

# The Black Decree

## A SHROPSHIRE VERSION.

1.

LET Christians all with one accord rejoice  
And praises sing with heart as well as voice,  
To God on high, for wonders He hath done  
In sending us His well belovèd Son.

2.

The night before that happy day of grace  
The Virgin Mother, she had no resting place ;  
She and her pious Joseph were so low  
They scarcely knew which way or where to go.

3.

For they were forced to wander up and down  
And they could find no lodging in the town ;  
But in an ox's stall where beasts are fed  
His mother made our Lord His lowly bed.

4.

Three wise men by a star were thither brought  
And found the blessèd Babe they long had sought,  
The best of spices and rich costly things  
They humbly offered unto the King of kings.

5.

Then rather than the Lord of life betray  
They worshipped Him and went another way,  
Which so enraged the wicked Herod then  
(The Jewish king, the very worst of men) ;

6.

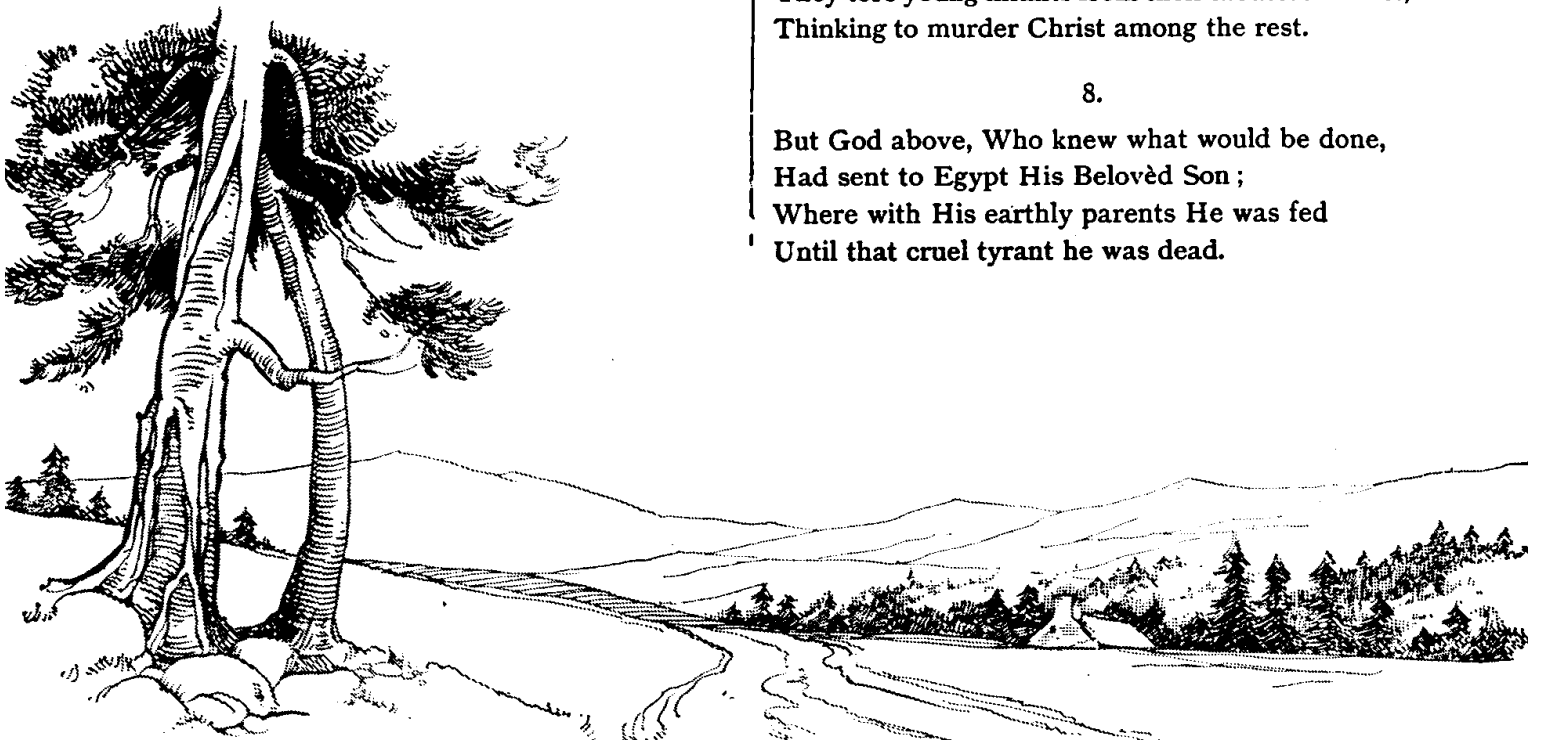
He caused young harmless infants to be killed ;  
All under two years old, their blood was spilled.  
Dear parents' tears could not his rage prevent,  
Nor pity move the tyrant to repent.

7.

The Black Decree went all the country round,  
To kill and murder children both sick and sound ;  
They tore young infants from their mothers' breast,  
Thinking to murder Christ among the rest.

8.

But God above, Who knew what would be done,  
Had sent to Egypt His Belovèd Son ;  
Where with His earthly parents He was fed  
Until that cruel tyrant he was dead.





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*Allegro moderato.*

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