

Fiddler John: A Country Tale

Fiddler John he used to dwell
A long time since, so I hear tell,
In an old thatched house with a leaning wall
That always seemed just ready to fall...
And wherever you went both far and near,
Where people did go to make good cheer,
Why, every time you'd find in the middle
Old bent John and his old cracked fiddle.

Chorus:

*With a catch, and a round, and a country dance,
A fine new tune from out of France,
A stave for sorrow, a stave for mirth,
This for a wedding, that for a birth,
"Ground for the Floor" and the "Green Grass
Grows"...
"Man's Life's a Vapour Full of Woes" –
And an alehouse glee when the full quarts foam,
And a right jolly lilt to the "Harvest Home"!*

Fiddler John he grew so old
He kept to his bed, so I've been told
He kept to his bed and there he lay
In his old thatched house for many a day,
And the lads and the lasses loitered by,
On summer nights they'd linger nigh
To hear him play by the light of the moon
On his old cracked fiddle each old tune. (CHO)

Fiddler John, he's dead and gone:
His green, green grave the grass grows on–
Fiddler John, he lies in the ground,
With the green grass growin' all a round, all around;
His bones are dust and his fiddle's rotten
His old, old tunes are all forgotten.
And the old thatched house where he used to dwell
It leaned some more and down it fell. (CHO)

But still, they say, when the moon is full,
And the mist on the commons is white as wool,
And the river's loud in the distant weirs,
And they're all abed at the "Crook and Shears,"
By the Fiddler's Field if you're homeward going,
You'll can see what looks like a garden growing...
And out of the house that stands in the middle
You can hear the sound of an old cracked fiddle.
(CHO)