

Still your heart and hush your breath!
The voices of Despair and Death
Are shuddering through the psalm!
Miserere! Miserere!

Lift your hearts! The Terror dies!
Up in yonder sinless skies
The psalms sound sweet and calm!
Miserere! Miserere!

Very low, in tender tones,
The music pleads, the music moans:
"I forgive and have forgiven,
The dead who died unshriven!"
De profundis! De profundis!

Psalm of the dead and disconsolate!
Thou hast sounded through a thousand
years,
And pealed above ten thousand biers;
And still, sad Psalm, you mourn the fate
Of sinners and just,
When their souls are going up to God,
Their bodies down to dust.
Dread hymn! you wring the saddest tears
From mortal eyes that fall,
And your notes wake the darkest fears
That human hearts appal!
You sound o'er the good, you sound o'er the
bad,
And ever your music is sad, is sad.
We seem to hear murmured, in every tone,
For the saintly, a blessing; for sinners, a
curse.
Psalm, sad Psalm! you must pray and grieve
Over our Dead on this Christmas Eve.
De profundis! De profundis!

And the Night chants the Psalm o'er the
mortal clay,
And the spirits immortal from far away,
To the music of Hope sings this sweet-toned
lay;
You think of the Dead on Christmas Eve,
Wherever the Dead are sleeping;
And we, from a Land where we may not
grieve,
Look tenderly down on you weeping.
You think us far, we are very near,

From you and the Earth though parted:
We sing to-night to console and cheer
The hearts of the broken-hearted.

The Earth watches over the lifeless clay
Of each of its countless sleepers;
And the sleepless Spirits that passed away
Watch over all Earth's weepers.

We shall meet again in a brighter Land,
Where farewell is never spoken;
We shall clasp each other hand in hand,
And the clasp shall not be broken.

We shall meet again in a bright, calm clime,
Where we will never know a sadness;
And our lives shall be filled, like a Christmas
chime,
With rapture and with gladness.

The snows shall pass from our graves away,
And you from the Earth, remember;
And the flowers of a bright, eternal May,
Shall follow Earth's December.

When you think of us, think not of the tomb
Where you laid us down in sorrow;
But look aloft, and beyond Earth's gloom.
And wait for the great To-morrow.

And the Pontiff, Night, with his dark stole
on,
Whispereth soft and low;
Requiescat! Requiescat!
Peace! Peace! to every one
For whom we grieve this Christmas Eve,
In their graves beneath the snow.

The stars in the far-off Heaven
Have long since struck eleven!
And hark! from Temple and Tower.
Soundeth Time's grandest midnight hour,
Blessed by the Saviour's birth.
And Night putteth off its sable stole,
Symbol of sorrow and sign of dole,
For one with many a starry gem,
To honor the Babe of Bethlehem,
Who comes to men the King of them,
Yet comes without robe or diadem,
And all turn toward the holy East,
To hear the Song of the Christmas Feast.

Four thousand years Earth waited,
Four thousand years men prayed,
Four thousand years the Nations sighed
That their King so long delayed.

The prophets told His coming,
The saintly for Him sighed;
And the Star of the Babe of Bethlehem
Shone o'er them when they died.

Their faces toward the Future—
They longed to hail the light
That, in after centuries,
Would rise on Christmas night.

But still the Saviour tarried
In His Father's home;
And the Nations wept and wondered why
The Promised had not come.

At last, Earth's hope was granted
And God was a Child of Earth;
And a thousand angels chanted
The lowly midnight birth.

Ah! Bethlehem was grander
That hour than Paradise;
And the light of Earth that night eclipsed
The splendors of the skies.

Then let us sing the Anthem
The angels once did sing;
United with the music of love and praise,
The whole wide world will ring.

Gloria in excelsis!
Sound the thrilling song
In excelsis Deo!
Roll the hymn along.