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SPECIMENS OF OLD

# CHRISTMAS CAROLS,

SELECTED FROM

*Manuscripts and Printed Books.*

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PRINTED FOR THE PERCY SOCIETY,

BY T. RICHARDS, FOR THE EXECUTORS OF THE LATE

C. RICHARDS, 100, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

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MDCCXLI.



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## PREFACE.

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THE object of the following Collection is to illustrate one of our old popular customs, which is fast disappearing. It was suggested that it should be made a *seasonable* publication ; and the desire to publish it at the given time has necessarily restricted a little the extent of the Editor's researches. He has found also that the remains of this class of literature are not so numerous as might have been expected.

The Anglo-Saxon *Gule* or *Yule*, was an ancient Pagan festival, from which we derive the feasting and merriment still observed at the same season of the year. When the Anglo-Saxons were converted, the feasting and other observations were turned to another purpose, and were made to be considered a memorial of the nativity of our Saviour, the commemoration of which

happened at the same time. The name of *Yule* still remained, and in some parts of our island has been preserved to the present day ; but after the entry of the Normans, a foreign appellation was introduced,—*Noel*, derived from the Latin *natalis* (the *dies natalis* of our Lord), which soon became naturalised in our language and literature.\*

Our carols illustrate the festive character, as well as the pious feelings, appropriate to the season. The Anglo-Norman song which stands first, is the earliest carol known to have been written in our island. It has been printed before, but it is now carefully edited from the original manuscript. The late Mr. Douce translated it into English verse ; but as his version does not preserve a single characteristic of the original, it has been thought unnecessary to reprint it here. Another French carol has been inserted, as a specimen of similar compositions among our

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\* In our carols these names appear in different forms ; as *zol*, *yol*, *nowel*, *novels*, &c. It may here be observed, that in the first line of the poem beginning on p. 18, a later hand has corrected *Sunday* to *Monday*.

neighbours. Several carols in our Collection illustrate the fine old ceremony of bringing in the boar's head, and other Christmas festivities. A few pieces have been introduced which are not strictly carols, but which are more or less connected with the subject. Three modern carols are added at the end, taken from the Collection of Sandys, to show how long the expressions and allusions of the older carols have been preserved by popular tradition. The only desire of the Editor is to contribute towards the *merry Christmas* of the members of the Percy Society.

T. W.

*December 1841.*

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# CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

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## I.

[From MS. Reg. 16 E, viii. fol. 130, vo, written early in the  
thirteenth century.]

---

SEIGNORS, ore entendez à nus,  
De loinz sumes venuz à vous,  
Pur quere Noel ;  
Car l'em nus dit que en cest hostel  
Soleit tenir sa feste anuel,  
Ahi, cest jur.  
Deu doint à tuz icels joie d'amurs,  
Qui à danz Noel ferunt honors !

Seignors, jo vus dis por veir,  
Ke danz Noel ne velt avoir  
Si joie non ;  
E repleni sa maison  
De payn, de char, e de peison,  
Por faire honor.  
Deu doint à tuz ces joie d'amur !

B

Seignors, il est crié en l'ost,  
 Que cil qui despent bien, e tost,  
     E largement,  
 E fet les granz honors sovent,  
 Deu li duple quanque il despent,  
     Por faire henor.  
     Deu doit à . . . .

Seignors, escriez les malveis,  
 Car vuz nel les troverez jameis  
     De bone part :  
 Botun, batun, ferun, groinard,  
 Car tot dis a le quer cunard  
     Por faire henor.  
     Deu doit . . .

Noel beyt bien li vin Engleis,  
 E li Gascoïn, e li Franceys,  
     E l'Angevin :  
 Noel fait beivere son veisin,  
 Si qu'il se dort, le chief enclin,  
     Sovent le jor.  
     Deu doit à tuz cels . . .

Seignors, jo vus di par Noel,  
 E par li sires de cest hostel,  
     Car bevez ben :  
 E jo primes beverai le men,  
 E pois après chescon le soen,  
     Par mon conseil ;  
 Si jo vus di trestoz, ' Wesseyl !'  
 Dehaiz eit qui ne dirra, ' Drincheyl !'

## II.

[From the Porkington MS. of the fifteenth century, communicated by Sir Frederick Madden to the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. ii. p. 30. It appears to end imperfectly.]

---

HEY, hey, hey, hey,  
The borrys hede is armyd gay.

The boris hede in hond I bryng,  
With garlond gay in porttoryng,  
I pray yow alle with me to synge,  
with hay.

Lordys, kny3ttes, and skyers,  
Persons, prystis, and wycars,  
The boris hede ys the furt mes,  
with hay.

The boris hede, as I yow say,  
He takis his leyfe, and gothe his way,  
Gone after the .xij. theyl ffyt day,  
with hay.

Then commys in the secunde kowrs with mykylle pryde,  
The crannus, the heyrrouns, the bytteris, by ther syde,  
The pertrychys and the plowers, the wodcokus and the  
snyt,  
with hay.

Larkys in hot schow, ladys for to pyk,  
 Good drynk therto, lycyus and fyne,  
 Blwet of Allmayne, romnay and wyin,  
 with hay.

Gud bred alle and wyin dare I welle say,  
 The boris hede with musterd armyd soe gay ;  
 Furmante to pottage, with wennissun fyne,  
 And the hombuls of the dow, and all that ever commis  
 in ;  
 Cappons i-bake, with the pesys of the roow,  
 Reysons of corrons, with odyre spysis moo.

---

### III.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 79, ro. written about the time of  
 Henry VI.]

---

WOLCUM 30l, thu mery man, in worchepe of this holy day.

Wolcum be thu, hevene kyng,  
 Wolcum, born in on morwenyng,  
 Wolcum, for hom we xal syng,  
 wolcum, 30l.

Wolcum be 3e, Stefne and Jon,  
 Wolcum, Innocentes everychon,  
 Wolcum, Thomas marter on,  
 wolcum, 30l.

Wolcum be ȝe, good newe ȝere,  
 Wolcum, twelthe day bothe in fere,  
 Wolcum, seyntes lef and dere,  
 wolcum, ȝol.

Wolcum be ȝe, Candylmesse,  
 Wolcum be ȝe, qwyn of blys,  
 Wolcum bothe to more and lesse,  
 wolcum, ȝol.

Wolcum be ȝe that arn here,  
 Wolcum, alle, and mak good chere,  
 Wolcum, alle, another ȝere,  
 wolcum, ȝol.

---

 IV.

[From MS. Sloane 2593, fol. 51, v<sup>o</sup>.]

---

*Eya, Jhesus hodie natus est de Virgine.*

BLYSSID be that mayde Mary,  
 Born he was of here body,  
 Godis sone that syttit on hy,  
*non ex virili semine.*

In a manjour of an as,  
 Jhesu lay and lullyd was,  
 Harde peynis for to pas,  
*pro peccante homine.*

Kynges comyn fro dyvesse londe,  
 With grete zyftes in here honde,  
 In Bedlem the childe they fonde,  
*stella ducte lumine.*

Man and chyld, bothe eld and ying,  
 Now in his blysfyl comyng,  
 To that chyld mow we syng,  
*gloria tibi, Domine.*

Nowel, nowel, in this halle,  
 Make merye I prey zou alle ;  
 Onto that chyld may we calle,  
*ullo sine crimine.*

---

V.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 52, v<sup>o</sup>.]

---

**JHESU, Jhesu, Jhesu, Jhesu, saf us alle thorw thi vertu !**

Jhesu, as thou art our savyour,  
 That thou save us fro dolour,  
 Jhesu is myn par amour ;  
 Blyssid be thi name, Jhesu !

Jhesu was born of a may,  
 Upon Cristemesse day,  
 Sche was may be-forn and ay ;  
 Blyssid be thi name, Jhesu !

Thre kynges comen fro Segent,  
 To Jhesu Cryst they browte present ;  
 Lord God omnipotent,  
     Saf us alle throw thi vertu !

Jhesu deyid and schad his blod,  
 For al mankynde, upon the rod ;  
 He graunt us grace of happis good,  
     I be-seke the, swete Jhesu !

Jhesu, for thi modere sake,  
 Kepe us fro the fyndis blake,  
 Aȝene hym that we mown wake,  
     And save us alle throw thi vertu !

---

 VI.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 57, r<sup>o</sup>.]

---

Nowel el el el el el el el el el el, Mary was gret with  
 Gabriel.

MARY moder, meke and mylde,  
 Fro schame and synne that ȝe us schyllde,  
 For gret on grownd ȝe gon with childe,  
     *Gabriele nuncio.*

Mary moder, be not a-dred,  
 Jhesu is in ȝour body bred,  
 And of ȝour bryst he wil be fed,  
     *cum pudoris lilio.*



Mary moder, the frewit of the  
 For us was naylid on a tre,  
 In hevene is now his magesté,  
*fulget resurrexcio.*

Mary moder, the thredde day  
 Up he ros, as I 3ow say,  
 To helle he tok the ry3te way,  
*motu fertur proprio.*

Mary moder, after thin sone  
 Up thou steyist with hym to wone,  
 The aungele wern glad quan thou were come,  
*in celi palacio.*

---

VII.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 63, r<sup>o</sup>.]

