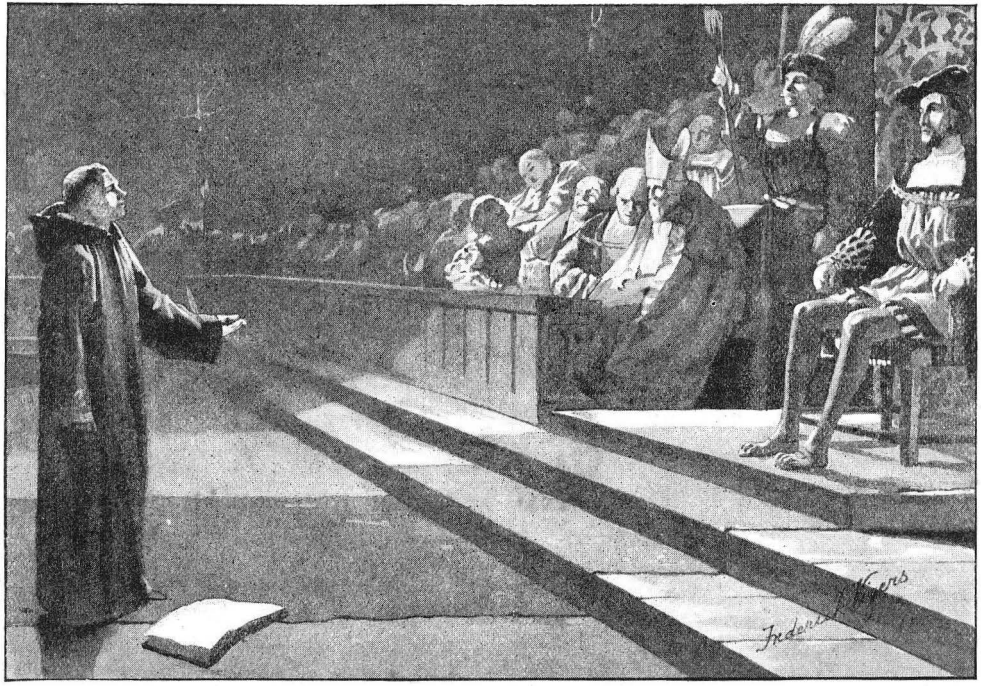

LUTHER ARRAIGNED BEFORE THE DIET OF WORMS.

Frontispiece.] [*See page* 90.

MARTIN LUTHER

THE

HERO OF THE REFORMATION

BY

E. VELVIN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY FREDERICK VIGERS AND OTHERS

SECOND EDITION

LONDON:
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION
57 AND 59 LUDGATE HILL, E.C.

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MARTIN LUTHER

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BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

Why he was called Martin—Meaning of the word Luther—Hans Luther, his Father—His Journey to Eisleben—The Winter Fair—Luther's Mother—His Birth—His Father's Joy and Prayer.

F the many "Splendid Lives" which have, from time to time, benefited and enlightened the world, accomplishing great tasks, combating great evils, and dissipating the gloom of ignorance and superstition, that of Martin Luther, the great Reformer, is second to none.

Martin Luther was born on the eve of the festival day of St. Martin of Tours—hence his name—on 10th November 1483, at Eisleben, in the Duchy of Mansfeld, in Thuringia. His surname,

Luther (Lyder, Lüder, Ludher, or, as some say, Lothar or Lothair), is supposed to be derived from *Lauter*, which means "clear" or "pure." This was the generally accepted meaning of the word, but another interpretation is that Lutherus and Lotharius are synonymous, Lotharius ("King of Men") being a name given to royal, imperial, and illustrious personages.

Hans Luther, his father, who was a miner or slate-cutter by trade, and belonged to a family of free peasants at Möhra, having struggled in vain to make a living in his native place, one day made up his mind to leave it, and try if things were better at Eisleben. So taking advantage of the Winter Fair, which was held there annually, when it was customary for the poor peasants to dispose of their produce or merchandise, he set off, accompanied by his wife and children, and made his way slowly to Eisleben, getting there just in time for the fair.

Hans was a strong, sturdy peasant of average height, with good though somewhat rugged features; straightforward and honest to a degree, and pious according to the faith in which he had been brought up. He was gifted with strong physical and mental powers, could reason with exceptional clearness, and was broad-minded, save for his antipathy towards the monks, for whom he entertained nothing but distrust and dislike.

BIRTHPLACE OF MARTIN LUTHER.

(The second house on the right-hand side.)

In appearance he was stern and forbidding, and brought up all his children with the greatest severity; but he had a warm, generous, affectionate nature, and was strict and hard towards them simply from a sense of duty, and because harsh discipline was considered in those days to be the only way in which the young could be brought up to become good and honest men and women.

Margaret Lindebron, his wife, was noted for her gentleness and piety, although she shared the same views as her husband with regard to the bringing up of children. Not very much is told us about her, but from the various short accounts we gather that she was of a shy, timid nature, sensitive, but rather phlegmatic. Melanchthon, the great friend and college chum of Martin, when writing of her, says: "She was endowed with many virtues, which befitted an honest woman, and was especially well known for her orderly discipline, her piety, and diligence in prayer and religious duties; so that she was regarded as an example of virtue and fidelity to all other upright women."

Soon after their arrival at Eisleben, and while the fair was still in full swing, Martin was born, his birth taking place in the house of some poor peasants with whom his parents were lodging.

Hans had been out in the fair selling the yarn which Margaret had been spinning for months past,

hoping thus to make a little money to provide for their many wants. On his return, saddened and depressed,—for he had sold but little,—he was told the good news, and overjoyed at the birth of a son, it is said that he fell on his knees at the bedside and prayed fervently that grace might be given to the boy, and that he might become known for learning and good works.

Thus we see that Martin Luther came into the world under lowly but favourable circumstances, receiving a glad welcome and blessing from the very first, and bringing comfort and happiness to his parents.

CHAPTER II.

BOYHOOD.

Removal to Mansfeld—Martin as a Boy—His Parents' Severity—Martin is sent to Magdeburg—Singing for Bread in the Streets—Running away from a Friend.

OR six months after the birth of his little son, Hans stayed quietly with his wife and family at Eisleben, but his mind was full of schemes for the bringing up and education of the boy. Not getting on at Eisleben as well as he expected, he made up his mind to go on to Mansfeld.

Here he set up a forge, and although the profits were sadly small, and his family rapidly increasing, he was able, when Martin was old enough, to send him to the Latin school of the place, where the boy studied hard, showed great aptitude and ability, and distinguished himself greatly.

As a boy, Martin was extremely shy and timid;

and his health, until he arrived at manhood, was always delicate. He was thin and slightly built, had a gentle expression of countenance, with bright, keen-looking brown eyes, which had, nevertheless, a sad, pensive look in them at times, as of vague longings for indefinable things. He was given to dreamy, moody fits, which called down on him the ridicule of his schoolfellows, and his shyness and timidity were looked upon by them as cowardice. Martin himself attributes this extreme nervousness of his—so unnatural in a schoolboy—to the severe way in which his parents treated him.

Years afterwards, when speaking of this, he said: "My parents treated me almost cruelly, so that I became very timid. I remember once that my mother whipped me until the blood came. They truly thought that they were doing right in not sparing the rod; but they lacked discernment of character, which yet is absolutely necessary, that we may know when, on whom, and how much punishment should be inflicted. It is right to punish children, but always at the same time bearing love to them."

There came a time, however, when Martin saw through the harshness, and realised all the love, self-sacrifice, and devotion which had been lavished on him. He was, undoubtedly, a somewhat difficult and trying boy to deal with. Under that quiet,

gentle manner of his, there lurked an impetuous, passionate spirit, which, when once roused, was difficult to subdue; the same spirit which blazed forth in after years, electrifying the world and rousing the slumbering minds and consciences of men and women to think out things for themselves. But in this early stage his judgment was apt to be unreasonable, and at times unjust, and there is no doubt that his home discipline, though severe, was not without its good effects.

He had several brothers—only one of whom lived to grow up—and four sisters: Barbara, Dorothea, Catherine, and Marie, of whom we hear very little.

When he was fourteen, he had so highly distinguished himself at the Latin school under his master, Dr. (or, as the Germans style their head-masters, "Vicar-General") Trebonius, that his father, delighted beyond words, and naturally proud of his clever young son, decided to make a lawyer of him, and sent him to a Franciscan school at Magdeburg for a year.

Among the many things which he was taught at this school were carol and psalm singing; this proved extremely useful to him throughout his whole life. It was then the custom in Germany for poor scholars to go singing through the streets in order to get their daily bread, and Martin who

had a particularly good voice, attracted a great deal of attention, with his serious, earnest young face uplifted, chanting in his voice, as he paced slowly along with the other scholars, "*Panem propter Deum, Panem propter Deum*" (Bread, for the love of God).[1]

If possible, his timidity increased while at Magdeburg, for the masters were exceptionally strict and severe there, and kept the scholars in close subjection. An anecdote told in Luther's own words will show in what fear the boys went singing through the streets.

"I was accustomed," he says, "with some companions, to beg food to supply our wants. One day, when at Magdeburg, about Christmas-time, we were all going through the neighbouring villages, from house to house, singing the usual carols on the infant Jesus at Bethlehem. We stopped in front of a peasant's house, which stood detached from the rest, at the extremity of the village. The peasant hearing us sing our Christmas carols, came out with some food which he meant to give us, and, having a rough, loud voice, he called out, 'Where are you, boys?' Terrified at these words, we ran away as fast as we could. We had no reason to fear, for the peasant came out in kindness to give us this assistance; but our hearts were, no doubt, fearful

[1] See Illustration, page 23.

and untrusting from the threats and ill-treatment then used by masters towards their scholars, so that we were seized with sudden fright.

"At last, as this good peasant continued to call out after us, we stopped, saw that he had food in his hands, forgot our fears, ran to him, and thankfully received what he offered. It is thus," he adds, "that we tremble and flee when conscience is guilty, and when fear fills us with alarm; we are then afraid even of the help that is offered us, and of those who are our friends and wish to do us good."

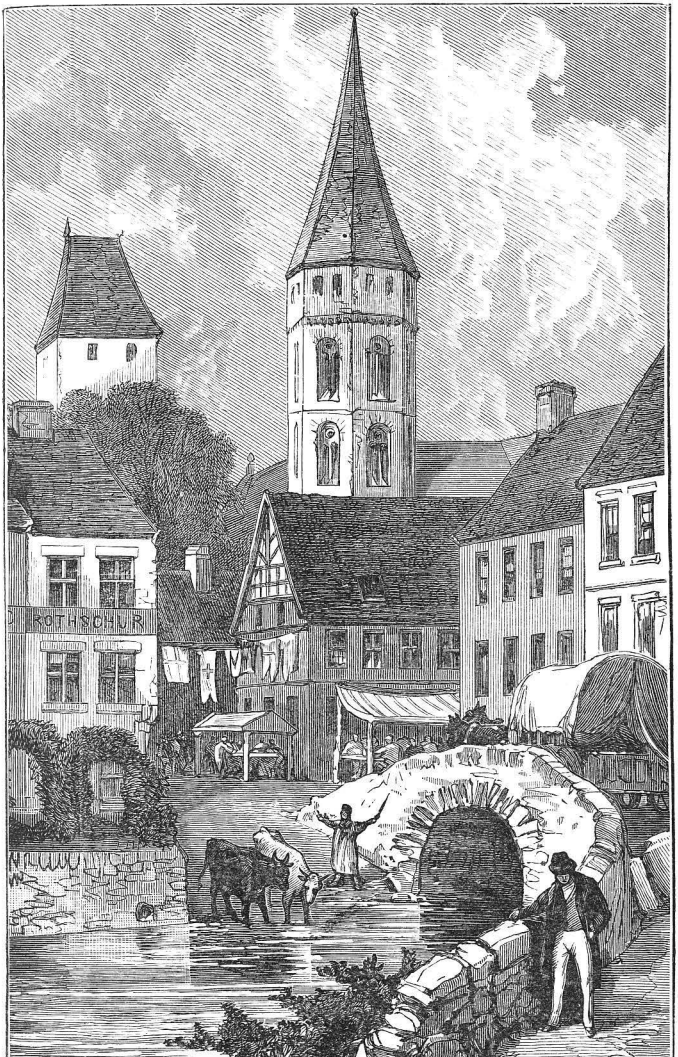
CHAPTER III.

EDUCATION.

Martin goes back to Eisenach—His Meeting with Dame Ursula Cotta—Hans Luther's Work for the sake of Martin—Affection between Father and Son.

ARTIN LUTHER had been at Magdeburg about a year, when he found that, in spite of his singing in the streets, and the small sums which his father was (only occasionally) able to send him, he had not enough to keep him there any longer; so he went back to Eisenach, where he had some relations, hoping they would be able to help him a little.

Martin does not appear to have been nearly as great a favourite among his teachers and schoolfellows when a young boy as he became later on. No doubt his shyness and reserve were much against him. He was of rather a melancholy temperament, and although he would at times join in the games



EISENACH, WHERE LUTHER WENT TO SCHOOL.

of the other boys, it was quite easy to see that it was rather a relief to him when they were over. He much preferred roaming off either by himself, or with his great friend and companion, Alexis, through whom indirectly a great part of his life was influenced.

