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XIII.B.32
1-4
"Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
Who ys there that fyingth so nowell, nowell, nowell?"

A COLLECTION

OF

Antient Christmas Carols

ARRANGED FOR FOUR VOICES

BY

EDMUND SEDDING,

PRECENTOR OF S. RAPHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, BRISTOL;
SOMETIME ORGANIST OF S. MARY, B. V. SOHO.

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TO THE

Right Honourable Lord John Manners, M.P., etc.,

This Work

Is; by his Lordship's permission,
respectfully dedicated.



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P R E F A C E .

IT would be superfluous to introduce this unpretending work with any preliminary account of the origin and use of Carols, or to quote authorities and facts which abler pens have reiterated in the many volumes on the subject already published. Neither do I think any apology is necessary in presenting this set of Carols to the publick, now that the excellent works of Mr. Sandys, Dr. Rimbault, the Revds. T. Helmore and J. M. Neale, Mr. Wright, Dr. Gauntlett, and others, have succeeded in opening the way to a more general revival of the venerable and joyous custom—so long held in comparative abeyance—of heralding forth the tidings of CHRIST'S Birth to the Faithful.

This pious and laudable practice, as is well known, has in some parts of the kingdom never been relinquished; and, for my own part, I have been wont from early childhood to regard the "Carol-singing" as one of the chief joys and accompaniments of dear old Christmas. A few years ago, London retained scarcely more than the shadow of the antient use; then, occasionally might be heard itinerant singers, who (from motives not altogether disinterested, and in strains as uncouth as they were illsuited to the theme and object) annually wished their neighbours a merry Christmas, and announced "tidings of comfort and joy;" now, it is gratifying to know, a great portion of our Parochial Choirs have discerned one of their principal offices as true heralds of the Church, and hasten "very early, very early," to spread the "tydynges that ben fwul gode," how "CHRIST our SAVIOUR He was born on Christmas Day



Day in the Morning." And thus the great fact is established, that the present century is ready to admit that the celebration of the Holy Season consists not only in its round of social enjoyments, but in a due share of religious rites and grateful offices which appertain to this and all other High Festivals of the Church.

And here I would deferentially mention the disappointment which is commonly felt, that the Capitular bodies of the respective Chapels Royal seem averse to, or disposed to discourage, similar pious and loyal solemnities on the part of their Lay Clerks and Choristers at this Season. But for this, or other latent causes, the Holy Festival of Christmas would be observed by a Choral body duly appointed, and not to be excelled in professional skill, and the incongruous substitution of an instrumental band be obviated,—a usurpation by the latter of functions which the Church has in all ages assigned to those who minister in Holy Places, and an assumption of invested inalienable rights granted by our august Sovereigns from time immemorial. (a)

I should, perhaps, make a few observations upon the word "Nowell" or "Noël" extensively used in this Collection. This word is commonly understood to be derived from the Latin *natalis* ("the *dies natalis* of our LORD"), and is said by Mr. Wright to have been introduced into England at the time of the Norman Conquest. (b) But, as Mr. Sandys remarks in his interesting book on "Christmas-tide," the term is often used in the sense of *news* or *tidings*, and was moreover a cry of joy not absolutely confined to the season of the Nativity. (c)

(a) It is customary at Windsor, early on Christmas morning, for Her Majesty's band to perform musical pieces under the walls of the Castle.

(b) Preface to "Specimens of old Xmas. Carols."

(c) Page 190.

In some cases the word actually takes the form of "Novels," and the line "Nowell, nowell, *good news, good news*, of the Gospel," forming the burthen of Carols sung in the Churches of Cornwall after Service, (*a*) seems in a very marked manner to strengthen the above interpretation.

Again, in an old pageant of the fifteenth century, one of the "dramatis personæ" says:—

"*Novellis, novellis* of wonderful marvellys, * * * *
 Affe Scripture tellis these strange *novellis* to you I bring." (*b*)

And in an old Carol of the time of Henry VIII., (*c*) the first lines are:—

"Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
 Tydynges gode y thyngke to telle."

"Ane Sang of the Birth of CHRIST," from "Ane compendious Booke of Godly and Spirituall Sangs," Edinburgh, A.D. 1621, (*d*) commences:—

"I come from Hevin to tell
 The best *nowellis* that ever befell;
 To yow *this tythinges* trew I bring,
 And I will of them fay and sing."

