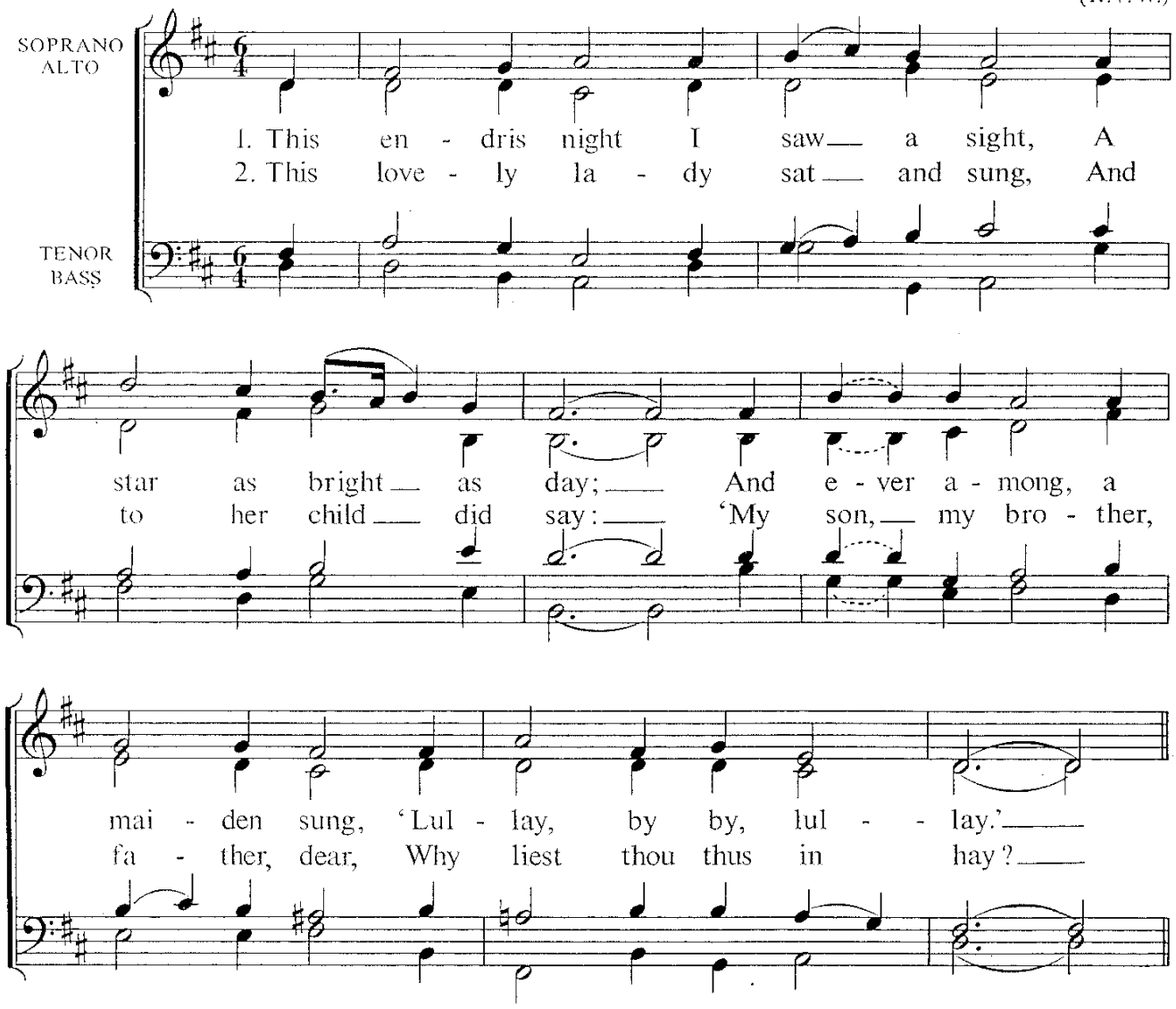
THIS ENDRIS NIGHT
(NATIVITY)

