

Lloyd, Bitter Withy

BITTER WITHY

As it fell out on a high holiday
Small rain from the sky did fall
Sweet Jesus asked of his own mother dear
Whether he might play at ball
To play, to play, dear child she did say
It's time that you have been gone
And don't let me hear complaints about you
At night when you do come home
Now our Savior walked down into yonder town
As far as the holy, holy well
And there he met three of the finest children
That ever any tongue could tell
Good morn, good morn, good morn, said they
Good morning, then said he, said he
Now which of you three fine children
Will play at ball with me
Oh we are lords and ladies sons
Born in a bowery hall
And you are but a maiden's child
Born in an oxen stall
Now our savior built a bridge with the beams of the sun
and over the water ran he, ran he
And the three jolly children followed after him
And drowned they were all three
The upward ball and the downward ball
Their mothers they did wail and squall
Saying, Mary mild, fetch home your child
For ours are drowned all
Then Mary mild picked a handful of withies
And laid our dear savior across her knee
And with that handful of withy twigs
She gave him slashes three
Oh cursed be to the bitter withy
That has caused me to smart, to smart
And that shall be the very first tree
That shall perish right at the heart
recorded by MaColl & Lloyd- English & Scottish Ballads; Roberts &
Barrand - Nowell Sing We Clear
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