

The Mumming Play of King George and the Turkish Knight

Characters:

Father Christmas - comic patchwork, heavy makeup, white face, carries a wineskin tied to a broom handle

King George - White garment with red cross on chest, sword

Bold Slasher - Green and red, as gay as possible, Turban and scimitar, Dark face

Doctor - Tall hat, black and green, tail coat, medicine bottle, paper "leaves" hand down. Alternatively, as Dr. Bull: Black and White, Jersey cow tunic and top hat, cow bow tie, red clown nose.

Mary Tinker - All black, black face or veil, frying pan (to torment souls), club, drudge/slattern bell on elbow

Note: Costumes are traditionally scrounged materials: paper, ribbon, burnt cork, cast off finery, small bells, pointed hats

The collection of donations at the finish corresponds to the petition of the deity at the close of the ritual on which the play is based. Taking of "cakes and bonney brown ale" is sacramental - a mass in point of fact.

Father Christmas: (sweeping with broom in a series of gestures that delineates a sacred space)

Here comes I, Father Christmas,
Welcome or welcome not.
I hope old Father Christmas,
Will never be forgot.
I open the door, I enter in,
I'll beg all favors for to win.
Whether I rise, sit, stand, or fall,
I'll do my duty to please you all.
A room, a room, I do presume,
Pray give me room to rhyme.
For we have come to show activity,
This Merry Christmas time.
In this garland room there shall be shown,
The greatest battle that ever was known.
Acting youth or acting age,
Was never seen before,
Or acted on the stage.
Stir up the fire to give us light,
And let us act our noble fight!

All:

We are merry actors that travel the street,
We are merry actors that fight for our meat,
We are merry actors that show pleasant play,
Enter King George! Clear the way!

King George:

I am King George who from Old England sprung,
My famous name throughout the world hath rung.
For many gory deeds and wonders have I made known,
And made the giants tremble on their throne.
I fought the fiery dragon and brought him to the slaughter,
And by this means I won the King of Egypt's daughter.
For England's rights, for England's wrongs,
For England's my salvation,
What mortal man would dare to stand,
Before me with my sword in hand,
When I draw my English weapon?
I'll slay him and cut him as small as flies,

And send him to Jamaica to make mince pies.
I've searched and searched the whole world round,
But a man to equal me has not been found!

Turkish Knight:

I am the man to equal thee!

King George:

Who art thou?

Turkish Knight:

I am a valiant soldier,
Bold slasher is my name,
With sword and buckler by my side,
I hope to win the game.
Likewise, I'm called the Turkey Knight
Returned to England for to fight.
I have come in red robes roaring
From the red clouds of the dawn,
It is then that people call me,
The mighty Lord Red Lawn.
I have come in scaley green,
From the green hells of the sea,
Where fallen skies and evil hues,
And eyeless creatures be.
I sired the mighty Uther,
Quaffed many an English flagon,
I am called The Turkey Knight,
Indeed, I am the Dragon!

King George:

Wo Ho little fellow! Thou talkest very bold,
If thy blood's hot, I'll make it cold!
Draw out thy sword and slay,
Or pull out your purse and pay,
For I'll have satisfaction of thee,
Before thou goest away!
Stand off Slasher, let no more be said,
For if I draw my sword, I'll break thy head.

Turkish Knight:

How can'st thou break my head?
Since my head is made of brass.
My body made of steel.
My legs and arms are knuckle bones,
No man can make me feel.

(They fight. King George is slain.)

Turkish Knight:

I have cut him down like the evening sun,
He lies bleeding in the deep.

Father Christmas:

Oh no! Oh no! What hast thee done?
Thou hast killed my only son!

Turkish Knight:

Nay Father, 'twas thy son as gave me the first
challenge!

Father Christmas:

What must I do to raise him up again?
Here he lies slain in the presence of you all,
I willingly for a doctor do call.
Doctor, Doctor, where biat thee?
King George is wounded in the knee.
Doctor, Doctor, play thy part,
King George is wounded in the heart.
Is there a doctor to be found,
To raise the dead and heal the wound?

