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# I SAW THREE SHIPS COME SAILING IN

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Words  
Traditional circa 17<sup>th</sup> Century

Music  
Sir John Stainer

SATB

**Cantate Domino**  
E D I T I O N

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## I saw three ships come sailing in.

Traditional circa 17th Century.

Arranged by Sir. John Stainer.

I saw three ships come sail-ing in, on Christ-mas day, on Christ-mas day.

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The melody is simple and homophonic, with lyrics written below the notes.

I saw three ships come sail - ing in. On Christ - mas day in the morn - ing.

The second system of musical notation also consists of two staves in the same key and time signature. It begins with a measure rest marked with a '5' in a box, indicating a five-measure rest. The melody continues with lyrics written below the notes.

2. And what was in those ships all three?
3. Our Saviour, Christ and his lady.
4. Pray whither sailed those ships all three?
5. O they sailed into Bethlehem.
6. And all the bells on earth shall ring.
7. And all the angels in heaven shall sing.
8. And all the souls on earth shall sing.
9. Then let us all rejoice amain.

*This carol is derived from "As I sat on a sunny bank" but the above words are as they appeared in Sandy's of 1833. There is another version that incorporates the Passion. "As I sat by my old cottage door" which was in the Cecil Sharp collection.*