

Barbara Ellen

The musical score for 'Barbara Ellen' is written in G major (one sharp) and 5/4 time. It consists of two staves of music with lyrics underneath. The first staff has two measures labeled (a) and (b). The second staff has one measure labeled (c). Below the main score, there are two staves labeled 'Variants', with the first labeled (a) and the second labeled (c).

(a) As I was a - go - ing down the street I heard the death bells tol - ling out

(b)

(c) Ev - ery toll it seemed to say "hard heart - ed Bar - ba - ra Ell - len".

Variants

(a)

(b)

(c)

Source: Collected by Cecil Sharp from Mrs Kathleen Williams, Wigpool Common September 6, 1921

Cecil Sharp noted only one verse from Mrs Williams. The following verses sung by James Mills at South Cerney were noted by Alfred Williams.

1. In Reading town, where I was born,
There was a fair maid dwelling.
I picked her out to be my wife,
And her name was Barbara Allen.
2. 'Twas in the merry month of May,
When green leaves they were springing,
A young man on his death bed lay
For the love of Barbara Allen.
3. Her sent to her a servant-man
To the place where she was dwelling,
Saying - "Fair maid, to my master you must go,
If your name is Barbara Allen."
4. So slowly, slowly she walked in,
So slowly she went to him,
And when she got to his bedside
She said - "Young man, you're dying."
5. "Nothing but Death's prints in thy cheeks,
All joys they are fled from thee,
I cannot save thee from the grave,
So farewell my dearest Johnny!"

6. As she was walking in the fields
She heard the bells a-ringing,
And as they rang they seemed to say -
"Hard-hearted Barbara Allen."
7. Hard-hearted creature, sure, I was,
To one that loved me so dearly;
I wish I had more kinder been
In the time of life, when he was near me.
8. 'T was he that died on one good day,
And she that died the morrow;
'T was only he that died for love,
And she that died for sorrow.

©Gloucestershire Traditions