At Eisenach, as at Magdeburg, he sang in the streets for bread; but the inhabitants were, for the most part, poor people themselves, and had very little to give away. Martin's moody fits increased: if he could not earn enough to support himself, there would be nothing left for him to do but to go back to his father at Mansfeld and work with him in the quarries. The thought of giving up his studies caused him the greatest distress. With the increase of knowledge came a thirst to know and learn more, to find out things, and investigate the why and wherefore of them all. There can be no doubt that already he had dreams and ambitions of his own, although there is no record of his ever having made avowal of them.

At this time he was making great progress in all his studies. Clear-headed, logical, quick at learning, and gifted with a wonderfully retentive memory, he got far ahead of all his fellow-scholars, came out first in Latin and Greek, was one of the best in composition both in poetry and prose, and got at the very root or meaning of things before

the other boys could even stumble through the sentences.

So that, when he found there was every probability of his being obliged to give it all up, and lead a dreary, monotonous existence as a common quarryman, it was no wonder that the boy's spirit failed him at the very thought.

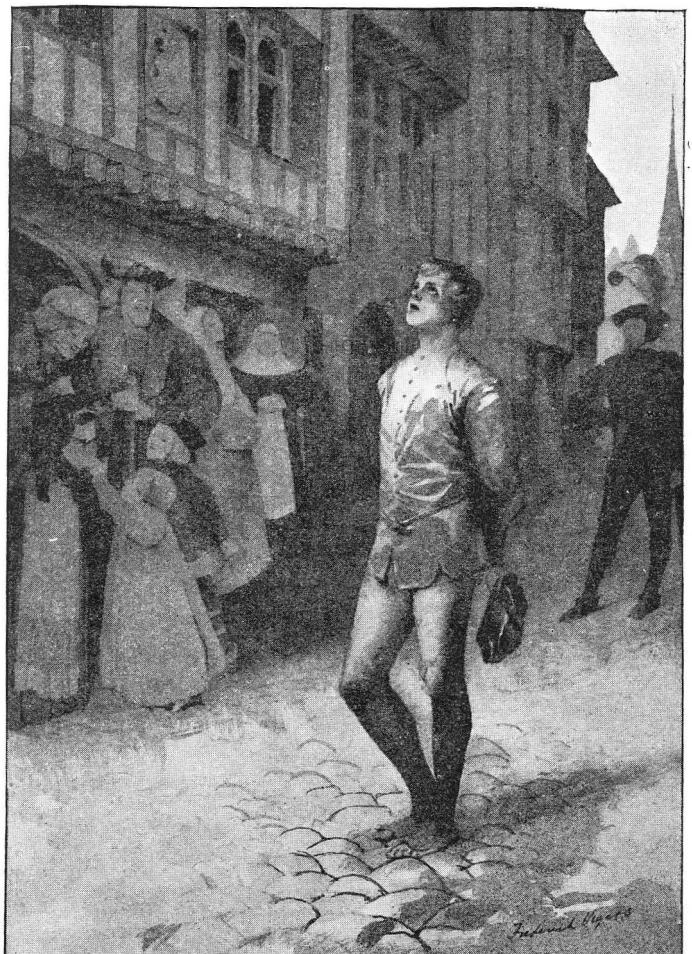
It was in one of his moodiest fits that he betook himself one day, weary and desperately hungry, to try once more to obtain a little bread in return for a few sweetly-sung carols and hymns. Very little attention was paid him by the passers-by, and he then went from door to door, hoping in this way to be more successful in touching the hearts of the inhabitants.

Twice he was repulsed rudely and curtly, and he then made up his mind that he would try once more, and should he be refused a third time, would give it up for that day and go home.

Alas! he was no more successful at the third house; and so poor Martin, sick at heart and faint from hunger, began to make his way slowly back to his miserable lodging.

He had got as far as the St. George Platz, when he stopped listlessly in front of a house, buried in sad, desponding thoughts.

As it happened, the house was owned by Conrad Cotta, the Burgomaster of Eisenach, whose gentle,



SINGING FOR FOOD IN THE STREETS OF MAGDEBURG.—*See page* 16.

warm-hearted wife, Ursula, had already noticed Martin for his reverence in church and his peculiarly sweet voice. She saw the boy standing there, and noticing how very sad and ill he looked, she opened the front door and invited him in.

Gaining confidence by her kindly face and manner, Martin poured out his troubles and anxieties into her sympathetic ear, and she in return gave him a good meal and some food to take home, and invited him to come again. The next time he went, the Burgomaster was in, and gave him a warm welcome and hearty greeting.

From that time Martin Luther's pressing anxieties were at an end; for this kind-hearted couple took upon themselves to support him, and all through the remainder of his stay at Eisenach proved themselves friends indeed, taking the keenest interest in his studies and progress, and giving him kindly counsel and help.

In after years Martin always spoke of the Burgomaster and his wife with the warmest affection and gratitude, and this is not to be wondered at when we realise the difference it made in his life. He had come to his very last resources, and neither knew where to go or what to do next. But after the meeting with Dame Ursula he stayed contentedly on at Eisenach until he was eighteen, studying hard, devoting every spare moment to

thought and reflection, and making such rapid progress in all branches of his education as to absolutely astonish the masters and teachers, who asked among themselves with bated breath, "What manner of being is this?"

At eighteen (1501), Martin Luther, following out his father's wish that he should become a lawyer, went to Erfurt, to study at the university. Poor old Hans Luther, delighted and proud of his clever young son's progress and success, strained every nerve, and slaved away day and night, in order to get enough money to support his beloved boy at the university. Wonderful stories were told him of Martin's learning and genius, all of which served as an additional impetus to his labours; and it is related of him, that many a time, tired and worn-out with his hard day's work, he would sit at the door of his humble cottage, surrounded by the neighbours and his numerous family, and talk about his son "Martin the lawyer," what marvellous learning he had!—what a stupendous memory!—what extraordinary brains!—and so on; until the neighbours—getting almost as excited as himself—would predict a great name and future for Martin, to the good man's great delight.

Martin, on his part, was deeply sensible of the toil and privations which his father was undergoing in order to keep him at Erfurt, and it was about

this time that he began to realise what worthy, unselfish parents he had, and how wrong he had been in calling them "cruel", when he was very young. He was always ready to acknowledge this, and to say he had spoken in the ignorance and thoughtlessness of youth, when he was unable to look at things in the right light. Between his father and himself especially there existed the warmest affection; and Martin, accompanied by his friend Alexis, paid frequent visits to his home at Mansfeld, whenever opportunity served.

CHAPTER IV.

AT ERFURT UNIVERSITY.

Martin Luther's Masters—He takes his Bachelor's Degree—Finding the Bible—Death of Alexis—Martin's Vow—The Plague—He becomes a Monk—His reasons for doing so—His Father's Disappointment.

ARTIN was very happy at Erfurt University, and simply revelled in his books and studies. He was also fond of the masters there, among whom the principal ones were Trutwetter, the great humanist, Usinger, Grevenstein, Osterneyer, and Göde. He was specially devoted to Trutwetter, who taught him classics and philosophy, and with whom he used to have long confidential chats and discussions.

Martin took the greatest pride in his college, and in speaking of it always said the other universities were mere academies in comparison. Erfurt was, at that time, the first university in

Germany, and there were from a thousand to thirteen hundred students. Some of the professors had studied the classics in Italy, and were specially noted for their learning. The Elector Friedrick had at that time just founded a new university at Wittenberg, but like all new ventures this was not to be compared with the ancient institution at Erfurt for popularity.

Martin Luther took his Bachelor's degree in 1502, and in 1503 became a teacher himself, lecturing on the physics and ethics of Aristotle in a most brilliant manner. The students would simply crowd to his lectures, and even the professors, whenever they could, would go and listen; for so young a man these lectures of Luther's were wonderful—not a single professor could expound and give such clear definitions or lucid explanations —not the oldest among them was able to arrive at such logical conclusions, and explain the reasons for them, as ably as Martin.

There was a very good old library at the university, where Martin passed a good bit of his spare time, dipping into all kinds of books, and reading little bits here and there, just as it took his fancy. It was this discovery that one day marked an epoch in his life. He had been looking through the volumes in a careless, desultory fashion, just reading the title-pages and names of the authors,

when one with rather a curious title attracted his attention. It was called "Holy Bible."

"Holy Bible"! What could it be? Never before had Martin Luther seen such a book, and he soon became deeply interested, the first thing he happened to come upon being the story of Hannah and Samuel.

Living in our day it seems strange to think that a youth of his age should not have seen a Bible before, but it must be remembered that at that time copies of the Bible were very rare indeed; they were only to be found in the libraries of universities, places of study or learning, or in the houses of the very rich, and in the latter places were merely kept because of their rarity and value, and not for devotional purposes. Therefore there is nothing extraordinary in the fact that a youth of twenty, coming from the remote Forest region, should never have had a Bible in his hands until he found one in the university library. Had he not been so studious and eager in his thirst after knowledge, there is every probability that he would never have come across one at all. Up to this time he had had no idea that any other portions of Scripture existed except the fragments of Gospels and Epistles read in the churches, or the Collections of Homilies.

Deeply interested, Martin read on and on,

utterly regardless of time, until the hour for his lecture drawing near, one of the students was sent to look for him, and found him oblivious to everything but the wonderful book. It was with the greatest difficulty that he could persuade him to leave the precious volume and go to the other students, who were waiting impatiently for the lecture. Even then it was noticed by all that he was *distrait* and preoccupied.

After this he made his way to the library on every possible occasion, never missing a single day, and scarcely allowing himself any time for food or out-door recreation. Dr. Usinger, an Augustinian brother, one of Martin's tutors, who had noticed his preoccupation and knew the cause, tried to reason with him one day.

"Ah, brother Martin," he said, "what is there in the Bible? It is better to read the books of the ancient doctors; they have sucked the honey of the truth. The Bible is the cause of all troubles in the Church."

But Martin knew better, and determined to find out the truth for himself. A new light was dawning on him, and he was beginning to have strange questionings and reasonings within himself. He had great determination, and having once made up his mind to find out and fathom a thing, he would allow nothing to come between him and his

purpose. As yet, however, he was only reading the Bible with the interest of a student and scholar; two years later he studied it with very different feelings, and the study of this second copy caused him those mental conflicts, spiritual wrestlings, and grievous sufferings through which he passed before he saw things in the true light.

Martin discussed many of his thoughts and ideas with his great friend Alexis, who entered into a great deal of it with keen interest; but the latter had neither the brave nor the devout mind of Luther, and found it difficult at times to comprehend him. Many discussions did the two have on their way to or from Mansfeld, whither Alexis often accompanied Martin on a visit to his parents.

It was on one of these occasions, when Martin was returning home, that he was overtaken by a violent thunderstorm, and one terrific flash of lightning struck him senseless to the ground.

It was only a short time previously that Martin had been very much impressed by the tragically sudden death of his friend Alexis; perhaps the remembrance of this aggravated the shock, for as soon as he regained consciousness he appears to have been in an agony of terror. So awestruck and overcome was he that he made a solemn vow to God on his knees, that if his life was spared he would forsake the world and devote himself to His service.

According to the prevailing notion of those times, the only way to forsake the world was to enter a monastery, and this, after many conflicts, Martin did, a little later on in the year.

At this time the plague was raging with fearful results at Erfurt, and this, following so closely on the tragic death of his friend, seems to have had a depressing effect on Martin Luther, who went about with white troubled face and eyes full of anguish, debating within himself on the why and wherefore of it all, but confiding his thoughts to no one.

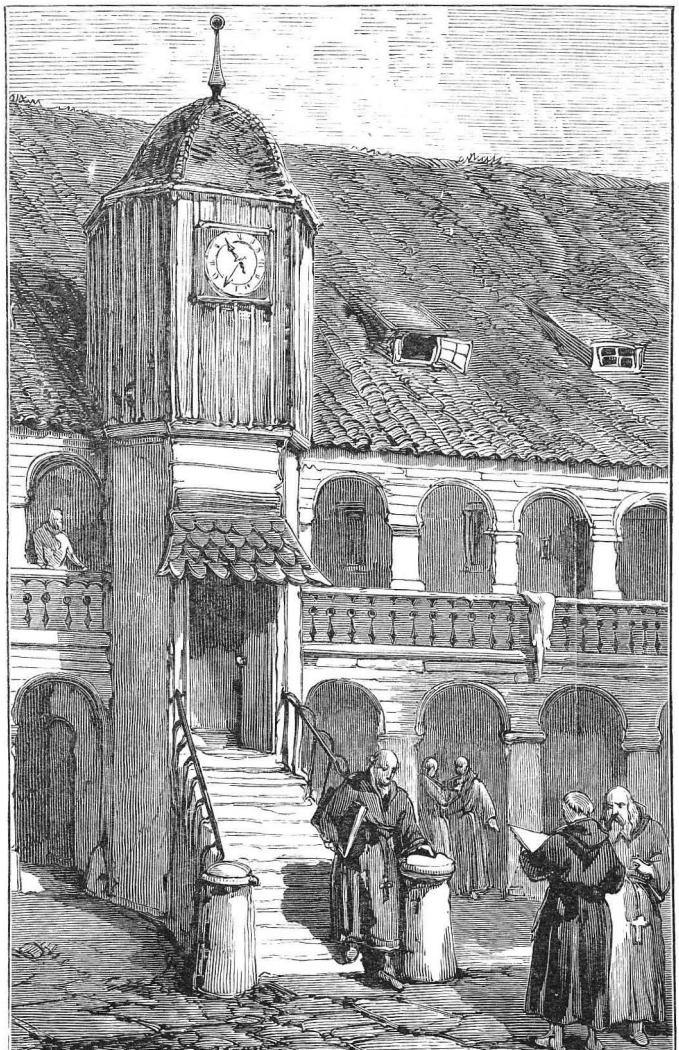
Truly nothing could have been more depressing than Erfurt at that time; a gloom like that of a huge cloud rested heavily on the town and university, and the inhabitants who had not flown crept through the streets with hushed footsteps and terrified faces, to escape. Large numbers who only a few days before had been in the best of health and spirits, full of youth and hope, were now lying dead, waiting for burial. Huge fires of cypress wood and juniper, myrrh, and green pine, were kept burning day and night in the streets, in order to purify the air; while sad processions wended their way slowly along, followed by heart-broken mourners, whose cries were occasionally varied by discovering the plague spots on either themselves or their friends. Most of the masters, professors, and students had

rushed wildly off to their homes, or to the villages in the Thuringian forest.

