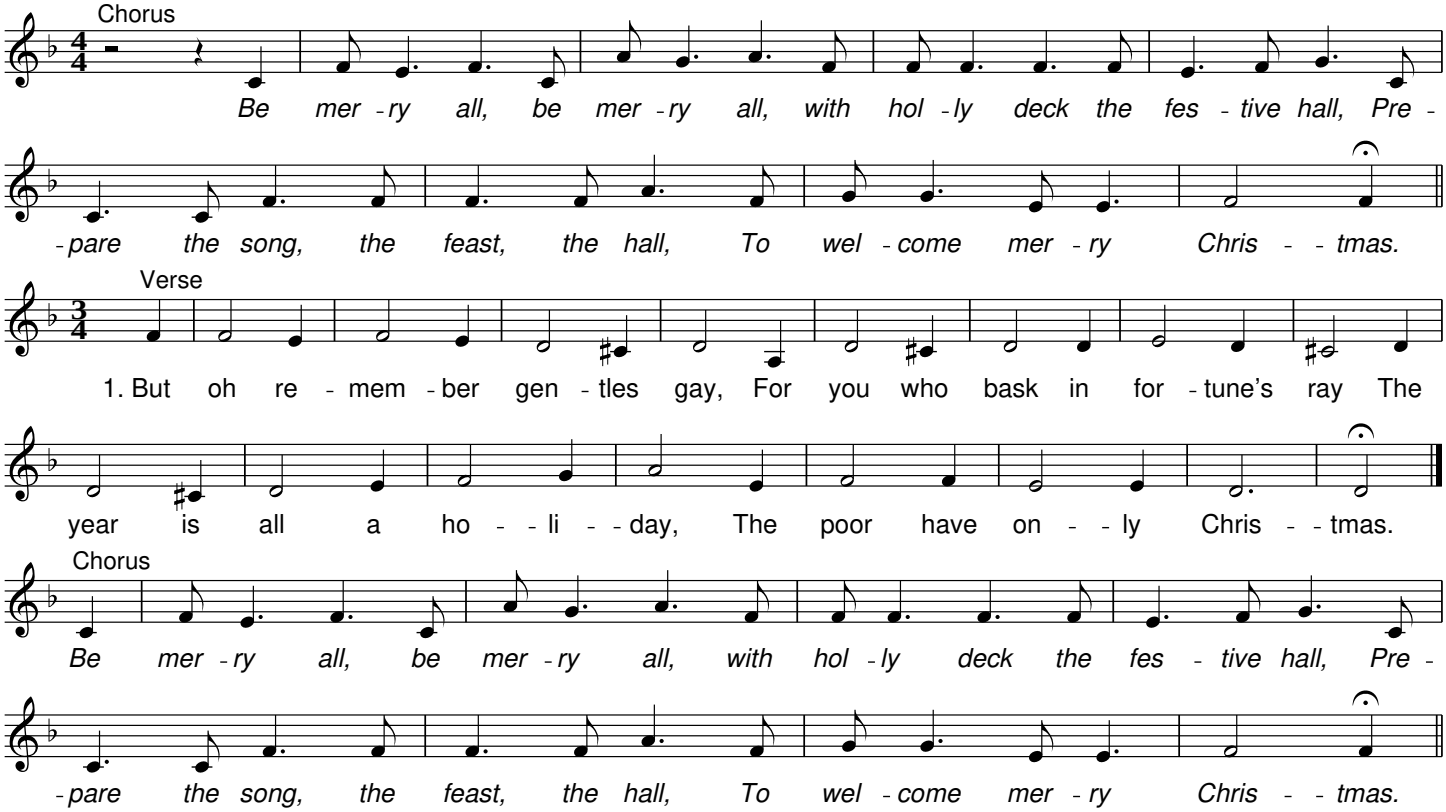
The Ditchling Carol

Be Merry All

Lyrics 1811 William Robert Spencer (1769-1834), Music Peter Parsons (1825-1901)



2. When you with velvets mantled o'er
Defy December's tempest roar.
O spare one garment from your store
To clothe the poor at Christmas.

Ch. Be merry all, be merry all,
With holly deck the festive hall,
Prepare the song, the feast, the hall
To welcome merry Cristmas.

3. From blazing loads of fuel awhile,
Your homes are within summer smile;
Oh spare one faggot from your pile
To warm the poor at Christmas.

Ch. Be merry...

4. When you the costly banquet deal
To guests who never famine feel;
O spare one morsel from your meal
To feed the poor at Christmas.

Ch. Be merry...

5. When gen'rous wine your care controls
And gives new joy to happier souls;
O spare one goblet from your bowls
To cheer the poor at Christmas.

Ch. Be merry...

6. So shall each note of mirth appear,
More sweet to heaven than praise or prayer;
And angels in their carols there
Shall bless the poor at Christmas.

Ch. x2 Be merry...

Noted poet and wit William Robert Spencer was born in Kensington Palace, the younger son of of Lord Charles Spencer and grandson of Charles Spencer, 3rd Duke of Marlborough. Peter Parsonsis said to have been a cordwainer (shoemaker) and church musician; his pitch-pipe is hung in St Margaret's Church at Ditchling. Vic Gammon collated our version from a variety of texts, including broadsides.