

THE THREE BUTCHERS

Vaughan Williams notes for rest of words see book of Ballad sheets.

It was Ips Gips and Johnson
As I have heard many say
They had five thousand guineas
All on a market day
As they rode over Northumberland
As hard as they could ride
O hark O hark said Johnson
I hear a woman cry

The Three Butchers

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THE THREE BUTCHERS

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They had five thousand guineas all on a market day
As they rode over Northumberland as hard as they could ride
O hark O hark says Johnson I hear a woman's cry

Then Johnson being a valiant man a man of courage bold
He rang'd the woods all over till this woman he did behold
How came you here said Johnson how came you here I pray
I am come here to relieve you if you will not me betray

There has been ten swaggering blades has hand and foot
me bound
And stripped me stark naked with my hair pinned to the
ground

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

As they rode over Northumberland as hard as they could ride
She put her fingers in her ears and gave a dismal cry
Then up starts ten swaggering blades with weapons in
their hands
And riding up to Johnson they bid him for to stand

It's I'll not stand says Gibson then no indeed not I
No I'll not stand says Gibson I'll sooner live than die
Then I will stand says Johnson I'll stand while I can*
I never yet was daunted nor afraid of any man

Then Johnson drew his glittering sword with all his might
and main
So well he laid upon them till eight of them was slain
As he was fighting the other two this woman he didn't mind
She took the knife all from his side and ripp'd him up
behind

Now I must fall says Johnson I must fall unto the ground
For relieving this wicked woman she gave me my death wound
O base woman O base woman, woman what hast thou done
Thou hast killed the finest butcher that ever the sun
shone on

This happened on a market day as people were riding by
To see this cruel murder they gave a hue and cry
So now the woman's taken and bound in fetters strong
For killing the finest butcher that ever the sun shone on

*Misprint in line of broadside