



# Introduction.

AROLS are songs sung by the people at Christmas in memory of the Song of the Angels, which the shepherds heard at our LORD's birth. The word Carol is from the Italian *Carola*, a song of devotion; or from *Cantare*, to sing, and *rola*, an interjection of joy. The hymn, "Glory be to GOD in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to men," was introduced at an early period into the Service of the Church, being sung either at Morning Prayer, or in the Communion Office, or before the Lessons on Christmas Day. In process of time other hymns of the same kind appear to have been introduced after its example; and it is stated by the celebrated ritualist, Durandus, that, anciently, Bishops were accustomed, on the above festival, to "sing Carols among their clergy" in the cathedrals.

In a Latin poem, written about the middle of the fifteenth century, and soon after translated into English, the following allusion to the practice of carolling in church at Christmas occurs :—

"A wooden child is on the altar set, About the which both boys and girls do dance and trimly jet; And Carols sing in praise of CHRIST, and for to help them here The organs answer every verse with sweet and solemn cheer."

The "Christmas Carol," however, was not confined to the Church offices in mediæval times. "It has been the custom," says a modern writer, "for the common people of England *for many centuries* to go about in bands, at an early hour on Christmas morn, serenading their neighbours with what are called Carols." Such also was the usage in other parts of Christendom. "During the season of Advent," remarks Mr. Digby, "the waits, while other men took their rest, wandered singing hymns in the streets; and on the blessed night, every one kept watch like the shepherds, while minstrels chanted Christmas Carols." These religious songs even gladdened the festivals of royalty. Henry VII., in the third year of his reign, kept Christmas at Greenwich; on the twelfth night, after high mass, the king went to the hall, and kept his estate at the table; in the middle sat the dean and those of the king's chapel, who, immediately after

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his majesty's first course, "sung a Caroll." The earliest collection of Christmas Carols supposed to have been printed is only known from the last leaf of a volume printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1521. The majority of the mediæval Christmas Carols were "religious." Some of these, in a more or less interpolated and modernised state, have been handed down to us, and though, perhaps, wanting in interest to a refined mind, are sometimes admirable for their simplicity and tenderness. A few of the best of them will be found in the following pages.

The contents of our little brochure are these :---

GOD REST YOU, MERRY GENTLEMEN.—This is perhaps the greatest favourite of all the Carols now sung at Christmas. The tune is plaintive and extremely beautiful. An antiquary, many years ago, thus spoke of it :—"The melody of 'God rest you, merry gentlemen' delighted my childhood, and I still listen with pleasure (as who does not) to the shivering carolists' evening chant towards the clear kitchen window deck'd with holly, the flaring fire showing the whitened hearth and reflecting gleams of light from the surfaces of the dresser utensils." The versions of this melody differ considerably; we believe ours to be a tolerably pure one.

THE CHERRY TREE CAROL.—The subject of this curious and highly popular Carol is Mary's desire for the fruit on the cherry tree, and Joseph's refusal to gather it for her on the return of his jealousy—a singular legend of the dark ages. A writer on Carols has remarked, "The admiration of my earliest days for some lines in the 'Cherry Carol' still remains, nor can I help thinking that the reader will see somewhat of cause for it." The versions differ considerably, and the Carol is sometimes sung to a different tune.

THE ANGEL GABRIEL.—" The birth of our SAVIOUR," says the editor of a recent collection of Carols, "was a mystery upon which the old divines and carolists were ever fond of dwelling. The familiar expressions used towards the Virgin, the Angel Gabriel, and the other distinguished personages of the event, served to enlist the sympathies of rustics, and rendered the outlines of the narrative easier to their understanding." The tune of this ancient Carol is very beautiful.

A VIRGIN MOST PURE.—A Carol exhibiting evident signs of antiquity, although nothing is known of its history. It is a great favourite in the west of England.

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM.—One of the least known of the old Carols, notwithstanding its quaint old melody, which we were the first to note down.

I SAW THREE SHIPS.—A favourite production with the illiterate, and from its quaintness well worthy of a place in our little collection. There is another version of this Carol common amongst the people, which begins :—

" As I sat on a sunny bank, A sunny bank, a sunny bank, As I sat on a sunny bank, On Christmas Day in the morning."

