

JOHN BARLEYCORN.

Henry Mallion, Fen Ditton 1907 collected by RVW



There were three men came from the west their fortune for to try
And these three men made a solemn vow John Barleycorn should die

They ploughed they sowed and harrowed him in; threw clods upon his head
Then these three men made a solemn vow John Barleycorn was dead.

They let him lie for a very long time till the rain from heaven did fall
Then little Sir John sprung up his head and so amazed them all

They let him lie till midsummer and he grew so pale and wan
Then little Sir John he grew a long beard and so became a man

They hired men with scythes so sharp to cut him off at the knee
And then they tied him to a cart and used him barbarously.

They hired men with flails so strong to cut him skin from bone
But the miller he used him worse than that for he ground him between two stones

Put brandy in a glass me boys and cider into a can
Put little Sir John in a nut-brown mug and he'll prove the merrier man

The ploughboy he can't plough the field, nor the huntsman blow his horn
The parson he can't say his prayers without a little John Barleycorn.