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CO-OP. FURNITURE CO.

Dr. Martin Luther.

The Wittenberg Fêtes in his Honor

On Oct. 31st, in the year 1517, Martin Luther nailed his theses to the door of the Schloss Kirche at Wittenberg. It was the official declaration by Luther of his rebellion against Rome. This is the event that Protestant Germany has just been celebrating in the presence of Kaiser Wilhelm and other sovereign princes of Germany, who, with official and ecclesiastical dignitaries went in procession to the old church, entering the very door on which the reformer nailed his theses against the doctrine of indulgences and his arraignment against the church.

Trumpeters stationed on the tower of the church played, as the procession crossed the historic threshold, "Ein' Feste Burg," Luther's grand choral, which was the battle song of the Reformation and the comfort of Protestantism through the decades. After the services in the church, the members of the imperial, royal and princely families proceeded to the house in which Luther lived while at Wittenberg and inscribed their names on the visitor's album there.

THE OLD CHURCH RESTORED.

The celebration, says the N. Y. *Sun*, marks the completion of the renovation of the old Schloss church, which has been restored at the cost of the Emperor, to its original form and features. In the celebration the Protestant churches of Prussia and Germany took part, and memorial services were preached from their thousands of pulpits. England was represented by Queen Victoria in the person of the Duke of York, their presumptive to the throne of Great Britain. For both these countries, England and Germany, as well as for America, the anniversary is of noteworthy historical interest. It is well, just after the splendid pageants that have been held in honor of Christopher Columbus for discovering a new world, to call to remembrance the great deed of Martin Luther, who, though he did not discover a new world, upset the old one for Luther's reformation broke the power of an all absorbing and tyrannical church, that, supreme everywhere, had forgotten its splendid mission; it released the barriers that had stunned advanced thought and intelligence and paved the way to the achievement of political liberty in almost every country that it reached.

THE MARCH OF THOUGHT.

The Protestant empires of Germany and England and the great Republic of the West owe their rise to leadership in the realms of literature, scientific discovery, of human progress and thought and liberty to that event which Germany and the Protestant world has celebrated at Wittenberg. Without Luther's great Reformation what? "Had there been no Luther," says Froude, "the English, American and German peoples would be thinking differently, would be acting differently, would be altogether different men and women from what they are at this moment." "Once more a true sense of nature and fact," exclaims Carlyle, "for which these centuries and many that are to come yet will be thankful to heaven." "He created the German language," says Heine; "he was not only the greatest, but the most German man of our history." "His image," says Kraush, "casts itself upon the current of ages as the mountain mirrors itself in the river that winds at its feet—the Mighty Eating itself immutably upon the Unchanging."

THE ANCIENT CHRONICLE.

Those who have read the charmingly interesting "Chronicles of the Schoenberg-Cotta Family" will remember that passage in the diary of the narrator, dated Wittenberg, Nov. 1, 1517—All Saints' Day:

"Yesterday evening, as I sat at the window with Gottfried in the late twilight, building Gretchen to sleep, we noticed Dr. Luther walking rapidly along the street toward the Castle church. His step was firm and quick, and he seemed too full of thought to observe anything as he passed. There was something about the man's bearing, which made my husband call my attention to him. His head was erect and slightly thrown back, as when he preaches. He had a large package of papers in his hands, and, although he was evidently absorbed with some purpose, he had more the air of a general moving to a battlefield than of a theologian buried in meditation. This morning, as we went to the early mass of the festival, we saw a great crowd around the doors of the Castle church, not a mob, however, but an orderly throng of well-dressed men, professors, citizens and students, those within the circle reading some writing which was posted on the door, while around, the crowd was broken into little knots, in eager, but not loud, debate. Gottfried asked what had happened. 'It is only some Latin theses against the indulgences, by Dr. Luther,' replied one of the students, 'inviting a disputation on the subject.'".

And on Nov. 20 is the entry in the diary:

"It is wonderful the stir that these theses make. Christopher cannot get them printed fast enough. Both the Latin and German printing presses are engaged, for they have been translated, and demands come for them from every part of Germany. Dr. Tetzel, they say, is coming, and many of the prelates are uneasy as to the result; the new Bishop has dissuaded Dr. Luther from publishing an explanation of them. It is reported that the Elector Frederick is not quite pleased, fearing the effect on the new university, still in its infancy. Students, however, are crowding to the town and to Dr. Luther's lectures more than ever. He is the hero of the youth of Germany." Again in February, 1518, the diary goes on: "Christopher returned yesterday evening from the market place, where the students have been burning Tetzel's theses, which he wrote in answer to Dr. Luther. The students kindled this conflagration in the market place entirely on their own responsibility. They are full of enthusiasm for Dr. Luther, and of indignation against Tetzel and the Dominicans."

