

The White Boys

Ny Guillyn Baney

Performed 21 December 2019

Adapted from the original texts collected in Stephen Miller, "Who Wants to See the White Boys Act?"

Devil Doubt

Mac Man

St. Patrick

St. Maughold

St. George

Doctor

All

Room, room, brave gallant boys!

Give us room to sport! *etc.*

Devil Doubt

Here by your leave, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We will act a sporting play;

To give you fine diversion,

Before we go away.

Mac Man

It is room, room, brave gallant boys!

Give us room to rhyme –

To show you some diversion

This Merry Christmas time.

Devil Doubt

It is room, room, give us room to sport,

This is the place we wish to resort,

To make fun¹ and to repeat our pretty rhymes –

Remember, good folks, it is the Christmas times.

¹ New line.

Mac Man

'Tis Christmas time! And we appear,
To act our Christmas merrily here.
And bid you health and all good cheer
And wish you well² for the coming year.

All

For we are the merry actors –

Devil Doubt

– that travel the street,

All

We are the merry actors –

Mac Man

– who fight for our meat,

All

We are the merry actors

Devil Doubt

– who show pleasant play;

Mac Man

Enter in the St. Patrick – clear the way!

[Enter the St. Patrick]

St. Patrick

I am St. Patrick, and boldly do appear,
And Maughold, he is a friend, a friend so very dear.³
Stand forth, St. Maughold, thy sword in hand, to act a gallant part
And show to all this company a specimen of art!

[Enter St. Maughold]

² 'health' in the original text

³ This line is new.

St. Maughold

I am Maughold of Mann, my father's gallant son,
And many are the deeds of arms that nobly I have done
In many a rugged region and far and foreign shore
And here I come to show myself at Christmas time once more!

Show me the foe that dares to stand
And he shall fall by the right hand,
I challenge dukes and lords to fight
And put the best of them to flight!

[Enter St. George]

St. George

Ho! ho! Ha ha – what empty boast!
I'll serve you sardines to your toast!

St. Maughold

Who art thou – bird or animal?
Then clip thy claws I certainly shall!

St. George

I am an English champion, from English land came,
I came to fight that valiant knight,
St. Maughold they call his name.
But if St. Maughold they call thee,
Let thy courage be stout or bold,
If thy heart's blood is hot, I'll soon run it cold!

St. Maughold

Slasho, slasho, don't speak so hot,
For little knowest the man thou hast got!
That head from off thy shoulders soon I'll lop,
And that foul mouth of thine for ever stop.

[They fight. Maughold stops and inspects his sword]

St. Maughold

The point of my sword is broke.
How can I fight?

St. George

Ho, ho! – I've heard that little joke
Before tonight!

[St. George strikes and St. Maughold falls]

St. Patrick

O mortal stars! and skies of blue!
I never was in such a stew
O skies of blue and mortal stars
Come old Mac Man, make this day ours.⁴
He is the breed in hour of need,
A champion to avenge this deed.

[Enter Mac Man]

Mac Man

Ho, ho, Sir King, what is your need?
I am your man to do the deed!

St. Patrick

Step in, Mac Man, and act my part
And smite this villain to the heart.

St. George

He challenged me to fight, and why should I deny?
He cut my coat so full of rents and made the buttons fly!

Mac Man

I'll try the metal of thy race;
I'll cut a splinter from thy face.
And if thou dost another word against my master say,
Clean through thy yellow body I'll make an open way.

[They fight and St. George falls to his knees]

⁴ This line is not in any of the originals. The original is: 'Bring out from prison old Mac man!'

St. George

O horrible! O horrible the way I feel,
My head made of iron, my body made of steel,
But legs that seem like pipe shanks so to snap
And that's the way of giving that caused me this mishap!
Alas! Old Mac Man, rather queer I feel,
Run through the body by thy sword's good steel;
Prithee, good fellow, for a doctor roar,
Or poor St. George will be no more.⁵

[St. George dies]

St. Patrick

Doctor! A doctor! Is there a doctor to be found,
That can cure these men, raise them from the ground?⁶

[Enter Doctor]

Doctor

Oh yes! master, yes, there is a doctor to be found,
That can cure these men, raise them from the ground.⁷

St. Patrick

From whence come ye?