---

A NEW 3er! a new 3er! a chyld was i-born,  
 Us for to savyn that al was for-lorn,  
 So blyssid be the tyme!

The fader of hevene his owyn sone he sent,  
 His kyngdam for to cleymyn,  
 So blyssid be the tyme!

Al in a clene maydyn our Lord was i-ly3t,  
 Us for to savyn with al his my3t,  
 So blyssid, etc.

Al of a clene maydyn our Lord was i-born,  
 Us for to savyn that al was for-lorn,  
 So blyssid, etc.

Lullay! lullay! lytil chyld, myn owyn dere fode,  
 How xalt thou sufferin be naylid on the rode?  
 So . . .

Lullay! lullay! lytil chyld, myn owyn dere smerte,  
 How xalt thou sufferin the scharp spere to thi herte?  
 So . . .

Lullay! lullay! lytyl child, I synge al for thi sake,  
 Many on is the scharpe schour to thi body is schape;  
 So . . .

Lullay! lullay! lytyl child, fayre happis the be-falle!  
 How xal thou sufferin to drynke ezyl and galle?  
 So . . .

Lullay! lullay! lytil chyld, I syng al be-forn,  
 How xalt thou sufferin the scharp garlong of thorn?  
 So . . .

Lullay! lullay! lytil chyld, qwy wepy thou so sore?  
 And art thou bothin God and man? quat woldyst  
 thou be more?  
 So . . .

Blyssid be the armys the chyld bar abowte!  
 And also the tetes the chyld on sowkyd!  
 So . . .

Blyssid be the moder! the chyld also!  
 With *benedicamus Domino!*  
 So blyssid be the tyme.

## VIII.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 70, r<sup>o</sup>.]

---

NOWEL el el el el el el el el el el el el el el el el.

Mary moder, cum and se,  
 Thi sone is naylyd on a tre,  
 Hand and fot he may not ge,  
     His body is woundyn al in woo.

Thi swete sone, that thou hast born,  
 To save mankynde that was for-lorn,  
 His hed is wrethin in a thorn,  
     His blysfyl body is al to-torn.

Quan he this tale be-gan to telle,  
 Mary wold non longer dwelle,  
 But hyid here faste to that hylle,  
     Ther Jhesu his blod be-gan to spylle.

Myn swete sone, that art me dere,  
 Qwy han men hangyd the here?  
 Thi hed is wrethin in a brere;  
     Myn lovely sone, qwer is thi chere?

Thin swete body, that in me rest,  
 Thin comely mowth, that I have kest,  
 Now on rode is mad thi nest,  
     Leve chyld, quat is me best?

Woman, to Jon I the betake !  
 Jon, kyp this woman for myn sake,  
 For synful sowlys my deth I take,  
     On rode I hange for manys sake.

This game alone me muste play,  
 For synful sowle I deye to day,  
 Ther is no wyzt that goth be the way,  
     Of myn peynys can wel say.

---

 IX.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 71, r<sup>o</sup>.]

---

MAN, be glad in halle and bour,  
 This tyme was born our savyour.

In this tyme Cryst hazt us sent  
 His owyn sone in present,  
 To dwelle with us verement,  
     To ben our helpe and socour.

In this tyme ros a sterre cler  
 Over Bedlem, as bryzt as fer,  
 In tokenyng that he hadde non per,  
     Lord, god, kyng, and emperour.

In this tyme it is be-falle,  
 He that deyd for us alle,  
 Born he was in assis stalle,  
     Of Mary, that swete flour.

In this tyme kemyn thre kynges,  
 He kemyn fro fer, with ryche thinges,  
 For to makyn here offerynges,  
     On here knen with gret honour.

In this tyme prey we  
 To hym that deyid on the tre,  
 On us have mercy and peté,  
     And bryng us alle to his tour !

---

X.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 74, r<sup>o</sup>.]

---

MAN, be glad in halle and bour,  
 This tyme was born our savyour.

In this tyme a chyld was born,  
 To save tho sowl that wern for-lorn,  
 For us he werde garlond of thorn,  
     Al it was for our honour.

The eytende day he was schorn,  
 To fulfyll the law that was be-forn,  
 Of meknesse he blew his horn.

On Good Fryday was don on rode,  
 The Jewes spyltyn his herte blode,  
 Mary, his moder, be hym stode ;  
     3e ben our help and our socour.

On Esterne Day he gan up ryse,  
 To techyn hem that wern on-wyse ;  
 Jhesu, for 3our woundes five,  
     3e ben our, etc.

On Halwyn Thursday he gan up steye  
 To his fader, that sit on heye ;  
 Jhesu, for 3our curteysye,  
     3e ben, etc.

On QwytSunday he gan doun sende  
 Wyt and wysdam us to a-mende ;  
 Jhesu, bryng us to that ende,  
     With-outyn delay, our sayvour !

---

 XI.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 74, v<sup>o</sup>.]

---

NOWEL el el el, now is wel that evere was woo.

A babe is born al of a may,  
 In the savasyoun of us,  
 To hem we syngyn bothe nyght and day,  
     *Veni creator spiritus.*

At Bedlem that blyssid pas,  
 The chyld of blysse born he was,  
 Hym to serve, go 3eve us gras,  
     *O lux beata trinitas.*

Ther come thre kynges out of the est,  
 To worchepe the kyng that is so fre,  
 With gold and myrre and francincens,  
*A solis ortus cardine.*

The herdes herdyn an aungele cry,  
 A merye song then sungyn he,  
 Qwy arn ȝe so sore a-gast?  
*Jam ortus solis cardine.*

The aungele comyn doun with on cry,  
 A fayr song then sungyn he,  
 In the worchepe of that chyld,  
*Gloria tibi, Domine.*

---

## XII.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 75, r<sup>o</sup>.]

---

**MAN**, be merie as bryd on berie, and al thi care let away !

This tyme is born a chyld ful good,  
 He that us bowt upon the rod ;  
 He bond the devyl, that is so wod,  
 Til the drydful domys-day.

Quan the chyld of meche myȝt  
 Wold be born of Mary bryȝt,  
 A tokene he sente to kyng and knyȝt,  
 A sterre that schon bothe nyȝt and day.

The sterre scon as bryzt as fer,  
 Over al the wold, bothe fer and ner,  
 In tokene he was with-outyn per,  
 And pereles he xal lastyn ay.

The .viij. day he was circumsise,  
 For to fulfyll the profecye,  
 The profetes with wordes wyse  
 Hym present with ryche a-ray.

The .xij. day come kynges thre  
 Out of the Est, with herte fre,  
 To worchepyn hym thei knelyd on kne,  
 With gold and myrre and francincens.

---

### XIII.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 75, v<sup>o</sup>.]

---

NOWEL el el el el el el el el el el el el el el el.

Nowel el! bothe eld and 3yng,  
 Nowel el! now now we syng,  
 In worchepe of our hevene kyng,  
 Al-myty God in Trinité.

Lestenyzt, lordynges, bothe leve and dere,  
 Lestenyzt, ladyis, with glad chere,  
 A song of merthe now now 3e here,  
 How Cryst our brother he wolde be.



An aungyl fro hefne was sent ful snel,  
 His name is clepyd Gabriel,  
 His ardene he dede ful snel,  
                   He sat on kne and seyde, *Ave!*

And he seyde, “Mary, ful of grace,  
 Hevene and erthe in every place,  
 With-ine the tyme of lytyl space,  
                   Reconsiled it xuld be.”

Mary stod style as ony ston,  
 And to the aungyl che seyde a-non,  
 “Than herd I nevere of manys mon,  
                   Me thinkit wonder thou seyst to me.”

The aungyl answerd a-non ful wel,  
 “Mary, dryd the never a del,  
 Thou xalt conseyye a chyld ful wel,  
                   The holy gost xal schadue the.”

Mary on bryst here hand che leyd,  
 Style xe stod, and thus xe seyde,  
 “Lo me here Godes owyn hand mayd,  
                   With herte and wil and body fre!”

Mary moder, mayde myld,  
 For the love al of thi chyld,  
 Fro helle pet thou us schyld,  
                   Amen! amen! now synge we.

## XIV.

[From MS. Sloane, No. 2593, fol. 80, vo.]

**Mak** we merthe for Crystes berthe, and syng we 30l  
til Candilmes.

THE ferste day of 30l we han in mynde  
How man was born al of our kende,  
For he wold the bondes on-bynde  
Of alle our synne and wykkydnes.

The secunde day we syng of Stevene,  
That stonyd was, and sid up evene  
With Cryst ther he wold stonde in hevenc,  
And crownyd was for his provys.

The threde day longes to Saynt Jon,  
That was Crystes derlyng, derest on,  
To hem he tok, quan he xuld gon,  
His dere moder, for his clenens.

The forte day of the chylderyn 3yng,  
With Herowdes wrethe to deth were throng,  
Of Cryst thei cowde not speke with tong,  
But with here blod bare wytnesse.

The fyfte day halwyt Seynt Thomas,  
Ryth as strong as peler of bras,  
Hyld up his kyrke and slayin was,  
For he stod faste in rythwynes.

The eytende day tok Jhesu his nam,  
That savyd mankynde fro synne and schame.

c

And circumsysid was for non blame,  
 But for insaun[ce] and mekenesse.