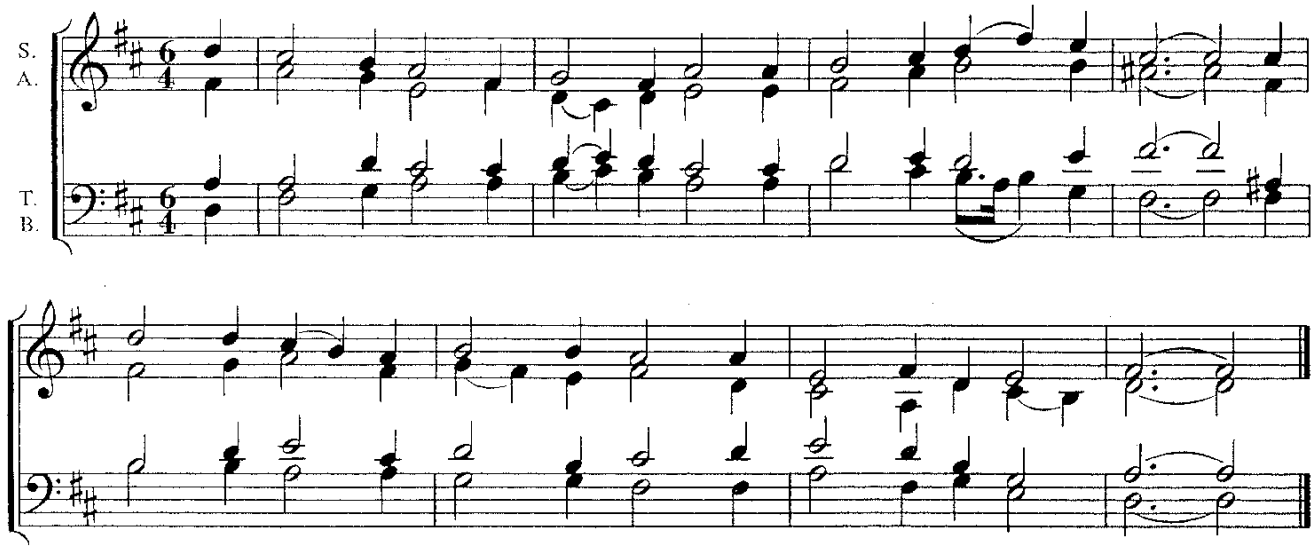
15th century

Ibid.
(R.V.W.)



FA-BURDEN

(M.S.)



3 'My sweetest bird, thus 'tis required,
Though thou be king veray;
But nevertheless I will not cease
To sing, By by, lullay.'

4 The child then spake in his talking,
And to his mother said:
'Yea, I am known as heaven-king,
In crib though I be laid;

5 'For angels bright down to me light:
Thou knowest 'tis no nay:
And for that sight thou may'st delight
To sing, By by, lullay.'

6 'Now, sweet son, since thou art a king,
Why art thou laid in stall?
Why dost not order thy bedding
In some great kingès hall?

7 'Methinks 'tis right that king or knight
Should lie in good array:
And then among, it were no wrong
To sing, By by, lullay.'

8 *'Mary mother, I am thy child,
Though I be laid in stall;
For lords and dukes shall worship me,
And so shall kingès all.

9* 'Ye shall well see that kingès three
Shall come on this twelfth day.
For this behest give me thy breast,
And sing, By by, lullay.'

10 *'Now tell, sweet son, I thee do pray,
Thou art my love and dear—
How should I keep thee to thy pay,
And make thee glad of cheer?

11 *'For all thy will I would fulfil—
Thou knowest well, in fay;
And for all this I will thee kiss,
And sing, By by, lullay.'

12 *'My dear mother, when time it be,
Take thou me up on loft,
And set me then upon thy knee,
And handle me full soft;

13 *'And in thy arm thou hold me warm,
And keep me night and day,
And if I weep, and may not sleep,
Thou sing, By by, lullay.'

14 *'Now, sweet son, since it is come so,
That all is at thy will,
I pray thee grant to me a boon,
If it be right and skill,—

15 *'That child or man, who will or can
Be merry on my day,
To bliss thou bring—and I shall sing,
Lullay, by by, lullay.'

1. This endris—('thys ender' in the MS. Add. 31922, 'this endurs' in the MS., Advocates' Lib., Edinburgh), the other night, a few nights ago. ever among—every now and then. 3. veray—true. 5. light—alight. no nay—not to be denied. 10. pay—satisfaction. 11. fay—faith. 14. skill—reasonable.

Was not new when it was written out in the Bodleian MS., Eng. Poet., e. 1, which is dated between 1460 and 1490. It is in the MS. of Richard Hill, the grocer (cf. No. 36). Four versions are given by Dyboski in the Early English Text Society, Extra Series, c. 1, p. 174. Wright's version, from the Sloane MS. 2593 (see nos. 174, 182), Percy Society, 1841, is reprinted in Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* (p. 209) by Helmore. Two of the versions are in Chambers and Sidgwick, pp. 119 and 121. The tune is used in the *English Hymnal* (20) and *Songs of Praise* (72): it is in the fifteenth or sixteenth century MS., B.M., Royal Appendix 58, set for three voices, with melody in the tenor