



Part-song from  
the opera "Jessy Lea"

# At First the Mountain Rill

George A. Macfarren  
(1813-1887)

**Sir George Alexander Macfarren** (1813-1887) was born in London. From early youth, he suffered from poor health and weak eyesight. His eyesight continually deteriorated until he became totally blind in 1860. However, his blindness had little effect on his productivity. Macfarren began to study music when he was fourteen and, at sixteen, entered the Royal Academy of Music. Because of his eyesight, he abandoned performance and concentrated on composition. He later taught at the Academy, eventually becoming a principal. He was also appointed professor of music at Cambridge University in 1875. He was conductor at Covent Garden, London; founder the Handel Society; program note writer for the Philharmonic Society; and edited the works of Handel and Purcell. He wrote 18 operas, 13 oratorios and cantatas, 9 symphonies, and 162 songs. He was active as writer of part-songs, literature for the many amateur choirs appearing throughout the country. He was knighted in 1883 on the same day as Arthur Sullivan and George Grove. His brother Walter Macfarren (1826-1905) was a pianist, composer and professor of the Royal Academy.

At first the mountain rill is weak,  
And from its prison scarce can break;  
Then each pebble on its way  
Seems enough its course to stay.  
Spreading as it glides along,  
Soon it is a torrent strong;  
And its path is broad and free,  
As it bounds into the sea,  
And its path is broad and free,  
As it bounds into the sea.  
At first the mountain rill is weak,  
But spreading as it glides along,  
A torrent strong, its path is broad and free,  
As it bounds, bounds into the sea.

Thus love is oft so weak at first,  
That e'en the heart in which 'tis nursed  
Scarcely can its presence feel;  
But its power will soon reveal;  
And so mighty is its force,  
Nothing can restrain its course.  
Riches, honours, what are they?  
Love through all will find a way.  
Thus love is oft so weak at first,  
But soon it will its power reveal, so mighty,  
Nothing can restrain its course,  
Love through all will find a way.

John Oxenford (1812-1877)

# At First the Mountain Rill

G. A. Macfarren

Andante ♩ = 66

S At first the moun - tain rill is weak, \_\_\_\_\_ And from its

A At first the moun - tain rill is weak, \_\_\_\_\_ And from its

T At first the moun - tain rill is weak, \_\_\_\_\_ And from its

B At first the moun - tain rill is weak, \_\_\_\_\_ And from its

4  
S pris - on scarce can break; \_\_\_\_\_ Then each peb - ble on its

A pris - on scarce can break; \_\_\_\_\_ Then each peb - ble on its

T pris - on scarce can break; \_\_\_\_\_ Then each peb - ble on its

B pris - on scarce can break; \_\_\_\_\_ Then each peb - ble on its



# At First the Mountain Rill

7 *cresc.* *f dim.*  
S way \_\_\_\_\_ Seems e - nough its course to stay. \_\_\_\_\_  
A way Seems e - nough its course to stay. \_\_\_\_\_  
T way Seems e - nough its course to stay. \_\_\_\_\_  
B *cresc.* *f dim.* *p*  
way \_\_\_\_\_ Seems e - nough its course to stay. Spread - ing as it

10 *p* *mf*  
S Spread - ing as it glides a - long, Soon it is a tor - rent  
A *p* *mf*  
Spread - ing as it glides a - long, Soon it is a tor - rent  
T *mf*  
Spread - ing as it glides a - long,  
B *cresc.*  
glides a - long, Soon it is a

13 *p* *f dim.* *p*  
S strong; And its path is broad and free, \_\_\_\_\_ As it  
A *p*  
strong; And its path is broad and free, As it  
T *f dim.* *p*  
Soon it is a tor - rent strong; And its path is free, As it  
B *f* *p*  
tor - rent strong; And its path is broad and free, As it

# At First the Mountain Rill

16

S bounds in - to the sea, And its path is broad and

A bounds in - to the sea, And its path is broad and

T bounds in - to the sea, And its path is broad and

B bounds, Soon it is a tor - rent strong; And its

19

S free, As it bounds in - to the sea.

A free, As it bounds in - to the sea.

T free, As it bounds, as it bounds in - to the

B path is free, As it bounds in - to the sea.

