

The Primrose



Henry Ceslie (1822-1896)





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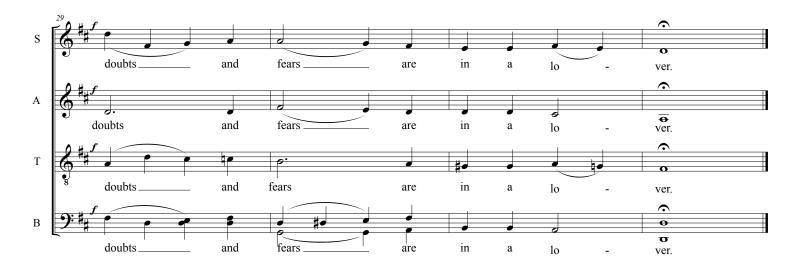
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Novello's Part-Song Book No. 136 (1875-1890)

Henry David Leslie (1822-1896) was born in London, England. He studied the cello as a youth, later playing in the Sacred Harmonic Society. In 1855, he organized an a cappella singing society. The society grew to 200 voices and became known as "Henry Leslie's Choir." The choir won numerous international competition prizes and enjoyed a strong reputation for singing unaccompanied music, both ancient and modern. He also became conductor of the Guild of Amateur Musicians. In 1864, Leslie established a National College of Music, but the college survived only two years. In 1878, Leslie and others made another attempt to form a national music school. This effort was successful, becoming the predecessor of the Royal College of Music. After he retired, he founded the Oswestry School of Music and its Festival of Village Choirs. Throughout his life, he was a champion of amateur choral musicians. He composed symphonies, oratorios, sacred works as well as chamber music, piano music and many part-songs.

Ask me why I send you here
The firstling of the infant year?
Ask me why I send to you
This primrose all bepearl'd with dew?
I straight will whisper in your ears:
The sweets of love are washed with tears.

Ask me why this flower doth shew So yellow, green, and sickly too? Ask me why the stalk is weak And bending, [yet it doth not break]? I must tell you:— These discover What doubts and fears are in a lover.

Thomas Carew (1594/5-1640) Some attribute this poem to Robert Herrick (1591-1674) Editor's Note: this edition uses what appears to be an accepted best variant of the poem.

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