The .xij. day offeryd to hym kynges .iij.  
 Gold, myrre, incens, this giftes fre,  
 For God and man and kyng is he,  
 And thus thei worchepyd his worthinesse.

The forty day cam Mary myld  
 On to the temple with here schyld,  
 To schewyn here clene that never was fyld;  
 And here-with endis Crystemesse.

---

 XV.

[From MS. Harl. No. 2252, fol. 153, v<sup>o</sup>. of the fifteenth century. This and the following ought not strictly to have a place among a collection of carols, but they are curious illustrations of one part of the old popular belief relating to Christmas Day.]

---

Yf Crystmas day on the Sunday be,  
 A trobolus wynter ye shall see,  
 Medlyd with waters stronge;  
 Were shalbe good wyth-owte fabylle,  
 The somer it shabe resonabylle,  
 And stormys odyr whylys amonge.

Wynus that yere shalbe goode,  
 The herveste shalbe wete wyth floddes,  
 Pestylens falle in many a contré,  
 And many younge pepylle dede shall be,  
 Or that sekenes lynne,  
 And grete tempestes ther-ynne.

Prynces that yere with iren shall dye,  
 And chaungyng of many lordes eye,  
     Among knyghttes grete debate ;  
 Many tydynges shall com to men ;  
 Wyffes shalle wepen then,  
     Bothe pore and grete estates.

The faythe then shalbe hurte truly,  
 For dyvers poyntes of heresy  
     That then shall apere,  
 Throwe temptyng of the fende ;  
 For diverse maters unkynde  
     Shalle cawse grete daunger.

Catelle shall threve one and odyr,  
 Save beeve, they shall kyll eche odyr,  
     And som bestes shalle dyen ;  
 Lytell frute and corne good,  
 No plenté of appylles to your fode ;  
     Shyppys on the see have payne.

That yere on the Monday, wyth-owte fyne,  
 Althynges welle thou mayste begynne,  
     Hyt shalbe prophytabyll ;  
 Chyldren that be borne that day,  
 Shalbe myghtye and stronge par fay,  
     Of wytte full raisonnabyll.

## XVI.

[From MS. Harl. No. 2252, fol. 154, r<sup>o</sup>.]

---

LORDYNGES, I warne yow al be-forne,  
 Yef that day that Cryste was borne  
 Falle uppon a Sunday,  
 That wynter shalbe good par fay,  
 But grete wyndes alofte shalbe,  
 The somer shalbe fayre and drye ;  
 By kynde skylle, wyth-owtyn lesse,  
 Throw all londes shalbe peas,  
 And good tyme all thyngs to don ;  
 But he that stelythe, he shalbe fownde sone ;  
 Whate chylde that day borne be,  
 A grete lorde he shalle ge, etc.

Yf Crystemas day on Monday be,  
 A grete wynter that yere have shall ye,  
 And fulle of wyndes lowde and styлле ;  
 But the somer, trewly to telle,  
 Shalbe sterne wyndes also,  
 And fulle of tempeste all thereto ;  
 All batayle multyplye ;  
 And grete plenty of beeve shall dye.  
 They that be borne that day, I wene,  
 They shalle be stronge eche on and kene ;  
 And he that stelylythe owghte ;  
 Thow thowe be seke, thou dyeste not.

Yf Crystmas day on Tuysday be,  
 That yere shall dyen wemen plenté ;  
 And that wynter wex grete marvaylys ;  
 Shyppys shalbe in grete perylles ;  
 That yere shall kynges and lordes be slayne,  
 And myche hothyr pepylle agayne heym.  
 A drye somer that yere shalbe ;  
 Alle that be borne ther in may se,  
 They shalbe stronge and covethowse.  
 Yf thou stele awghte, thou lesyste thi lyfe ;  
 Thou shalte dye throwe swerde or knyfe ;  
 But and thow fall seke, sertayne,  
 Thou shalte turne to lyfe agayne.

Yf Crystmas day, the sothe to say,  
 Fall uppon a Wodnysday,  
 That yere shalbe an harde wynter and strong,  
 And many hydeus wyndes amonge ;  
 The somer mery and good shalbe ;  
 That yere shalbe wete grete plenté ;  
 Young folke shall dye that yere also,  
 And shyppus in the see shall have gret woo.  
 Whate chylde that day borne ys,  
 He shalbe dowghtye and lyghte i-wysse,  
 And wyse and slyee also of dede,  
 And fynde many men mete and wede.

Yf Crystemas day on Thursday be,  
 A wyndy wynter se shalle yee,  
 Of wyndes and weders all wecked,  
 And harde tempestes stronge and thycke.

The somer shalbe good and drye,  
 Cornys and bestes shall multiplye :  
 That yere ys good londes to tylthe ;  
 And kynges and prynces shalle dye by skylle.  
 Whate chylde that day borne bee,  
 He shalle have happe ryghte well to the,  
 Of dedes he shalbe good and stabylle,  
 Of speche and tonge wyse and resonabylle.  
 Who so that day ony thefte abowte,  
 He shalbe shente wyth-owtyn dowte ;  
 And yf sekene on the that day betyde,  
 Hyt shall sone fro the glyde.

Yf Crystmas day on the Fryday be,  
 The fyrste of wynter harde shalbe,  
 With froste and snowe and with flode,  
 But the laste ende therof ys goode.  
 Agayn, the somer shalbe good also ;  
 Folkes in hyr yen shall have grete woo ;  
 Wemen wyth chyld, bestes, wyth corne,  
 Shall multiplye, and none be lorne.  
 The chyde that ys borne that day,  
 Shall longe lyve and lecherowus be aye.  
 Who so stelythe awghte, he shalbe fownde ;  
 And thou be seke, hyt lastythe not longe.

Yf Crystmas day on the Saterdag falle,  
 That wynter ys to be dredden alle ;  
 Hyt shalbe so full of grete tempeste,  
 That hyt shall sle bothe man and beste ;

Frute and corne shall fayle grete won,  
 And olde folke dyen many on.  
 Whate woman that day of chylde travayle,  
 They shalbe borne in grete perelle ;  
 And chyldren that be borne that day,  
 Within halfe a yere they shall dye, par fay.  
 The somer than shall wete ryghte ylle ;  
 Yf thou awghte stele, hyt shal the spylle ;  
 Thou dyest yf sekenes take the.

---

## XVII.

[From MS. Harl. 541, fol. 214, ro. written in the reign of  
 Henry VII.]

---

Now ys Crystemas y-cum,  
 Fadyr and son togedyr in oon,  
 Holy Goste, as ye be oon,  
                                   in fere-a,  
 God sende us a good n[e]w yere-a.

I wolde yow synge for and I myg3hgt,  
 Off a chylde ys fayre in sygh3t,  
 Hys modyr hym bare thys yndyrs nygh3t  
                                   so style-a,  
 And as yt was hys wylle-a.



There cam .iij. kynges fro Galylee  
 Into Bethleem that fayre cytee,  
 To seke hym that ever shulde be  
                                   by rygh3t-a  
 Lorde and kynge and knygh3t-a.

As they cam forth with there offrynge,  
 They met with Herode that mody kynge,  
                                   thys tyde-a,  
 And thys to them he sayde-a.

“ Off wens be ye, yow kynges .iij.?”  
 “ Off the Este, as ye may see,  
 To seke hym that ever shulde be  
                                   by rygh3t-a  
 Lorde and kynge and knygh3t-a.”

“ Wen yow at thys chylde have be,  
 Cum home a3eyne by me,  
 Telle me the sygh3tes that yow have see,  
                                   I praye yow ;  
 Go yow no nodyr way-a.”

They toke her leve both olde and yonge  
 Off Herode that mody kynge ;  
 They went forth with there offrynge  
                                   by lygh3th-a,  
 By the sterre that shoone so brygh3t-a.

Tyll they cam in to the place  
 There Jhesu and hys modyr was,

Offryd they up with grete solace  
                                   in fere-a  
 Golde and sence and myrre-a.

The fadyr of hevyn an awngylle down sent,  
 To thyke .iiij. kynges that made presente  
                                   thys tyde-a,  
 And thys to them he sayd-a.

“ My lorde have warnyd yow everychone,  
 By Herode kynge yow go not home ;  
 For and yow do, he wylle you slone  
                                   and strye-a,  
 And hurte yow wondyrly-a.”

Forth them wente thys kynges .iiij.,  
 Tylle they cam home to there cuntré.  
 Glade and blyth they were alle .iiij.  
 Off the syghȝtes that they had see,  
                                   by-dene-a,  
 The cumpany was clene-a.

Knele we now here a-down,  
 Pray we in good devocioun  
 To the kynge of grete renown,  
                                   of grace-a,  
 In hevyn to have a place-a.

---

## XVIII.

[From a Collection of Christmas Carols, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, in 1521, from which book it is given by Hearne, in his notes to William of Newbery, iii. p. 175.]

---

*A Carol bringyng in the bores heed.*

*Caput apri differo,  
Reddens laudes Domino.*

The bores heed in hande bring I,  
With garlands gay and rosemary ;  
I praye you all syng merely,  
*qui estis in convivio.*

The bores heed, I understande,  
Is the chefe servyce of this lande ;  
Loke where ever it be fande,  
*servite cum cantico.*

Be gladde, lordes, bothe more and lasse,  
For this hath ordeyned owr stewarde,  
To chere you all this Christmasse,  
The bores heed with mustarde.