The tune is very pleasing, and a general favourite with the people.

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THE LORD AT FIRST HAD ADAM MADE.—A fine old Carol, preserved, with its melody, in Mr. Davies Gilbert's collection.

IN EXCELSIS GLORIA.—One of the most ancient of the Religious Carols. The refrain of this curious piece, *In Excelsis Gloria*—Glory in the highest—is retained in its original form, doubtless, from its analogy to the "Gloria," which the priests were accustomed to intone at the altar. It is adapted to a fine old German Carol-tune of the sixteenth century.

THE FIRST NOEL.—This is a popular English version of the Golden Carol. Legendary lore has provided for us three notable personages—Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, commonly known as the Magi, who, guided by the star, were present at or shortly after the Nativity, and who survive in history as "The Three Kings of Cologne." The legend forms the burden of several Carols. The present tune is a perfect little gem.

THE BOAR'S HEAD CAROL.—This is taken from the old Carol leaf (before mentioned) printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1521. It is sung annually on Christmas Day in the Hall of Queen's College, Oxford, when the Boar's Head is brought in. The late Dean Wade, in his *Walks in Oxford*, has made too pleasant a memorandum respecting the origin of the Oxford Boar's Head ceremonies to bear omission :— "Tradition," says he, "presents this usage as a commemoration of an act of valour performed by a student of the college, who, walking in the neighbouring forest of Shotover, and reading *Aristotle*, was suddenly attacked by a wild boar. The furious beast came, open-mouthed, upon the youth, who however very courageously, and with a happy presence of mind, is said to have rammed in the volume, and cried *Graecum est* (it is Greek); fairly," adds the Dean, "choking the savage with the sage." The tune of this Carol is like a fine old Cathedral Chant.

SONG OF THE ANGELS.—This hymn, "Whilst shepherds watch'd their flocks by night," is still popular in the rural districts. It is probably not very old. The tune is a version, in the major key, of "God rest you, merry gentlemen."

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING.—One of the oldest and most popular religious hymns for Christmastyde. It is adapted to a fine melody by Mendelssohn, from which it will probably never be separated.

Christmas is recognised as peculiarly the home and household festival of England—longed for as the season when our shining hearths, our sea-coal fires, our domestic comforts, and social felicity become the brightest underneath the Christian sun! Christmas is our chosen season of peace and good-will, of family re-unions, of friendly greetings, indeed of happiness and universal joy. The antiquity of Christmas is understood at once from its curious customs and observances, none of which is more deserving of perpetuity than its quaint and interesting old Carols.

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6 save us all from Sa - tan's pow'r, When we were gone To day; a -To save us all from Sa-tan's pow'r, When we were gone a day; P  $\mathbf{O}$ ti dings of com - fort and joy, com - fort and stray. 0.. ti - dings of com fort com - fort and joy, stray. 0.. and (10)



In Bethlehem, in Jewry, This blessed BABE was born, And laid within a manger, Upon this blessed morn; The which his mother Mary Nothing did take in scorn. O tidings, &c.

#### 3.

From God, our Heavenly FATHER, A blessed Angel came, And unto certain shepherds Brought tidings of the same; How that in Bethlehem was born The Son of God by name. O tidings, &c.

# 4.

The shepherds at those tidings Rejoiced much in mind, And left their flocks a-feeding, In tempest, storm, and wind; And went to Bethlehem straightway, This blessed BABE to find. O tidings, &c.

#### 5.

And when they came to Bethlehem, Where as this INFANT lay, They found HIM in a manger, Where oxen feed on hay; HIS mother, Mary, kneeling down, Unto the LORD did pray. O tidings, &c.

## 6.

Now to the LORD sing praises, All you within this place, And with true love and brotherhood Each other now embrace: This holy tide of Christmas All others doth deface. O tidings, &c.

(11)



Jo-seph and Where Ma - ry Walk'd thro' a gar - den As green, gar - den Jo - seph and Ma - ry Walk'd thro' a Where green, As rall. thick as might be cher - ries and - ries Were as seen; ber rall. 1 1 ries Were as thick as might be and seen; ries ber cher -H rall. (13)

3. O then bespoke up Mary,

With words both meek and kind, "Pluck me some cherries, Joseph, They run so in my mind."

