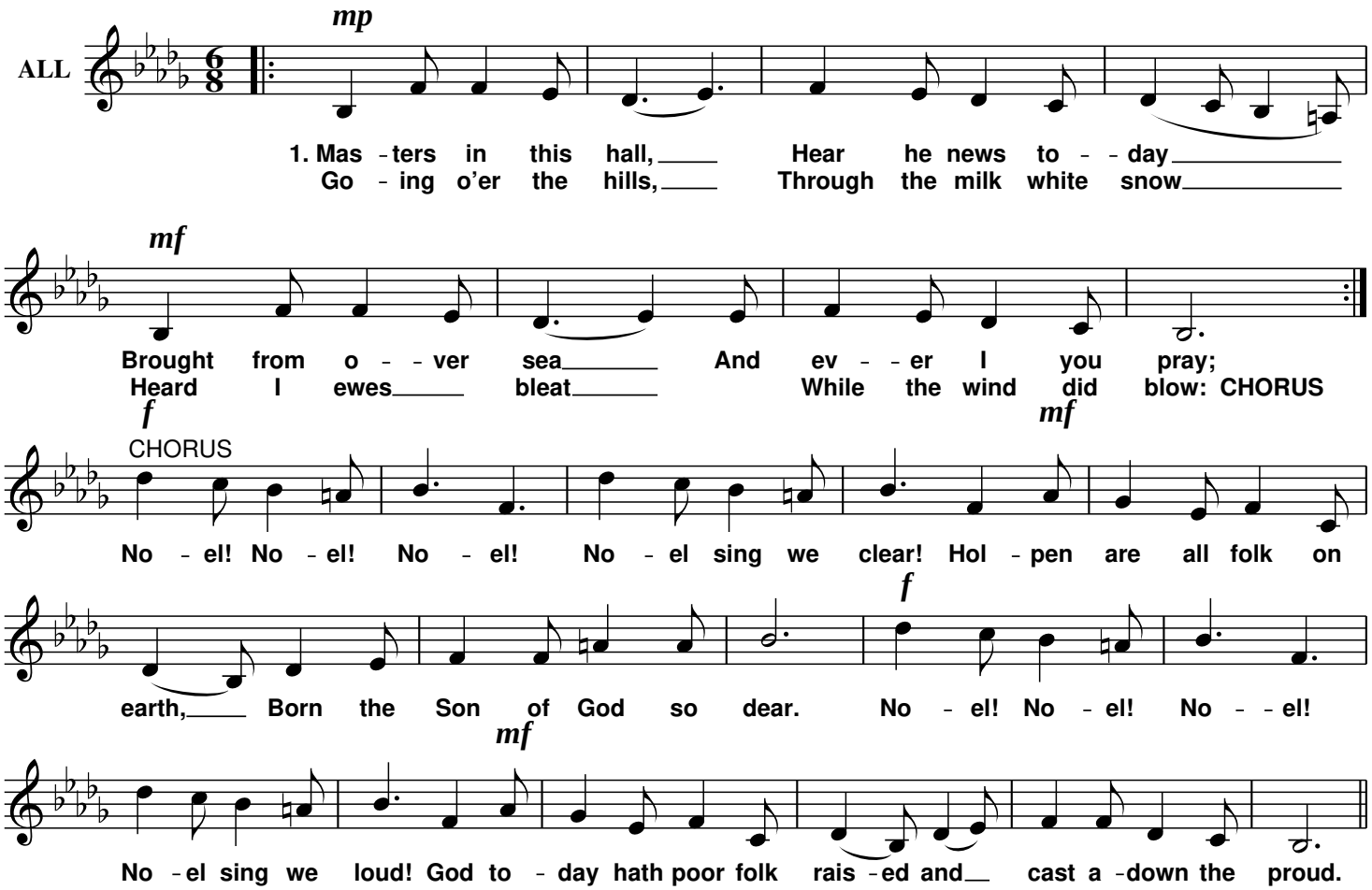
Masters in This Hall

Words: William Morris 1860, written when living at Red House, Bexleyheath, Kent
Music: French tune included in Raoul Auger Feuillet's 1703 Recueil de contredanse



Please note the dynamics in the final chorus.

2. Shepherds many an one
Sat among the sheep,
No man spake more word
Than they had been asleep.
Quoth I, "Fellows mine,
Why this guise sit ye?
Making but dull cheer,
Shepherds though ye be?
CHORUS

3. "Shepherds should of right
Leap and dance and sing,
Thus to see ye sit,
Is a right strange thing."
Quoth these fellows then,
"To Bethlem town we go,
To see a mighty lord
Lie in manger low":
CHORUS

4. "How name ye this lord,
Shepherds?' then said I,
"Very God," they said,
"Come from Heaven high".
Then to Bethlem town
We went two and two,
And in a sorry place
Heard the oxen low:
CHORUS

5. Therein did we see
A sweet and goodly may
And a fair old man,
Upon the straw she lay,
And a little child
On her arm had she,
"Wot ye who this is?"
Said the hinds* to me:
CHORUS

6. Ox and ass him know,
Kneeling on their knee,
Wondrous joy had I
This little babe to see
This is Christ the Lord,
Masters be ye glad!
Christmas is come in,
And no folk should be sad:
CHORUS
f Noel! ! Noel!
Noel, sing we clear!
mf Holpen are all folk on earth,
Born is God's son so dear:
f Noel! Noel! Noel!
Nowell, sing we loud!
< God ***(ff)*** to-day hath poor folk raised
< And ***fff*** cast a-down the proud.

**hinds (Anglo-Saxon origin): Could be house servants, but more likely slightly above agricultural labourers. The term is not part of the Kentish dialect.*