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### Foreword

The fact that the folk tradition of songs about love, work, life and religion is still flourishing in the British Isles owes much to the song-collecting pioneers from the beginning of the twentieth century. The English Folk Dance and Song Society, whose leaders included Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams, transcribed and published hundreds of regional songs that might otherwise have been lost, or certainly not have achieved the popularity they now enjoy. The three English songs published here are good examples of differing approaches to the theme of love, and love lost.

*Early one morning*, a bittersweet lyric with a deceptively upbeat melody, tells of false promises and deception. It probably dates from the eighteenth century and is quoted in 1859 by William Chappell (*Popular Music of the Olden Time*), as being 'one of the three most popular songs among the servant-maids of the present generation'. It is here given a rather melancholic treatment, ending simply and sadly, as it began. You can hear the men promising to be ever faithful in bars 56–63, underneath the girls' plaintive reproach.

In contrast, *Dashing away with the smoothing iron* is lively, catchy and full of fun. It is the love song of a man besotted by a maid and the weekly rhythm of her laundry-work, reaching a climax with church bells (wedding bells, perhaps?) and the hard-working girl in her Sunday best, looking utterly 'neat and charming'.

When Cecil Sharp transcribed *O waly waly* in 1908, from one Mrs. Cox of High Ham, it bore this title but did not contain the title words; beginning instead with 'Down in the meadows'. It has been suggested since that the version we know now may be a composite of three songs: the Scottish 'Waly waly' (meaning 'a cry of woe or grief'), the Cecil Sharp transcript and an American song, 'The water is wide', which begins the first verse of our version. This sad song is sometimes set in 3/4 time, but I have chosen to give it a gently rocking 4/4 feel, slightly reminiscent of the version by the American singer James Taylor.

### Editorial notes

Choral Basics has been devised to provide arrangements and original pieces specifically for beginner choirs. The arrangements don't explore the extremes of the voice, but aim to stretch the vocal range from time to time in the context of a well-placed musical phrase. The simple yet imaginative piano parts have been written to support the vocal lines. The singers should aim to follow the punctuation of the poem, and breathe accordingly.

Alexander L'Estrange, May 2004

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# Early one morning

Traditional English  
arr. Alexander L'Estrange

Smoothly ♩ = 72

SOPRANO

ALTO

MEN

PIANO

Smoothly ♩ = 72

*mf* *espress.*

8 MEN *mf*

Ear - ly one morn - ing, just as the sun was ri - sing, I heard a maid sing in the

14 SOPRANO

ALTO

MEN

*p*

Oh don't de - ceive me, oh ne - ver leave me,

*p*

val - ley be - low:

# O waly waly

Traditional Somerset  
arr. Alexander L'Estrange

Gentle ♩ = 60

VOICE *optional SOLO (any voice) mp*

PIANO *p*

1. The wa - ter is

con Ped.

3 (2nd time: ALL)

S. wide, I can-not cross o'er, and nei - ther  
(2.) mea-dows— the o - ther day, a - ga - th'ring

A. (2nd time only)

(2.) mea-dows— the o - ther day, a - ga - th'ring

MEN *p* (2nd time only)

(2.) the o - ther\_ day,

*p* (2. *mp*)

5

have. I wings to fly; Build me a  
flowers— both fine and gay, A - ga - th'ring

flowers— both fine and gay, A - ga - th'ring

a - ga - th'ring flowers,