In all these passages the term appears to convey no other meaning than that of glad news; "The first Nowell the Angel did say," being "Fear not: for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy."

But perhaps one of the cleverest and most literal explanations of the word "Nowell" is in the first line of an old Carol from Sloane MSS., 2593 (*e*):—

"Nowel - el - el - el - *now* is *wel* that evere was woo."

I need hardly say that in France "Noël" is the term used

(*a*) Page 184, *ibid.* (*b*) Page 181, *ibid.*

(*c*) Add. MSS. Brit. Mus. 5665.

(*d*) Brand's Antiquities, vol. 1, p. 487.

(*e*) Wright's Specimens of old Xmas. Carols, p. 13,

to express Christmas Songs or Carols, as well as the Tide of Yule itself.

M. Fertault, in his description of Christmas in Burgundy, (*a*) says:—"This magic word resounds on all sides; it seasons every fauce; it is served up with every course. Of the thousands of canticles which are chanted on this famous Eve, ninety-nine in a hundred begin and end with this word."

I have been compelled to curtail the verses of some of the Carols, as they would have been far too long for actual performance, and have interfered considerably with the arrangements for the fingers, but I have put forth, at the same time, a complete set of the words in a cheap form.

The English words to the French Noëls have been kindly written for me by the Revds. J. M. Neale, M.A., and F. G. Lee, S.C.L., F.S.A., and William Morris, Esq., B.A., to whom I here express my sincere gratitude. The melodies of Nos. VI. and VII. were kindly given me by my friend, Mons. l'Abbé Nary, Organist of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Chartres, and are from a Collection of Noëls sung there during the High Celebration, from Christmas-Eve to Candlemas. Another form of the melody of No. VI. is given in "L'Echos du temps passé," published by J. Wekerlin (vol. 1, p. 14).

The air of No. VII. is given in a Collection of Noëls published by Mons. Minè, late Organist of Chartres.

The use of the melody of "The First Nowell" has been kindly granted me by Dr. Rimbault, and is taken from his "Little Book of Christmas Carols."

The melodies of Nos. II. and III. are taken, by the kind consent of Mr. Sandys, from his Book on "Christmas-tide" (J. R. Smith and Co., Russell-square); and Nos. IV. and V. from a Collection of "Antient Christmas Carols, with the Tunes to which they

(*a*) See note to the Christmas Carol in Longfellow's Poems.

were formerly sung in the West of England," published by the late Davies Gilbert, F.R.S., F.A.S., A.D. 1823.

No. IX. cannot be strictly called a Christmas Hymn, but a Carol suited for all seasons in the Christian year: the air is taken from a "Collection of Christmas Carols, and Hymns and Songs for High Seasons and Holy Days," edited by J. A. and L. J. Alberdingk Thijm, Amsterdam, 1852. The translation is taken (with the publisher's permission) from the "Ecclesiologist" for February, A.D. 1856.

This Collection, as will be seen, comprises melodies and words chiefly composed and in use since the time of the Reformation, and it will be a matter of congratulation to many, I feel sure, to see how the simplicity of construction, quaintness of expression, and, what is of more importance still, the grand conception of sterling Catholick Truth, have never been allowed to die out in these precious compositions.

EDMUND SEDDING.

F. of S. Andrew, A.D. 1860.



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Antient Christmas Carols.

I.

“The First Nowell.”

“The herdes herdyn an Aungele cry,
A merye song then fungyn he,
Qwy arn ye so fore agaft
Jam ortus solis cardine.

“The Aungele comyn doun with on cry,
A fayr song then fungyn he,
In the worchepe of that Chyld,
Gloria tibi, Domine.”

From Dr. RIMBAULT's “Little Book of Xmas. Carols.”

Animato.

The First Now-ell, the An-gel did fay, Was to
three poor shep-herds in fields as they lay; In fields where
they lay keep - ing their sheep, In a cold winter's night that

CHORUS.

was so deep. Now - ell, Now - ell, Now -
- ell, Now - ell, Born is the KING of If - ra - el.

2. They lookéd up and saw a Star,
Shining in the East, beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.
3. And by the light of that same Star,
Three Wise Men came from country far ;
To seek for a KING was their intent,
And to follow the Star wherever it went.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.
4. This Star drew nigh to the north-west,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where JESUS lay.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.
5. Then enter'd in those Wise Men three,
Most reverently upon their knee,
And offer'd there, in His Presence,
Both gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.
6. Then let us all with one accord,
Sing praises to our Heavenly LORD,
That hath made Heaven and earth of nought,
And with His Blood mankind hath bought.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

II.