---

## XIX.

[The following modernised form of the foregoing carol, is given by Dr. Dibdin, as preserved and used up to a very recent period at Queen's College, Oxford. Dibdin's Ames, vol. ii. p. 252.]

---

THE boar's head in hand bear I,  
 Bedeck'd with bays and rosemary ;  
 And I pray you, my masters, be merry,  
*Quot estis in convivio.*  
*Caput Apri defero,*  
*Reddens laudes Domino.*

The boar's head, as I understand,  
 Is the rarest dish in all this land,  
 Which thus bedeck'd with a gay garland,  
*Let us servire cantico.*  
*Caput Apri defero,*  
*Reddens laudes Domino.*

Our steward hath provided this  
 In honour of the king of bliss ;  
 Which on this day to be served is  
*In Reginensi Atrio.*  
*Caput Apri defero,*  
*Reddens laudes Domino.*

---

## XX.

[From MS. Harl. No. 7333, fol. 193, vo. of the beginning of the sixteenth century. This curious piece is inserted as an illustration of the ancient customs at this season of the year.]

A CRISTEMASSE game, made by Maister Benet Howe.  
God Almyghty seyde to his apostelys, and echon off  
them were baptiste, and none knewe of othir, etc.

*Sanctus Petrus.*

Petir! Petir! prynce of aposteles alle,  
Primat of the chirche and governore  
Of the fflokke, O pastor principalle,  
Whiche for my love suffridest dethes showre,  
Come have thy mede ordeyned for thy laboure,  
Come on, Petir, syt downe at my knee,  
Here is a place preparete for the.

*Sanctus Paulus.*

Doctoure of Jentiles, O perfite Paule,  
By grace convertid from thy grete erreoure  
And cruelté, chaunged to Paule fro Sawle,  
Of faythe and trowthe moost perfyte prechowre,  
Slayne at Rome under thilke emperoure,  
Cursyd Nero, Paule, sit downe in this place,  
To the ordeyned by purveaunce of grace.

*Sanctus Johannes.*

Jon the wangelyst, O virgyne pure,  
For thy clenness and pure virginité,

Crystes moder was commytte to thy cure,  
 Exiled to Pathmos thurghe cruelté,  
 Wrote the booke of goddis privitee,  
 Of boylyng oyle venquysshing the heete,  
 Com sit downe, Johan, this place for the is mete.

*Sanctus Andreas.*

Andrewe, myldist of othir seyntys alle,  
 To whom for meekenesse and mansuetude  
 Alle worly wetnesse semed bitter galle,  
 Whos lustis alle thowe dyd pleynty exclude,  
 And in the crosse undir Egeas rwde  
 Thowe suffrydyste dethe, remembring my passioun,  
 Come nere, Andrew, to receyve thi guerdoun.

*Sanctus Bartholomeus.*

Blessid Barthylmewe, hevене blisse to wyne,  
 Aftir grete passioun and bittre tormente,  
 O myghty martir, right owte of thyne owne skynne  
 Thow were torne and cruelly to-rent,  
 For thy constaunce cowde not from feithe be bent,  
 Of ryghtwisnesse thi laboure most be qwytte,  
 Come, Barthilmewe, and right downe here thow sitte.

*Sanctus Thomas.*

Thomas! Thomas! that suffredist dethe in Ynde,  
 Persid withe a spere, the feithe for to susteyne,  
 Harde of beleewe but ytt thow did unkynde,  
 By thyn hardnesse from mys-bylevys certeyne  
 Many a sowle, and so kept hem fro peyne,

Syt downe, therefore, here in this bathe of blisse,  
 Welcome, Thomas, welcome to me y-wis !

*Sanctus Simon.*

Seynte Simon, thow dyd the feithe reherce,  
 Caughte my lawe and prechyd my doctrine,  
 Unto the peple of the reame of Perce,  
 Wher to the dethe they dydden the diffyne ;  
 Therefore, Simon, by purviaunce divine  
 Righte here withe me shalle be thy dwellyng place ;  
 Sit downe, Simon, in the see of grace.

*Sanctus Matheus.*

Mathy, chosen yn by very sort and grace  
 Unto the nombre of apostolacye,  
 Whan cursid Judas has forsake his place,  
 Thurghe his falshede and trechery,  
 Thy perfite lyfe broughte the to prelacye,  
 Thy blyssyd lif and perfite governaunce  
 Unto this seete shalle the now avaunce.

*Sanctus Jacobus.*

James, brother to Johan my ffrend so dere,  
 Preching my peple in the lande of Ynde,  
 Undir Hermogenes martyred thow were,  
 Thy constaunce shalle never be sette be-hynde,  
 Of hevens blysse thowe shalle alle ffoyesen fynde ;  
 Come, sitte downe heere, righte in this place of blisse,  
 Whiche for thy mede to the ordayned is.

*Sanctus Philippus.*

Philippe, thowe preched peple of Sythye,  
 By perfyte doctrine the feithe to susteyne,  
 In trewe byleeve howe they shuld multiplye,  
 Anmonyshing theirre erreure to restreynce,  
 Wherefore there thowe suffryd passion and peyne,  
 And for thy passyon and sufferance  
 Come sitte downe here, in this place of plesaunce.

*Sanctus Barnabe.*

Blessid Barnabé, electe by grace divine  
 To be oone of the chosen companye,  
 And sitte upon the seetes twelwe in fyne,  
 Of thy triumphe laureat and victorie,  
 Come and receive reward of glorie,  
 Come sitte here in this seete celestiale,  
 For reward of thi palme victorialle.

*Sanctus Matheus.*

Mathewe, thow scribe of trouthe and verité,  
 Labouryng in the wyne of scripture,  
 Wyne of doctrine broching gret plenté,  
 By grete tribulacion and reddure,  
 Suffrid passioun, worthi to endure  
 Eternally in blisse for thy greete constauce,  
 Come and rejoyce thyne owne inheritaunce.

---



## XXI.

[From MS. Harl. No. 5396, fol. 4, r<sup>o</sup>. of the beginning of the  
sixteenth century.]

---

*Christo paremus canticam, excelsis gloria.*

When Cryst was born of Mary fre,  
In Bedlem in that fayre cyté,  
Angellis song thier with myrth and gle,  
*in excelsis gloria.*

Herdmen beheld thes angellis bryzt,  
To hem apperyd wyth gret lyzt,  
And seyde, "Goddys sone is born this nyzt,"  
*in excelsis gloria.*

Thys keng ys comyn to save kynde,  
As yn scripturas we fynde,  
Therefore this song have we in mynde,  
*in excelsis gloria.*

Then, Lord, for thy gret grace,  
Graunt us the blys to se thy face,  
Where we may syng to thy solas,  
*in excelsis gloria!*

---

## XXII.

[From MS. Harl. No. 5396, p. 18. This MS. appears to have been written in the north; for on the page which contains the present carol are written, in nearly a contemporary hand, the words, "Wylȝam Northe of Yorke."]

---

*Puer nobis natus est, de virgine Maria.*

BE glad, lordynges, be ye more and lesse,  
 I bryng ȝou tydynges of gladnesse,  
 As Gabryel me beryth wetnesse,  
*dicam vobis quia.*

I bryng ȝou tydynges that ben gode,  
 Mary hath borne a blysful foude,  
 That boȝt us all upon the rode,  
*sua morte pia.*

For the trespas of Adam,  
 For the fadyr of hevyn he cam,  
 Here-to myrthhe us bygan,  
*teste profecia.*

Mary, modur and leve virgyn,  
 That bare a child wyth-outen syn,  
 Kepe us all fro hell pyn,  
*de virgine Maria.*

---

## XXIII.

[From MS. Cotton. Vesp. A. xxv. fol. 136, v<sup>o</sup>. written early in the  
sixteenth century.]

Who trustes Christes incarnatyone,  
Are chyldren of salwacyone.

Seaventh chapter of Isai,  
A signe, a token ye shall se,  
Where that that he haith sayd,  
Lo! a mad shall conceyve a chyld,  
Of mans knowing be undefilde,  
And still shall be a maide.

A mother maid a child to bringe,  
Nowe who haithe hard of suche a thinge?  
Or who can tell at ffull  
Howe that a maid a mother was,  
Or howe this same is browght to pas?  
Mans wit it is to dull.

Signes now upon this maiden be,  
That sso maye in verginitie,  
Onelye by will of God,  
And still to be a maiden pure,  
A childe bringe furthe against nature,  
Like flores of Arons rodde.

Another singe behold and se,  
Upon this maid virginité,  
Trwlie of hir was ment

This fierie bushe that was so bright,  
To Moises did give suche a light,  
And not one leafe was brent.

Another sing behould now, lo !  
Of Sedrak, Misake, Abbednago,  
In a fornace concluded,  
And not one hare of them adust ;  
As ys Godes wyll, Godes wyl be must,  
Yt cannot be refussed.

Who can deny but this ys trew,  
What ys Godes wyll yt must ensew,  
And nature must applye ?  
Why dost thou, Jew, now musse now than,  
That God may be both God and man,  
A mayd a mother be ?