Doctor:

In walks the noble Doctor, travels
Much in this country, nor I do abroad.
I ain't like these little quee-quack doctors,
That goes about for the good of the country.

Father Christmas:

How far hast thou traveled in doctorship?

Doctor:

England, Ireland, Europe and Syrup,
Italy, Vitaly, High Germany, Spain,
All over the hills, and back again!

Father Christmas:

So far, and no further?

Doctor:

Ah yes, a great deal further.

Father Christmas:

How far?

Doctor:

From the fire sides, cupboard-head, upstairs and
into bed.

Father Christmas:

Well said Doctor! What is the fee?

Doctor:

Ten guineas is my fee.
But fifty pounds will I take of thee.

Father Christmas:

What diseases can`st thou cure?

Doctor:

All diseases! Just what my box of pills pleases!
The itch, the stitch, the palsey and the gout,
All pangs within and all pangs without.
If there are nineteen devils in that man,
I'll cast four and twenty out!
The squolly-grubs, the molly-grubs,
Tight-looseness in the chest,

Wind on the knee and all Pandora`s Box!
Also, many other things,
Which I will never be able to mention tonight,
or any other night.

Father Christmas:

Can`st thou bring the dead to life?

Doctor:

Surely I can cure this poor man,
In my box I carry my pills,
And in my bottle I carry my smills,
A drop on my heart, A drop on thy skull,
If thou be not quite slain,
Arise King George and fight again!

(He does not stir...)

Doctor:

I`ve got a little bottle in my side pocket,
Called Iccum Spicum Spinta of Spain,
Which brings dead men to life again!
Here Jack, sip a tup of my nip nap.
And let it run down thy tip tap.
Arise and fight ten-thousand...
Or lay down those swords and be at rest,
For peace and quietness is best.
If you can believe these words I say,
Step in Molly Tinker and save the day!

Molly Tinker:

Rise up King George and fight again!
Behold the cure that I have done,
I have raised you from your bleeding wound!

King George:

Here I am with shining armour bright,
Famous champion, likewise worthy knight.
Seven long years in close cave I was kept,
Out of that prison I leapt.
From out of that into a rock of stone,
There I laid down my weary bones.
Oh to be knocked out of seven senses
Into seven score,
The like was never seen in England before.

Molly Tinker:

My name ain`t Molly Tinker,
My name is old Mary Tinker.
Ale, wine, and strong beer drinker,
I told the landlord to his face,
The chimbley corner was my place.
That's where I sat and dried my face,
While Jones`s ale goes round, my boys,
I ate half a gallon loaf t`other day,
Without any bread,
And near choked myself with the crumbles.
My head`s so big, my wit`s so small,
But I`ve got enough to please thee all.
My name`s old Mother Balzeebub,
Under my arm, I carries my club,
And on my elbow I wears my bell,

Don` t you think I cut a great swell?

Turkish Knight:

Yes Mary, as big as me sel` `

Molly Tinker:

First comes Christmas, then comes Spring,
I am a jolly lass that can either dance or sing.
But money in the dripping pan is a much better
thing!
With a rink, tink, tink,
And a drop more to drink.
To make the kettle go round oh
For all these lads are mine.
If you think I` m a fool and got no sense,
Put your hand in your pocket,
And pull out your pence.
Blue sleeves, yellow lace,
All you mummers dance apace,
The players are in deep distress,
For want of cakes and bonny brown ale.

All sing and dance:

Come all ye jolly mummers that mum at
Christmas time,
Come join us all in chorus, Come join us all in
rhyme.
A mumming we will go, a mumming we will go.
With a blue cockade all in our hats,
We` ll go to the garland show.
With a hey down down and a hey down down,
With a hey down down down-derry,
For we come this Christmas time,
A purpose to be merry.
And we` ll be merry here my friends,
And we` ll be merry there.
Who can tell if we shall live,
To be merry another year.