To add to the general terror, the remaining priests and monks preached to the people of the more awful terrors of the Day of Judgment, from which no one could flee, working them up to a pitch of frenzy, and thus making them much more susceptible to infection than before. In spite of this, however, the churches were thronged day after day, the heat and overcrowding causing men and women to be carried fainting out into the streets, where a great many were stricken down on their way home.

By the time the plague began to abate, Martin was in the lowest depths of depression, and on 17th July 1505, in fulfilment of his vow, he entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt.

It was a most bitter disappointment to his father. In the first place, Hans Luther had always hated the monks, and looked upon them as a set of idle, indolent men, leading selfish, unnatural lives under the garb of religion. He had had ambitious dreams for his favourite son, such brilliant visions of the future; he had hoped that Martin would make himself famous in the world, that his name would be in everyone's mouth, that he would perhaps even become rich as a doctor of law.



THE AUGUSTINIAN MONASTERY AT ERFURT.

For this end he had worked and striven, deprived himself of necessaries times without number, and through sheer hard work and industry was now a prosperous burgher of Mansfeld, and likely to become burgomaster. And the end of it all was that Martin entered a monastery and became one of those hated monks!

It seems as though, at that time, Martin, curiously enough, did not by any means realise that by taking this step he was blighting all his father's most cherished hopes. His one idea seems to have been to fulfil his vow, which he acknowledged himself in after life to have been made hastily and through the fear of death. In a letter to his father some time afterwards, he says—

"I became a monk—not willingly or by choice, still less to lead an indolent life and to fatten my body, but because, when I was encompassed by the terror and fear of quick-coming death, I vowed a forced and hasty vow."

But for a long time old Hans refused either to see his son or hold any communication with him, and although there was a reconciliation when Martin became a priest, nothing ever would or did reconcile the honest, outspoken old man to his son's connection with the detested brotherhood.

CHAPTER V.

MONASTIC LIFE.

Luther's Work—Begging in the Streets—His Anguish of Spirit—Breakdown in Health—Visit of the Monk and Choristers to his Cell—Reported to be dying—Father Staupitz.

HAT Luther's entry into a convent was a trial to him, and a very great one, there can be no doubt whatever. For one thing, he had to give up all his beloved studies, which of later years had become doubly dear to him, and formed a veritable part of his existence. The only books which he took with him to the monastery were Virgil and Plautus, which, devoted as he was to the classics, he could not make up his mind to forego.

Alas! it was of little use, for there was no time for such studies, as he very soon found. It was the custom for all new inmates in the monastery to be put to do the roughest and most degrading part of

the work, and as Martin happened to be the youngest brother in the whole community, everything that was laborious or specially menial was apportioned to him. Perhaps he had hardly realised what the stern reality would be.

At that time he had the idea that he could only hope for admission into the higher life by his own efforts, and that these efforts consisted in constant laborious work and bodily mortification.

It was his duty to clean all the dirty pots and pans; to wash and scrub the stone floors of the rooms, passages, and courtyard; to sweep the chapel; to open and shut the gates; and to do other and far more disagreeable offices for the other brothers. He was obliged to be up every morning at four o'clock, and to work hard for three or four hours before a bit of food touched his lips. Then, when after a long weary day's work, he had performed his manifold duties as porter, kitchener, sexton, and general servant, he was obliged to walk barefooted through Erfurt, a huge sack on his back, begging provisions from house to house.

A very pathetic figure he must have been, with his rugged face—thin and haggard now—and eyes full of a wild, restless, silent sorrow and melancholy; eyes which looked out from under his somewhat heavy eyebrows and the grey cowl of the Augustinian order, with infinite yearning for comfort and

peace. It was on one of these occasions, tramping barefooted through the thick snow, that he suddenly met one of the nieces of Dame Ursula Cotta, who had done so much for him. For a moment she took no notice—it being a common thing for the monks to be seen going round begging—and not recognising Martin Luther in the thin, gaunt monk, with hollow cheeks and deep sunken eyes. Then, suddenly realising who it was, she went impulsively forward and spoke to him.

"Martin!" she said. "Do you not know me?"

A quiver passed over Martin's face, but he held up his hands as though to ward her off.

"I am in the service of the monastery," he said quietly. "I break the rules if I talk or linger."

"God and the saints help you, brother!" she answered in a low tone, her eyes full of tears.

Martin half turned towards her, but checking himself quickly, bowed low, crossed himself devoutly, and muttering some benediction in Latin, went slowly and painfully on his way, his bent stooping figure and heavy downcast eyes being a great contrast to the upright boyish youth who used to sing in the streets of Erfurt with uplifted face and clear ringing voice.

So convinced, however, was Martin Luther that it was right to mortify the body and crucify the flesh, that he would himself continually invent

new and harsher forms of penance, in addition to those which he was obliged daily to undergo. He subjected himself to long watchings and fastings, going sometimes for nearly a week without sleep or food, thus putting a severe strain on his health, which had never been of the strongest.

But not even the extreme rigour of an ascetic life could free him of his anguish of spirit and agony of soul, for ever since that reading of the Bible in the university library he had been troubled with doubts and vague misgivings, and his conscience allowed him no rest. It was no wonder that, with all these sufferings combined, the health of the young monk began to break down, and in due course of time failed completely. He became deadly white and listless, and his frame was a mere skeleton; the only sign of life or animation about him was the bright, wild, almost frenzied look in his eyes.

From the other monks he got neither sympathy nor pity, nothing but supreme contempt, and, in some cases, what they considered justifiable anger. Why, they argued, should he be continually shutting himself up in his cell for prayer and meditation? That, according to their light, was neither serving the community nor using his time in a proper or satisfactory manner. They tried in vain to reason with him, to prove to him that his duty consisted in

working as a servant, in begging, and in collecting all kinds of food, or, in fact, anything he could get for the use of the brethren. But Martin, knowing how useless it was to explain his feelings to them, answered nothing, and, annoyed at his silence, they generally left him with cutting words and reproaches.

But there were a few kindly hearts among them, and when, one day, an old monk was told by the others how Martin had again shut himself up in his cell, and would neither allow anyone in or answer the knockings at his door, this old man took with him some of the chorister boys and went to the cell himself. Not receiving any answer to his repeated knockings, he at last opened the door by force, and on the cold damp stone floor, utterly prostrate and senseless, was Martin, completely worn out with his long and continued vigils.

After trying in vain to restore him to consciousness, the kind-hearted old monk, terribly distressed, suggested to the chorister boys that they should sing some of his favourite hymns. Music always had an indescribable charm for Martin, and the well-known airs seemed to restore him to life again. But with consciousness, all the old doubts, restless unsatisfied communings and questionings began again, and a short time after this a rumour went through the monastery that Martin Luther was dying.

Consternation was on every face and in every

LUTHER IN THE ERFURT LIBRARY.

heart, for in spite of the seeming hardness of some of the monks, Martin had, by his patience, gentleness, and wonderful forbearance, endeared himself unconsciously to them all.

The superior of the monastery, Father Staupitz, on hearing the news, hastened at once to the young monk's cell, and was distressed beyond measure at the sad, emaciated form and face of Martin. What the struggle and mental conflict had cost him was written only too plainly on the worn, attenuated body and in the sunken and now lustreless eyes.

Of a deeply sympathetic nature, Father Staupitz gradually won Martin's confidence, and very soon he had opened his heart to the good old man and told him all his trouble. He could not have had a more appreciative or attentive listener, for as it happened the superior had been through exactly the same kind of thing himself, but had come out triumphant, and was thus enabled to cheer and comfort Martin, who for the first time began to see things in a new and clearer light.

From this time Staupitz was one of Martin Luther's best friends, and showed him every possible kindness. He freed him from the menial duties and drudgery of the cloisters, and encouraged him to continue and persevere in his theological studies, giving him occasional help and every opportunity

of obtaining books and time in perseverance of this object.

From the time of his first conversation with Father Staupitz, Luther returned to the study of the Bible with redoubled interest. Father Staupitz lent him his own copy, and so diligently did Martin read it that in a very short time he could instantly turn to any verse that was mentioned. For the commentaries he did not care, as he argued that it was better to read and see the Scriptures with one's own eyes than with other people's. He was still uneasy and troubled at times; but, in between, he had glimpses of rare brightness which cheered and encouraged him to search deeper and deeper still. He worked hard at his theology too, and that he found the Bible of the very greatest use to him, is proved by his memorable saying, "*Bonus Textuarius bonus Theologus*" (A good theologian is he who is well versed in the Scriptures).

CHAPTER VI.

PRIESTHOOD.

Luther's Ordination—The Ceremony—His Father's Forgiveness—His Gift and Rebuke—Martin Luther goes to Wittenberg as Professor of Philosophy—His Preaching.

FTER much grave and careful consideration, and partly through the influence and persuasion of Father Staupitz, Martin Luther was ordained priest on 2nd May, 1507.

Although many of his views and feelings had changed, he still retained the notion of the special sanctity, by virtue of their offices, of those connected with the Church. It was therefore with the greatest solemnity and reverential awe that he received his consecration, and read mass for the first time.

The day of ordination was memorable in more ways than one, and had been specially appointed with a view to the convenience of Hans Luther,

who was present at the ceremony. All this time the honest old miner had held aloof from his son, and had made no secret of his just anger and displeasure at Martin's becoming a monk. In vain did his friends and relations plead with him on his son's behalf for forgiveness; the old man remained stolidly silent and immovable. It had been the great disappointment of his life, and he was unable either to forget or forgive. But that year troubles had fallen upon him thick and fast, and he had been sorely tried. The plague had stalked remorselessly into his home, and taken two of his sons, leaving him almost heart-broken; so that when, on the top of this, the report reached him that Martin too was dead, his anger melted into the deepest anguish, and all the old love for his favourite son returned.

Whether this report was circulated from device or accident is not known, but it had the effect of reconciling father and son, and Hans Luther was present at the ordination of Martin, with a cavalcade of twenty horsemen in honour of the event. Also, in accordance with the custom of that time, he made him a present of twenty golden guilders (about ten pounds).

The ceremony itself was most impressive, and had such an effect on Martin's highly-strung, sensitive nature, that at one time, had it not been

for a few firm, encouraging words from a brother monk, he would undoubtedly have swooned away. As it was, he had the greatest difficulty in getting through the service without giving way.

John von Lasphe, Bishop of Brandenburgh, officiated, and after the ritual solemnities were finished, there was a feast, for which Hans Luther also stayed.

And here we cannot help noticing how exceeding well and with how much dignity this sturdy, honest old miner behaved. Having once realised how useless it was to oppose Martin's determination to become a monk, and being reconciled, Hans had raised no objection to his son's assuming priest's orders, but had taken it all with good grace, making it known among all his friends and relations, and doing all possible honour to the occasion by being present with a retinue and giving the customary gift. But when, at the feast, the brethren commented upon the meritorious action of Martin in entering the monastery in spite of obstacles, and evidently expected Hans to join with them, they found they had no weak, easy-going individual to deal with, but a man with strong ideas and convictions of his own, and possessed of the courage of his opinions.

In answer to Martin's question, as to whether he would not now withdraw his disapproval respecting the monkish vow, Hans asked curtly—

"Have you never read in the Scriptures that it is a duty to obey father and mother?"

And Martin Luther had no answer to give him; for the words struck home, and he realised for the first time how little he had considered his parents in this matter, which affected them so deeply. Indeed, these words of his father seemed to have made a great impression on him, for in after years we often find him referring to them when speaking about the monastic life.

Hans Luther felt it was useless fighting against the inevitable, and now that Martin was of full age he made no attempt to coerce him. But his own convictions regarding the monastic life remained unchanged, and he had no hesitation in saying so or giving his opinion. After the ceremonies were over, he went back quietly to his forge, thinking no doubt of the two sons who were already dead, and of the third one, who was, in his opinion, also lost to him in all but name.

In the following year, Martin Luther, through the recommendation of Father Staupitz, was appointed by the Elector of Saxony, Professor in the University of Wittenberg. This university was founded in 1502 by the Elector Frederic, and had been classed by Martin once, when speaking of the Erfurt University, as "one of the academies."

At that time there were only about 179

MARKET-PLACE AT WITTENBERG, WITH TOWN-HALL AND STADT-KIRCHE.

students at Wittenberg, but this number rapidly increased, as Martin's lectures were from the very first a notable feature in the university.

He now felt the benefit of his incessant studies at Erfurt, for, in spite of his many penances and mortifications, he had continued his theological work throughout. His studies under Trutwetter had led him to pore over the bulky folios of Occam ("*mein lieber meister*," as he always fondly termed him), until he knew them by heart. The university brethren at Erfurt were loth, very loth, to let him go to Wittenberg, for they were keenly alive to his genius, and very proud of him, inasmuch as his learning reflected great honour and credit on Erfurt. But Martin was ready and willing to do anything that Staupitz advised, besides looking upon it as a duty, Father Staupitz being the superior of his monastery.

