Upon the snow-clad earth

Sir Arthur Sullivan
(1842-1900)

1. Upon the snow-clad earth without, The stars are shining bright, As
   Twas in the days when far and wide Men owned the Caesar's sway, That

2. Heav'n had hung out all her lamps To hail the festival night; For
   his decree went forth, that all A certain tax should pay. Then

   on this night long years ago The Blessed babe was born, The
   from their home in Nazareth's vale, Obedient to the same, With

   saints of old were wont to keep Their virgin until morn.
   Mary his espoused wife, The saintly Joseph came.

3. A stable and a manger, where
   The oxen lowed around
   Was all the shelter Bethlehem gave,
   The welcome that they found!
   Yet blessed among women was
   That holy mother maid
   Who on that night her first-born Son
   There in the manger laid.

4. The King of kings, and Lord of lords,
   E'en from His very birth,
   Had not a place to lay His head,
   An outcast in the earth:
   And yet we know that little Babe
   Was tender to the touch,
   And weak as other infants are;
   He felt the cold as much!

5. In swaddling bands she wrapped Him round,
   And smoothed His couch of straw,
   While unseen Angels watched beside,
   In mute, adoring awe.
   How softly did they fold their wings
   Beneath that star-lit shed,
   While eastern sages from afar
   The new-born radiance led!

6. And thus it is, from age to age,
   That as this night comes round,
   So sweetly, underneath the moon,
   The Christmas carols sound.
   Because to us a Child is born,
   Our Brother and our King,
   Angels in Heaven, and we on earth,
   Our joyful anthems sing.