

**LYRA GERMANICA; HYMNS
FOR THE SUNDAYS AND
CHIEF FESTIVALS OF THE
CHRISTIAN YEAR. [1856]**

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Lyra Germanica; Hymns for the Sundays and Chief Festivals of the Christian Year. [1856] by
Catherine Winkworth

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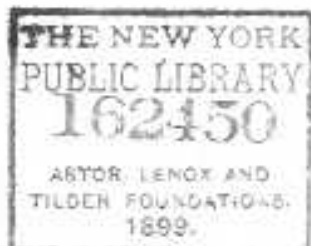
HYMNS FOR THE SUNDAYS AND
CHIEF FESTIVALS OF THE
CHRISTIAN YEAR.



TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY
CATHERINE WINKWORTH.



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1856.



JOHN F. THOW,
Printer and Stereotypor, Nos. 371 & 372 Broadway,
Corner of White street.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY
THE CHEVALIER BUNSEN,

ETC. ETC. ETC.

THESE HYMNS ARE, BY HIS KIND PERMISSION,
RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY

DEDICATED BY

THE TRANSLATOR.



PREFACE.

THE following hymns are selected from the Chevalier Bunſen's "Versuch eines allgemeinen Gesang und Gebetbuchs," published in 1833. From the large number there given, about nine hundred, little more than one hundred have been chosen. This selection contains many of those best known and loved in Germany, but in a work of this size it is impossible to include all that have become classical in that home of Christian poetry. In reading them it must be remembered that they are hymns, not sacred poems, though from their length and the intricacy of their metres, many of them may seem to English readers adapted rather to purposes of private than of public devotion. But the singing of hymns forms a much larger and more important part of public worship in the German

Reformed Churches than in our own services. It is the mode by which the whole congregation is enabled to bear its part in the worship of God, answering in this respect to the chanting of our own Liturgy.

Ever since the Reformation, the German church has been remarkable for the number and excellence of its hymns and hymn-tunes. Before that time it was not so. There was no place for congregational singing in public worship, and therefore the spiritual songs of the latter part of the middle ages assumed for the most part an artificial and unpopular form. Yet there were not wanting germs of a national Church poetry in the verses rather than hymns which were sung in German on pilgrimages and at some of the high festivals, many of which verses were again derived from more ancient Latin hymns. Several of Luther's hymns are amplifications of verses of this class, such as the Pentecostal hymn here given, "Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord,"* which is founded on a German version of the "Veni Sancte Spiritus, Reple." By adopting these verses, and retaining their well-known melodies, Luther enabled his hymns

* Page 117.

to spread rapidly among the common people. He also composed metrical versions of several of the Psalms, the *Te Deum*, the *Ten Commandments*, the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Nunc Dimittis*, the *Da nobis Pacem*, &c. thus enriching the people, to whom he had already given the *Holy Scriptures* in their own language, with a treasure of that sacred poetry which is the precious inheritance of every Christian Church.

The hymn, "*In the midst of life*,"* is one of those founded on a more ancient hymn, the "*Media in vita*" of Notker, a learned Benedictine of St. Gall, who died in 912. He is said to have composed it while watching some workmen, who were building the bridge of Martinsbruck at the peril of their lives. It was soon set to music, and became universally known; indeed it was used as a battle-song, until the custom was forbidden on account of its being supposed to exercise magical influences. In a German version it formed part of the service for the burial of the dead, as early as the thirteenth century, and is still preserved in an unmetrical form in the Burial Service of our own Church.

* Page 235.