THE GREAT SCHISM.

This was the beginning of the struggle which led to the great division in the Christian world. It was occasioned by the building of that magnificent edifice of ecclesiastical splendor—St. Peter's Church in Rome. Indulgences were to furnish the necessary means. The sale of these had been entrusted for a great part of Germany to Albert, Archbishop of Mayence and Magdeburg, and he, crippled for want of money, secured a loan from the wealthy Fuggers of Augsburg, and gave as security part of the profits arising from the sale. As Julius Koestlin says, in his "Life of Luther," "Behind the preacher of indulgences Tetzel, who announced God's mercy to the paying believers, stood the agents of that commercial house, who collected their share for their principals." Tetzel's advent, however, only marks the point where the revolution against Rome, the result against the abuses that had grown up within the Church, was pushed from the quiescent to the active stage. As Bishop Hurst remarks in his "Short History of the Reformation:" "The sale of indulgences aroused Luther's nature to a high pitch of excitement. He was now ready for his mission. He went over the whole case against Rome, as he saw it, and arraigned the Church in a bill of charges, which he called his 'Ninety-five Theses.' They were directed principally against the sale of indulgences, but they touched the inmost burden of Luther's soul. He insisted that the Church taught the truth, but that there were excrescences which must be removed."

The life of Luther takes us back more than 400 years. Nine years before Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos to discover a new ocean route to Cathay, Martin Luther was born at the little village of Eisleben, the son of a peasant who had been a slate cutter in Mohra, and then a miner in Eisleben. He in turn was sent to a school at Eisenach, just below the Wartburg. In 1501 he attended the university at Erfurt. In 1505 he entered the Augustinian cloister at that place in 1506 he became a monk; in 1507 he was ordained a priest, and in 1508 he was appointed professor of philosophy and later of theology at the University of Wittenberg, then a small town of only 2,000 inhabitants. It was in Wittenberg that Luther did most of his greatest work, and the little town is crowded with historic places connected with his life.

From Wittenberg he made his first visit to Rome, from which he returned full of bitterness of spirit against the abuses in the Church that reigned unchecked. It was there that he lectured and drew thousands of students from every part of Germany to listen to him. It was there that he published his Theses, nailing them to the door of the Schloss Church. It was there that during the next three years, while engaged in disputes with Caperan and Eck, he wrote and brought out several of his most important works, among them his "Commentary on the Galatians," his "Address to the Christian Nobles of Germany" and his "Sermon on the Liberty of a Christian Man." It was there, in 1520, came his open breach with the Pope, when he burned the Papal bull of excommunication which began:

"Arise, O Lord, and judge thy cause! Remember the reproach which the foolish can against Thee all day long. St. Peter, St. Paul, the congregation of saints and the whole Church are called upon to arise. The foxes would lay waste the vineyard of the Lord; a wild boar has entered therein; a savage beast would pasture there."

Then Luther was condemned as a heretic; his writings were to be burnt, and every one was "commanded to seize Martin Luther and deliver him to the Pope at Rome."

Eck was sent to deliver the bull, but he was received with great hostility. In Leipsic he had to take refuge in St. Paul's Church, and the students, using satirical songs for his benefit, in Eckart the students attacked him, seized the printed copies of the bull and threw them into the river Gera. In Wittenberg Luther himself "took the bull by the horns," and on Nov. 10, 1520, he publicly announced that the bull of excommunication and the Papal books of canonical law would be burned on the following morning at 9 o'clock.

At the appointed time students, masters and doctors were assembled at the designated place at the Elster Gate, near the Augustinian Monastery. An advanced student prepared the place, piled on the faggots and applied the fire. Then Luther cast the Roman decretals, together with the Papal bull, into the flames, exclaiming: "Because thou hast offended the Holy One of the Lord, be thou consumed with everlasting fire." Then Luther returned with his friends to the city, while several hundred students remained at the fire, feeding the flames with Papal writings, and others paraded the streets, darkling Eck and the Papal bull. "Thus by his bold actions did Luther let loose a storm which raged over all Germany—a storm which could not be quieted till the Judgment Day."

HIS HOME IN WITTENBERG.