Now faith in this that must take place,  
Therefore who so faith wyll embrace,  
And trust in Christ his birth,  
As saith the scripture, they shalbe  
With God above in his glory,  
Where ever shalbe mirth.

FFINIS.

---

## XXIV.

[MS. Cott. Vesp. A. xxv. fol. 138, r<sup>o</sup>.]

As said the prophet Abacuc,  
 Betwixt too bestes shulde lye our buk,  
     That mankind shuld redeme ;  
 The oxe betokenithe mekenes here,  
 The asse our gilte that he shulde bere,  
     And washe away our cryme.

In mydst of doctors he was fownd,  
 The prophetes planly did expownde,  
     Throughe mydst frome deathe he fledd ;  
 No where wolde die but on the crosse,  
 Betwixt two theives redemed our losse,  
     His blood for hus to shedde.

In midst of his disciples all,  
 Said, peace to yow universall !  
     All synnes ye shall remite,  
 For now is maid an unities  
 With man and Godes devinitie,  
     Of love the knot is knite.

Saint John abowe the ierarchies,  
 Se .vij. golden luminaries,  
     And Crist was in the myde ;  
 And of this .vij. the trew entente  
 Is .vij. holie sacramentes ment,  
     Christ in the midst is hide.

In the sacrament of eucharist,  
 Is trow man Gode and very Christe,  
     Secret in forme of bread,  
 In mydst of us shall perdurate,  
 Whilles that he come in great estate,  
     To judge bothe quicke and dead.

This is the lord of unitie,  
 The lord of love and charatie,  
     That all thinges dothe remite ;  
 And who in him is congregate,  
 The poor, the riche, or greate estate,  
     In mydst of them dothe site.

FFINIS.

---

XXV.

[MS. Cotton. Vesp. A. xxv. fol. 138, v<sup>o</sup>.]

---

A CAROLL OF SAINT STEPHEN.

THERE was no deathe nor worldlie joie,  
 The faithe of Stephen that culde distroye ;  
 There was no payne nor tormentrie,  
 Cud juge the vleysse (?) that he did se.

This holy stephen replet with grace,  
 Did se Godes sonne before his face,  
     In joye where he shuld come,

Standing by his powre and might,  
 Stephen for to succoure in his sight  
 Of blodye marterdome.

Steven as a knight before his king,  
 And all his courte one hym loking,  
 Dyd valiantly fight ;  
 Before the cowrt of heaven,  
 Was this conflicte of holy Stephen  
 Downe lyke a puyzant knight.

Les stephen shuld dowte, beinge a man,  
 The Sone of God apperyde than,  
 As he was crucified,  
 Hym for to comfothe, helpe, and guyde,  
 Of deathe shulde be nothinge affraid,  
 When stoons of him did glied.

Saincte Jhon Baptist se heven open,  
 Saincte Paule se thinges not to be spoken,  
 Some se transfigurate ;  
 But Steven se Christ in his glorye,  
 Praid for his enemes enterelye,  
 And thos that dyd hym haite.

Before Stephen eies was set the glave,  
 For his conflicte he shoulde receyve  
 A crowne, it did appere ;  
 This crown was wrought in every linke,  
 No tounge can tell nor hart can thincke,  
 Bout those that dothe it were.

This crown to were and to obtain,  
 The creuell stones that perche his brine  
     Was no adversitie ;  
 Trowble, payne, hys lyve to end,  
 He thought his blode was righte well spend,  
     For this crowne for to die.

Whoe at his bodie keste a stone,  
 He did forgeve them every one,  
     And he that kept there cloosse ;  
 Christe grante this deie that we maie se,  
 With Stephen to die in charitie,  
     And for-geve all our fosse.

FFINIS.

---

XXVI.

[MS. Cotton. Vesp. A. xxv. fol. 139, v<sup>o</sup>.]

---

THEN may we joie in unities,  
 And thanke the holie Trinitie.

Man to redeme and not angell,  
 In heaven wrought by dyvine consell,  
     For what encheson,  
     Then heare my reason ;  
 Angell fell by no suggesture,  
 And man by angell decepture.  
     Disceit and falles treason.  
                     Then may, etc.



Ye know that angell of substance  
 Shuld be stronge with-oute variance ;  
 And whie not man ?  
 I shall shew than :  
 Man was maid of flesh unpoure,  
 Weak and feble, sone to alure,  
 For that mercye whan.  
 Than maye, etc.

Against the father Adam sind ;  
 And Eve against the sonne, I find ;  
 In whom angell,  
 I shall you tell ;  
 Against the holye gost commite,  
 Which shall in no worlde remite,  
 But ever be in hell.  
 Than maye, etc.

Angell subvented rristelie, (?)  
 And sad *eritis sicut dii*,  
 For what intent  
 Man to subvent,  
 And make all Adam seed to die ;  
 But Christ again upon a tre,  
 His blessid blood spent.  
 Then may, etc.

Where angell said and maid a lye,  
*Nequaquam moriemini*,  
 How did it passe,  
 As God wylle was ;

.V. thowsand yeare all went to hell,  
 To leise man Christe toke fleshe and fell,  
 This good Christenmas.  
 Then maye, etc.

I pray yow all that loves the Lord,  
 Joie in Christ birthe in one accorde,  
 So shall it be ;  
 Then we agre,  
 And thanke the Lord bothe now and then,  
 Together lyve like christenge men  
 In charitie.

Then may, etc.  
 Above the fiere,  
 I you desyre.

FFINIS.

---

XXVII.

[MS. Cott. Vesp. A. xxv. p. 140, v<sup>o</sup>.]

---

By reason of two, and no poore of one,  
 This tyme God and man was set at one.

God against nature thre wonders haith wrought ;  
 First of the vile earthe mad man without man ;  
 Then woman without woman of man maid of nought ;  
 And so man without man in woman than :

Thus, lo! God and man together begane,  
 As two for to joine together in one,  
 As at this good tyme to be sett at one ;  
     Thus God begane  
 This world for to forme and to encrease man.

Angell in heaven for offence was damned,  
 And man also for beinge variable ;  
 Whether shuld be saved was examyned,  
 Man or yet angell ; then God was greable  
 To answer for man, for man was not able,  
 And said man had mocyon and angell had none,  
 Wherefore God and man shuld be seit at one.  
     Thanke we him than,  
 That thus did leave angell and saved man.

The Devill clamed man by bargan as this,  
 For an thappell, he said, man was bought and solde ;  
 God aunswered and said, the bargan was his,  
 Withe myne to be myne, how durst thoue be so bolde ?  
 Man myne, syne thyne, wherfore thoue art now told,  
 Thoue bought nought, then taikie nought, the bargan  
     is don ;  
 Wherfore God and man shalbe set att one.  
     Nowe blessed be he,  
 For we that are bownde, loe ! nowe are maid free.

Betwene God and man it was great distaunce,  
 For man said that God shuld have kept him upryght,  
 And God said man maid all the variaunce,  
 For thapple to sett his commaundement so light ;

Wherefore of his mercye sparinge the ryght,  
 He thought God and man shuld be set at one ;  
 Seinge that God and man was set at one,  
     What kindnes was this,  
 To agree with man and the fault not his ?

Withe man and woman it was great traverse,  
 Man said to the woman, “ woe myght thou be ! ”  
 “ Nay, ” quod the woman, “ why dost thou reverse ?  
 For womans entisinge woe be to the !  
 For God [made] man the heade and ruler of me ;  
 Thus God sawe man and woman were not at one,  
 He thought in a woman to sett theime at one ;  
     To our solace,  
 His mercye he graunted for our trespase.

Of womanhede lo ! thre degres there be,  
 Widowehede, wedlocke, and verginnitie ;  
 Widowehede clamed heaven, her title is this,  
 By oppressions that mekelie suffrethe she ;  
 And vergins clame by chastité alone ;  
 Then God thought a woman shoulde set them at one ;  
 A wedlocke by generacion, heaven hires shuld be,  
     And cease the strife ;  
 For Marie was maden, widowe, and wife.

The ritche and the pore the title did reherse ;  
 The pore clamed heaven throughhe his pacient havour,  
 He saide *beati pauperes*, and further the verse,  
 The riche man by ritches thought hym in favour,

For who was so ritche as was our saviour?  
 And againe who so pure as he was one,  
 In hey when he ley to set us at one?  
                   Who grant us peace,  
 And at the last ende the great joyes endles!

FFINIS.

---

### XXVIII.

[MS. Cott. Vesp. A. xxv. fol. 160, vo.]

---

#### A CARROLL OF THE BIRTHE OF CHRIST.

THE golden tyme ys nowe at hande,  
 The daye of joye from heaven doth springe,  
 Salvacyone over-flowes the lande,  
           Wherefore all faithfull thus may singe,  
           Glorye to God most hie!  
           And peacee on the earth continuallye!  
 And unto men rejoysinge!

The birthe of Christ who lyst to here,  
 To this oure songe lett them gyve eare,  
           Which shows the same most playnlye:  
 The angell Gabriell from above  
 Was sent by God to breake his love  
           Unto the virgin Marye;  
 Who saide, "haile! Marye, full of graicce,  
 Blessed art thow of womans rayce!

The lorde ys with the sertainly,  
 As he haith sent the worde by me."  
 When she harde this, she was affrayed,  
 And cast in her mynde what he hadde saide ;  
 The angell saide, " feare not, Marye,  
 The Sonne of God dothe dwell with the.

