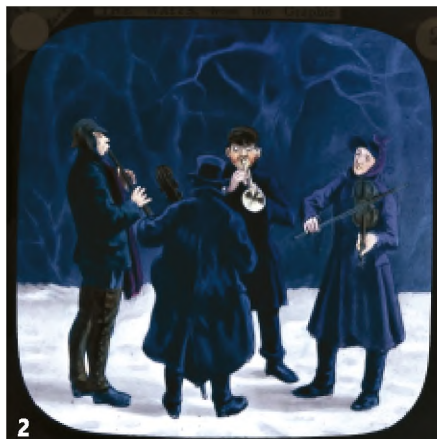


THE WAITS

Jennifer Utteridge

Here is a seasonal piece for members to enjoy. The slides are made by York & Sons, 1895, but the poem is my own version of the story. The

more contemporary reading in the MLS Readings Library for these slides is *The Waits: an unsentimental age* by Edgar Lee 'from the *Graphic*'. However a 1995 poem by Delia and Peter Gillies can also be found there.



The bold numbers on the left refer to the slide images. Slide 12 is missing.

THE WAITS

- 1** One winter's eve in the Castle Bar
A-pratting with my mates,
We all recalled the old town band
And how we *loved* The Waits
I'd an old fiddle and Fred a bass
And with clarionet and horn,
We thought the folks would pay us well
To salute the happy morn
- 2** We got a carol, learnt it up
And, on an evening wintry,
We muffled up and sallied forth
To try it on the gentry.
"Good King Wenceslas" played we
With Bill tootling on his horn.
We all agreed there were none like we
To salute the happy morn

We started at the Doctor's house
 And played with splendid power,
 3 But the Doctor, he came rushing out
 To see what all the row were!
 But then he fetched us half a crown
 Though he tossed it down with scorn
 "Can't you find some other place
 To salute the happy morn?"

We stood half frozen in the square
 And played *bravissimo*.
 4 It brought the local urchins out
 To pelt us all with snow!
 Then every verse got worse and worse
 Our tune got more forlorn
 Never did a sadder band
 Salute the happy morn!



And so to keep our spirits up,
 We thought we'd try the manor,
 Surely such a grand old gent
 Would spare us each a tanner.
 5 Instead he set the dog on us
 And waved his gun about!!
 We had to leg it down the lane-
 And we came away with 'nowt'.



6 Enough's enough, we all agreed:
 We'll go back to the Castle.
 But then we passed the lawyer's house.
 Ah! Now he'd enjoy some wassail.
 We tuned up the fiddle and the horn
 And played *fortissimo*,
 7 But up the lawyer's window went
 And.... slops came down below!



Now wet and frozen to the bone,
 8 We needed somewhere warm.
 The Castle would be just the place
 To salute the happy morn.
 9 Lizzy opened up the bar,
 But said, in some dismay,
 "I've heard about your pranks tonight.
 You can't come in and play!"
 10 The bass was froze to poor Fred's back.
 We had to part the two.
 11 Then as we got the fire to go,
 We thought the evening through.
 It had its ups and downs we thought,
 But, when we're on top form,
 There's no one in the town like we
 To salute the happy morn.