Martin's appointment was that of Lecturer in Philosophy, and he began, soon after taking up his abode in the Augustine convent, to lecture on the dialectics and physics of Aristotle. His heart, however, does not seem by any means to have been in these lectures; indeed, he expressed great dislike to them several times. Notwithstanding this, his vigorous delivery, his clearness of argument, and his wonderful ability to arrest and keep the attention of his hearers, led to his classroom being

thronged, and his fellow-professors came as students.

Martin did not care particularly for Wittenberg, neither was he in much touch or sympathy with the inhabitants. After pretty, picturesque Mansfeld, and lovely, dreamy Eisenach, Wittenberg was prosaic to a degree; and he considered the people cold and dull, somewhat coarse in nature, and with no ideas or wishes beyond their ordinary everyday humdrum life. The place or people never inspired him with either affection or enthusiasm.

There was, however, one pretty spot, some way out of the town, where he was fond of going to meditate by himself, and read or write. This was a little well about two miles from the Elster Gate; a background of rather scraggy woods sheltered the spot from wind or sun, and there many a time, after a hard day's work, Martin would wend his way and spend a quiet hour. He had the well enclosed, and a small shed or summerhouse built as a protection against weather. To this day the spot is still called "Luther's Well."

During his first course of lectures on philosophy, Luther still kept up a diligent study of the Scriptures, the Epistles of St. Paul engaging a great deal of his attention; he was also deeply interested in the works of St. Augustine.

At the end of this course, he lectured on theology

and divinity; and on 2nd May 1509 he obtained the theological Laureateship. This had been one of his dearest ambitions, and the attainment of it appears to have given him keen pleasure and encouragement. His Biblical lectures created a profound impression; and when, at Staupitz's suggestion, he commenced to preach, his impressive eloquence attracted considerable attention. He preached straight from the heart, in clear simple language. In his intense earnestness, he worked himself up to such a pitch of excitement that he would tremble from head to foot, and his voice would be heard for some distance outside the building; but he was never vulgarly blatant. Under that somewhat blustering manner there was always the innate refinement which was Martin Luther's great characteristic. He would say what he considered to be right, without thought of offending, and because he looked upon it as his duty; he could not wait to choose words, his object was to get at what he believed to be the truth.

"My husk may be hard," he would say sometimes, with a kindly twinkle in his eyes as he thought of his somewhat noisy lecturings, "but the kernel is soft and sweet."

CHAPTER VII.

FIRST VISIT TO ROME.

Journey to Rome—The Benedictine Monastery—Ascent of the Santa Scala—A Worldly and Vicious Priesthood—Luther's Disgust—His Change of Views.

BOUT the year 1511 an interruption occurred to Martin Luther's preaching and lecturing which was the means of influencing his whole life. This was a journey to Rome, which some authorities tell us was undertaken in fulfilment of a vow made years previously by him, while others say he was sent on convent business in company with another Augustinian monk, it being the custom for monks of that order to travel in pairs.

Luther set off with a brother monk in true pilgrim spirit, filled with lofty imaginings and devout expectations. He had, at that time, a great idea of meritorious service, and thought that good works done in that most holy city, Rome, must of necessity be much better than those done

in any other place. They went on foot the whole way, begging their food and shelter, which Luther would sometimes repay by performing a mass in the parish church, or promising to offer up prayers for the givers on his arrival in Rome. They were about eight weeks on the road, but Luther seems to have greatly enjoyed the change of air and scene, and the exquisite beauty of Italy. It was to him, he said, like glimpses of Eden. The charitable institutions and hospitals appear to have made a favourable impression on him, and called forth his warmest admiration; but he was disagreeably struck with the contrast between the bountiful richness of the Italian convent food and the hard plain fare of the German orders.

The two monks were received as honoured guests at the Benedictine monastery in Lombardy, and Luther was particularly surprised to see the floors inlaid with rich marble of various kinds, the tapestried walls, the costly furniture, and the tables covered with fine damask, and heaped with all the delicacies of the season. It is said that twelve thousand florins were expended annually at this monastery on guests, and judging from the lavish hospitality bestowed on Luther, it seems that guests were looked upon as the rightful claimants to part of its riches. But Luther, in his brusque, outspoken way made some remark respecting

the lavish outlay; and from the courteous, smiling entertainers came such malignant glances, that, being secretly warned that they were in danger, Luther and his brother monk deemed it prudent to continue their journey that same evening.

All through the journey Luther was in a transport of reverent expectation, longing for his first glimpse of the Holy City. Although far from strong in some ways, he was a fairly good walker, and the thought of getting daily nearer to Rome seems to have made him forget even the fatigue of an eight-days' journey. On he went; over the hot dusty plains, and up by the long mountain roads; under the trellised vine walks by the sides of the hills, with their cool delicious shade; through the valleys, fragrant with lavender and cistus, and green with olives and chestnuts, until at last the sacred towers and domes of Rome appeared in the distance. Overcome by his feelings, Luther went down on his knees and offered up a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Once inside the sacred gates, he proceeded to the Augustinian monastery, called by the Romans "The Porto del Popola," where he lodged while in Rome. His first act was to celebrate mass in one of the convent churches close by, and offer up prayers. He seems, at this time, to have been almost carried away by his superstitious piety and the religious associations of the place. He visited

shrine after shrine, looked at every real and imaginary relic with sacred awe, listened greedily and in good faith to the most incredible legends and traditions, and yet, with it all, felt neither convinced nor satisfied.

The flippancy and continual jesting among the prelates and dignitaries of the Church regarding the most sacred subjects were a great shock to him, and on more than one occasion he expressed his horror at the blasphemy and profaneness of it all. On one occasion, at a great feast, one or two openly expressed their disbelief in transubstantiation, although they in their preaching and teaching held forth the truth and reality of it.

Martin slowly became disgusted with the hollowness, mockery, and open wickedness of the place, and his feelings reached a climax one day when doing one of the many useless and futile actions which were supposed to earn for pilgrims special indulgences.

He was visiting the Santa Scala, an old stone staircase, said to have been brought from Pilate's house at Jerusalem, and to have formed, at one time, his judgment-seat. Up these twenty-eight steps, worn into deep hollows by the knees of pilgrims and penitents, Martin began slowly to make his way, for the accomplishment was to gain for him the indulgence of a thousand years. Each pilgrim had to go up on his knees, a painful and

tedious process; but when half-way up, the others were astonished to see Luther suddenly rise up, turn round, and walk quietly down again!

His belief in such nonsense had suddenly come to an end. On the way up, a familiar text had occurred to him, "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH," and as by a lightning flash he realised the mockery of the methods which were supposed to bring salvation and peace to restless, unhappy souls. He felt it was a revelation from God Himself, and it was as though he had been awakened from a dream.

Slowly, but surely, truth, reason, common sense, asserted themselves, and before long he was completely disillusioned. This wonderful city of Rome, which for years he had thought and dreamed of as one of the most holy, marvellous, glorious, and sacred of places, was in reality, he found, a very hotbed of crime, immorality, and all sorts of wickedness. From a devout believer in the Church of Rome, upholding all its rituals and doctrines, he became a determined heretic, denouncing the flippancy of its priests, the emptiness of its rites, and the horrible wickedness and depravity of its clergy. "If there be a hell," he exclaimed one day, in his hot, impetuous fashion, "Rome is built on the top of it!"

There is no doubt that the utter disdain with which the Romish priests looked upon Luther's beloved Germany had something to do with his

furious anger and disgust; but he had given the whole matter his clear-headed and most careful consideration, and although naturally quick-tempered and hasty, he was not a man to change his opinions without being able to show definite proofs and reasons for so doing. His keen mind at once grasped the fact that a change, a complete reformation, was urgently and imperatively needed. The gospel in Rome was represented by nothing but innumerable indulgences, perpetual singing and saying of masses, adoration of saints and so-called relics, while the very dignitaries of the Church itself led idle and vicious lives, and secretly scoffed at the very essentials of their creed.

All this was a rude shock to the German monk who had gone to Rome with such devout expectations. It was a terribly disappointing awakening from a pleasant dream, and although he had cause for satisfaction in knowing the real state of affairs, his disillusionment was very bitter, and must have cost him many a heart-pang. Martin Luther had gone to Rome a devout Roman Catholic; he returned a most earnest Protestant, and believed no more in the supreme sanctity of the Eternal City and the holiness of its spiritual dignitaries.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRIENDS AND FOES.

Return to Wittenberg—Friendship of Staupitz—Luther made Doctor of Divinity—His Lectures and Preaching—Staupitz's Absence—Luther preaches before Duke George—Tetzel and the Sale of Indulgences—The Ninety-five Theses.

IT was in a somewhat saddened but thankful spirit that Martin Luther returned to Wittenberg and took up his studies and lecturing again. He was glad, too, to see Father Staupitz once more. A strong friendship of the tenderest nature had developed between the two; Martin looked up to Staupitz not only as a wise, reliable counsellor, whose gentle help and cheering words had saved him from despair, but in his warm, impulsive way, idealised him as a very hero.

Staupitz, on his part, had the greatest admiration and affection for Martin, and was deeply touched by his devotion to himself. He also had implicit

confidence in him, and whenever he was asked whether, among his many monks, he had a man who was absolutely trustworthy, he always said, "Yes. Martin Luther: he can be safely relied on in any emergency."

Their friendship was broken by no disagreements, their intercourse interrupted by no petty quibblings; each spoke freely to the other, and was always ready to listen to the other's opinion.

Luther had, in some ways, insufficient self-esteem, although in others he was apt to be a little overbearing and dictatorial. In claiming any new honours, for instance, he was always shy and backward, and many of the offices he held were obtained entirely through the suggestion and help of Staupitz.

It was with Staupitz that the idea originated of Martin Luther claiming the degree of Doctor of Divinity, the highest honour to be obtained in the University of Wittenberg. Luther himself dreaded the vast responsibility, and declared he was both unfitted for and unworthy of it. Just at this time, however, he was in a weak state of health, and his spirits were consequently low and depressed. Sitting under the pear trees at Wittenberg, Luther and Staupitz talked it over together; Luther bringing forward every objection and difficulty, Staupitz meeting them all with unanswerable and convincing arguments.

Luther seems to have been impressed with the idea that, owing to his feeble state of health, his life would be short, and it was therefore useless to take up new responsibilities. Staupitz heard this

MARTIN LUTHER.
From a Drawing by ALBERT DÜRER

in silence, and then remarked in a quaint way of his, which never failed to rouse and cheer Martin, that if he were worked to death on earth, perhaps work would be found for him to do in heaven! But another obstacle—and this was a very real one

—was that Luther, who was very poor, had literally no money to pay the necessary fees. But even this difficulty was overcome when Staupitz announced the fact that the Elector would supply the fifty Rhenish gulden which were requisite for the purpose.

Finding all his arguments met in this way, Luther finally gave in, and the ceremony took place on 22nd October 1512.

It was looked upon as a great day at Wittenberg. All the bells of the churches were rung, as if for a Church festival; all the university authorities—among them being some of the masters, seniors, and brethren of his Erfurt convent—marched in procession through the streets, and the rejoicing and feasting were joined in by all. The degree was conferred by Dr. Andrew Bodenstein of Carlstadt, and the vow which Luther solemnly took on this occasion was looked upon by him as the seal of his mission.

"*Juro me veritatem evangelicam viriliter defensurum*" ("I swear vigorously to defend evangelical truth"), he repeated solemnly in his clear ringing voice, and those who heard him knew he would keep it.

After the oath, he was invested with the Doctor's robes, hat, and a massive gold ring presented to him by the Elector Friedrick, and from this time he was known as Dr. Martin Luther. After his return to Wittenberg he never called himself priest, friar, or monk; he valued his doctor's degree

very highly, and from the time it was conferred upon him, nothing gave him greater pleasure than to be addressed as "Dr." It was one of Luther's great characteristics, that no matter how much he had previously been opposed to a thing, having once decided in favour of it, he took it up with warm interest, devoted to it all his time and thoughts, and set to work with zeal to carry everything out thoroughly and to the very best of his ability.

He commenced his work with lecturing on the Psalms, and commenting on the Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Galatians. He studied his Bible unceasingly, and was deeply in sympathy with St. Paul, in whose life and history he had always taken the deepest interest. These early lectures and sermons of Luther's have a special interest, as at that time he was, though undeclared, at heart a Protestant, and held all the principles of the Reformation. His present state was one of transition. He looked upon the Church in which he had been brought up as his rightful spiritual home, but he was already beginning to shake its foundations by his wonderful preaching, setting forth his new views, investigating the why and wherefore, the origin and meaning of things, which before had been accepted placidly and without questionings. In preaching he used his wonderful reasoning powers, and brought his strong personality

to bear upon his hearers, but he always kept strictly to the gospel. Crowds flocked to hear his sermons and lectures, and a group of disciples already began to gather round him.

The year 1515 was a very important one in Luther's spiritual history, but very little has been written about it, and he himself at that time seems to have kept no record of his doings.

In 1516, Staupitz went to the Netherlands to collect and bring home some interesting relics to the monastery, and during his absence appointed Luther to be vicar. This not only gave Luther double power and authority, but laid upon him so many duties that it was with difficulty he could get through them all. In addition to other official duties, he had to inspect schools, give admonitions or charges to the brethren in various houses, keep order and discipline among the brethren, preach daily, read the portion of Scripture at meals, besides conducting nearly all the correspondence and looking after the household affairs of the monastery. But he loved his work, and in spite of his never robust health, managed to get through an enormous amount.

