

Hatfield

Transcribed from

Anonymous, ante 1780 86. 86. (C. M.)

The Waterhouse Manuscript, 1780.

A minor William Billings, ante 1780

Tr. T. B.

8 5 10

Though beauty grace the comely face, With rosy white and red, A dying fall shall spoil it all, For Absalom is dead.

This tune was probably composed by William Billings before 1780, and copied into *The Waterhouse Manuscript* at (or soon after) a singing-school session; the manuscript page is dated May 30, 1780. Obviously the copyist, Susanna Heath, didn't complete copying the Treble part. The words are recondite, apparently a latefr stanza from a longer poem, *Here is a song, which doth belong*, but the first complete version of this poem was not published until 1812.

The tune appeared in Shumway's *American Harmony* (1793) with different words, *Naked, as from the earth we came*, then in Ingalls' *Christian Harmony* as The True Penitent, with yet different words. Billings had apparently considerably revised the tune in the 1780s or 1790s, but the revision didn't appear until the posthumous *Psalm-Singer's Amusement* in 1804 or thereabouts, when it was paired with Isaac Watts' words, *Let others boast how strong they be*.