For above forty years I have been a diligent collector of history, tradition, legend, custom, or folklore, whether from familiar or unfamiliar sources, relating to the festival of the Holy Nativity. Moreover, I have gathered copiously from scarce pamphlets of the 17th and 18th centuries, from old chapbooks, newspaper paragraphs, and magazine articles old and new, and from contact with rustics in several counties. The fruits of my gathering are briefly summarized in the following pages, in the hope that they may conduce to that "joy and pious mirth" wherewith we ought, all of us, to commemorate the best and greatest Gift of God to man. - Summary by from the Preface

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