It would take too long to follow Luther's life in detail. In 1521 he appeared before the Diet of Worms. Then came his concealment in the Wartburg, where he began his translation of the Bible, the first part of which, the New Testament, was published in 1522. He returned to Wittenberg in 1522; in 1525 he married Catharine Von Bora, lived at Wittenberg until the year 1546, when he died while on a journey, at Eisleben, at the age of 63. The house in which Luther lived with his wife and family still exists in Wittenberg. It was formerly a portion of the old Augustinian Convent. "In accordance with the order of the Elector, Luther remained in the monastery building, and which had been vacated by all the monks. Here Katie established her household. Today"—we are quoting from Dr. Rein—"this stately dwelling still stands, close to the gate and to the city walls, altered within, but firm and towering without, a genuine German home from which have issued streams of blessing for the whole world."

A TIME OF FESTIVENCE.

Luther released himself from his vows and entered the marriage state on June 13, 1525, at the age of 41. Catharine Von Bora was of an old and noble family, and had been a nun in the cloister of Nimptsch, near Geinia, in Saxony. Though Luther's enemies derisively reminded him of the old legend that from the union of an expelled monk and a runaway nun anti-Christ would be begotten, his married life was a happy one. Two children were born to him—a son, Hans, and a daughter, Elizabeth. In 1527 the plague broke out in Wittenberg, and Luther's infant son was stricken, but recovered. Luther wrote concerning these days: "Thus there are conflicts without and fears within. Our comfort, nevertheless, we have over against the ragings of Satan, and that is the Word of God, by which we may save the souls of the faithful, even if Satan should destroy their bodies. Pray for us that we valiantly endure the visitation of God and overcome the devil's might and craft, be it for life or death. Amen."

EIN' FESTE BURG.

It was during these troublous times—perhaps that very year—that Luther composed the grand old choral, "The Battle Hymn of the Reformation," "Ein' Feste Burg ist Unser Gott," which was played by trumpeters from the tower of the Schloss Kirche at Wittenberg when Kaiser Wilhelm and the Princes and princes were the guests of the church on which Luther nailed his ninety-five theses.

A Stronghold sure our God is he,
A trusty Shield and Weapon;
Our help He'll be and free us free,
Whatever ill may happen.
The old malicious foe
Intends to deadly woe;
Armed with the strength of hell,
And deceit each on well,
On earth is not his fellow.

Much has been written about this grand old choral, and the probable date of its composition. That it was written "during the plague, however, is mere fancy, though the "mighty stronghold" is probably the remembrance of the Castle of Wartburg, in which he was concealed under the name and guise of Junker Georg for several months in the year 1521. Some authorities believe that Luther wrote the choral while on his way to the Diet of Worms in 1521, whither he had been summoned by the German Empress and others in high authority to say whether he would recant or not. His friends used every endeavor to dissuade him from going, reminding him that John Huss was burned to death under similar circumstances. To one of these friends Luther wrote: "Were there as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs, I would go, and not to avoid it Huss was burned to ashes, the truth was not burned with him."

"And as he went fortifying himself during the journey by the composition of that noble hymn, by which alone his name would have been preserved to prosperity." So says one authority.

Some think, however, that it was composed at the close of the second Diet of Worms—that of 1529—after he revoked the religious liberty granted in the previous one of 1526, against which five sovereign princes and fifteen free cities "protested," and so earned the name of Protestants. But we do not incline to either of these opinions, for the reason that Luther went to work with systematic earnestness and did not trust to inspiration alone. "Ein' feste Burg" is founded on Psalm xlvi.—"God is our refuge and strength, a very pleasant help in trouble," and he wrote not only the words, but the music. "The hymn," says a recent writer, "was sung over the reformer's grave, and the first line was afterwards cut on the tombstone. Thus much regarding the hymn itself, but the tune was almost certainly composed by Luther. We say 'almost certainly,' for though it has been asserted positively that he wrote the tune, it is but right to say that doubts have been raised on the point. We cannot discuss the matter here. It must be sufficient to state that the evidence is largely in favor of the reformer's having composed the tune. The melody is certainly a noble one, full of the spirit of the words to which it was adapted."

LUTHER, POET AND MUSICIAN.

