

Charles Waterton - The Fine Old English Gentleman

Picnics in the Grotto at Walton Park:

“On such occasions, if the late Mr. Waterton appeared, even at a distance, during these happy, rural, and festive gaities, the Squire was always greeted by the bands playing, and the whole multitude joining in chorus ‘The Fine Old English Gentleman’; having selected the portions peculiarly applicable to the high-spirited and generous-hearted ‘old Squire’:

I'll sing you a good old song that was made by a good old pate,
Of a fine old English Gentleman, who had an old estate;
And who kept up his old mansion at a bountiful old rate,
With a good old porter to relieve the old poor at his gate,
Like a fine old English Gentleman, one of the olden time.
His custom was when Christmas came, to bid his friends repair
To his old Hall, where feast and hall for them he did prepare;
And though the rich he entertained, he ne'er forgot the poor.
Nor was the houseless wanderer e'er driven from the door
Of this good old English Gentleman, one of the olden time.”

Charles Waterton: His Home, Habits and Handiwork. *Reminiscences of an Intimate and Most Confiding Personal Association for Nearly Thirty Years.*
by Richard Hobson MD, 2nd Edition - "Containing a Considerable Amount of Additional Material", i.e. the good doctor expanded upon the first edition, 1867, Whittaker & Co.; Simpkin, Marshall & Co. London, H.W. Walker and John Smith, Leeds. The 1st edition was published in 1866.

The Fine Old English Gentleman

(the version contained in John Eyre's book.)

I'll sing you a good old song,
Made by a good old pate,
Of a fine old English gentleman,
Who had an old estate;
And who kept up his old mansion
At a bountiful old rate,
With a good old porter to relieve
The old poor at his gate--
Like a fine old English gentleman,
All of the olden time.

His hall so old was hung around
With pikes, and guns, and bows,
And swords and good old bucklers
That had stood against old foes;
'Twas there "his worship" sat in state,
In doublet and trunk hose,
And quaff'd his cup of good old sack
To warm his good old nose--
Like a fine old English gentleman,
All of the olden time.

When winter's cold brought frost and snow,
He open'd his house to all;
And though three-score and ten his years,
He featly led the ball.
Nor was the houseless wanderer
E'er driven from his hall;
For while he feasted all the great,
He ne'er forgot the small--
Like a fine old English gentleman,
All of the olden time.

But time, though sweet, is strong in flight,



Illustration from the book *Old Time Ballads* by John Eyre, published circa 1902
The ballad is from the early 19th century or even earlier.

Charles Dickens wrote a satirical version of the ballad for the Liberal journal *The Examiner*, published on Saturday, 7 August 1841, shortly after the Tories had taken over the government in a parliamentary election.

Charles Waterton - The Fine Old English Gentleman

And years roll swiftly by;
And autumn's falling leaves proclaim'd
The old man--he must die!
He laid him down quite tranquilly,
Gave up his latest sigh;
And mournful stillness reign'd around,
And tears bedew'd each eye--
For this good old English gentleman,
All of the olden time.

Now, surely this is better far
Than all the new parade
Of theatres and fancy balls,
"At home" and masquerade!
And much more economical,
For all his bills were paid.
Then leave your new vagaries quite,
And take up the old trade--
Of a fine old English gentleman,
All of the olden time.

There is also another work entitled
*A Fine Old English Gentleman, exemplified in
the life and character of Lord Collingwood, a
biographical study*, by William Davies,
Samson, Low, Marston, Lowe & Searle,
London (1875).

