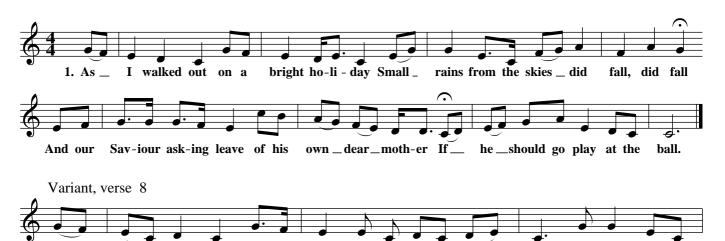
## The Bitter Withy



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And laid

our dear



- 1. As I waled out on a bright holiday
  Small rains from the skies did fall, did fall
  And our Saviour asking leave of his own dear mother
  If he should go play at the ball.
- 2. Go play at the ball, my own dear Son, It's time that you were gone, were gone, And don't let me hear of any ill-doings At night when you come home.
- 3. Our Saviour walked down into yonder town As far as the holy, holy well, And there he met three of the finest children That ever any tongue could tell.
- 4. "Good morn, good morn, good morn" said they "Good morning" then said he, said he "Now which of you three fine children Will play at ball with me?"
- "Now, we are lords' and ladies' sons Born in a bowery hall, And you are but a maiden's child Born in an oxen's stall."
- 6. Now our Saviour built a bridge with the beams of the sun And over it walked he, walked he, And the three jolly children they followed him And drownded they were all three.

- 7. Then up would bawl and down would bawl Their mothers they did a-wall and squall Saying "Mary mild, fetch home your child, For ours they are drownded all"
- 8. Now Mary mild take a handful of small withy And laid our dear Saviour across her knee And with that handful of small withy She gave him slashes three.
- 9. "Oh curses be to the bitter withy That causeth me to smart, to smart, And that shall be the very first tree That shall perish right at the heart."

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Source: William Payne, Gloucester, 22nd August 1952, collected by Maud Karpeles and Patrick Shuldham-Shaw