In the summer of this same year, Staupitz sent Luther to preach before Duke George at Dresden, in answer to his request for "a preacher worth hearing." So one hot Sunday in July, before Duke

George and all the ladies and gentlemen of the court, Martin Luther preached on the text, "*Ye know not what ye ask.*" The sermon simply electrified the listeners, and created a profound impression. Luther was not to be awed by any dignitaries of court or state, but in his straightforward, impetuous way thundered forth his belief and convictions, his rugged face lit up by his sparkling eyes full of earnestness and enthusiasm, and the absolute simplicity of his language making his discourse and arguments intelligible to the most ignorant.

Many remarks were made about this sermon. Luther's warmth and enthusiasm stirred up a few phlegmatic individuals into spirited praise of his powers of preaching; but others, who were uncomfortably conscious of having been roused from their self-satisfied, inert way of living, resented his plain speaking, and said bitter things about him. Duke George was both puzzled and perplexed; but although he made no move in the matter, apparently, he never forgot Martin Luther's words, but gave evidence years afterwards that he had taken them well to heart.

As Staupitz's vicar, another of Luther's many duties was to occasionally travel about for the purpose of visiting different orders. It was on one of these occasions, when at the monastery of Grimma that he heard of John Tetzel, a seller of indulgences.

The new Pope, Leo. x., was sending agents all through Germany to sell indulgences, or forgiveness of sins. These indulgences were short letters written by the Pope, promising complete forgiveness and absolution for various sins, and were sold by Tetzel for different sums of money. So much was charged according to the sin, and the money was supposed to go towards building a new church; but, as a matter of fact, Tetzel, who had been appointed to go through Saxony, kept the proceeds, or the larger part of them, for himself.

This man Tetzel would travel from place to place, attending the markets, fairs, or any crowded assemblage, attract the people round him and work upon their feelings, while his assistants would wander in and out among the crowd, indulgences in hand, shouting, "Buy! Buy! Buy!"

This traffic in indulgences was becoming a scandal to decency and religion, and when Luther heard of it he was furious, and determined to put a stop to it. The poor were shamefully imposed upon, and their last penny wheedled out of them in the most unscrupulous manner, while Tetzel promised pardon for all sorts of crime and wickedness.

Luther preached against him from the Wittenberg pulpit, denouncing his methods, exposing his frauds, and calling on all honest and conscientious people to help him put down this impostor. Not content

with this, he wrote to the bishops and princes, begging them to refuse Tetzel permission to go through their lands.

When, however, he heard that Tetzel had erected his booth at Juterbog, a few miles from Wittenberg, and was preparing to practise these frauds and impositions under his very eyes, he could stand it no longer. He wrote out ninety-five propositions, or theses, denouncing indulgences, and on Friday, 31st October 1517, boldly nailed them to the door of the Castle Church. Martin Luther's whole spirit was on fire at last, and when his wonderful sermons appeared, explaining the theses, his public life had opened: the Reformation had begun.

These theses had a marvellous effect on the German people; their power, their warmth, their vigorous and incisive arguments, and their convincing proofs of the sham and hypocrisy of buying forgiveness of sin, made them see the folly and wickedness of the whole system. A great many were as furious with Martin Luther as he was with Tetzel and his nefarious practices; but those ninety-five theses—not to speak of the daring act of nailing them to the church door—had one great result: they roused one and all from the state of listless apathy into which they had subsided, and like Martin Luther himself, Germany was, in a very short time, ablaze.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REFORMATION.

Result of the Ninety-five Theses—Demand for Copies—Luther as a Man—His Sympathy with the Poor—Tetzel's Rage—Publication of the Exposition—Dr. John Eck—Luther goes to Heidelberg.

E have now come to one of the most interesting parts of Luther's life, the time when he began his public career by boldly denouncing the sale of indulgences. In writing the ninety-five theses he had not only struck at the sale of indulgences, but had dealt a blow, and a forcible one, at the system which invented such things.

Had he known in what a marvellous manner these theses were to spread abroad over all Europe, he would, undoubtedly, have moulded and expressed some of them differently; but he had written them in a very fever of indignation, his one great idea at the time being to stop Tetzel from his scandalous

impositions. He had nailed up the theses on the eve of All Saints; he followed up this act in the evening by preaching a powerful sermon, calling special attention to the forgiveness of sin, and solemnly warning the congregation against the sale of these fraudulent papers. The Castle Church of Wittenberg was noted for its vast collection of relics, which had been accumulated for centuries by the princes of Saxony. Pilgrimages were constantly made to it, especially at this time of the year, as the 1st November, besides being All Saints' Day, was also the anniversary of the consecration of the church. Therefore, it was to no mere handful of brethren and townsfolk that he preached this sermon, but to a vast congregation composed largely of pilgrims and strangers.

At the end of the service, huge crowds thronged the entrance to the church, striving to get near enough to the doors to read the theses—not an unruly mob, but professors, citizens, students, and pilgrims, all eagerly scanning the written papers. As the time went on, the crowd increased; and at last one of the students translated the Latin into German, for the benefit of those who could not read it, and in order to keep some of the pressure off the doors.

After reading or hearing what was written, the people stood about in little excited groups, eagerly

discussing, arguing, and, in some cases, angrily denouncing Luther as a heretic. A great many pilgrims, who had travelled long distances in order to obtain the very indulgences Luther had written and preached about, finally returned to their homes with copies of the theses instead.

It was so new, so wonderful, and so comforting to hear that it was possible to obtain forgiveness of sins, not only without paying any money, but simply by going to God alone. The news was too startling for its full import to be realised at first, and so copies of the theses were most eagerly sought for, to be taken home and pondered over carefully.

So great a demand was there from every part of Germany in a short time for copies, that it was impossible to get them printed fast enough. Every printing press in Wittenberg was engaged for the work, both Latin and German, and no one seems to have been more surprised at the stir caused by these theses than Martin Luther himself.

Luther was at this time, the beginning of his public life, about thirty-five years of age, and in the very flower of his strength and manhood. As a boy, he had been slim, delicate, and fragile in appearance, and his health and body had been well-nigh ruined by privations, penances, and fastings. But at this time, when he was beginning his warfare against indulgences, he was in good

health, his body had filled out, his sinews and muscles had developed, he held himself erect, walked easily and well, and had every appearance of a strong muscular man.

He was a little over the middle stature and well-proportioned, and his face was wonderfully expressive of the man. Frank, honest, generous, his bright penetrating eyes looked out from under the rugged craggy eyebrows, changing, softening, or blazing with the fire of his indomitable will and energy, according to his mood. The pathetic expression of his boyhood had disappeared, and in its place had come the placid and yet determined look of a man who intended to say and do what he considered to be right, and who had the courage of his opinions. His features were rugged, and he had no pretensions to good looks, but it was a wonderful face, strong and earnest, and always indicative of his passing thoughts. Gifted with an extremely deep rich voice, capable of every modulation, he was able, at times, to carry all before him. He had the power of making his hearers think as he thought, reason as he reasoned, and believe what he himself believed; it was no wonder that his name soon became famous.

Another thing which made Luther so popular was that he always had the interests of the poor at heart, and was ever ready with his help and

sympathy. As a peasant's son, he knew only too well how bitterly hard the peasantry had to work. He never forgot the time when he had seen his father working laboriously in the mines, and his mother carrying home the heavy faggots of wood on her back. It was partly the thought of this which made him so bitter against Tetzel; he knew how hardly earned was a peasant's money, and he also knew how easily they could be talked over by a plausible impostor, and be induced to give up the little they had for such a boon as a Pope's indulgence. The first instinct of the Germans in the storm which arose over the famous theses was to side with Luther. By and by, however, when suspicions of heresy began to be associated with his name, and rumours were abroad of his opposition to the Pope, the more timid began to shake their heads and cool in their ardour for reform.

Meanwhile Tetzel, seeing his frauds exposed and his occupation in danger, lost no opportunity of vilifying Luther by the spread of calumnious stories. His cause was greatly strengthened by the help of a theologian named Wimpina, and with this man's assistance, and the authority of the Pope to back him, he defied Luther, and dared him to do his worst. It was significant of his feelings towards the Reformer, that one day, being asked why he had caused a huge pile of faggots to be

set blazing in the market-place, Tetzel replied vindictively—

"To burn the heretics; the Wittenberg heretic (Luther) shall have a bigger one still."

But for a time Luther kept out of the disturbance he had raised, and remained in the background. When, however, he found he was being attacked and maligned on all sides, and that the whole of the University of Wittenberg was being scandalised through him, he considered it time to come forward and defend himself. All through the winter of 1517–18 he worked very hard in preparing a treatise, in which he published, not only the whole of the theses, but a long and exhaustive commentary upon them.

This important work cost him many hours of thought and troubled communings with himself. He had not yet broken with the faith in which he had been brought up, but he was beginning more than ever to see through the artificiality and hollowness of it all, and he was moreover exceedingly anxious to declare the truth and the truth only. Day after day he pored over the Scriptures, and studied the best authorities, and in May 1518 the work was published, and sent to the Pope and some of the German bishops.

In it Luther declared the great need for a thorough reformation of the Church, which he

considered could only be accomplished by the whole of Christendom co-operating, and with the help of God.

The theses had caused a commotion, but that had been nothing compared to the excitement and controversy which the new publication called forth. Luther had numerous admirers and followers, the most devoted being the Wittenberg students, who regarded him as a veritable hero, and adored him accordingly; but he also had some formidable opponents, among them being an old personal friend, for whom he had the greatest affection and respect, Dr. Eck, of the Ingoldstadt University.

John Eck and Martin Luther had been fellow-students; and Luther, who was of a very affectionate nature, had grown to be very fond of him. When, therefore, a book was written, speaking of Luther in cutting, biting, scorching sarcasm, calling him all sorts of names,—among others, "a blasphemous, seditious heretic,"—and depicting him in the very blackest colours, Luther found it very hard to bear. But when he learned that it had been written by John Eck, he was pained indeed. It was, however, only a foretaste of the coming trials which he had to suffer for his new convictions.

About this time Luther also wrote short popular treatises; his interpretation of the *Magnificat*, his *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, and the *Lord's*

Prayer, making a great sensation. In this same year he was present at a general meeting of his order at Heidelberg, and preached a powerful sermon. The chief business to be transacted at this great gathering at Heidelberg was the election of officers, and Staupitz then resumed his office of vicar-general.

Luther seems to have passed a most pleasant time at Heidelberg, staying there about a month, and meeting old friends of his order, and men of Erfurt and Eisleben, some of whom insisted on seeing him safely back to Wittenberg.

CHAPTER X.

THE REFORMATION—CONTINUED.

Conflict with the Church of Rome—The Pope's Bull—Burning of the Bull by Luther—Melanchthon—Summons to Worms—Luther discontinues his Monkish Observances—Journey to Worms—The Diet—Luther refuses to recant.

THE next three years following Luther's publication of the theses—1519, 1520, 1521—were spent in a long, fierce, but triumphant struggle with the Church of Rome. At first there were endless disputations and conferences—the two greatest disputes being between Andrew Bodenstein of Carlstadt, another friend and colleague of Luther's, and John Eck; and John Eck and Luther.

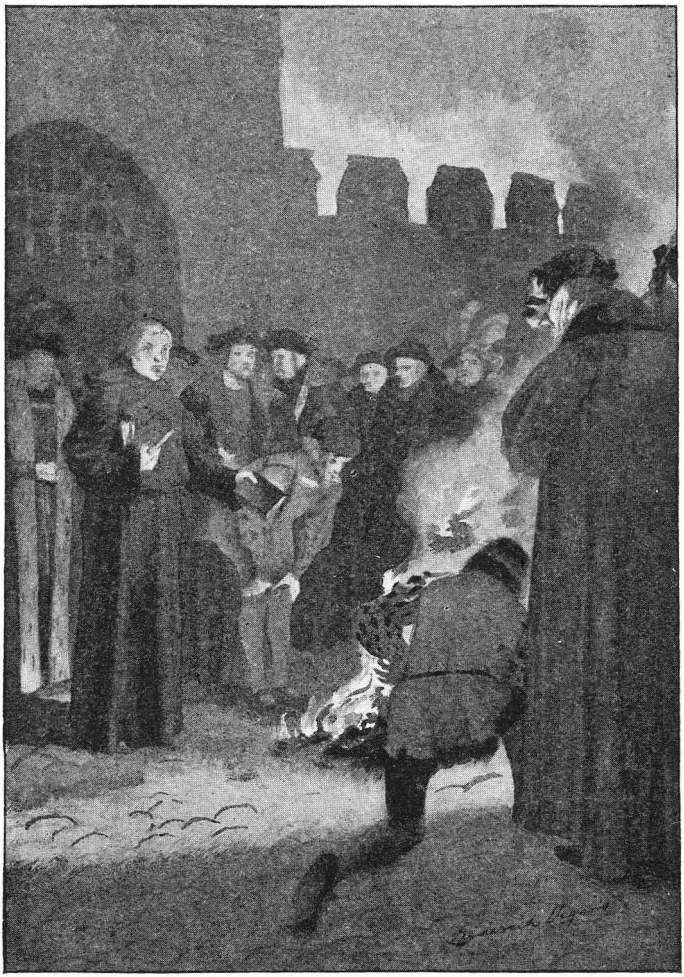
The year 1520 was an important one in many ways. The first great event to occur was the death of the Emperor Maximilian, who had been favourably impressed with Luther, and had watched his career with the deepest interest. His death took place just at a time when he might have been of signal

help to the Reformer, and his son Charles being elected Emperor, led to a revival of the old state policy which was inimical to change and reform.

