistress,}
\textquote{As you sit by the fire,}
\textquote{Remember us poor plough-boys}
\textquote{Who travel through muck and mire.}
\textquote{The mire is so deep: we travel far and near}
\textquote{To wish you a happy and prosperous New Year.}

The fool knocks and asks permission to show their play as follows:

\textquote{In comes I, Tom Fool,}
\textquote{The biggest fool you've ever seen;}
\textquote{There's five more little boys out here,}
\textquote{By your consent they shall come in.}

Leave having been obtained he bids them 'step up.'

The soldier enters first and sings a song which appears to be \textit{ad lib.}; I can hear of no particular words. Next enters one of the company dressed as a woman.

\textit{Woman.} In comes I, old Dame Jane,
\textquote{With a neck as long as a crane,}
\textquote{Long have I sought thee, now I've found thee:}
\textquote{Tommy, bring the baby in.}

\textit{Enter Beelzebub.}

\textit{Beelzebub.} In comes I, old Beelzebub,
\textquote{In my hand I carry my club,}
\textquote{Under my arm a whit-leather dripping pan,}
\textquote{Don't you think me a funny old man?}

\(^1\)Mrs. Gutch and Mabel Peacock, "Examples of Printed Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire," \textit{County Folk-Lore, V, Printed Extracts No. 7 (1908)}, 176-177.
Is there any old woman in this company who dare stand before me?

*Woman.* Yes, me.

*Fool.* Beezlebub, Beezlebub, what hast thou done!

  Killed poor old dame Jane and lamed her son.

  Five pounds for a doctor!

*Beezlebub.* Ten to stop away.

*Fool.* Fifteen to come in in a case like this.

*Enter Doctor.*

*Doctor.* In comes I, the Doctor.

*Fool.* How became you a doctor?

*Doctor.* I travelled for it.

*Fool.* Where did you travel?

*Doctor.* England, France, Ireland, Spain,

  Now I've come to doctor England again.

*Fool.* What diseases can you cure?

*Doctor.* Hipsy, pipsy, palsy, and gout,

  Pains within and pains without,

  Heal the sick, and cure the lame,

  Raise the dead to life again.

*Fool.* Now try your skill.

[Doctor takes hold of Woman's ankle.]

*Fool.* Is that where her pulse lies?

*Doctor.* Yes, the finest and most delicate part about a lady. Her pulse beats nineteen times to the tick of my watch once.

  This woman is not dead, but in a trance,

  If she can't dance we can't sing,

  So raise her up and let's begin.

*The Collector here takes the last round while the others dance about.*
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