

Back and Side Go Bare

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Early English Lyrics

(Chambers & Sedgewick; October House)

cho. Back and side go bare, go bare

Both hand and foot go cold,

But belly, God send thee good ale enough,

Whether it be new or old!

But if that I may have truly

Good Ale my belly full,

I shall look like one, by sweet Saint John,

Were shorn against the wool.

Though I go bare, take ye no care

I am nothing cold;

I stuff my skin so full within

Of jolly good ale and old.

I cannot eat but little meat,

My stomach is not good;

But sure I think that I could drink

With him that weareth an hood.

Drink is my life; Although my wife

Some time do chide and scold.

Yet spare I not to ply the pot

Of jolly etc.

I love no roast but a brown toast,

Or a crab in the fire.

A little bread will do me stead,

Much bread I never desire.

Nor frost, nor snow nor wind, I trow

Can hurt me if it wold,

When I am wrapped within and lapped

With jolly etc.

I care right nought, I take no thought

For clothes to keep me warm;

Have I good drink, I surely think

Nothing can do me harm.

For truly than I fear no man,

Be he never so bold,

When I am armed and thoroughly warmed

With jolly etc.

But now and then I curse and ban
They make their ale so small.
God give them care and evil to fare
They stry the malt and all. (stry=destroy)
Such peevish pew, I tell you true
Not for a crown of gold
There cometh one sip within my lip
Whether it be new or old.

Good ale and strong maketh me among
Full jocund and full light,
That oft I sleep and take no keep
From morning until night.
Then start I up and flee to the cup
The right way on I hold;
My thirst to staunch, I fill my paunch
With jolly etc.

And Kit, my wife, that as her life
Loveth well good ale to seek,
Full oft drinketh she, that ye may see
The tears run down her cheek.
Than doth she troll to me the bowl
As a good malt-worm should
And say: "Sweetheart, I have take my part
Of jolly etc."

They that do drink till they nod and wink
Even as good fellows should do,
They shall not miss to have the bliss
That good ale hath brought them to.
And all poor souls that scour black bowls
And them hath lustily trolled
God save the lives of them and their wives
Whether they be young or old!

(see note on JOHNDORY)