Then bowed down the highest tree Unto GoD's mother's hand; O then she cried, "See, Joseph, I have cherries at my command."

#### 5.

"O eat your cherries, Mary, O eat your cherries now; O eat your cherries, Mary, That grow upon the bough."

# 6.

As Joseph was a-walking, He heard an Angel sing, "This night shall be the birth time, Of CHRIST OUT Heav'nly KING.

# 7.

"He neither shall be born In housen nor in hall, Nor in the place of Paradise, But in an ox's stall.

# 8.

"He neither shall be clothed In purple nor in pall, But all in fair linen That usen babies all.

# 9.

"He neither shall be rocked In silver nor in gold, But in a wooden manger That resteth on the mould."

# 10.

As Joseph was a-walking, Then did an Angel sing; And Mary's CHILD at midnight Was born to be our KING. 

# 11.

Then be ye glad, good people, This night of all the year, And light ye up your candles, For H1s star it shineth clear.



thi-ther came, He fell down on his knee, And look-ing in the Virgin's face, thi-ther came, He fell down on his knee, And look-ing in the Virgin's face,  $\mathbf{O}$ C CHORUS. Said, "Hail! all hail! Ma - ry." Then sing we all both great and small, No -Said, "Hail! all hail! Ma-ry." Then sing we all both great and small, Noe f CHORUS. (16)



"Mary," he said, "be not afraid, But do believe in me; The power of the HoLY GHOST Shall overshadow thee; Thou shalt conceive e'en without grief, For so the LORD told me; [come, GoD's own dear SON from Heav'n shall And shall be born of thee." Then sing we all, &c.

2

3.

Then came to pass as GoD's will was, E'en as the Angel told; About midnight an Angel bright Came to the shepherds' fold; And told to them both where and when Born was the CHILD our LORD, And all along this was their song "All glory be giv'n to GoD." Then sing we all, & c.

4.

Good people all, both great and small, The which do hear our voice; With one accord let's praise the LORD, And in our hearts rejoice; Let us be bound in kindred love, Whilst we our lives do spend, Whilst we have space let's pray for grace, And so let our Carol end. Then sing we all, &c.







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. 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. Rejoice, &c.

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

5

There 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. Rejoice, &c.

(20





A SAVIOUR! sinners here around, Sing, shout the wond'rous word; Let ev'ry bosom hail the sound, A SAVIOUR! CHRIST the LORD. Noel, Noel, &c.

2.

**{@} {@} {@} {@} {@} {@**}

3.

For not to sit on David's throne, With worldly pomp and joy; HE came to earth for sin t' atone, And Satan to destroy. Noel, Noel, &c.

#### 4.

To preach the word of life divine, And feed with living bread, To heal the sick with hand benign, And raise to life the dead. Noel, Noel, & c.

5.

HE preach'd, HE suffer'd, bled and died, Uplift 'twixt earth and skies; In sinners' stead was crucified, For sin to sacrifice. Noel, Noel, & c.

# 6.

Well may we sing a SAVIOUR's birth, Who need the grace so given; And hail HIS coming down to earth Who raises us to Heav'n. Noel, Noel, &c.

(23)



----1 2. And what was in these ships all three, On Christmas day, on Christmas day? And . -0-. . 2. And what was in these ships all three, On Christmas day, on Christmas day? And 0000 5 0 what was in these ships all three, On Christ-mas day in the morn - ing? . .. 0 0 0 0 all three, On Christ-mas day in the morn - ing ? what was in these ships • (25)

Our SAVIOUR CHRIST and HIS ladie,\* On Christmas day, on Christmas day; Our SAVIOUR CHRIST and HIS ladie, On Christmas day in the morning.

#### 4.

Pray whither sailed those ships all three, On Christmas day, on Christmas day? Pray whither sailed those ships all three, On Christmas day in the morning?

#### 5.

O they sailed into Bethlehem,On Christmas day, on Christmas day;O they sailed into Bethlehem,On Christmas day in the morning.