However, leaving discussion aside, it is certain that Luther was intensely fond of both music and poetry, and long before Shakespeare he said: "He who despises music, as all learned men will never be my friend." And again, "For I would fain see all arts, especially music, in the service of Him who has given and created them." We are indebted to Charlotte Winkworth and her Christian sisters of Germany for much interesting information about Luther's hymns. We learn that it was the custom after his marriage, and while residing at Wittenberg, that Luther first felt the want of German Psalms and hymns to fill the place of the Latin hymns and responsories, and he at once set to work to supply the need. And in the years when he was composing most of his hymns, it is recorded, four printers in Erfurt alone were entirely occupied in printing and publishing them. They were sent everywhere, "carried all over the country by wandering students and pedlers." "The whole people," wrote a chronicler of his day, "is singing itself into the Lutheran doctrine."

With the assistance of Conrad Rupf, choir-master of the Elector of Saxony, and Johann Walther, then choir-master to Frederick the Wise at Leipsic, who he invited to reside with him at Wittenberg, "elected the tunes most suitable for his purpose and provided them with new words. Besides a large number of translations from the Latin, many of his hymns are ascribed to him, as well as several chorals, best known of which are "Ein' feste Burg ist Unser Gott," and his Christmas carol, "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come." "It is my intention," he wrote to Spalatus, "after the example of the prophets and the ancient fathers, to make German psalms for the people; that is, spiritual songs, whereby the Word of God may be kept alive among them by singing. We seek, therefore, everywhere for German poets."

HANS SACHS HEARS THE CALL.

"We seek, therefore, everywhere for German poets." And it was from Nuremberg that the first response came. Hans Sachs, the chief of the Mastersingers. Luther had many adherents in Nuremberg, whose citizens were among the first to hail the new doctrine. In the same bill which had condemned Luther as a heretic the learned Willibald Pirckheimer and the town clerk Lazarus of Nuremberg had fallen under the ban of excommunication. The City Fathers, too, were in arms against the Papacy. Hans Sachs wrote unwearidly during this religious conflict in answer to Luther's call, he set to work composing hymns, he paraphrased the Bible in song after song, and his verse, sung in nearly all the Mastersinger schools of Germany, spread the Lutheran faith among the most earnest and energetic workmen of the land.

THE NIGHTINGALE OF WITTENBERG.

During fifty years Hans Sachs did poetic battle for the cause of Luther and the Reformation. But, of all that came from his busy brain, he has left nothing more poetic and beautiful than his "Greeting to the Nightingale of Wittenberg," with its inspired call to the people to awaken: "Wach auf Es nahet gen den Tag," which Wagner has introduced so felicitously as a choral in the third act of his opera "Die Meistersinger." This was Sachs's greeting to Luther, in ringing and poetic of the Reformation:

Awake! The dawn of day is near,
I hear singing loud and clear,
A wondrous-throated nightingale
Where'er she is heard o'er hill and dale,
By night she sings to Christ, God's Son,
The day-star's risen from the Orient,
And morning's purple glories burn
Out from the depths of cloud and gloom.

Sachs' poem "The Wittenberg Nightingale" is proof sufficient that Luther was known to the people of Germany, not only for his reformatory work but for his hymns and chorals, written to awaken the new faith. Sachs was accustomed to call things by their proper names, and he would not have styled Luther a nightingale because he nailed theses to the church door at Wittenberg or for his dispute with Eck at Leipsic, or his burning of the Papal bull at Wittenberg, or his appearance before the Emperor at the Diet of Worms. No! Sachs styled Luther a nightingale because he sang sweetly, because he was "a wondrous-throated nightingale," whose voice was heard everywhere singing the doctrines of the new faith into the hearts of the people.

A Turkish Serpent Superstition.

The people of all serpent ridden countries have many charms, spells and incantations which they repeat or perform for the purpose of exercising such obnoxious visitors. In Turkey everybody from the sultan to the humble peasant, when the serpent king, Chah-Miran. When they come in contact with a serpent the first exclamation is, "In the name of Chah Miran, go away and hide thyself."

Of course Chah-Miran has been dead for centuries, but the Turk argues that the serpents do not know this. If they knew that they were no longer under his influence they would destroy the whole human race.—St. Louis Republic.

Very Willing.

Employer—I am very suspicious of young men nowadays. You can't tell how they are going to turn out. Why, in six months they know a great deal more about your business than you do yourself and want to manage it entirely.

Applicant for Position—I can assure you, sir, that if you will engage me I will devote as little time as possible to your business.—London Tit-Bits.

The Relation.

A widow lady once married the tenth brother of her dead husband. One day a friend, who had not known the defunct party, saw his portrait in the drawing room and asked the lady if it represented a relative of the family. "Yes," replied the bride, with a demure look; "it is the husband of my poor brother-in-law."—San Francisco Argonaut.