Lo! in thie wombe thou shalt conceyve,  
 And beare a sonne whosse name shall have  
     The gloryous name of Jesus ;  
 He shalbe greate in majestie,  
 And calde the sonne of God most hee,  
     Who still shall dwell amongst hus.  
 The Lorde for hym shall well provide  
 The seate of his father Davyde ;  
 And he shall reigne for evermore,  
 A safegarde styll unto the poore,  
 Whosse kingdome sure shall have no ende,  
 But styll in joyes the tyme to spende."  
 The virgin saide to thangell than,  
 " Howe shall this be? I knowe no man."

The angell answered and saide,  
 " The holye gost, be not affraide,  
     From heaven shall come upon the ;  
 And by the graicce of God most hie,  
 Powre shall over-shadowe the,  
     I tell the truthe, beleve me.  
 And also thie cosen Elizabethhe  
 So in lykewisse conceyved haithe,

Thus God canne make the barren tre  
 To budde with frute most pleasauntlye."  
 Then Mary said, with one accorde,  
 "Behould the hande-mayde of the Lorde!  
 The will of God be done in me,  
 As yt shall please his majestie!"

When fortye wekes were commed and gonne,  
 In Bethleem this our Lorde was borne,  
     As Esaye he did prophesye;  
 The shepherdes keping sheepe by night,  
 The Lorde did compasse them with light,  
     His angell walking harde bye.  
 The shepherdes then were soore dismaide,  
 The angell saide, "be not affraied,  
 I bringe you tidinges of suche joye  
 As Sathans force canne not destroye.  
 For whye? to you ys borne this day  
 The savioure of the world, I saye:  
 This ys the signe where you shall see  
 A swodled child in maunger lye."

The shepherdes stright to Bethleem wente,  
 As they by thangell than were sent,  
     Where Josephe was with Marye;  
 And as the angell to them saide,  
 They founde the child in maunger layde,  
     Whom they dyd worshipp trulye;  
 And sprede abrode what they did see,  
 As thangell tould them certainlye,

Rejoysing greatly at the same,  
 And praisinge Godes most holye name,  
 For sending downe his only sonne  
 For our salvacyone to be bourne ;  
 Which was as now this Christenmas,  
 Rejoyce therefor, bothe more and lesse.

---

 XXIX.

[MS. Cott. Vesp. A. xxv. fol. 168, v<sup>o</sup>.]

---

## A CHRISTENMESSE CARROLL.

A BONNE, God wote !  
 Sticke in my throate,  
 Without I have a draught  
 Of cornie aile,  
 Nappy and staile,  
 My lyffe lyes in great wauste.  
 Some ayle or beare,  
 Gentill butlere,  
 Some lycoure thou hus showe,  
 Such as you mashe,  
 Our throtes to washe,  
 The best were that yow brew.

Saint, master, and knight,  
 That saint Mault hight,  
 Were prest between two stones ;



That swet humour  
Of his lycoure  
Would make us sing at once.  
Mr. Wortley,  
I dar well say,  
I tell you as I thinke,  
Would not, I say,  
Byd hus this day,  
But that we shuld have drink.

His men so tall  
Walkes up his hall,  
With many a comly dishe;  
Of his good meat  
I cannot eate,  
Without a drink i-wysse;  
Now gyve hus drink,  
And let cat wynke,  
I tell you all at once,  
Yt stickes so sore,  
I may sing nomore,  
Tyll I have dronken once.

FFINIS.

---

## XXX.

[MS. Cott. Vesp. A. xxv. p. 172, r<sup>o</sup>. imperfect at the end.]

---

PRAISE we the Lord that haith no peare,  
And thanke we hym for this new yere!

The second person in Trinitié,  
Man to restore to lybertie,  
The shape of hym to tak certaine  
Dyd not refuse, but was full fayne.

On earthe he taught many a yere,  
Willing mankinde for to forebeare  
When he were up to fall againe,  
And then of hym he would be faine.

When he had taught and preched longe,  
He choysse out twelff our selves amonge,  
To whom he would gyve knowledg plaine,  
To teache the truth, which maid them faine.

When he had wrought thus for our sake,  
His deth full mekely he did take,  
His hart with speare was rent in twaine,  
Man to reedeme he was so faine.

But all this same we do forgett,  
By hym right nought that we do sett,

E

From synne we wyll no whytt refraine,  
To love the world we be so faine.

Let hus take up our selves in tyme,  
From darknes let hus seke to clyme,  
Or that our bodye by dethe be slaine,  
Our Lord we let—————  
He be faie—————

FFINIS.

---

XXXI.

[From MS. Addit. in Mus. Brit. No. 5665, fol. 5, v<sup>o</sup>, written in  
the reign of Henry VIII. This is the MS. formerly  
in the possession of Ritson.]

---

NOWELL, nowell, nowell, nowell,  
Tydynges gode y thyngke to telle.

The borys hede, that we bryng here,  
Betokeneth a prince withoute pere,  
Ys borne this day to bye us dere,  
nowell.

A bore ys a soverayn beste,  
And acceptabe in every feste ;  
So mote thys lord be to moste and leste,  
nowell.



## XXXIII.

[MS. Addit. 5665, fol. 8, r<sup>o</sup>.]

MERVELE noȝt, Josep, on Mary mylde ;  
 Forsake hyr not, they she be with chylde.  
 I, Josep, wonder how this may be,  
 That Mary wex gret when y and she  
 Ever have levyd in chastité ;  
 If she be with chylde, hit ys not by me.

Mervelle not, Joseph.

The holy gost, with mercifulle disstens,  
 In here hathe entryd wythowte offenses,  
 God and man conceyved by hys presens,  
 And she virgyn pure wythowte violens.

Mervelle no, Joseph.

What the angelle of God to me dothe say,  
 I, Joseph, muste and wille umble obey,  
 Ellys prively y wolde have stole a-way,  
 But now wille y serve here tille that y day.

Mervelle not, Josep.

Josep, thow shalt here mayde and moder fynde,  
 Here sone redemptor of alle mankynde,  
 Thy fore-faderes of paynes to unbynde ;  
 Therefor muse not this mater in thy mynde.

Mervelle not.

## XXXIV.

[MS. Addit. 5665, fol. 36, r<sup>o</sup>.]

*Profate*, welcome, wellescome !  
 Thys tyme ys borne a chyld of grace,  
 That for us mankynde hathe take.  
*profate.*

A kinges sone and an emperoure  
 Ys comyn oute of a madynys toure,  
 With us to dwelle with grete honowre.  
*profate.*

This holy tyme of Cristesmesse,  
 Alle sorwe and synne we shulde relese,  
 And caste away alle hevynesse.  
*profate.*

The gode lord of this place entere,  
 Seith welcome to alle that now apere,  
 Unto suche fare as ye fynde here.  
*profate.*

Wellescome be this new ere !  
 And loke ye alle be of gode chere ;  
 Our Lorde God be at oure denere !  
*profate.*

## XXXV.

[MS. Addit. No. 5665, fol. 40, v<sup>o</sup>.]

*Jhesu, fili virginis,  
miserere nobis.*

Jhesu, of a mayde thou woldest be borne,  
To save mankynde that was for-lorne,  
And alle for owr synnes,  
*miserere nobis.*

Angelis ther were, mylde of mode,  
Song to that swete fode,  
Wyth joye and blisse :  
*miserere nobis.*

In a cracche was that chylde layde,  
Bothe oxe and asse wyth hym playde,  
Wyth joye and blisse,  
*miserere nobis.*

Then for us he shadde his blode,  
And alleso he dyedde on the rode,  
And for us y-wysse,  
*miserere nobis.*

And then to helle he toke the way,  
To raunson hem that ther lay,  
with joy and blisse :  
*miserere nobis.*

## XXXVI.

[MS. Addit. No. 5665, fol. 9, r<sup>o</sup>.]

MAN be joyfulle and myrth thou make,  
For Crist ys made man ffor thy sake.

Man be mery I the rede,  
But be whar what merthis thou make ;  
Crist ys clothed yn thy wede,  
And he ys made man for thy sake.

He cam ffro hys ffader sete,  
Into this worlde to be thy make ;  
Man be war how thou hym trete,  
For he ys made man for thy sake.

Loke thou mercy ewyr crye,  
Now and alleway, rathe and late ;  
And he wille sette the wonder hye,  
For he ys made man for thy sake.

## XXXVII.

[MS. Addit. No. 5665, fol. 15, v<sup>o</sup>.]

HAVE mercy on me, kynge of blisse,  
As muche as thy mercy ys !

Of Mary Criste was bore,  
Wythowte wem of aney hore,



To save us that were for-lore.  
                                     Kyng of alle kynges.

To us he gaffe a sompelle abowte,  
 That we shulde noȝt be prowte,  
 For he was wrapped in a clawte.  
                                     Kyng of alle kynges.

Pray we Jhesu, heven kyng,  
 Alle so after owre endyng,  
 To his blysse ever lastyng,  
                                     Kyng of alle kynges.

-----

XXXVIII.

[MS. Addit. No. 5665, fol. 23, v<sup>o</sup>.]