## 6.

And all the bells on earth shall ring,On Christmas day, on Christmas day;And all the bells on earth shall ring,On Christmas day in the morning.

7.

And all the Angels in Heaven shall sing,On Christmas day, on Christmas day;And all the Angels in Heaven shall sing,On Christmas day in the morning.

#### 8.

And all the souls on earth shall sing,On Christmas day, on Christmas day;And all the souls on earth shall sing,On Christmas day in the morning.

#### 9.

Then let us all rejoice amain, On Christmas day, on Christmas day; Then let us all rejoice amain, On Christmas day in the morning.

\* i.e. The Virgin Mary.





And so re-joice and mer-ry be, For this is Christmas eve. live, mer - ry be, For this is Christ-mas live, And so re-joice and eve.

And there within the garden he Commanded 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." Now let good Christians, &c.

2.

## 3.

"For in that day thou dost it touch, Or dost it then come nigh, And if that thou dost eat thereof, Then thou shalt surely die."
But Adam he did take no heed To that same holy thing, But did transgress God's holy laws, And sore was wrapp'd in sin. Now let good Christians, &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 come, The SAVIOUR of us all. Now let good Christians, &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 sort, And such as do it crave; And when we die, in Heav'n, be sure, Our reward we shall have. Now let good Christians, &c.

(2



cres. P 6 In Glo -Ex sis gels with cel ri a ! An sang cres. 0 sis gels with In Ex -Glo ri a ! cel An sang --0 ø 0 cres. 0 2 5 0. glee, In Ex Glo mirth and sis a ! cel ri -\_ 0. 0. 0 Glo -In mirth glee, Ex and sis ri a ! cel -0 0. C 0 C 0 2. 00 • 6 (31)

p In Ex Glo -Glo - cel - sis a ! ri ri a In Ex Glo Glo cel sis a! ri ri al

> 2.
> The shepherds saw these Angels bright, To them appearing with great light,
> "O God's dear Son is born to-night," In Excelsis Gloria !

# 3.

This KING is come to save mankind, In Scripture truths as we do find, Therefore this song have we in mind, In Excelsis Gloria !

# 4.

Dear LORD then for all THY great grace, Grant us the bliss to see THY face, That we may sing to THY solace, In Excelsis Gloria !

(32)



0 keep- ing their night sheep, In a cold win-ter's that they lay keep - ing their sheep, In a cold win-ter's night that they lay CHORUS. f No - el, No - el, No - el, so deep. No was el, No - el, No No so deep. No el, . . was . . 0 CHORUS.



They looked up and saw a Star, Shining in the East, beyond them far, And to the earth it gave great light, And so continued both day and night. Noel, &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. Noel, &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. Noel, &c.

# 5.

Then enter'd in those Wise Men three, Most reverently upon their knee, And offer'd there, in H1s presence, Both gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. Noel, &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.

Noel, &c. (35)













"To you, in David's town this day, Is born, of David's line, A SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST the LORD; And this shall be the sign,— The Heavenly BABE you there shall find, To human view display'd, All meanly wrapt in swaddling bands, And in a manger laid."

2.

3.

Thus spake the Seraph, and forthwith Appeared a Heavenly throng Of Angels praising GOD, and thus Addressed their joyful song :----" All glory be to GOD on high, And to the earth be peace, Good-will henceforth from Heav'n to men, Begin and never cease."





- hem." Hark! the he - rald An-gels sing to the new-born King. Glo-ry - hem." Hark! the he - rald An-gels sing Glo-ry the new-born KING. to

2.

CHRIST, by highest heav'n adored, CHRIST, the EVERLASTING LORD, Late in time behold HIM come Offspring of a Virgin's womb. Veil'd in flesh the GODHEAD see, Hail, the INCARNATE DEITY ! Pleas'd as MAN with man to dwell, JESUS OUR EMMANUEL. Hark ! the herald, &c. 3.

Hail the heav'n born PRINCE of PEACE,
Hail the SON OF RIGHTEOUSNESS !
Light and Life to all HE brings,
Ris'n with healing on HIS wings.
Mild HE lays HIS glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark ! the herald, &c.



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