

THE PENN VERSION OF THE MUMMERS' PLAY.

Mr. Lennox Morison, a member of this Society, while staying at Penn, at Christmas, 1911, heard the following version of the Mummings' Play performed by two boys only (but had previously seen it acted by a larger number of players). He induced the boys to write the words down, while he himself wrote down the music of the song. They told him they had learnt it from older boys. While he suspects it to be curtailed and corrupted, it seems to be genuinely traditional. In a list of the *Dramatis Personæ*, given to Mr. Morison, a character named "My Son John" is included, but he does not appear in the Play.

The publication of the Wooburn Version in THE RECORDS for 1906 was the means, through the local newspaper, of bringing my desire to obtain the Great Marlow version to the notice of an old inhabitant of the town, whom I had known for years, but was quite unaware that he had taken part in the performance at any time; and he wrote it out for me.

This awaits a convenient moment for publication, and meanwhile I gladly give precedence to Mr. Morison's find. It seems best to reserve any criticisms of texts until after the publication of at least that one more version, but a few very brief foot-notes are appended.

I am responsible for the stage directions, and for the assignment of lines to each speaker. It will be noticed that (as in the Wooburn version) there are no *Exits*, and the characters would gradually accumulate on the stage, were it not for the limited number of actors in the present case.

ALFRED HENEAGE COCKS.

THE PLAY.

Enter DON DERRY.

DON DERRY.

In comes I, old Don Derry
Come round this Christmas time to make you merry;
Room, room
For me and the broom,
And all the rest of the family.
Come in!

*Enter KING GEORGE.**

* *King George* was no doubt originally *Saint George*.

KING GEORGE.

In comes I, King George, brave soldier,
Clear the way.
Come in!

Enter CAPTAIN CURLY.†

† Captain Kearley of the Wooburn version.

CAPTAIN CURLY.

In comes I, Captain Curly, from the Isle of Wight;
Charge † any man to fight.

† ? = Challenge.

K. GEORGE.

Ha, Ha! Young man, you talk very bold;
You're like the man I've been told,
Draw out your sword and fight,
Sword to sword, and shield to shield;
There shall be a battle on this field
Between you and I,
See which on this ground first shall lie.

[? K. GEORGE *knocks* ? CURLY *down*. *]

* The stage direction here of Mr. Morison's informant is merely "Knocks him down," and Mr. Morison cannot remember which combatant was the conqueror. The grammar favours the assignment here adopted, but in the Wooburn version Captain Kearley is the victor, and if this should be the case here, the following speeches doubtfully assigned to the King, belong of course to the Captain.

? K. GEORGE.

Now is there a man to be found
To cure this dying man lying on this ground?

DOCTOR DODD (*without*).

Yes, there is a doctor.

? K. GEORGE.

And what's your fee?

DOCTOR (*without*).

Ten pound ten I'll take.

? K. GEORGE.

Come in.

*Enter DOCTOR DODD.**

* The famous Dr. Dodd was not of medicine, but Vicar of Wing in this county. He was hung for forgery in 1777.

DOCTOR.

In comes I, Doctor Dodd,

With my hand I stop the blood;

Ease the wound, and raise the body from the dead.

I killed a magpie last week; how do you think I killed him? Screwed his head off, and threw him in a dry ditch of water; and I cure this man too. I'll tell you what he want; two loads of herring heads, two loads of horse-top * tails, all boiled up in an old wooden saucepan with the bottom out. If that won't do I'll suffer to be hung. †

I've got a little bottle in my pocket, called the golden drop; ‡
Drip drop on his temple, drip drop on his heart;

* Is this a corruption for *Horse-knop*, = knapweed, *i.e.*, something utterly valueless? † Is this an intentional reference to the fate of the unfortunate Vicar?

‡ "Aurum potabile." L. M.

Rise up my old fellow, and take your own part.

Come in!

Enter BILLY SWEEP.

BILLY SWEEP.

In comes I, little Billy Sweep.

All the money I get I mean to keep;

In my pocket I carry no thieves.

Ladies and gentlemen, give us what you please.

Come in!

*Enter BIG HEAD. **

* I have ventured to use this name, from the Wooburn version, for that in the MS.—"I AS AIN'T BEEN YET."

BIG HEAD.

In comes I as ain't been yet,

With my big head and little wit;

My head so big, and my wits so small,

We'll sing you a song to please you all.

Both sing:—

SONG.



- (1) My father left me an acre of ground,
Sing Ivy, sing Ivy.
My father left me an acre of ground,
With a bunch of green holly and ivy.

[The third line in each verse repeats the first; the second and the fourth are the same throughout.]

- (2) We harrowed it with a bramble bush, &c.
(3) We ploughed it with an old cow's horn, &c.
(4) We sowed it with a pepper-box lid, &c.
(5) We reaped it with a carving knife, &c.
(6) We rolled it with a rolling pin, &c.
(7) We picked it * up in a walnut shell, &c.
(8) We took it home with a team o' rats, &c.
(9) The team o' rats came jig-jog back, &c.
(10) We stacked it down a mouse's hole, &c.

* In this verse "it" changes its subject to "crop" or an equivalent word, so a verse is perhaps omitted; and the verses have apparently lost their original order, as ploughing (unless the disorder is intentional) must precede harrowing; and rolling must precede reaping.

END.