-----

*Te laudamus, te dominum confitemur, te eternum.*

O BLESSE God in Trinité!  
 Grete cause we have to blesse thy name,  
 That now woldest sende downe fro the  
 The holy gost to stynte oure blame.  
                                     *Te Deum laudamus.*

Synge we to God, fader eternalle,  
 That luste to inne wyth oure nature,  
 The sone of hym celestiale,  
 Man to be borne oure saulis to cure.  
                                     *Te Deum.*

Alle te seyntes in heven on hye,  
 And alle that buthe in erthe alleso,  
 Geff laude and thangkes devotelye  
 To God abowe, and synge hym to,  
*Te Deum.*

---

## XXXIX.

[MS. Addit. No. 5665, fol. 25, v<sup>o</sup>.]

---

Now make we joye in this feste,  
*In quo Christus natus est,*  
*A patre unigenitus,*  
 .iij. zong maydens cam tille us,  
 And say, wellcome.  
*Veni, redemptor gentium.*

*Agnoscat omne seculum;*  
 A bryzth sterre .iij. kynges made come,  
*A solis ortus cardine,*  
 So myzthi a lord yz non as he.  
*Veni, redemptor omnium gentium.*

---

## XL.

[From a small volume of Christmas Carols, printed by Richard Kele, probably between 1546 and 1552.]

---

BE we mery in this feste,  
*In quo salvator natus est.*

In Bethелеem, that noble place,  
 As by prophesy sayd it was,  
 Of the vrygyn Mary, full of grace,  
*Salvator mundi natus est.*

Be we mery, etc.

On Chrystmas nyght an angel it tolde  
 To the shephardes, kepyng theyr folde,  
 That into Betheleem with bestes wolde,  
*Salvator mundi natus est.*

Be we mery, etc.

The shephardes were compassed ryght,  
 About them was a great lyght,  
 Drede ye nought, sayd the aungell bryght,  
*Salvator mundi natus est.*

Be we mery, etc.

Beholde to you we brynge great joy,  
 For why? Jesus is borne this day  
 Of Mary, that mylde may,  
*Salvator mundi natus est.*

Be mery, etc.

And thus in fayth fynde it ye shall,  
 Lyenge porely in an oxe stall.  
 The shephardes than lauded God all,  
*Quia Salvator mundi natus est.*  
 Be mery, etc.

---

## XLI.

## NOEL NOUVEAU.

[Sur l'air, "Or dites-nous, Marie," from a rare French tract of  
 the latter part of the sixteenth century, entitled,  
 "Noels Vieux et Nouveaux."]

---

CÉLÉBRONS la naissance  
*Nostri Salvatoris,*  
 Qui fait la complaisance  
*Dei sui Patris;*  
 Cet Enfan tout aimable,  
*In nocte media,*  
 Est né daus une étable  
*De casta Maria.*  
 Cette heureuse nouvelle  
*Olim Pastoribus*  
 Par un Ange fidelle  
*Fuit nunciatus,*  
 Leur disant, laissez paître  
*In agro viridi,*

Venez voir votre Maître,  
*Filiumque Dei.*  
A cette voix céleste  
*Omnes hi pastores,*  
D'un air doux et modeste,  
*Et multum gaudentes,*  
Incontinent marchèrent  
*Relicto pecore ;*  
Tous ensemble arrivèrent  
*In Bethlem Judæ.*  
Le premier qu'ils trouvèrent  
*Intrantes stabulum.*  
Fut Joseph ce bon père,  
*Senio confectum,*  
Qui d'ardeur nonpareille,  
*It obviam illis,*  
Les reçoit, les accueille  
*Expansis brachiis.*  
Il fait à tous caresse,  
*Et in præsepio*  
Fait voir plein d'alégresse  
*Matrem cum filio ;*  
Ces bergers s'étonnèrent  
*Intuentes eum,*  
Que les Anges révèrent  
*Pannis involutum.*  
Lorsqu'ils se prosternèrent  
*Cum reverentia,*  
Et tous ils adorèrent  
*Pietate summa*

Ce Sauveur tout aimable  
*Qui homo factus est,*  
Et qui dans une étable  
*Nasci dignatus est.*  
D'un cœur humble et sincère,  
*Suis muneribus,*  
Donnèrent à la mère  
*Et filio ejus*  
Des marques de tendresse ;  
*Atque his peractis,*  
Font voir leur alégresse  
*Hymnis et canticis :*  
Mille esprits angéliques  
*Juncti pastoribus*  
Chantent dans leur musique  
*Puer vobis natus ;*  
Au Dieu par qui nous sommes,  
*Gloria in excelsis,*  
Et la paix soit aux hommes  
*Bonæ voluntatis !*  
Jamais pareilles fêtes  
*Judicio omnium,*  
Même jusques aux bêtes  
*Testantur gaudium.*  
Enfin cette naissance  
*Cunctis creaturis*  
Donne jouissance,  
*Et replet gaudiis.*  
Qu'on ne soit insensible,  
*Adeamus omnes,*

Ce Dieu rendu passible  
*Propter nos mortales,*  
 Et tous de compagnie  
*Exoramus eum,*  
 Qu'à la fin de la vie  
*Dei regnum beatum.*

---

## XLII.

[From "The Christmas Prince," London, 1607.]

---

*Carol, on bringing the Boar's Head, used before the Christmas  
 Prince, at St. John the Baptist's College,  
 Oxford, Christmas 1607.*

THE Boare is dead,  
 Loe, heare is his head:  
 What man could have done more  
 Then his head of to strike,  
 Meleager like,  
 And bringe it as I doe before ?

He livinge spoyled  
 Where good men toyled,  
 Which made kinde Ceres sorrye ;  
 But now, dead and drawne,  
 Is very good brawne,  
 And wee have brought it for ye.

Then sett downe the swineyard,  
The foe to the vineyard,  
Lett Bacchus crowne his fall ;  
Lett this boares-head and mustard  
Stand for pigg, goose, and custard,  
And so you are welcome all.

---

## XLIII.

[A Christmas Carol, by George Wither. From his "Juvenilia," first printed in 1622.]

---

So, now is come our joyfult feast ;  
Let every man be jolly ;  
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,  
And every post with holly.  
Though some churls at our mirth repine,  
Round your foreheads garlands twine ;  
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,  
And let us all be merry.

Now, all our neighbours' chimnies smoke,  
And Christmas blocks are burning ;  
Their ovens they with bak'd meats choke,  
And all their spits are turning.  
Without the door let sorrow lye ;  
And if for cold it hap to die,  
We'll bury't in a Christmas pie,  
And ever more be merry.



Now every lad is wondrous trim,  
And no man minds his labour ;  
Our lasses have provided them  
A bag-pipe and a tabor ;  
Young men and maids, and girls and boys,  
Give life to one another's joys ;  
And you anon shall by their noise  
Perceive that they are merry.

Rank misers now do sparing shun ;  
Their hall of music soundeth ;  
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,  
So all things there aboundeth.  
The country folks themselves advance  
With crowdy-muttons out of France ;  
And Jacke shall pipe, and Jyll shall dance,  
And all the town be merry.

Ned Squash hath fetcht his bands from pawn,  
And all his best apparel ;  
Brisk Nell hath bought a ruff of lawn  
With dropping of the barrel ;  
And those that hardly all the year  
Had bread to eat, or rags to wear,  
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,  
And all the day be merry.

Now poor men to the justices  
With capons make their errants ;  
And if they hap to fail of these,  
They plague them with their warrants :

But now they feed them with good cheer,  
 And what they want they take in beer ;  
 For Christmas comes but once a year,  
 And then they shall be merry.

Good farmers in the country nurse  
 The poor, that else were undone ;  
 Some landlords spend their money worse,  
 On lust and pride at London.  
 There the roysters they do play,  
 Drab and dice their lands away,  
 Which may be ours another day ;  
 And therefore let's be merry.

The client now his suit forbears,  
 The prisoner's heart is eased ;  
 The debtor drinks away his cares,  
 And for the time is pleased.  
 Though other purses be more fat,  
 Why should we pine or grieve at that ?  
 Hang sorrow ! care will kill a cat,  
 And therefore let's be merry.

Hark ! how the wags abroad do call  
 Each other forth to rambling :  
 Anon you'll see them in the hall  
 For nuts and apples scrambling.  
 Hark ! how the roofs with laughter sound !  
 Anon they'll think the house goes round ;  
 For they the cellar's depth have found,  
 And there they will be merry.

F

The wenches with their wassel bowls  
About the streets are singing ;  
The boys are come to catch the owls,  
The wild mare in is bringing.  
Our kitchen-boy hath broke his box,  
And to the dealing of the ox  
Our honest neighbours come by flocks,  
And here they will be merry.

Now kyngs and queens poor sheep cotes have,  
And mate with every body ;  
The honest now may play the knave,  
And wise men play the noddy.  
Some youths will now a mumming go,  
Some others play at Rowland-ho,  
And twenty other gameboys mo,  
Because they will be merry.

Then wherefore in these merry daies  
Should we, I pray be duller ?  
No, let us sing some roundelayes,  
To make our mirth the fuller.  
And, whilst thus inspir'd we sing,  
Let all the streets with echoes ring,  
Woods and hills, and every thing,  
Bear witness we are merry.