“A Virgin most pure.”

“On Chryſtmas nyght an Angel it tolde,
To the Shephardes, kepyng theyr folde,
That into Bethleem with beſtes wolde,
Salvator mundi natus eſt.”

The Melody from SANDYS and GILBERT.

Allegro moderato.

A VIR-GIN most pure, as the Prophets do
tell, Hath brought forth a BABE, as it hath be-
- fell, To be our RE-DEEM-ER from death, hell, and
sin, Which A-dam's trans-gref-sion had wrapt us all in.

CHORUS.

Re - joice and be mer-ry, fet for - row a - fide, CHRIST

JE - SUS our SA - VIOUR was born on this Tide.

2. The KING of all Glory to the world being brought,
 Small store of fine linen to wrap Him was bought;
 When Mary had swaddled her young SON so sweet,
 Within an ox-manger she laid Him to sleep.

Chorus. Rejoice, &c.

3. Then God sent an Angel from Heaven so high,
 To certain poor Shepherds in fields where they lie,
 And bid them no longer in sorrow to stay,
 Because that our SAVIOUR was born on this day.

Chorus. Rejoice, &c.

4. Then presently after the Shepherds did spy
 A number of Angels appear in the sky,
 Who joyfully talkéd, and sweetly did sing,
 To God be all glory, our Heavenly KING.

Chorus. Rejoice, &c.

5. Three certain Wise Princes, they thought it most meet,
 To lay their rich off'rings at our SAVIOUR'S Feet;
 Then the Shepherds consented, and to Bethl'em did go,
 And when they came thither, they found it was so.

Chorus. Rejoice, &c.

III.

“The Lord at first had Adam made.”

“Man be joyfulle and myrth thou make, Into this worlde to be thy make;
 For CRIST ys made man for thy sake. Man bewar how thou Hym trete,
 He cam fro Hys FADER sete, For He ys made man for thy sake.”

The Melody from SANDYS.

Moderato.

The LORD . . at first had A - dam made Out
 of the dust and clay, And in his nos-trils
 breath-ed life, E'en as the Scrip-tures say; And
 then in E - den's Pa-ra - dise He pla - ced him to
 dwell, That he with - in it should remain, To

Detailed description: The musical score is written in a two-staff system (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The lyrics are printed below the notes. The melody is a simple, hymn-like tune. The score consists of five systems of music, each with two staves. The lyrics are: 'The LORD . . at first had A - dam made Out of the dust and clay, And in his nos-trils breath-ed life, E'en as the Scrip-tures say; And then in E - den's Pa-ra - dise He pla - ced him to dwell, That he with - in it should remain, To'.

CHORUS

drefs and keep it well. Now let good Christians

all be - gin A ho - ly life to live, And

to re-joice and mer-ry be, For this is CHRISTMAS EVE.

2.

And thus within the garden he
 Comanded was to stay;
 And unto him in commandment,
 These words the LORD did say:
 "The fruit that in the garden
 grows,
 To thee shall be for meat,
 Except the tree in midst thereof,
 Of which thou shalt not eat."
Chorus. Now let, &c.

3.

"For in that day that thou dost
 touch,
 Or dost it then come nigh,
 And if that thou dost eat thereof,
 Then thou shalt surely die."
 And Adam he did take no heed
 To that same only thing,
 But did transgress God's Holy Laws,
 And sore was wrapped in sin.
Chorus. Now let, &c.

4.

Now mark the goodness of the
 LORD,
 Which He to mankind bore;
 His mercy soon He did extend
 Lost man for to restore:
 And then, for to redeem our souls
 From death, and hell, and thrall,
 He said His own dear SON should
 The SAVIOUR of us all. [come,
Chorus. Now let, &c.

* * * *

5.

And now the Tide is nigh at hand,
 In which our SAVIOUR came;
 Let us rejoice and merry be,
 In keeping of the same:
 Let's feed the poor and hungry
 And such as do it crave; [fort,
 And when we die, in Heaven be
 sure
 Our reward we shall have.
Chorus. Now let, &c.

IV.

“God’s dear Son without beginning.”