The Pope of Rome getting genuinely alarmed at the state of ferment into which the country had been plunged through Luther's writings and preaching, issued a bull on June 15, 1520, in which he condemned Luther as a heretic, and excommunicated him. It was not until October that Luther himself saw the bull, and then, noticing that part of the punishment meted out to himself was that all his works and writings should be burnt, he determined to personally burn the bull itself in some public place.

Accordingly, on 10th December, at the east gate of Wittenberg, near the sacred cross, Luther had an enormous bonfire made, and before a huge crowd of admiring students, awestricken and half-exultant townsfolk, and strangers from all parts, he put into the fire, one by one, the books of papal law, and lastly the bull itself.

A solemn hush fell upon the crowd as the documents were cast upon the burning pile, and as the flames leaped up a curious scene was revealed. Martin Luther, in his monk's garb, with his grave, determined face, holding in his arms the decrees and documents of the Popes, looked quietly at the fire; and as the flames died down, kept



LUTHER BURNING THE POPE'S BULL.

adding fresh fuel until his arms were empty, and the papers which had stigmatised him as a heretic and excommunicated him from the Church of Rome were reduced to ashes. Then he walked quietly away, and the crowd dispersed, more impressed by this supreme act of daring than by all his work, preaching, and reasoning of the past few years. It was the first great act of public protest and defiance, and the boldness of it not only stirred the whole country, but caused men gravely to consider the iniquitous state into which the Church of Rome had fallen.

It was now quite evident that it would be an exceedingly difficult thing to crush Luther; opposition and denunciation only made him more determined to carry out his resolves and do what he considered to be right.

Rome had done its utmost and failed; it was now the Emperor's turn to do what he could. The Pope had asked the Emperor, Charles v., to help him to put down heresy in Germany, and after some debate Charles summoned Luther to appear before him at the Diet of Worms, 1521.

During all this trying time the greatest comfort to Martin Luther had been his friendship with Philip Melanchthon, the young Professor of Ancient Languages at the University of Wittenberg. Frail and delicate-looking, Melanchthon presented a

great contrast to Luther. The latter was rough, unpolished, rugged; Melanchthon was refined, nervous, and highly sensitive, and his timidity showed up all the more in comparison with Luther's daring courage. But the hearts of these two men of God were closely united. Luther had a paternal feeling towards Melanchthon, whose grace and gentleness attracted him strongly. A clever man himself, it was delightful to exchange ideas with one equally well informed, and even more thoughtfully wise. Melanchthon had, on more than one occasion, declared that he would rather die than be separated from Luther, so great was his affection for him; and when the latter was summoned to appear at the Diet of Worms, Melanchthon's nervousness and agitation were painful to witness.

It must not be thought, however, that Luther himself was not also fully aware of the significance of this summons. The few weeks previous to the Diet were passed by him in incessant hard work and continual wrestlings with himself, which, at times, threatened to make him quite ill. In his small cell in the Augustine monastery at Wittenberg he restlessly paced up and down, thinking out all the harassing and agitating questions which presented themselves to his mind. Worry always aggravated the attacks of dyspepsia to which he was a martyr, but he announced his intention—if

too ill to walk—of being carried to Worms. It was only the devil, he said, trying to stop him; and when he received grave warning from various friends that if he went to Worms, his life would be in danger, he replied defiantly—

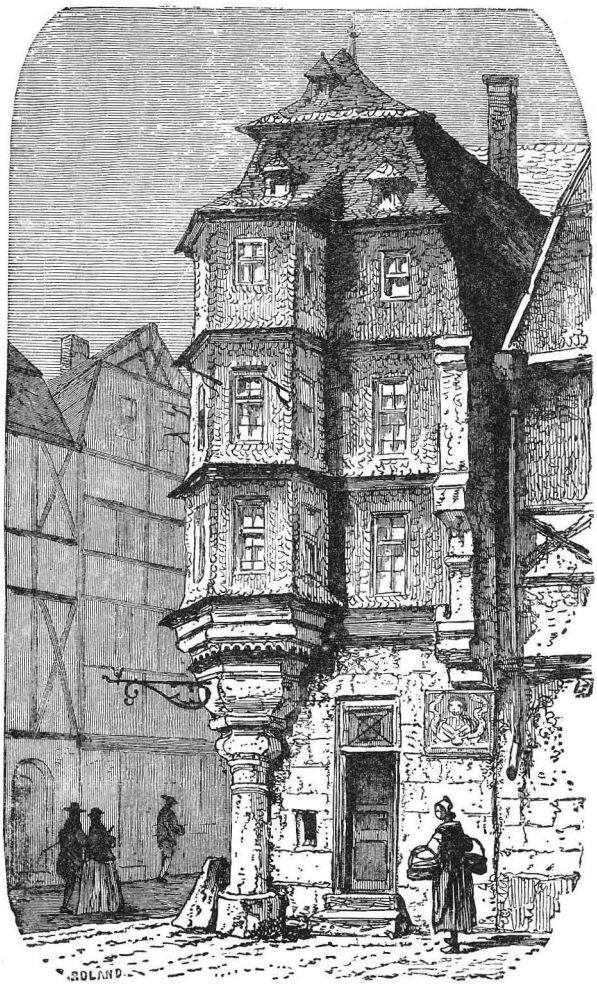
"If there were as many devils in Worms as tiles on the houses, I would go!"

It was at this time that he threw aside all his monastic observances, his rosaries and relics, his penances and privations, and decided to have no more set prayers or set times for prayer, no more ridiculous forms and ceremonies with unmeaning repetitions of set phrases, but to dispense with everything that was monkish except his dress and cell. He had finally been discharged from his vow of obedience to his order; and having obtained that, he devoted himself to his own reflections, prayers, and work, and expressed himself as being thankful that it was so. The amount of work he got through at this time was marvellous: he preached and lectured regularly; wrote long commentaries on the Psalms and New Testament; and devised, with the assistance of his artist friend, Lucas Cranach, a very clever book, which he himself called "a good book for the laity."

This book showed what powers of keen observation Luther possessed, and how bitterly sarcastic he could be on occasion. It contained a series of

woodcuts illustrating the differences between Christ and the Pope, with remarks and explanations in crisp, pithy German. The woodcuts were quaint in the extreme, and showed up the Roman Catholic customs in a way that was at once ludicrous and true. On one page, for example, was a picture of Christ washing the disciples' feet; on the opposite one, the Pope was represented holding out his toe to be kissed; Christ turning the money-changers out of the Temple, and the Pope seated in front of a table, with piles of money in front of him, selling indulgences; Christ bearing His cross, and the Pope being carried in state through Rome on men's shoulders; with many other instances which showed how carefully and thoroughly everything had been thought out by Luther, and how he was able to see through the incongruousness of the whole Romish system.

The journey to Worms was a memorable time to Luther; he believed he was going to his death, yet all the time felt convinced he had some special mission to fulfil. Crowds of people—mostly enthusiastic admirers—came out to meet and cheer him on the road. He halted successively at Leipzig, Naumberg, Weimar, Erfurt, Gotha, and Frankfort. It was a sort of triumphal journey, and yet, on every side, the imperial edict against the Reformer's writings was to be seen posted up in prominent places.



THE HOUSE AT FRANKFORT WHERE LUTHER STAYED.

Luther himself, although he felt at times seriously ill, was perfectly calm and self-possessed. The journey took just a fortnight, and on 16th April 1521, Luther entered Worms, preceded by the imperial herald.

The horn of the watchman stationed at the top of the Cathedral loudly announced his arrival, and thousands of people rushed out to see the monk who had done and dared so much, even to defying the Pope himself. But all they saw was a grave-looking man, in the brown garb of a monk, so cool and placid that most of them were astonished. Many warnings, threats, and doleful predictions had been thrust upon Luther during the journey, but he paid very little attention to any of them. At Naumberg he had been met by a priest, who silently held out to him the portrait of Jerome Savonarola of Ferrara, who had been burnt to death at Florence in 1498, by order of Pope Alexander VI. Luther looked at the portrait quietly, and then said contemptuously—

"Another wile of Satan to frighten me; he has already tried to stop me by sickness."

The evening before he was to appear at the Diet was spent by Luther in great anguish of spirit and most earnest prayer. But when the time came, he walked quietly and calmly in, and his face bore no trace of the struggles which he had previously gone through.

Two important questions were asked him by John Eck (an official, not the theologian): whether the books, pamphlets, treatises, etc., on the table were his, and whether he would recant and retract what was written in them?

Luther calmly acknowledged his work, but in answer to the second question, asked for time to consider it. He explained that as the matter concerned the highest of all subjects—the Word of God, and the welfare of souls—it should be gravely and solemnly considered. He had long ago made up his mind, but he was anxious to convince all that he was not taking this grave step without having carefully considered the matter.

When Luther again appeared before the Diet, and was asked whether he would recant, his answer was—

"Unless I have proof from Holy Scripture, I neither can nor will retract anything; for a Christian cannot be doing right to go against his conscience."

There was a dead silence, and then the Emperor remarked quietly—

"The monk speaks with an intrepid heart and unshaken courage."

Being asked again whether he would recant, after being warned that otherwise steps would be taken as to the best way of dealing with an obstinate

LUTHER SEIZED BY ARMED KNIGHTS IN THE FOREST.

heretic, Luther looked gravely round the huge assembly, and said in a grave, impressive voice—

"HERE STAND I. I CANNOT DO OTHERWISE; GOD HELP ME! AMEN."

There had been a silence when he had given his first answer, but it was nothing to the solemn hush which fell upon all present now. Every eye was turned towards him, as he stood there: a monk, the son of a peasant; one man against thousands, on whom the presence of emperors, princes, bishops, and dignitaries made no impression; a man who had dared so much, and seemed resolved to dare yet more.

Such an assembly would indeed have awed most men. In addition to the Emperor and his brother, the Archduke Ferdinand, there were present "the six Electors of the empire, whose descendants almost all became kings; eighty dukes, rulers of large territories; thirty archbishops, and other Romish prelates; many princes, barons, counts, and knights of good estate; seven ambassadors, including those of France and England; the Pope's nuncios; in all, about two hundred notables."

And yet, before all these people, Martin Luther stood, calm, composed, dignified, kingly, and with that already in his countenance which told them that what he meant to do he would do, and carry it through to the very end.

Finally, the emperor gave him three days to reconsider what he had said. Theologians and learned men came from all parts, trying their best to argue with and convince him, and to induce him to recant; but it was all of no use. Luther's mind was fully made up.

When the edict of the Diet was published, it was found that Luther was severely condemned, and had been placed under the ban of the empire. The meaning of this was that when his safe conduct expired, he would be an outlaw, and anyone giving him food or shelter would be severely punished.

Frederick, the Elector of Hanover, considering that Luther was in danger of his life, hurried him away from Worms as soon as possible, and had him carried to the fortified castle of the Wartburg. He admired and sympathised with Luther, and he saw that not only would a short period of seclusion allow the storm to blow over somewhat, but it would be good for the Reformer after the strain he had undergone.

On the road to the Wartburg, just by Eisenach, a band of armed knights met Luther and his party, knocked down the waggoners, put a knight's clothing on Luther, and carried him off. The Germans were widely in favour of Luther, and there was not only discontent, but threatenings of risings, when they found he had disappeared; but the agitation quickly

subsided when it was known that he was in safe keeping.

Luther himself, in a letter to Lucas Cranach, gives one of his characteristically abrupt and terse descriptions of the Diet at Worms:—

"Are these books yours?"

"Yes."

"Will you recant them?"

"No."

"Then be off!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE WARTBURG.

Enforced Rest—Translation of the New Testament—Luther's Life at the Wartburg—His Health—Fondness for Animals—Tired of Inaction—The Peasants' War—Return to Wittenberg.

REAT indeed was the contrast between Luther's life at the Wartburg and his life at Wittenberg. To him the whole world seemed to be changed. In place of the dull monotony of convent walls, he had a glorious stretch of woodlands and open country surrounding him. Instead of a bare narrow cell, his room was a comfortable one, with all the requisites for continuing his work with the pen. Instead of the numerous services, preachings, lecturings, visits, and the agitation attending recent events, there was quiet, seclusion, and compulsory rest.

After his exciting time at Worms, this quiet old castle, situated on the top of a hill, and

looking down on his beloved Eisenach, must have seemed a very haven of peace to Luther. His nerves had been strung to the highest tension during that trying time, and while the excitement lasted, in spite of his ill-health, he had not realised how spent and exhausted he was getting. It was only when able to sit still in the restful silence of the woods that he began to feel how much the strain had cost him.

This detention at the Wartburg was surely the very best thing that could have happened to him. It not only gave him time for leisured thought and meditation, but also the opportunity for accomplishing one of his most cherished projects—his translations of the Scriptures. Luther had long resolved upon it, but with his manifold duties and incessant work, it had hitherto been utterly impossible to find the necessary time. Now he had nothing to do *but* write, and write he did incessantly, taking infinite trouble and pains to secure clearness as well as accuracy, and correcting some passages in his MS. as many as fourteen or fifteen times. Whenever he was doubtful upon some technical point, he would write to one of his many friends, and the latter would be only too pleased and proud to help him.

Luther began by translating the New Testament. Translations had already been made into German,

but not from the original Greek. Luther's idea was to translate it into clear, forcible, homely language, and his success was so great that the appearance of the translation marked an epoch, not only in religious progress, but in German literature. To Luther's Bible, Germany owes an immense debt in many other than religious ways.

