

Author: Thomas Davies (?-?)

Text type: Poetry

Date of composition: 1618-1630

Editions: 1832, 1970.

Source text:

Davies, Thomas. 1832. "The Somerset Man's Complaint". ed. by Edward Wedlake Brayley. *The Graphical and Historical Illustrator* 12: 343.

e-text

Access and transcription: July 2012

Number of words: 402

Dialect represented: Somersetshire

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THE SOMERSET MAN'S COMPLAINT*

Gods boddikins, 'chill worke no more,

Dost thinke 'chill labor to be poore,

No, no ich have a doe: (*done*).

If this be now the world and trade

That I must breake and rogues be made,

Ich will a plundring too.

'Chill zell my cart and eake (*also*) my plow,

And get a 'zwird, (*sword*) if I know how,

For I meane to be right;

'Chill learne to drinke, to sweare, to roare,

To be a gallant, drob, and whore –

No matter tho nere fight.

**The Salamanca Corpus: "The Somerset Man's Complaint"
(1618-1630)**

But first a warrant that is witt (*fitt*)

From Mr. Captaine I doe gett,

'Twill make a sore a-doo;

Ffor then 'c'have power by my place

To steale a horse wth out disgrace,

And beate the owner too.

God blesse us what a worlde is heere,

Can never last another yeare,

Voke (*folk*) cannot be able to zow:

Dost think I ever 'chad the art

To plow my ground up wth my cart –

My bease + are all I-goe, (*agone.*)

I'ze had zixe oxen tother day,

And them the roundheads stole away,

A mischief be their speed;

I had six horses left me whole,

And them the cavileers have stole,

Gods zores, they are both agreed.

Here I doe labor, tole, and zweat,

And 'dure the cold, hot, dry, and wett,

But what dost 'think I gett?

Ffase, (*faith*) just my labor for my paines,

The garrizons have all the gaines,

And thither all is vett (*fetch*ed).

There goes my corne, my beanes, and pease,

I do not dare them to displeas,

They doe zoe zweare and vapor:

The Salamanca Corpus: "The Somerset Man's Complaint"
(1618-1630)

Then to the governor I come
And pray him to discharge the some,
But nought can get, or (*except*) paper.

Gods bores, dost think a paper will
Keep warme my back and belly fill?

No, no, goe burne the note;
If that another yeare my veeld
No better profitt doe me yeeld,
I may goe cut my throate.

If any money 'chave in store
Then straight a warrant came therefore,
Or I must plunderd be;
And when 'chave shuffled by one pay
There come a new wth out delay;
Was ever the like a zee (*seen*).

And as this were not grieffe enow,
They have a thing called *quarter* too;
Oh that's a vengeance waster!
A plague upont, they call it *vree*;
'Cham sure that made us slaves to be,
And every rogue our master.

*These verses were copied from the Common-place, or Memorandum Book of one Thomas Davies, written, as appears from the dates scattered through it, between the years 1614 and 1648. It is a small oblong volume, in 18mo, preserved in the Lansdowne Library, in the British Museum.

+ *Beasts*; cattle for the plough.