---

## XLIV.

[From "New Carolls for this Mery Time of Christmas," 12mo. Lond. 1661. This carol is printed in the "Archæologist," No. 1. It was sung to the tune of "Essex last good night."]

---

ALL you that in this house be here,  
Remember Christ that for us dy'd,  
And spend away with modest cheere  
In loving sort this Christmas tide.

And whereas plenty God hath sent,  
Give frankly to your friends in love:  
The bounteous mind is freely bent,  
And never will a niggard prove.

Our table spread within the hall,  
I know a banquet is at hand,  
And friendly sort to welcome all  
That wil unto their tacklings stand.

The maids are bonny girles I see,  
Who have provided much good cheer,  
Which at my dame's commandment be  
To set it on the table here.

For I have here two knives in store  
To lend to him that wanteth one;  
Commend my wits, good lads, therefore,  
That comes now hither having none.

For if I schuld, no Christmas pye  
Would fall, I doubt, unto my share ;  
Wherefore I will my manhood try,  
To fight a battle if I dare.

For pastry-crust, like castle walls,  
Stands braving me unto my face ;  
I am not well until it falls,  
And I made captain of the place.

The prunes so lovely look on me,  
I cannot chuse but venture on :  
The pye-meat spiced brave I see,  
The which I must not let alone.

Then, butler, fill me forth some beer,  
My song hath made me somewhat dry :  
And so again to this good cheer,  
I'll quickly fall couragiously.

And for my master I will pray,  
With all that of his household are,  
Both old and young, that long we may  
Of God's good blessings have a share.

---

## XLV.

[A Christmas Song, from "Poor Robin's Almanac," 1695. It is taken from Brand's "Popular Antiquities," as we have not been able to meet with a copy of the Almanac of that year. Brand appears to have omitted a part of a stanza.]

---

“ Now thrice welcome Christmas,  
Which brings us good cheer,  
Minc'd-pies and plum-porridge,  
Good ale and strong beer ;  
With pig, goose, and capon,  
The best that can be,  
So well doth the weather  
And our stomachs agree.

Observe how the chimneys  
Do smoak all about,  
The cooks are providing  
For dinner, no doubt ;  
But those on whose tables  
No victuals appear,  
O may they keep Lent  
All the rest of the year !

With holly and ivy  
So green and so gay ;  
We deck up our houses  
As fresh as the day,

With bays and rosemary,  
And lawrel compleat,  
And every one now  
Is a king in conceit.

But as for all curmudgeons,  
Who will not be free,  
I wish they may die  
On the three-legged tree.

---

## XLVI.

[A Christmas Carol, from "Poor Robin's Almanac," Dec. 1700.]

---

Now that the time is come wherein,  
our Saviour Christ was born,  
The larders full of beef and pork,  
the garners fill'd with corn ;  
As God hath plenty to thee sent,  
take comfort of thy labours,  
And let it never thee repent  
to feast thy needy neighbours.

Let fires in every chimney be,  
that people they may warm them ;  
Tables with dishes covered,  
good victuals will not harm them.

With mutton, veals, beef, pig, and pork,  
    well furnish every board,  
Plum-pudding, furmity and what  
    thy stock will then afford.

No niggard of the liquor be,  
    let it go round thy table,  
People may freely drink, but not  
    so long as they are able ;  
Good customs they may be abus'd,  
    which makes rich men so slack us,  
This feast is to relieve the poor,  
    and not to drunken Bacchus.

Thus if thou doest,  
    'twill credit raise thee,  
God will the bless,  
    and neighbours praise thee.

---

XLVII.

[From Sandys, p. 63.]

A CHILD this day is born,  
A child of high renown,  
Most worthy of a sceptre,  
A sceptre and a crown.  
Novels, Novels, Novels,  
Novels, sing all we may,  
Because the King of all kings  
Was born this blessed day.



This child both God and man  
From heaven down to us came,  
He is the King of all kings,  
And Jesus is his name.  
Novels, &c.

These tidings shepherds heard  
In field watching their fold,  
Was by an angel unto them  
That night reveal'd and told.  
Novels, &c.

Who standing near by them  
To them shined so bright,  
That they amazed were  
At that most glorious sight.  
Novels, &c.

To whom the angel spoke,  
Saying, be not afraid,  
Be glad, poor silly shepherds ;  
Why are you so dismayed ?  
Novels, &c.

For lo, I bring you tidings  
Of gladness and of mirth,  
Which cometh to all people by  
This holy Infant's birth.  
Novels, &c.

The only Son of God was he,  
The Lord and God most Highest ;  
And he is the true Shepherd ;  
The young child Jesus Christ.  
Novels, &c.

Then was there with the angel  
An host incontinent  
Of heavenly bright soldiers,  
Which from the Highest was sent.  
Novels, &c.

Lauding the Lord our God,  
And his Celestial King ;  
All glory be in paradise,  
This heavenly host did sing.  
Novels, &c.

Glory be unto our God.  
That sitteth still on high,  
With praises and with triumph great,  
And joyful melody.  
Novels, &c.

But when this holy army  
Of heavenly soldiers bright  
Was unto God returned  
And vanished out of sight ;  
Novels, &c.

The which the holy prophets  
Spake of long time before,  
That from the fall of Adam  
He should us all restore.  
Novels, &c.

The shepherds hearts were joyful  
At this great glorious news,  
That the King of all kings  
was risen amongst the Jews.  
Novels, &c.

Without the least of hinderance  
Anon they went in then,  
And found the young child Jesus Christ  
Thus born in Bethlehem.  
Novels, &c.

And as the angel told them,  
So to them did appear ;  
They found the young child Jesus Christ  
With Mary his mother dear.  
Novels, &c.

Not sumptuously, but simply,  
Was the young King array'd ;  
A manger was the cradle  
Where the young child was laid.  
Novels, &c.

No pride at all was found  
 In this most holy Child,  
 But he being void of all sin,  
 The Lamb of God most mild.  
 Novels, &c.

His body unto bitter pains  
 He gave to set us free :  
 He is our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
 And none but only he.  
 Novels, &c.

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost  
 All glory be therefore,  
 To whom be all dominion  
 Both now and evermore !  
 Novels, &c.

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 XLVIII.

[For Christmas Day in the Morning, from Sandys, p. 74.]

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THE first Nowell the Angell did say  
 Was to three poor Shepherds in the fields as they lay ;  
 In fields where they lay keeping their sheep  
 In a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
 Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
 Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star  
Shining in the East beyond them far,  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
And so it continued both day and night.

Nowel, &c.

And by the light of that same star,  
Three Wise Men came from country far ;  
To seek for a King was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went.

Nowel, &c.

This star drew nigh to the North West,  
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,  
And there it took both stop and stay  
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

Nowell, &c.

Then did they know assuredly  
Within that house the King did lie ;  
One entered in then for to see,  
And found the babe in poverty,

Nowell, &c.

Then enter'd in those Wise Men three  
Most reverently upon their knee,  
And offer'd there in his presence,  
Both gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

Nowell, &c.

Between an ox stall and an ass,  
 This child truly there born he was ;  
 For want of clothing they did him lay  
 In the manger, among the hay.  
 Nowell, &c.

Then let us all with one accord  
 Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
 That hath made heaven and earth of nought,  
 And with his blood mankind hath bought,  
 Nowell, &c.

If we in our time shall do well,  
 We shall be free from death and Hell,  
 For God hath prepared for us all  
 A resting place in generall.  
 Nowell, &c.

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### XLIX.

[From Sandys, p. 99.]

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COME rejoice, all good Christians,  
 And rejoice now, I pray,  
 For joy our Redeemer  
 Was born on this day,  
 In the city of David,  
 And a cottage so poor ;

Then rejoice and be you merry,  
We have blessings in store.  
And therefore be you merry,  
Rejoice and be you merry,  
Set sorrows away,  
Christ Jesus our Saviour  
Was born on this day.

Our Lord he was born  
Of a virgin most pure,  
Within a poor stable  
Both safe and secure.  
He was guarded most safely  
With angels so bright,  
Who told three poor shepherds  
Those things in the night.  
And therefore, &c.

They said, Be not fearful,  
But to Bethlehem go :  
Then rejoice and be chearful,  
For 'tis certainly so.  
For a young Son to Joseph,  
Is in Bethlehem born :  
Then rejoice all good Christians,  
And cease for to mourn.  
And therefore, &c.

And when those three shepherds  
Did to Bethlehem come,  
And arrived at the stable,  
Then in they did run,

Where they found blessed Mary  
With Jesus her Son :  
There they found our Lord sleeping,  
And thus they begun.  
And therefore, &c.

With the sweetest Hallelujah  
The heavens did rejoice,  
With the saints and the angels,  
And all with sweet voice,  
Crying, Glory and honour  
To our heavenly King,  
In the clouds of the air  
Then this host they did sing,  
And therefore, &c.

Then well may we Christians,  
That dwell on the earth,  
Rejoice and be glad  
For sweet Jesus his birth,  
Who brought us salvation,  
If we mind but the same :  
Then let all the nation  
Sing praise to his name.  
And therefore, &c.

With true zeal and honour  
Let us joyfully sing,  
In praise of our salvation,  
To our heavenly King ;



To our heavenly Father,  
That remaineth above,  
And to our dear Saviour,  
That redeem'd us with love.  
And therefore, &c.

FINIS.

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