

The Three Butchers

(a)

It's of three jo - lly butch - ers as I've heard ma - ny say ____ They were

go - - ing to some mar - - ket town ____ their mon - - ey for ____ to ____ pay

(a) variant

They rode together for a mile or two and a little more besides
Said Johnson unto Jipson "I heard a woman cry"

"Then stop I won't" said Jipson, "Stop I won't" said Ryde
"Then stop I will" said Johnson, "For I heard a woman cry."

Johnson he alighted and viewed the ground around
And saw a naked woman with her hair tied to the ground.

"How came you here?" said Johnson, "How came you here?" said he
"Two highway men have robb-ed me and that you can plainly see."

So Johnson being a valiant man a man of courage bold
He took the coat from off his back to keep her from the cold.

And Johnson being a valiant man a man of valiant mind
He got up upon his horse and sat her on behind.

And as they rode along the road as fast as they could ride
She put her fingers to her lips and gave three piercing cries.

Out sprang ten bold highwaymen with weapons in their hands
They stepped up to young Johnson and boldly bid him stand.

"Then stand I will" said Johnson "as long as ever I can
For I never was in all my life afraid of any man."

Then Johnson being a valiant man he made those bullets fly
Till nine of those bold highwaymen all on the ground did lie.

This wicked woman standing by young Johnson did not mind
She took a knife all from his side and stabbed him from behind.

But the day it being a market day and people passing by
They saw this woman's dreadful deed and raised a hue and cry.

She was down to Newgate brought bound down in irons strong
For killing the finest butcher boy that ever the sun shone on.

Source: William Hedges (76) at Chipping Campden. Collected by Cecil Sharp, 10 August 1909.
Sharp collected the tune only. Words supplied from a Dorset version.

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