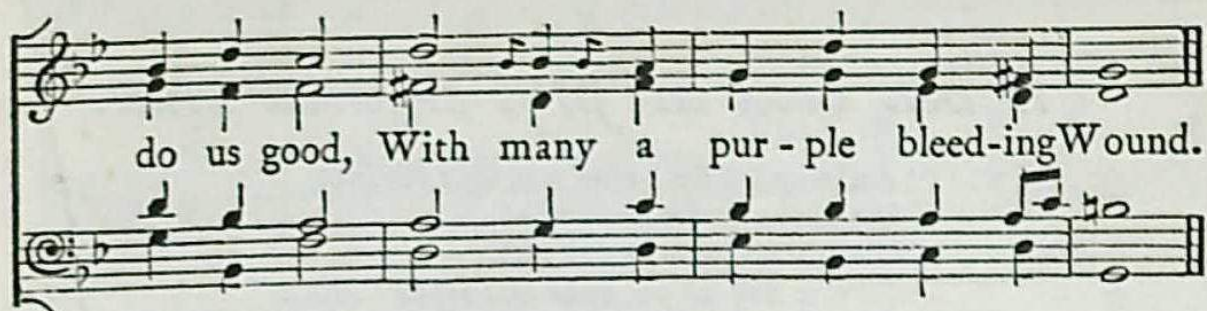
“Where is the golden cradle that CHRIST was rocked in?
Where are the silken sheets that JESUS was wrapt in?
A Manger was the cradle that CHRIST was rocked in,
The provender the asses left so sweetly He slept on.”

The Melody from GILBERT

Andante espressivo.

God’s dear SON with - out be - ginning, Whom the wicked
Jews did scorn; The Only Wife, without all finning, On this blessed
Day was born; To save us all from sin and thrall, When
we in Satan’s chains were bound, And shed His Blood to

The musical score consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system.



2. No princely palace for our SAVIOUR,
 In Judea could be found,
 But sweet Mary's meek behaviour,
 Patiently upon the ground
 Her BABE did place, in vile disgrace,
 Where oxen in their stalls did feed ;
 No midwife mild had this sweet CHILD,
 Nor woman's help at Mother's need.

3. No kingly robes nor golden treasure
 Deck'd the Birthday of God's SON ;
 No pompous train at all took pleasure
 To this KING of kings to run ;
 No mantle brave could JESUS have,
 Upon His Cradle for to lye ;
 No musick's charms in nurse's arms,
 To sing the BABE a lullaby.

* * * * *

4. Then with Angel love inspired,
 Three Wise Princes from the East,
 To Bethlehem as they desired,
 Came whereas our LORD did rest :
 And there they laid before the Maid,
 Before Her SON, our GOD and KING,
 Their offerings sweet, as was most meet,
 Unto so great a Power to bring.

5. Now to Him that hath redeemed us,
 By His Death on Holy Rood ;
 And us sinners so esteemed us
 To buy dearly with His Blood ;
 Yield lasting fame that still the Name
 Of JESUS may be honoured here ;
 And let us say, that Christmas Day
 Is still the best Day in the year.

V.

“When God at first created man.”

“An Aungyl fro hefne was sent ful snel,
His name is clepyd Gabriel,
His ardene he dede ful snel,
He sat on knee and seyde ‘Ave!’”

“And he seyde ‘Mary, ful of grace,
Hevene and erthe in every place,
With-ine the tyme of lytyl space,
Reconfiled it shuld be.’”

The Melody from GILBERT.

Animato.

When God at first cre - a - ted man, His I - mage for to
be, And how He made him by His Pow'r, In Scripture we may
see; And how He fram'd his help-mate Eve, The Scripture doth us
tell; Being free from sin, God plac'd them both In

CHORUS.

Pa - ra - dise to dwell. Then let men there - fore
 praise the LORD, Re-joice and cease to mourn, Be - cause our SA-VIOUR
 JE - SUS CHRIST This Bless - ed Day was born.

2.

* * * *

Man being blest'd in this estate,
 And blest'd sure was he,
 Having all things at his command,
 But the forbidden Tree ;
 But then the Serpent soon appear'd
 To have beguil'd Eve,
 And said if she should eat thereof
 That she should surely live.
Chorus. Then let men, &c.

* * * *

3.

