

## A CHRISTMAS DRAMA as performed by the WHITE BOYS

(Manx Sun – 1832 with variants from other recorded versions)

PROLOGUE It is here by your leave, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
We will act a sporting play;  
We will show you fine diversion, Before you go away.  
It is room, room, brave gallant boys! Give us room to rhyme,  
We will show fine diversion In this Christmas time.  
It is room, room, give us room to sport,  
This is the room we wish to resort –  
Resort and repeat our merry rhymes,  
For remember, Good folks, it is the Christmas times,  
This Christmas time as we do now appear,  
We wish to act our merry Christmas here;

Chorus: 'We are the merry actors that travel the street,  
We are the merry actors who fight for our meat,  
We are the merry actors who show a pleasant play;'  
Enter in, St. Denis, thou champion, – clear the way!

*Enter St. Denis and St. George:*

ST. DENIS A stately knight, well arm'd with sword and shield,  
Approaches, marching proudly o'er the field;  
Sir Knight, where cam'st thou? also tell me  
Where thou'rt bound? thy name and country so declaim.  
I fear thee not, altho' thou look'st so big:  
Nor for thy long sword do I care a fig!

ST. GEORGE Tho' thy demands are insolent, yet I  
Will condescend thus briefly to reply:–  
A knight am I, and not unknown to fame –  
St. George the bold of England is my name!  
Still in the front of battle foremost found  
By field and flood for martial deeds renowned.  
Many brave knights I've stretched upon the plain;  
Towns have I taken, mighty giants slain;  
And lately, 'tis indeed a feat to brag on,  
I killed with this good sword a furious dragon,  
Deeply enamoured of a lady bright,  
Through the world I travelled as her knight;  
More fair, more virtuous, more divine than she  
In any realm or country ne'er can be;  
And what I say I'll prove 'gainst any knight,  
By dint of arms in fierce and mortal fight!

ST. DENIS St. George, St. George! thou talkest like an ass!  
Full of conceit, nor will I let thee pass  
'Till I have bang'd thy hide, thou empty boaster,  
'Spite thy swaggering arms and long cheese-toaster.  
A knight of France, St. Denis, famed am I,  
And 'ere we part I surely mean to try  
Whether I cannot lower thy lofty tones,  
And bring thee, caitiff, to thy marrow bones;  
Forc'd to confess that on this world so round,  
The dames of France are still the fairest found!

ST. GEORGE Thy head from off thy shoulders soon I'll lop,  
And that foul mouth of thine for ever stop.  
An English knight, on coming to the scratch  
For two of France is always found a match.  
*(They fight: St. George falls)*

ST. GEORGE I die by a French man's hand – ah! fate too cruel!

ST. DENIS I think I've given St. George his gruel!  
*(Enter St. Patrick)*

ST. PATRICK I am St. Patrick, Ireland gave me birth –  
 In dearest Dublin, sweetest place on earth,  
 Sword or shillalagh equally I wield,  
 To break a head or cut a throat well skill'd.  
 Fighting and eating – drinking too my trade is,  
 With some spare time devoted to the ladies!  
 Saint tho' I'm called, and yet I must allow  
 That now and then I dearly love a row!  
 The English George you've fairly floor'd, I see,  
 And now, my boy, you'll take a turn with me;  
 Come on St. Denis, from frogs of France,  
 And without fiddle I will make you dance!

ST. DENIS For this thou well deserves't a broken head  
 Born in a bog and on potatoes fed!  
 Nor bog, nor murphies shall delight thee more –  
 This weapon sends thee to the Stygian shore,  
 I'll put a stopper to thy bulls and brogue,  
 And rid the world right quickly of a rogue!  
*(They fight: St. Denis falls)*

Alas, St. Patrick, rather queer I feel,  
 Run through the body by thy Irish steel;  
 Prithee, good fellow, for a doctor roar,  
 Or poor St. Denis soon will be no more.

ST. PATRICK Halloo – a doctor, is a doctor near?  
 DOCTOR Friend, did you call a doctor? – I am here,  
 Jalap, my name; and for all sorts of ills  
 I've powders, bolus, lotions, potions, pills;

ST. PATRICK From whence came ye?  
 DOCTOR From France, from Spain, from Rome I come,  
 I've travelled all parts of Christendom –

ST. PATRICK Well spoken doctor, What can you cure?  
 DOCTOR All sorts of diseases, whatever you pleases,  
 All pains within, all pains without,  
 The plague, the palsey and the gout.  
 For Cholera Morbus too – complaint terrific,  
 I have never failing and a grand specific.  
 The itch, the stitch, and molly-grubs  
 I can cure all these deeds.  
 All big-bellied maids and such-like jades,  
 Likewise, I will pledge my life, I can cure a scolding wife,  
 Let them be curst of ever so stout,  
 If the devil's in, I'll blow him out.

ST. PATRICK What is your fee?  
 DOCTOR No fee I look for if I make no cure!

ST. PATRICK I prithee, doctor, cease thy bothering cant,  
 A midwife in this case we do not want;  
 Thy aid obstetric for some female friend  
 If there be need, – I'll Jalap recommend  
 These wounded knights straightway demand thy care,  
 Run through the guts in mortal fight they were!

