

BARBARY ELLEN (Child 84)

(Songbooks 2008)

'Twas in the merry month of May
When green buds they were swelling
Young Willy Green on his death bed lay
For love of Barbary Ellen

He sent his servant to the town
To the place where she was dwelling
Saying Masters sick and bids you come
He begs you Barbary Ellen

Said she When I was young and green
And in love as there's no telling
Your master laughed and mocked me then
Poured scorn on Barbary Ellen

And in the tavern lately too
Bad company he fell in
With other girls upon his knee
He mocked poor Barbary Ellen

But yet his servant pleaded well
She went unto his dwelling
Oh I am sick with love he said
For I love sweet Barbary Ellen

Is this a joke to mock me thus?
Oh why-fore are you a-dying
O cruel, cruel are your taunts
I do believe you are lying!

But as she's walked across the green
She's heard the church bell knelling
And every knell it said to her,
Oh foolish Barbary Ellen!

Oh mother, mother make my bed
And make it long and narrow
Sweet William's died of love for me
And I now die of sorrow

Come all you fair and tender maids
Beware blind cupid's arrow
If when it strikes you speak no word
Your bed may be long and narrow