Doctor

From France, from Spain, from Rome I came,
I've travelled all parts and earned my fame.⁸

Devil Doubt

Well spoken, Doctor!

St. Patrick

What can you cure?

⁵ In the original this is "will soon be no more." Changed here as the rhythm was off with 'St. George' in.

⁶ This line is not in any of the originals. The original is: 'Can cure St. George, thy son, of a deep and deadly wound.'

⁷ This line is not in any of the originals. The original is: 'Can cure St. George, thy son, of a deep and deadly wound.'

⁸ The original is: 'I've travelled all parts of Christendom.'

Doctor

All sorts of diseases,
Whatever you pleases.
All pains within, all pains without,
The plague, the palsy, and the gout.
The itch, 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 lonely wife;⁹
Let them be curst or, ever so stout,
If the devil's in I'll blow him out.

Devil Doubt

Well spoken, Doctor!

St. Patrick

What is your fee?

Doctor

Twenty pounds down is my fee,
But half of that I'll take from thee

Devil Doubt

Well spoken, Doctor!

St. Patrick

What medicine do you carry Doctor?

Doctor

I carry a little bottle in my pocket of rixum, raxum,
Prixum-Praxum, with a high cock-o'lory –
A little drop to his nose, a little drop to his brain,
Rise up, St. Maughold! And fight again!

[The Doctor performs his cure, and St. Maughold rises]

⁹ The original has her a 'scolding wife.' Other alternatives available ('... marital strife' etc.)

St. Maughold

Oh horrible! terrible! the like was never seen,
A man drove out of seven senses into seventeen,
And out of seventeen into seven-score.
Oh horrible! terrible! the like was ne'er before.
It was neither by a bull, nor yet by a bear,
But by a little devil of a rabbit there.

Doctor

Another little drop to the nose, another little drop to the brain,
Rise up, St. George! And fight again!

[The Doctor performs the cure on St. George, who rises]

St. George

It is a kind of rough tough, coming up like a fly,
Up the seven stairs, and down the lofty sky.
My head is made of iron, my body made of steel,
My legs are made of pipe-shanks, I'll cause you all to yield.

[St. George is about to fight but the St. Patrick jumps in]

St. Patrick

Oh! Oh! We are all brothers,
Why should we be all through others?
After this squabble, thus our hands let's join,
In friendship, and together let us dine.

St. George

To a good dinner I would not object.¹⁰

St. Maughold

Good drink and cheer – now that sounds correct.¹¹

¹⁰ This line is not in any of the originals. The original is: 'To a good dinner I am nothing loath.'

¹¹ This line is not in any of the originals. The original is: 'And I've a twist that will surprise you both.'

All [singing]

Then here's success to all brave boys
Of stout and gallant heart,
In battlefield or banquet board
Prepared to play a part.
We handle well both knife and fork
Likewise the sword and spear,
And we wish you a merry Christmas
And a good new year,
And we wish you a merry Christmas
And a good new year,
And we wish you a good new year!

With hostile bands confronted,
To fight we are not slack,
On roast beef and plum pudding
We can make a stout attack.
We handle well both knife and fork
Likewise the sword and spear,
And we wish you a merry Christmas
And a good new year,
And we wish you a merry Christmas
And a good new year,
And we wish you a good new year!

[Dance. The doctor raises the swords at the conclusion of the dance and shows them to the audience. All the others leave, without the Doctor noticing. When he looks round, he is shocked.]

Doctor

My payment, Sirs! – But they depart;
Leaving nought for the actor's art.¹²
Good folks, I hope you'll pity my mishap,
And kindly drop something in my cap...



¹² These two lines are new. It is adapted from an exchange between all the characters in the 1832 version.