

Drive the Cold Winter Away



1. All hail to the days that merit more praise
Than all the rest of the year,
And welcome the nights that double delights
As well for the poor as the peer!
Good fortune attend each merry man's friend,
That doth but the best that he may;
Forgetting old wrongs, with carols and songs,
To drive the cold winter away.
2. Let Misery pack, with a whip at his back,
To the deep Tantalian flood;
In Lethe profound let envy be drown'd,
That pines at another man's good;
Let Sorrow's expense be banded from hence,
All payments have greater delay,
We'll spend the long nights in cheerful delights
To drive the cold winter away.
3. 'Tis ill for a mind to anger inclined
To think of small injuries now;
If wrath be to seek do not lend her thy cheek
Nor let her inhabit thy brow.
Cross out of thy books malevolent looks,
Both beauty and youth's decay,
And wholly consort with mirth and with sport
To drive the cold winter away.
4. The court in all state now opens her gate
And gives a free welcome to most;
The city likewise, tho' somewhat precise,
Doth willingly part with her roast:
But yet by report from city and court
The country will e'er gain the day;
More liquor is spent and with better content
To drive the cold winter away.
5. Our good gentry there for costs do not spare,
The yeomanry fast not till Lent;¹
The farmers and such think nothing too much,
If they keep but to pay for their rent.
The poorest of all now do merrily call,
When at a fit place they can stay,
For a song or a tale or a cup of good ale
To drive the cold winter away.
6. Thus none will allow of solitude now
But merrily greets the time,
To make it appear of all the whole year
That this is accounted the prime:
December is seen apparel'd in green,
And January fresh as May
Comes dancing along with a cup and a song
To drive the cold winter away.
7. This time of the year is spent in good cheer,
And neighbours together do meet
To sit by the fire, with friendly desire,
Each other in love to greet;
Old grudges forgot are put in the pot,
All sorrows aside they lay;
The old and the young doth carol this song
To drive the cold winter away.
8. Sisley and Nanny, more jocund than any,
As blithe as the month of June,
Do carol and sing like birds of the spring,
No nightingale sweeter in tune;
To bring in content, when summer is spend,
In pleasant delight and play,
With mirth and good cheer to end the whole year,
And drive the cold winter away.

9. The shepherd, the swain do highly disdain
 To waste out their time in care,
 And Clim of the Clough hath plenty enough
 If he but a penny can spare
 To spend at the night, in joy and delight,
 Now after his labour all day;
 For better than lands is the help of his hands
 To drive the cold winter away.
10. To mask and to mum kind neighbours will come
 With wassails of nut-brown ale,
 To drink and carouse to all in the house
 As merry as bucks in the dale;
 Where cake, bread, and cheese is brought for your fees
 To make you the longer stay;
 At the fire to warm 'twill do you no harm,
 To drive the cold winter away.
11. When Christmas's tide come in like a bride
 With holly and ivy clad,
 Twelve days in the year much mirth and good cheer
 In every household is had;
 The country guise is then to devise
 Some gambols of Christmas play,
 Whereat the young men do best that they can
 To drive the cold winter away.
12. When white-bearded frost hath threatened his worse,
 And fallen from branch and briar,
 Then time away calls from husbandry halls
 And from the good countryman's fire,
 Together to go, to plough and to sow
 To get us both food and array,
 And thus will content the time we have spent
 To drive the cold winter away.

Alternate titles are "In Praise Of Christmas", "The Praise Of Christmas" and "All Hail To The Days". The words are anonymous, probably before ca. 1625 from broadside sources. It is sometimes erroneously attributed to Tom D'Urfey (1653-1723).

This carol is contained in both the Samuel Pepys Collection and the Roxburghe Collection (the same Broadside is found in both collections). It is included in Edward Rimbault's **The Little Book of Songs and Ballads** as "The Praise of Christmas". Rimbault's notes state: This excellent old Song is corrected from a black-letter copy,

"Printed at London, by H[enry] G[osson]," in the Pepysian Collection.

Another copy (of the First Part only) is in D'Urfey's **Pills to Purge Melancholy**.

The black-letter copy is directed to be sung "to the tune of 'When Phoebus did Rest,'" It is also found in Playford's **Dancing Master**, 1650.

Many of the Cavalier songs against the Rump Parliament were sung to this tune.

In A. H. Bullen's **A Christmas Garland**, he notes that it is also found in an early 17th century Broadside: "All Hail to the Days", ca. 1625

It appears in William Chappell's **The Ballad Literature and Popular Music of the Olden Time**.

Many versions contain only verses 1, 3, 7, 11, 12, or a combination thereof.

The reference in verse 11 to 'Christmas-tide' generally refers to the Twelve Days of Christmas following Christmas Day through the feast of Epiphany, January 6; in some locations, the holiday may extend to Candlemas, February 2.