

The Hymn Of The Hampshire Countryside

As sung at Harvest-tide at St Michael and All Angels Church, Highclere

Source: unknown. If anyone has information about the author or derivation please inform church@highclerevillage.com – and yes, we do know that it is sung in other Hampshire parishes.

Praise we The Lord, the great Author of Nature,
Praise we the maker of upland and plain;
Praise we the Spirit through whom every creature
Gathers its life and renews it again.

Once did The Son of God – mighty the wonder –
Walk this earth's dusty paths, tread on its loam;
Once did he look on the harvest and ponder:
Where is the labour to fetch it all home?

Lord, we would serve Thee and turn to Thy glory
All our best efforts of mind and of hand;
Lord, we would see the old heavenly story
Made flesh again in the soil of our land.

Are not the waters of Test and of Avon
Meet for thy christening as Jordan's of old?
May not our downs, with thy footprints engraven,
Like Judah's mountains thy cradle unfold?

Of in the starry night, waking or sleeping,
On the hard stones Thou reclines thy head:
Wilt no Thou not rest where our forest is heaping
Leaves for thy pillow and ling for thy bed?

Once for a gardener did Mary mistake Thee
In the first mists of the first Easter Day:
Lord, we have gardens, and fain would we make Thee
Master of all their resplendent array.

See, where his flock the young shepherd is guiding,
Hard by the track on Old Winchester Hill;
See, where 'mid Alton's shy slopes lie in hiding,
Kilns where the hops their soft odours distil.

Jesus, our Saviour, in mercy be near us:
Shepherd and Sower and Reaper art thou;
Pardon our sins – let thy charity cheer us:
Hallow the harvest we bring to thee now.