[press'd,
 Man being now with grief op-
 Not knowing where to go ;
 His soul before being fill'd with
 Is now oppress'd with woe. [joy,
 But see the Goodness of the LORD
 To save man's soul from hell ;
 His SON He promis'd to send down,
 That He with us might dwell.
Chorus. Then let men, &c.

4.

An Angel then from Heav'n was
 For to declare GOD's will ; [sent,
 And to the Virgin Mary came,
 GOD's Words for to fulfil.
 A Virgin pure of virtuous life,
 Of whom the LORD made
 choice,
 To bear our SAVIOUR in her womb,
 Man's heart for to rejoice.
Chorus. Then let men, &c.

* * * *

5.

And Mary and her husband kind
 Together did remain,
 And went to Bethl'em to be tax'd
 As Scripture doth make plain ;
 And so it was that they being there,
 Her time being fully come,
 Within a stable she brought forth
 Her First-Begotten SON.
Chorus. Then let men, &c.

VI.—FRENCH NOËL.

“A Day, a Day of Glory.”

“A new yer! a new yer! a CHYLD was i-born
Us for to save that all was forlorn,
So blyffid be the tyme!”

The Melody as sung in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Chartres. The English
Words written expressly by the Rev. J. M. NEALE, M.A.

Joyfully.

A Day, a Day of Glo-ry! A Day that ends our
woe! A Day that tells of Tri-umph A-gainst the vanquish'd
foe! Yield Sum - mer's bright-est sun - rise, To
this De - cem-ber morn: Lift up your gates, ye

Prin - ces, And let the CHILD be born!

* C # last verse.

2.

With *Gloria in Excelsis*
 Archangels tell their mirth :
 With *Kyrie Eleison*
 Men answer upon earth :
 And Angels swell the triumph,
 And mortals raise the horn,
 Lift up your gates, ye Princes,
 And let the CHILD be born !

3.

He comes, His Throne the manger
 He comes, His Shrine the stall ;
 The ox and ass *His* Courtiers,
 Who made and governs all :
 The " House of Bread " His Birth-place,
 The Prince of Wine and Corn :
 Lift up your gates, ye Princes,
 And let the CHILD be born !

4.

* Then bar the gates, that henceforth
 None thus may passage win,
 Because the Prince of Israel
 Alone hath entered in :—
 The earth, the sky, the ocean,
 His glorious way adorn :
 Lift up your gates, ye Princes,
 And let the CHILD be born !

VII.—FRENCH NOËL.

“Sing of Maiden Mary.”

“Blyffid be that Lady bryght,
That bare a CHYLD of great myght,
Withouten peyne, as it was right,
Mayd Mother Marye.”

The English Words written by the Rev. F. G. LEE, S.C.L., F.S.A.

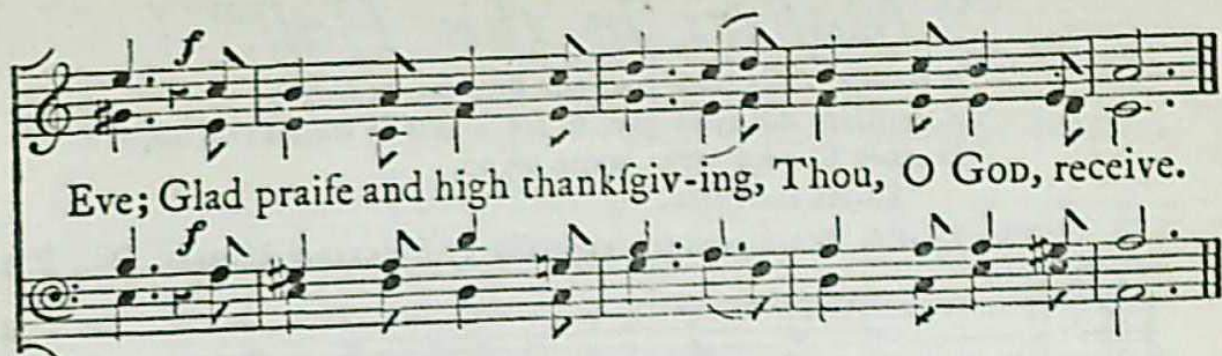
Andante.
p

Sing of Mai-den Ma - ry, And of CHRIST our

LORD, High and Sole - Be - got - ten, Ma - ry's Ho - ly

cres.

CHILD. O sing of Mai-den Ma - ry, Fair - er, bet - ter



2.

