

The Burning Babe

As I in hoary winter's night

"SALISBURY," C.M.

St. Robert Southwell, S.J. (1561-1595)

Ravenscroft's Psalter (1621)

1. As I in hoary winter's night Stood shivering in the snow, Sur -
2. And lifting up a fearful eye To view what fire was near, A
3. Who, scorched with excessive heat, Such floods of tears did shed, As
4. "Alas!" quoth he, "but newly born, In fiery heats I fry, Yet
5. "My faultless breast the furnace is, The fuel wounding thorns, Love

1. prised I was with sudden heat, Which made my heart to glow;
2. pretty Babe all burning bright Did in the air appear;
3. though his floods should quench his flames Which with his tears were fed.
4. none approach to warm their hearts Of feel my fire but I!
5. is the fire, and sighs the smoke, The ashes, shame and scorns;

6. "The fuel Justice layeth on,
And Mercy blows the coals,
The metal in this furnace wrought
Are men's defiled souls.

7. "For which, as now on fire I am,
To work them to their good,
So I will melt into a bath
To wash them in my blood."

8. With this he vanished out of sight
And swiftly shrunk away,
And straight I called unto mind
That it was Christmas Day.