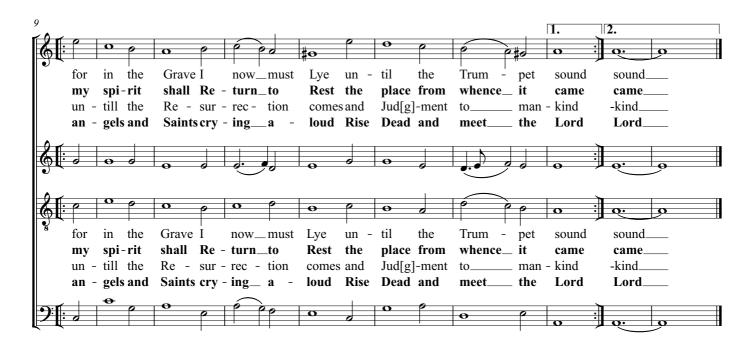
London Gallery Quire 656





This tune, with its anonymous text, is found in *The Shropshire Harmony*, a manuscript book by Thomas Owens (1755–1834) of Bishop's Castle, Shropshire, in use by 1816 (this date is found on one of the pages). It is headed *Ps the 15th or to the Funaral Hymn by Jno Symons* and previous editors have observed that this text is not a metrical paraphrase of Psalm 15. Indeed—the most likely explanation being that this heading is not the name of the tune, but an indication that it may be sung either to a metrical paraphrase of Psalm 15 (*Old Version*, as there are few *New Version* settings in the book) or to *A Funaral Hymn*, the four stanzas of which are written on blank staves below the music. It should be noted that Owens' handwriting is exceptionally clear.

The original source for the first stanza may be an engraving on a gravestone in St Mary's Parish Church, Brixham, Devon, which presumably pre-dates the manuscript (its precise location within the church is now unknown). All four stanzas are found on an embroidery sampler by Mary Ann Parsons, aged ten, dating from c. 1820. As none of the three sources agree, the version given in the manuscript has been preferred. There is no punctuation in any of the sources; the original spelling of the ms is retained.

The tune was composed by John Symons, whom Sally Drage has identified as being a church musician from Brixham. She has found that he owned a lease on a copper mine at Bickerton, Cheshire, and probably met Owens whilst passing through Bishop's Castle on the way. He contributed a further five tunes to the book, one of them being unfinished and then completed by Owens.