

the beginning" (Eusebius, lib. vii. c. 28). Three ancient Greek hymns, transmitted to us in the "Apostolic Constitution," are supposed by Bunsen, a competent authority, to be the sole authentic specimens we possess of the ante-Nicene psalmody and hymnology. The first of these, the "Gloria in Excelsis," commonly termed the "Morning Hymn," forms part of the communion service of the Anglican Church. Another, a "Hymn at the Lighting of the Evening Lamp" (*Hymnos tou Luchnikou*), is an interesting relic of the simple devotion of the early Christian household. The first writer known to have composed hymns for the worship of the Western Church is Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, who died A.D. 368. About the same time, Ambrose introduced choral singing into the church of Milan, and wrote the "Te Deum"—a magnificent composition, moving in the majestic cadences of the Hebrew psalm. But both hymn and choir-song had existed from a much earlier period in the Eastern Church. A specimen of the Greek hymn, the earliest known, is found in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, who flourished in the beginning of the third century (Paedag. lib. iii., *ad fin.*). Gregory of Nazianzus, towards the end of this century, acquired reputation as a writer of hymns. The general diffusion and influence of the earlier hymns may be inferred from the fact of the heretical sects availing themselves of the popular taste in order to disseminate error. Arius wrote songs "for the sea, and the mill, and the highway, and set them to music." These rude chants materially promoted the spread of his doctrine. Chrysostom found Arian canticles in great esteem at Constantinople, and combated their tendencies by counter-hymns in defence of the Catholic doctrine. The Gnostic Bardesanes imitated the Psalms of David, not only in style and structure, but in number. He composed one hundred and fifty mystical hymns; in these pseudo-psalms "presenting to simple souls," says Ephraem Syrus, "the cup of poison tempered with seductive sweetness." This false coinage shews the currency of the genuine metal; and Jerome tells us, that in his day "you could not go into the fields, but you might hear the ploughman at his hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vine-dresser singing David's Psalms."

In the fourth Council of Toledo, A.D. 633, the use of hymns was formally sanctioned by the Western Church. Most of the hymns for the festivals of saints and martyrs had been written at a much earlier period by Prudentius. We find some great names of the Latin Church in the list of its sacred minstrels—Popes Gelasius and Gregory, Paulinus, Venantius Fortunatus, Bernard, Anselme, Bede, &c. The famous hymn of Thomas Aquinas—"Pange lingua gloriosi"—fixes the epoch of transubstantiation, the point at which the rhetoric of the pulpits froze into the logic of the schools.

The great harvest of hymns was produced from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries in the Gallican and German cloisters. Many a monk employed himself, in the interval of inditing palimpsests and illuminating missals, with stringing together leonine triplets and sextains. The constant perusal of the Fathers strengthened this tendency. In the prose of Augustine we are struck by the frequent recurrence of rhythmical cadence and balanced antithesis. It was the delight of the monkish versifiers to compress hard theological formulæ into pithy epigrams, and set them to a rough jingling music. The learned Benedictines of the congregation of St. Maur specially laboured in this vocation, and weeded the service-books of many puerile and barbarous ditties (vide Leysser, Polycarp. Hist. Poet. et Poem. medii ævi).

Some of the best Latin hymns are anonymous, as the "Cœlestis urb Jerusalem," long a favorite in Scotland ("O mother, dear, Jerusalem"), though the original may be found in Augustine's "Meditations"; "In Abyssu Deitatis," and "Veni Creator Spiritus," translated by Dryden. The "Dies Iræ" was composed by Thomas von Celano, a Minorite friar, and the "Stabat Mater" is ascribed to Jacopone.