Sing of Maiden Mary,
And of Joseph too,
Loving Foster-father,
Mary's chosen Spouse.
O Wondrous Incarnation!
Kneel thee down in awe,
To worship thy CREATOR
Lying on the straw.

3.

Sing of Maiden Mary,
Now the holly gleams;
As we keep our Christmas,
And the snow is deep;
Yea: when the wreaths are sparkling—
When the lamps are hung,
And at the midnight knelling,
Ere the Mass is sung.

4.

Sing of Maiden Mary,
Once a Virgin poor,
David's Royal Daughter,
Eden's Lily Flower.
Sing aye of Maiden Mary
Kneeling on the sod,
And pray that we may see Her
Near the Throne of God.

VIII.—FRENCH NOEL.

“Masters in this Hall.”

“To Bethlem did they goe, the shepheards three;
To Bethlem did they goe, to see where it were so or no,
Whether CHRIST were borne or no,
To fet men free.”

The English Words written expressly by WILLIAM MORRIS, Esq., B.A.

Andante.

Mas-ters in this Hall, Hear ye news to -
- day Brought from o - ver sea, And
e - ver I you pray. **CHORUS.** Now - ell! Now - ell!
Now - ell! Now - ell sing we clear! Hol - pen
are all folk on earth, Born is GOD'S SON so dear:

Now-ell ! Nowell ! Nowell ! Now-ell sing we loud ! God to-

day hath poor folk rais'd. And cast a-down the proud.

2.
 Going over the hills,
 Through the milk-white snow,
 Heard I ewes bleat
 While the wind did blow.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

3.
 Shepherds many an one
 Sat among the sheep,
 No man spake more word
 Than they had been asleep.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

4.
 Quoth I, "Fellows mine,
 Why this guise fit ye?
 Making but dull cheer,
 Shepherds though ye be?"
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

5.
 "Shepherds should of right
 Leap and dance and sing,
 Thus to see ye fit,
 Is a right strange thing."
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

6.
 Quoth these fellows then,
 "To Bethlem Town we go,
 To see a Mighty LORD
 Lie in manger low."
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

7.
 "How name ye this LORD,
 Shepherds?" then said I,
 "Very God," they said,
 "Come from Heaven high."
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

8.
 Then to Bethlem town
 We went two and two,
 And in a forry place
 Heard the oxen low.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

9.
 Therein did we see
 A sweet and goodly May,
 And a fair old man,
 Upon the straw She lay.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

10.
 And a little CHILD
 On Her arm had She,
 "Wot ye Who This is?"
 Said the hinds to me.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

11.
 Ox and asfs Him know,
 Kneeling on their knee,
 Wondrous joy had I
 This little BABE to see.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

12.
 This is CHRIST the LORD,
 Masters be ye glad!
 Christmase is come in,
 And no folk should be sad.
Chorus. Nowell, &c.

IX.—DUTCH CAROL.

“Our Master hath a Garden.”

“My Beloved is gone down into His Garden, to the beds of Spices, to feed in the Gardens, and to gather Lilies.”

The Melody from THIJM; the translation from the *Ecclesiologist*, Feb. A.D. 1856.

Andante.

Our MASTER hath a Gar - den which fair flow'rs a -
- dorn, There will I go and ga ther both at eve and
morn; Nought's heard there - in but An - gel Hymns with
harp and lute, Loud trum - pets and bright cla - rions,

The musical score consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The first system ends with a long dash. The second system ends with a long dash. The third system has a piano dynamic marking 'p' above the first measure and below the first measure of the piano part. The fourth system ends with a long dash.

and the gen - tle soothing flute : Loud trum - pets

and bright cla - rions, and the gen - tle sooth - ing flute.

2.

The Lily white that bloometh there is Purity,
The fragrant Violet is surnamed Humility ;
Nought's heard therein, &c.

3.

The lovely damask Rose is here called Patience,
The rich and cheerful Marigold, Obedience ;
Nought's heard therein, &c.

4.