*dim.* *p* *cresc.* *dim.*

22

S At first, at first the moun - tain rill is weak,

A At first, at first the moun - tain rill is weak,

T sea. At first the rill is

B At first, at first the moun - tain rill is weak, the rill is

*p*

# At First the Mountain Rill

25 *cresc.* *mf*  
S But spread - ing as it glides a-long, A tor - rent strong, its  
A But spread - ing as it glides a-long, A tor - rent strong, its  
T weak, But spread - ing as it glides, A tor - rent  
B weak, But spread - ing as it glides a - long, as it glides, A tor - rent strong, its

28 *cresc.*  
S path is broad and free, As it bounds, as it bounds,  
A path is broad and free, As it bounds, as it bounds,  
T strong, its path is broad As it bounds, as it bounds,  
B path is broad and free, As it bounds, as it bounds,

31 *f*  
S bounds in - to the sea.  
A as it bounds in - to the sea.  
T as it bounds in - to the sea.  
B as it bounds in - to the sea.

# At First the Mountain Rill

34

S *p* Thus love is oft so weak at first, ——— That e'en the

A *p* Thus love is oft so weak at first, ——— That e'en the

T *p* Thus love is oft so weak at first, ——— That e'en the

B *p* Thus love is oft so weak at first, ——— That e'en the

37

S heart in which 'tis nurs'd ——— Scarce - ly can its pres - ence

A heart in which 'tis nurs'd ——— Scarce - ly can its pres - ence

T heart in which 'tis nurs'd Scarce - ly can its pres - ence

B heart in which 'tis nurs'd Scarce - ly can its pres - ence

40

S *cresc.* feel; ——— But its *f* pow'r *dim.* will soon re - veal; ———

A *cresc.* feel; But its *f* pow'r *dim.* will soon re - veal; ———

T *cresc.* feel; But its *f* pow'r *dim.* will soon re - veal; ———

B *cresc.* feel; ——— But its *f* pow'r *dim.* will soon re - veal; *p* And so might - y



# At First the Mountain Rill

43

Musical score for measures 43-45. It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The lyrics are: "And so might - y is its force, Noth - ing can re - strain its". Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The Soprano and Alto parts have a melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The Tenor part has a melodic line starting in measure 44. The Bass part has a simple accompaniment with a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking in measure 43.

S And so might - y is its force, Noth - ing can re - strain its

A And so might - y is its force, Noth - ing can re - strain its

T And so might - y is its force,

B *cresc.* is its force, Noth - ing can re -

46

Musical score for measures 46-48. It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The lyrics are: "course. Rich - es, hon - ours, what are they? Love thro'". Dynamics include *p* (piano), *f* (forte), and *dim.* (diminuendo). The Soprano and Alto parts have a melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The Tenor part has a melodic line starting in measure 46. The Bass part has a simple accompaniment.

S course. Rich - es, hon - ours, what are they? Love thro'

A course. Rich - es, hon - ours, what are they? Love thro'

T *f* Noth - ing can re - strain its *dim.* course. Rich - es, what are they? Love thro'

B strain its course. Rich - es, hon - ours, what are they? Love thro'

49

Musical score for measures 49-51. It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The lyrics are: "all will find a way, Noth - ing can re - strain its". Dynamics include *f* (forte). The Soprano and Alto parts have a melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The Tenor part has a melodic line starting in measure 49. The Bass part has a simple accompaniment.

S all will find a way, Noth - ing can re - strain its

A all will find a way, Noth - ing can re - strain its

T all will find a way, Noth - ing can re - strain its

B all, Noth - ing can re - strain its course, can re -

# At First the Mountain Rill

52

*f* *dim.* *p* *cresc.* *dim.*

S course, Love thro' all will find a way.

A course, Love thro' all will find a way.

T course, Love thro' all love thro' all will find a

B strain its course, Love thro' all will find a way.

55

*p*

S Thus love, thus love is oft so weak at first,

A Thus love, thus love is oft so weak at first,

T way. Thus love is weak at

B Thus love, thus love is oft so weak at first, so weak at

58

*cresc.* *mf*

S But soon it will its pow'r re-veal, so might - y, Noth - ing

A But soon it will its pow'r re-veal, so might - y, Noth - ing

T first, But soon re - veal its pow'r, so might - y,

B first, But soon it will its pow'r re - veal, its pow'r so might - y, Noth - ing

# At First the Mountain Rill

61

S can re - strain its course, Love thro' all, love thro' all,

A can re - strain its course, Love thro' all, love thro' all,

T Noth - ing can re - strain, Love thro' all, love thro' all,

B can re - strain its course, Love thro' all, love thro' all,

64

S love thro' all will find a way.

A love thro' all will find a way.

T love thro' all will find a way.

B love thro' all will find a way.

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