

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, deriding 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. To-day"—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 PESTILENCE.

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 Nimpsch, near Gesinia, 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. One 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 wrote 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 of Wittenberg when Kaiser Wilhelm and the Protestant princes enter the doors 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 set us free,  
Whatever ill may happen.  
The old malicious foe  
Intends us deadly woe;

Armed with the strength of hell,  
And deepest craft as 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 belongs to Luther's Wittenberg days, however, is sure, though the "mighty stronghold" is probably the remembrance of the Castle of Wartburg, in which he was concealed under the name and guise of Yunker Georg for several months in the year 1522. 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 Emperress 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 be afraid. If Huss was burned to ashes, the truth was not burned with him."

"And so 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—which 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 xlii.—"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 fanatics do, 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 singers of Germany for much interesting information about Luther's poetic work. In 1526 it was, the year 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 sequences, and he at once set to work to supply it. 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 peddlers." "The whole people," wrote a chronicler of his day, "is singing itself into the Lutheran doctrine."

With the assistance of Conrad Rupp, choir master of the Elector of Saxony, and Johann Walther, then choir-master to Frederick the Wise at Jorgan, whom he invited to reside with him, Luther, while at Wittenberg, selected the tunes most suitable for his purpose and provided them with new words. Besides a large number of translations from the Latin, thirty-seven hymns are ascribed to him, as well as several chorals, the 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 Spalaten, "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. From Hans Sachs, the chief of the Master-singers. 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 Perkeheimer 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 unwearily 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 Master-singer 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 naht den Tag," which Wagner has introduced so felicitously as a choral in the third act of his opera "Die Meistersinger." This was Sach's greeting to Luther, the singer and poet of the Reformation:

Awake! The dawn of day is near.  
I hear, singing loud and clear,  
A wondrous-throated nightingale  
Whose voice is heard o'er hill and dale.  
The night stoops to the Occident,  
The day breaks from the Orient,  
And morning's purple glories loom  
Out from the depths of cloud and gloom.

Sachs' poem "The Wittenburg 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 advance 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