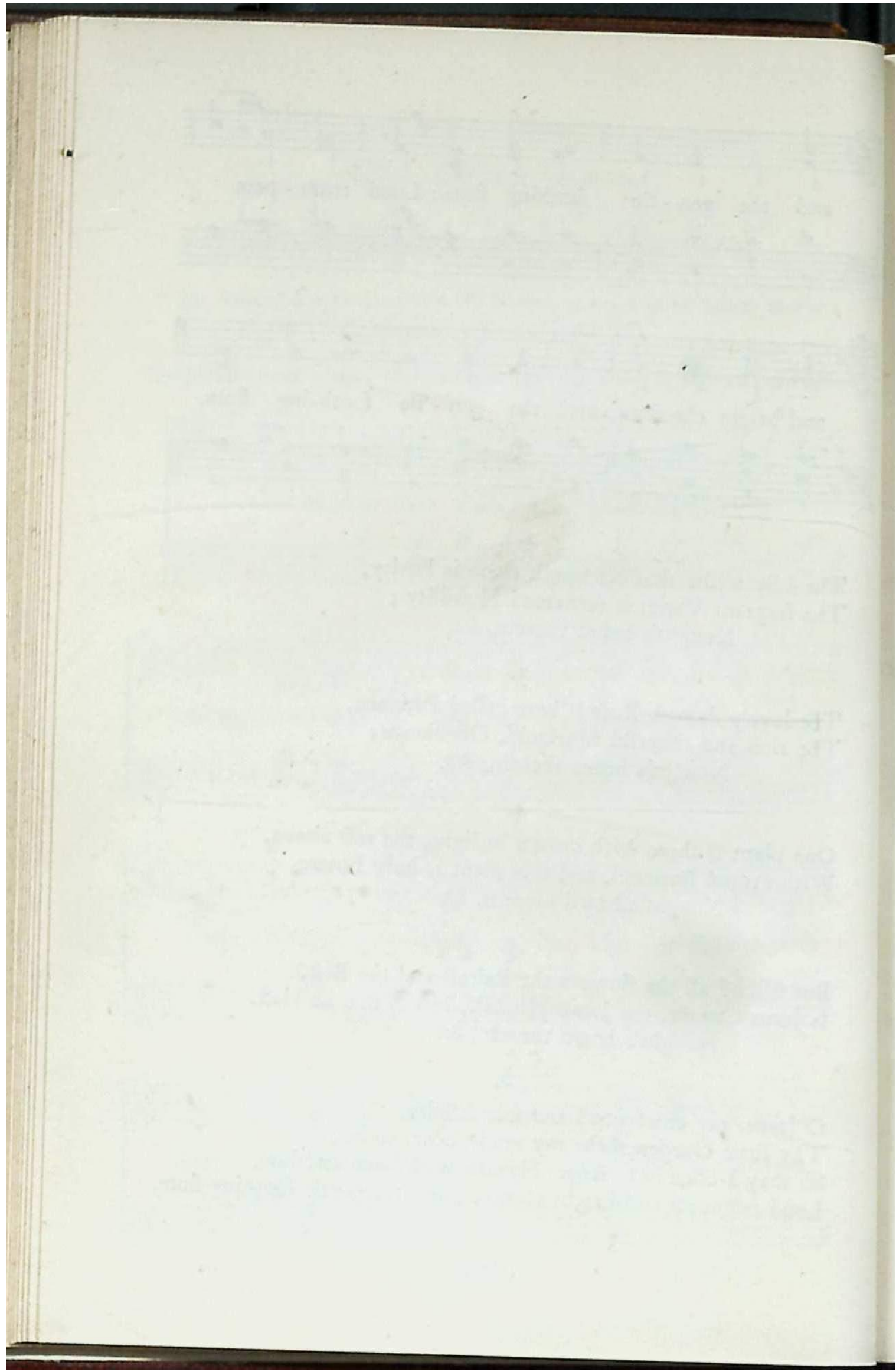
One plant is there with crown bedight, the rest above,
With crown imperial, and this plant is holy Love ;
Nought's heard therein, &c

5.

But still of all the flowers the Fairest and the Best,
Is JESUS CHRIST, the LORD Himself, His Name be blest.
Nought's heard therein, &c.

6.

O JESUS, my chief good and sole felicity,
Thy little Garden make my ready heart to be ;
So may I once hear Angel Hymns with harp and lute,
Loud trumpets and bright clarions, and the gentle soothing flute.



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V.	When God at first	10
VI.	A Day, a Day of Glory	12
VII.	Sing of Maiden Mary	14
VIII.	Masters in this Hall	16
IX.	Our Master hath a Garden	18

Carols for Christmas.

THE WORDS ONLY.

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