This translation of the Bible was, perhaps, Luther's most valuable contribution to the spiritual life of his people. He had spared no trouble; no detail was too trivial to be inquired into and explained; and so anxious was he to be perfectly accurate, that when translating certain passages which deal with the slaughter of beasts for sacrifice, he had some sheep killed, in order to learn rightly what every part of the animal was called. He expressed himself as anxious that his book should be in such simple language that it should be understood by all—"The mother in the house, the children in the streets, and the common man in the market."

This translation of the New Testament was published 22nd September 1522, and the whole of Germany felt its charm and influence. This was, however, only a fraction of Luther's work while at the Wartburg; letters, treatises, pamphlets, commentaries, etc., all emanated from that quiet study; and it was in this same year

that he began his translation of the Old Testament, a far more difficult and tedious work.

His life, at this time, was simple in the extreme; it was, in fact, much too sedentary for a man liable as he was at all times to dyspepsia, and the food which was provided for him was much too rich. As a consequence, he was often seriously indisposed.

His greatest pleasure was to roam about the woods and grounds in the intervals of work, and watch the squirrels and rabbits darting hither and thither. He was a great lover of animals, and would at any time go to much trouble in order to soothe or help any suffering creature.

At this time Luther must have presented a very different appearance to what he did as a monk. Instead of the plain woollen clothes of the Augustine order, the tonsure and clean-shaven face, he was dressed in a knight's clothes, hat, and plumes, and his hair and beard had been allowed to grow quite long. He went by the name of Squire George, and very few in passing through the woods would ever have recognised in this bearded knight the solitary monk of Wittenberg.

But although Luther's health troubled him much at the Wartburg, his literary activity was marvellous. It is said that in 1522, besides

publishing the translation of the New Testament and commencing the translation of the Old, he also produced one hundred and thirty treatises in addition to other writings. We hear a good deal about his being troubled by apparitions of Satan, and there are endless anecdotes about this; but there is no doubt that half these tales have arisen from popular misunderstanding of mere figures of speech. Possibly to this mistake we owe the story of his throwing his ink-pot at the Tempter. Luther undoubtedly *did* throw his ink-pot at the devil, inasmuch as he used more ink in showing up the devil's snares and subtleties with his pen than on any other subject.

Gradually the enforced confinement and seclusion at the Wartburg began to tell on Luther's health and spirits. Much as he enjoyed the quiet, and the opportunity of devoting himself to literary work, thoughts of his beloved students and friends made him restless and anxious. Disquieting rumours, too, began to reach him of rioting, such as the rough tearing down of crucifixes by his too zealous friends. He dreaded, also, being suspected of having deserted the field of battle, and being naturally combative, hated the idea of being considered weak or cowardly. As he himself said, when the Wartburg life had become almost intolerable to his restless spirit, "Rather

would I be stretched on burning coals than stagnate here, half dead! Ah! nothing on earth do I more desire than to face my enemies."

The news of the peasants' insurrection, and the visit of the so-called "prophets" to Wittenberg, who were the cause of most shameful rioting, decided him; and writing to the Elector, he told him he was leaving the Wartburg, and that he was doing so on his own responsibility.

Certainly no one could accuse Luther of cowardice after this. He asks for no protection, no help, but in his letter to the Elector, says boldly: "Do nothing. As for myself, let the command of the Emperor be executed in town or country. Do not resist, if they come to seize and kill me; only let the doors remain open for the Word of God."

Although warned that the most violent enemy of the Reformation, Duke George of Saxony, was waiting to execute the sentence of the ban, Luther left the Wartburg, and returned to Wittenberg on the 3rd March 1522.

CHAPTER XII.

RETURN TO WITTENBERG.

Luther's Views on Marriage—Back at Wittenberg—Disturbances and Riots—Luther's Works—Zeal of the Booksellers and Printers—His Hymns—Effect of Music upon Luther—Henry VIII. and Luther.

AMONG the many difficult questions which troubled Luther both before and after his departure from the Wartburg, was the question as to whether priests should marry.

At one time he had taken the prevalent view that it was an impious and unlawful act. Now, however, that he had carefully thought things out for himself, he saw it all in an entirely different light. For guidance he studied the Bible most carefully, and finally came to the conclusion that the sanctity of marriage extended to all persons alike, whether bishops, priests, monks, or nuns.

Luther, however, did not declare himself upon this point until he was himself convinced and was

able to give sound reasons for his opinions. He began by pointing out that compulsory vows of any kind were wrong, inasmuch as they were an outrage on the freedom of man. Then he proclaimed his belief that the enforced celibacy of the priesthood was in direct opposition to the Word of God.

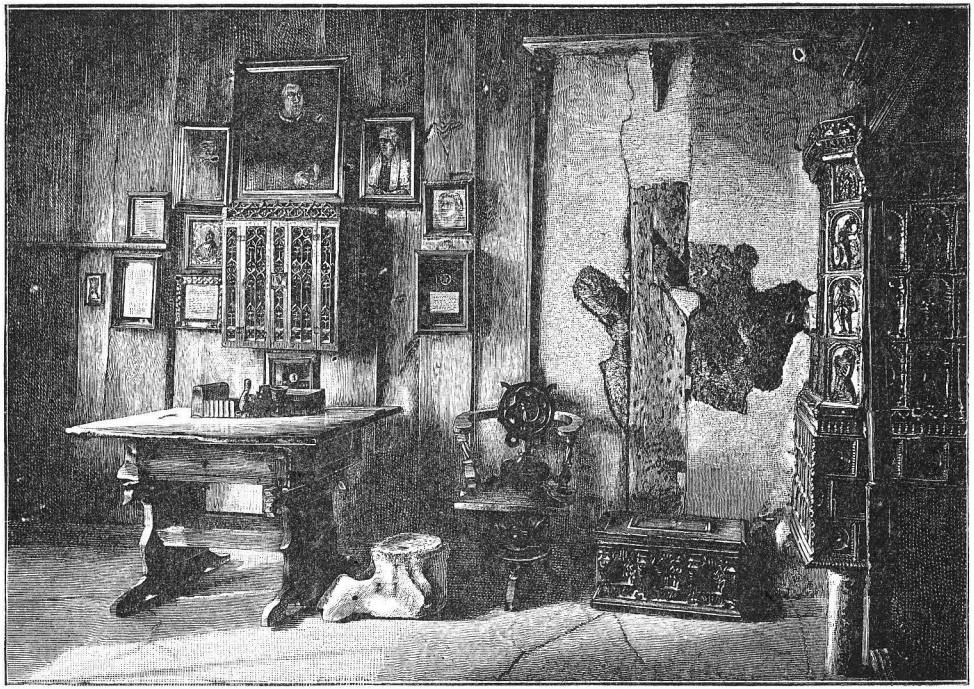
The agitation and controversy which this daring declaration aroused can well be imagined. Monks and nuns heard of it in their cells, and found themselves thinking about it in the midst of their devotions; the majority kept true to the Church of Rome and its teaching, but a few here and there came out as sympathisers with this new doctrine.

Nine nuns, under the influence of Luther's teaching, eventually left their convents, renouncing their religious vows. Foreseeing the dependent condition in which they would be placed by their daring step, Luther, poor as he was, did all in his power to help them, making great sacrifices, and on some occasions almost denying himself the necessaries of life in order to relieve them. That uncharitable things were said about him in consequence, goes without saying; but Luther cared not a jot for public opinion. He did what he considered to be right and just, and having a clear conscience himself, in all probability he heard little and cared less about all the calumnies and slanders which were circulated about him.

At this time, however, after leaving the Wartburg, he was so taken up with the riotous disturbances and the excitement of religious controversies then prevailing, that he had little or no time to attend to anything else. He found things were even worse than he had anticipated. His colleagues and adherents, carried away by their feelings, did violent and foolish things, which he utterly deprecated and condemned.

On eight consecutive days Luther preached against Carlstadt and the fanatics. At first, so excited were the people, that it was difficult to get them even to listen; but, in time, Luther's earnestness, his wonderful power of expressing his convictions and proving the truth of his statements, prevailed, and for a time, at anyrate, the danger was averted. He tried to show them that violence could never do any good to God's Word; that, on the contrary, it did a vast amount of harm, inasmuch as it brought out the worst traits of a man, and justified to a great extent the things which were spoken against them.

"The Word created heaven and earth and all things," he said; "the same Word must also now create, and not we poor sinners. *Summa Summarum*, I will preach it, I will talk of it, I will write about it, but I will not use force or compulsion with anyone. In this life everyone



LUTHER'S STUDY IN THE WARTBURG.

must not do what he has a right to do, but must forego his rights, and consider what is useful to his brother. Do not make a 'must be' out of a 'may be,' as you have now been doing, that you may not have to answer for those whom you have misled by your uncharitable liberty."

Just at this time, the printers and publishers were of the very greatest help to Luther, and their energy and zeal with regard to his works knew no bounds. They produced the whole of them entirely at their own risk and cost, issuing large editions, and getting them hawked about all over Germany. The well-known and celebrated printer of Basle, John Troberg, wrote to Luther, telling him how much his works were read, and how eager the people were to obtain them, even at Paris and the Sorbonne. "I have not," he wrote, "a single copy left of all that I have printed over again" (re-printed). "They are now all over the country. I have sent them to Italy, Spain, and every part where there are learned men, who always approve of them."

Another bookseller, a learned man called Calvi, of Pavia, took a quantity of Luther's works to Italy, and sold them there. He also wrote to Luther about his books and pamphlets, saying, "All the learned men of Italy will unite with me, and we will send tributary verses from our most distinguished writers."

At Nuremberg, Strasburg, and Mayence, even the smallest pamphlets and treatises were most eagerly sought after, not only by learned men, but by the very poorest, who often went without a meal in order to get even a few words written by the wonderful monk.

Another great help to Luther was his hymns; and there can be no doubt that he gained the ear and sympathy of the German people as much by his sacred poetry as by his preaching, writing, and personal influence. His well-known beautiful hymn, "Great God, what do I see and hear," which contains all the elements of his creed, was a great favourite of his.

His first hymn-book, which was published in 1524, only contained eight hymns; but the following year more than forty were published, and what hymns they were! Sweet, simple, forcible, they touched and captivated all hearts, and it soon became quite a common thing to hear fragments of his hymn tunes sung by the people as they went about their daily tasks. It was here, too, that Luther's knowledge and love of music stood him in such good stead; and he himself was only too thankful to be able to consecrate these gifts to the highest use. He not only had a musical ear, but also the faculty of harmonising the words of the hymns with the tune, which is one of the reasons

why his hymns have never lost their influence of popularity.

Throughout his whole life music had a marvellous effect on Luther. It will be remembered how, when found senseless on the stone floor of his cell at the Erfurt monastery, when all other means of restoring him to consciousness had failed, the choristers' hymn roused him, and acted like a charm on his troubled spirit and poor bewildered brain. It was always the same; when perturbed or in sorrow, music helped, soothed, and comforted him in a way that nothing else could; when low-spirited, it cheered and encouraged him; and in times of happiness, music, he declared, was the grandest way of expressing joy.

When speaking to parents about their children's education, Luther invariably recommended their being taught music, and laid stress upon the power it had of softening, ripening, and brightening the spirit. "Music," he said, "is a delightful and lovely gift of God; often has it excited and moved me so that it has quickened me to preach."

A touching incident occurred at the market platz, a few weeks after the publication of Luther's first hymn-book. An old blind shoemaker, who was greatly taken with the hymns, used to stand day after day, surrounded by a crowd, and sing them right through, only stopping for a few

minutes' rest when he came to the end, and then singing them all over again. In vain the monks tried to silence him, threatening him with all sorts of punishments; it was worse than useless, the crowd drove the monks away, and asked the blind old man to repeat them again and again. In this way, too, enormous numbers of the hymn-books were sold, many of the listeners taking them to their homes, and showing them to their friends in all parts of the country, so that the circulation increased to an amazing extent daily.

Numberless anecdotes are told about one of Luther's most celebrated hymns, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" (Our God is a stronghold), a paraphrase of the forty-sixth Psalm, which was always a comfort to Luther. It was quite a customary thing for him to say to Melanchthon and other friends, when harassed by some new difficulty, "Let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm," and the singing of it always calmed and sustained him.

Many interesting things are associated with this hymn. Luther, with his followers, chanted the words of it as they entered Worms; the well-known brave and pious Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, the hero of the Thirty Years' War, sang it with his soldiers on the morning of the battle of Lutzen, to the accompaniment of trumpets; and

so stirring and popular did it become, that it has been called "The Marseillaise of the Reformation."

Henry VIII., King of England, while glad of the arguments and denunciations levelled by Luther at papal pretensions, was outwardly indignant at the contempt of courts and kings which Luther also displayed, and by his command Lord Chancellor Wolsey, in presence of an enormous crowd in St. Paul's Churchyard, superintended the burning of the Reformer's books and pamphlets.

This act, however, instead of doing Luther harm, did him a great deal of good, inasmuch as it advertised his works and aroused considerable curiosity about them. Henry prided himself on being a good theologian, and it seems to have been Luther's *Babylonish Captivity* that specially incensed him. As a prince, Henry had learned a good deal more theology than is customary for princes, and now he took the opportunity at once of posing as a champion of orthodoxy and of displaying his own erudition by composing and writing a treatise. He entitled it "A DEFENCE OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS, AGAINST MARTIN LUTHER, BY THE MOST INVINCIBLE KING OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE, HENRY THE EIGHTH OF THAT NAME." Pope Leo was delighted, and conferred on the English monarch the title of "Defender of the Faith." This was in October

1521, and in July 1522, Luther published his rejoinder.

