

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE



CECIL FRANCES ALEXANDER (1818-1895)

Hymn Writer

Cecil Frances Humphreys was born in Dublin, but spent a good part of her later life in Londonderry and Strabane; her husband, William Alexander, himself a Derry man, was appointed Church of Ireland bishop of that city in 1867. He later became Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland.

Cecil Frances was a keen supporter of the Oxford Movement, and in 1848 published *Hymns For Little Children*, which include three of the most popular hymns in the English language: "Once in Royal David's City," "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and "There is a Green Hill Far Away." Charles Gounod, the composer of *Faust*, said that some of her lyrics "seemed to set themselves to music."

A further selection of her works - hymns, tracts and poems - was published a year after her death.

Victor Price