

The Beggars Song

A song from an Elizabethan play, maybe the earliest known English drinking song.

I'd much rather be a beggar than a King
And I will tell you the reason why
A King cannot swagger or drink like a beggar
Or be half as merry as I

Chorus

*Let the back and the sides go bare me boys
Let the hands and the feet go cold
But give to the belly boys beer enough
Whether it be new or old.*

I've money here all in my hand
Come landlord bring me beer
Chances of work I always shirk
Good begging always brings good cheer

Sometimes we call at a nobleman's hall
To beg for bread and beer
Sometimes blind and sometimes lame
Sometimes too deaf to hear

Sometimes we lie like hogs in a sty
With a flock of straw on the ground
Sometimes eat a crust that's rolled in the dust
Or whatever can be found.

<Chorus x 2>