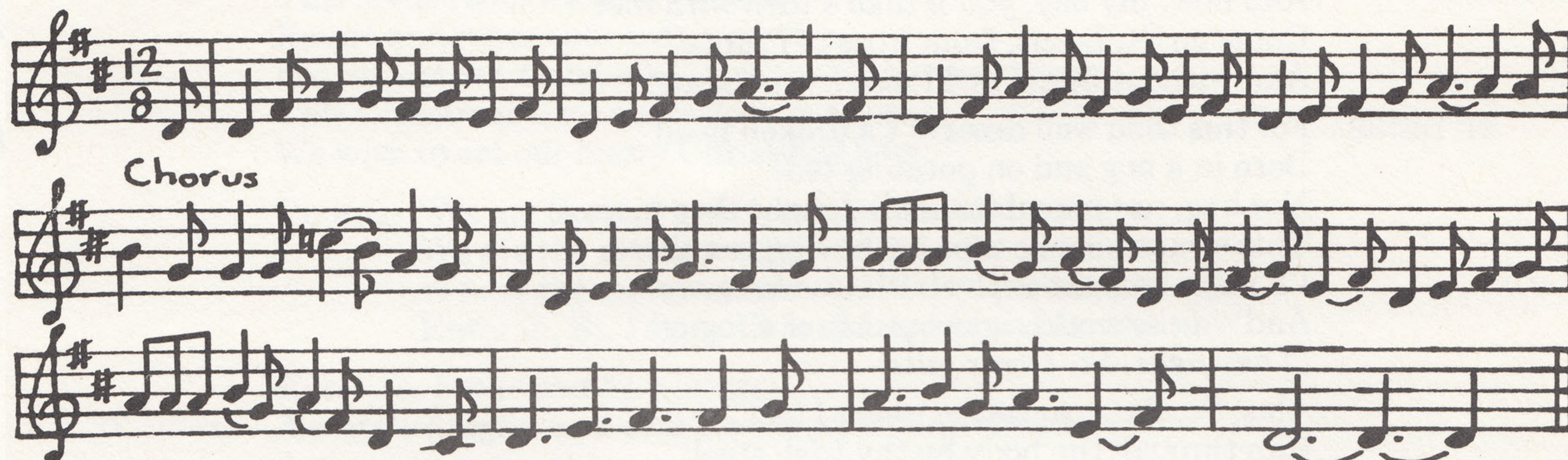
DOCTOR Stabb'd through the guts is sure a sad disaster,  
 But even for that I've a surprising plaster.

ST. PATRICK What medicine do you carry doctor?  
 DOCTOR I carry a little bottle in my pocket,  
 Of rixum-raxum, prixum-praxum, with cock-o-lory  
 A little of this to his nostrils soon their vigour will restore  
 And make them sound and active as before.  
*(The doctor operates: the wounded knights jump up perfectly recovered and  
 start fighting)*

ST. PATRICK After this squabble let our hands let's join  
In friendship, and together let us dine;  
Hungry I am, and well prepared for prog,  
With no objections to a glass of grog.

ST. DENIS To a good dinner I'm nothing loth;

ST. GEORGE And I've a twist that will surprise you both.  
(Knights stand in a circle and sing the following song)



Then here's success to all brave boys  
Of stout and gallant heart  
In battle-field or banquet board  
Prepared to play a part.

We handle well a fork and knife  
Likewise the sword and spear,  
And we wish you a Merry Christmas  
And a good New Year.

With hostile bands confronted,  
To fight we are not slack;  
On roast beef and plum pudding  
We make a stout attack.

We handle well a fork and knife etc. . . .

ST. PATRICK Now let's to dinner.

DOCTOR Stop, I wish to know,  
Who's to come down my fee before you go?

ST. PATRICK This morn I had a tenpenny, my dear,  
But on the road I spent it all on beer!  
And now I've not a copper in my breeches.  
St. George, fork out and satisfy the chap!

ST. GEORGE I'm short of rhino too – I've not a rap

ST. DENIS Nor I, good doctor, but I'll try to borrow  
A one pound note, so call again tomorrow.  
(All go off except the doctor)

DOCTOR I'm fairly fiddled! Birds of the same feather  
Are all three and humbugs all together.  
No cash, and call tomorrow, all a bubble!  
The doctor's bilked, lost in his time and trouble!  
(to the audience)

Good folks, I hope you'll pity my mishap  
And kindly drop a tester in my cap;  
So may a Merry Christmas – a Good New Year,  
Attend you all, with plenty of good beer. (Exit)

BIG HEAD In comes I who never came yet,  
With my big head and little wit;  
Let my wit be ever so small,

Me and my cudgell'll hammer 'em all.  
If you don't believe the words I say  
Enter in Little Devil Doubt, and clear the way

LITTLE DEVIL    In comes I, Little Devil Doubt,  
DOUBT            If you won't give me money  
                     I'll sweep you all out.  
                     Money I want and money I crave,  
                     If you won't give me money, I'll sweep you  
                     all to your grave.  
                     (*Commences sweeping*)  
                     Big Head, Big Head! There's war  
                     wherever we go!  
                     (*They fight*)

BIG HEAD        Where? where? where?

LITTLE DEVIL    Here, here, here  
DOUBT            (*Knocks Big Head down with his broom*)  
                     Here lies the body of old . . .  
                     When he dies,  
                     The Devil cries  
                     'Come . . . come!'    EXEUNT OMNES

*"The White Boys Dance is now performed"*

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