

The Beggars Song

An ancient English drinking song also titled "Jolly Good Ale and Old," "The Beggar" or "A-Begging We Will Go". The lyrics are derived from a 16th-century song by William Stevenson, often referred to as "Back and Side Go Bare" which appeared in the play Gammer Gurton's Needle. Roud 1573.

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

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

Some times 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 X2

Oi!