

SOFTLY UPON BETHLEHEM'S PLAINS.

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Andantino.

1 Soft - ly up - on Bethlehem's plains, Falls the gen - tle dew of night;
2 O'er the stop - ing moun - tain's side, Clust'ring flocks of sheep re - pose;

Sweet - ly so - lann si - lence reigns, Earth how calm! and heav'n how bright!
Watch - ful shep - herds there "a - bide," Feed and guard them from their foes.

Ev - 'ry star shines out a - lone, Look - ing down from heav'n to earth;
There they watch from ev'n-ing's ray, Sleep - less un - til midnight's hush;

Beau - ti - ful as first they shone, Ra - diant at cre - a - tion's birth.
There in thought - ful musings stay, Till the tears of twi - light gush.

3 Happy shepherds! lift your eyes,
Eastward cast your glance afar,
See! what lustre gilds the skies,
Lit by yonder signal star!
Slow descending from above,
See! an angel form appears,
God's own messenger of love
Brings glad tidings to your ears!

4 See! he folds his snowy wings,
Heaven in mercy stoops to earth,
Listen to the news he brings,
News of the Messiah's birth,
Shout in triumph, earth and heaven,
Swell the song of sweet accord!
Jesus lives! the "Son is given,"
Bow and worship "Christ the Lord!"

5 Multitudes of angels sing
Strains celestial! songs divine!
Glory to the new-born King,
Men may now with angels join.
Hallelujahs, loud and long,
Swell upon the shepherd's car;,
Richer far than earthly song,
Or the music of the spheres.

6 Happy shepherds! let us go
Unto Bethlehem, and see
God, made manifest below,
Smil'ng on his mother's knee!
Babe Almighty! earth's desire
Heaven's Anointed One art thou,
Men and angels—son and sire,
Place the crown upon thy brow.

BENJAMIN GOUGH.