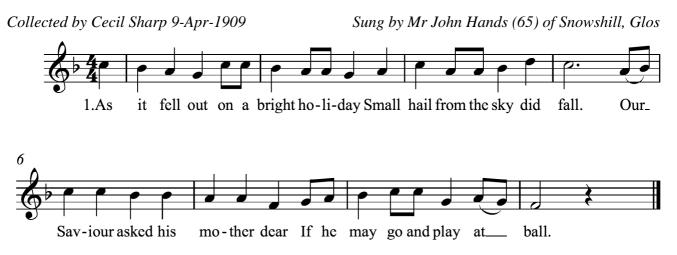
The Bitter Withy



As it fell out on a bright holiday, small hail from the sky did fall Our Saviour asked His mother dear if he may go and play at ball.

'At ball! at ball! my own dear Son! It is time that you were gone And don't let me hear of any doings at night when you come home.'

So up Lincull and down Lincull our sweetest Saviour ran, And there He met three rich young lords 'Good morning! To you all.'

'Good morn! good morn! good morn!' said they; 'Good morning !' then said He, 'O which of you three rich young men will play at ball with me?'

'We are all lords' and ladies' sons, born in our bower and hall And Thou art nothing but a poor maid's child, born in an ox's stall.'

'If you're all lords' and ladies' sons, born in your bower and hall, I will make you believe in your latter end; I'm an angel above you all.'

So He made Him a bridge with the beams of the sun, and o'er the water crossed He. These rich young lords followed after Him, and drowned they were all three.

Then up Lincull and down Lincull these young lords' mothers ran, Saying: 'Mary mild, fetch home your child, for ours He has drowned all.'

So Mary mild fetched home her child and laid Him across her knee With a handful of green withy twigs she gave Him slashes three.

'O withy! O withy ! O bitter withy thou hast caused Me to smart And the withy shall be the very first tree that shall perish at the heart!'

Copy for Singing prepared by GlosSongs. Uses the tune from John Hands and not the variants noted by Sharp. Source: Sharp manuscript ref FT2153 (tune) with words from Sharp, English Folk Carols (1911) which he attributes to 'from Mr. George Gibbs of Evesham, Worcestershire. who communicated them to the "Notes and Queries" column of The Evesham Journal, edited by Mr. E. A. B. Barnard.' Mr. Gibbs, a cobbler by trade, learned the verses from a little girl who used to bring him her shoes to be mended, and who, in return for the service rendered, taught him the carol. Audit Transcription prepared by VL Oct 2011/HT Oct 2011/Checked tbc

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