At the Diet of Worms, Luther's demeanour had been quiet and gentle, although firm; but in the controversy with Henry VIII. he adopted a different tone altogether. His reply was curt, defiant, coarse, and acrimonious. In vain his friends pointed out that he would only arouse fresh animosity, and that it was but adding fuel to the fire. Luther cared not a jot; he had come to the conclusion that the only way to deal with his papist opponents was to be as rough and curt as possible; he had, for a long time, been meekness itself, but the meeker he was, the more angry and overbearing had the enemy become. Now he put aside mild words, and took up a position that was defiant and uncompromising.

He maintained that, under certain conditions, such an attitude was justifiable, and quoted as examples, Christ, who had spoken of the Jews as a generation of vipers; Peter, who told Simon Magnus to take himself and his money to the devil; and Paul, who stigmatised all who were against the truth as dogs, liars, and messengers of Satan.

Needless to say, after this reply of Luther's, Henry was simply furious; he never forgot or forgave it, not even when, in after years, at the

commencement of the split between Henry and the Pope, Luther, who had resumed his old former temperate mode of address, wrote, apologising for his book, and expressed the hope that God was softening and opening the King's heart. Henry's only reply was a contemptuous, biting speech, desiring never to hear from him again.

Meanwhile the Reformation was making progress, slowly but surely, in spite of all difficulties and obstacles. Luther preached and worked, not for kings or those in high places, but for the people; and the people, in whose hearts and minds he figured so largely, responded in a manner and in such numbers as to surpass even Luther's expectations.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARRIAGE.

Opposition to Luther's Marriage—Catherine Von Bora—The Wedding—Luther's Home Life—His Children—His Love for his Wife and Children—The Death of his little Daughter.

ALTHOUGH Luther had, for a long time past, advocated marriage, it came to most of his friends and acquaintances as an overwhelming surprise when he announced the fact that he himself was about to take a wife.

Very few were in favour of it, and the majority most strongly disapproved. It was predicted that this marriage would completely undo all the good work which the Reformer had striven so hard to accomplish; that it would give a certain semblance of truth to the scandalous reports which had been circulated with regard to the assistance he had rendered to the escaped nuns, especially as Catherine Von Bora, his intended wife, was one of those who

had left their convents through the influence of Luther.

The Papists stood aghast at what they considered the impious union of a monk and nun. The scandalmongers were exultant, for it seemed to verify what they had insinuated, and the most outrageous rumours soon got into circulation.

In many ways, it certainly did appear an eminently unwise act just then. Luther was overwhelmed with work and worry; Germany was in the throes of a frightful social struggle; and Frederick, who for so many years had been a true friend to Luther, was slowly dying. Moreover, Luther himself was so extremely poor that when the marriage was about to take place, he was obliged to ask for gifts from his various friends when inviting them to the wedding. Even Melanchthon did not approve, and, in his gentle way, attempted to dissuade Luther from what he considered to be a most unwise step.

But Martin Luther was not to be moved when once he had made up his mind; he was not doing it hastily or from any sudden impulse. Indeed, there is every probability that he would never have married at all, had it not been that he had heard, in an indirect way, that Catherine Von Bora cared for him.

Catherine Von Bora came of a noble but poor family, and was born at Steinlausitz on the Mulde

in 1499. When ten years old she had been put into the convent of Nimptsch near Grimma, and was there under the superintendence of Staupitz. There is every probability that when Luther acted as Staupitz's deputy, Catherine, just then budding into womanhood, was taken with his preaching and wonderful personality, and in the solitude of the convent thought about him more than perhaps she ought to have done.

When Luther was sent to the Wartburg, Catherine was twenty-two, capable of thinking out things for herself, and of judging what she considered to be the right course of action. It was in the spring of 1523 that she eventually left the convent in company with eight other nuns, and took a situation in Wittenberg, in the house of Reichenbach, a man of good position, who acted as municipal secretary. Here again at Wittenberg she saw and heard a good deal about Luther, as the artist Cranach and his wife were great friends of hers.

Had Luther searched the world over, he could not have found a more devoted or suitable wife. In disposition Catherine was the very reverse of her affianced husband; placid, quiet, not the least excitable, she presented a striking contrast to him, with his abrupt manner, hearty tones, and, at times, hasty temper. She was not beautiful, but had a

prepossessing face, with gentle eyes, and quiet, unassuming ways.

This was the woman whom Luther, in spite of all warnings, and in the teeth of every opposition,

CATHERINE VON BORA, LUTHER'S WIFE.

took to wife on 13th June 1525, giving as his reason, in his quaint, rough way, that it was to spite the devil. It was just at the crisis of the Peasants' War, and there was every probability that

Luther might fall a victim to its fury, and realising this, he had resolved thus to add his own personal example to his preaching and testimony against celibacy.

To the many who were shocked and scandalised at the marriage, there was one exception. Old Hans Luther was simply delighted. He had always hated monks, and strongly disapproved of their manner of living, and it was with the very keenest satisfaction that he saw his son's long contest with the papacy crowned by this last defiant act of marriage.

The wedding was a very quiet one, and took place in the house of his friend Sladschreiber, the town-clerk of Wittenberg, in the presence of a few of his most intimate friends. Dr. Bugenhagen blessed the union, and the witnesses to the deed were Apel the lawyer, and Lucas Cranach the artist.

For some time after the marriage there was a general expectation that the young couple would be visited by some dire calamity or sorrow, as a judgment of God for their impiety; but as time went on, it became more and more evident that the union was in every way a wise and happy one, and that Luther, instead of being hindered in his work and career, was considerably helped and strengthened by his home-life. Luther had always

been inclined to be a trifle morbid, and from his very boyhood had had an idea that he was going to die; his marriage seems to have dissipated this notion completely, and there is a different tone throughout all his works and writings after that event.

He was in his forty-second year, and his life had been one long strain of toil, worry, and acute mental strain; he had looked upon his marriage as the performance of a solemn duty to God and man, and as a protest against the error of enforced clerical celibacy; he had not realised the joys and comforts of a home-life, and for some time he could not help expressing his surprise that a wife could so alter and brighten a man's life.

There were six children born of this marriage, and Luther's love and devotion to them was most touching. Behind all the zeal of a reformer he had a very affectionate nature, and could be most tenderly sympathetic and lovable. He had strong domestic instincts, and as a husband, father, and head of a household, he was a very model. The love, influence, and sympathy of a wife softened and rounded off his ruggedness, and made him more gentle and refined. His firstborn child was called Hans, after his grandfather.

A very well-known picture of Luther's home-life depicts him seated near a Christmas tree, which is

laden with tiny lighted candles and all kinds of toys. He is holding his youngest baby in his arms, a second is clinging to his knees, a third looking at a picture-book, the eldest girl, Magdalen, is nursing a doll, and the eldest boy, Hans, is shooting a crossbow at the tree, trying to knock off one of its many treasures. By Luther's side stands his wife, Katie, as he always fondly called her, a happy and proud wife and mother, looking smilingly at her husband and children.

Luther's domestic life lasted twenty-one years, and although many sorrows came with the joys, he invariably speaks of his married life in the happiest and most exultant strains. One of the greatest griefs was the death of his eldest daughter Lena, who died on 20th September 1542, in her fourteenth year. Luther seems to have felt this most acutely, and for some time afterwards was quite inconsolable; Magdalen was a thoughtful child, of a very affectionate nature, and had become one of her father's favourite companions, so that he missed her terribly. But he was brave through it all, and set himself to comfort the bereaved mother, forgetting his own anguish in sorrow and sympathy for her.

When Magdalen was dying, Luther said calmly, although his ashy face showed what he was suffering, "I love her much; but if it be Thy will, O

God, to take her, I shall gladly know she is with Thee." And when she was buried, he expressed himself as being quite satisfied. "She is well cared for," he said simply. "She is provided for, body and soul. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

CHAPTER XIV.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC WORK.

Luther's Refusal of Payment for his Writings—His Wonderful Faith—Catherine's Expostulations—Luther's Reply to Erasmus—Diet of Spires—Hans Luther's Illness and Death—The Diet of Augsburg—Coburg Castle—The Confession of Augsburg.

FROM the very first, Luther refused to take any money for his writings, making free presents to the printers of his many MSS. The printers, at that time, were also the publishers and sellers of publications, and they offered Luther four hundred guilders annually for having the privilege of producing his works; but this he would not hear of. "To me," he said, "it would seem like making merchandise of the grace of God. I have enough."

Neither would he take any fees for his lectures, although the preparation of some of them took a vast amount of time and labour.

"It was my intention, after my marriage," he tells us, "to lecture for pay; but as God anticipated me, I have all my life sold no copy of my books, nor read lectures for money; and, if it please God, I will carry this honour to the grave with me."

Melanchthon, to whom it was always the greatest pleasure to be able to do something for his beloved friend, promised that he would obtain one thousand guilders for Luther's translation of Æsop, if he would only finish it. Luther had begun translating it before he was so much taken up with theological writings; but in answer to Melanchthon's offer, he thanked him, and said, "My wish is now to labour only for the diffusion of the gospel, and to write books for spiritual profit."

Even when, after translating the Bible, the Elector, John the Constant, offered him, in 1529, a share in a rich silver mine at Schriceberg, as some slight recognition of his labour, Luther refused it, and his refusal invariably was in words to the same effect: "I have never taken a penny for my works, and never asked it. It better becomes me to pay the amount of my share with a prayer that the ores may continue productive, and that the product may be well applied."

It has been a wonder to many how he contrived to live; for, after his marriage, he had a household and large family to support, and, in addition, was

always being asked to contribute something towards charitable objects. Yet, although he was poor, he never actually wanted; he was always receiving presents from various quarters, many of them being sent anonymously. A little money came in also from some fields which belonged to his wife. There were times, however, when he was in very great straits, and, not knowing which way to turn, had either to borrow money from his friends, or sell or pledge some of his belongings. In one place, we are told, he pledged three silver cups for fifty guilders, and a fourth for twelve, and was in great distress at having unavoidably got into debt.

A great many considered that, having married a wife, Luther was greatly to blame for not taking money for his work, and so providing more comfortably for them both in the present and future. As he had married to set an example, so he should set an example with regard to keeping them comfortably. It was an excellent opportunity for those who had jeered at his marriage to say uncharitable things about him, and they naturally made the most of it. But for all this, Luther cared nothing; he did what he considered to be right and just in all things, and was prepared to take the consequences. "The Lord will provide," was his motto.

Luther's instinctive generosity sometimes ran away with his discretion. Occasionally, he would

MARKET-PLACE AND CATHEDRAL AT WORMS.

give away, on the impulse of the moment, what his own family would have been glad of. Catherine, mild and placid as she was, could not fail to be annoyed occasionally by his imprudence. She was an excellent housewife, careful and economical, and these impulsive acts must, undoubtedly, have been very trying. She was a good, charitable woman, and an ideal wife as regarded falling in with her husband's wishes; but she was also a mother, with all a mother's love and care for her offspring, and it distressed and annoyed her to see things given away which her own children needed badly.

It was in vain that she expostulated and argued with him, trying to point out that his own children's welfare should come first. He stuck to his motto, "The Lord will provide," and nothing would move him.

"My dear Catherine," he said one day, in answer to her expostulations, "do not grudge giving, if we expect to receive. I knew a woman at Zwickau who herself must now go begging, because she used to slight the poor country people."

And Catherine, like a sensible woman, finding argument was of no use in this matter, gave it up, and let him do as he thought best, keeping, however the management of the finances in her own hands as much as possible.

It was soon after his marriage that Luther wrote his celebrated reply to Erasmus, who had withdrawn

his qualified approbation, and the two were now openly at variance. Luther acknowledged that Erasmus was a "dear, high man, graced with many dear, noble, costly gifts by God," and that his learning, experience, and understanding were far in excess of his own, adding that he will pray that God may make him as superior in grace as he already is in other respects.

Fond as Luther was of his home, he never allowed it to interfere with his spiritual work in any way. He left it when necessary, and, for the time being, devoted himself entirely to the work he had in hand, saying he committed his wife and family to God. At the Diet of Spires in 1529, he worked very hard, and it was about this time that the Evangelical Princes and Free Cities of Germany began to organise resistance to the Emperor and the Pope.

John of Saxony, Philip of Hesse, the Prince of Anhalt, the Dukes of Lunenburg and Brunswick, representatives of twelve free cities, and Strasburg and Nürnberg, entered a solemn protest against the popish resolution; from which act arose the term PROTESTANTS, a name now familiar throughout the world.

In February 1530, Luther heard that his father, Hans Luther, was dangerously ill. Deeply distressed, Luther's first impulse was to rush off and soothe the last hours of one who had always shown

the greatest solicitude for himself. But this could not be. Public affairs claimed his attention and presence elsewhere, and it was quite impossible to get away; the Diet of Augsburg was approaching, and a multitude of other things had to be considered. The only thing to be done was to write and beg both his parents to come to Wittenberg, to be nursed and looked after by himself and Catherine. The latter had always been a great favourite with the old people, and she now begged, "with tears in her eyes," that they would come, and she would do all she could for them.

The letter was an urgent and affectionate one, and every argument was used to persuade the aged couple to take up their abode in Wittenberg; but poor old Hans was far too ill to undertake any more journeys save the last one of all. To Luther's intense grief, he died without seeing his son again.

The approaching Diet brought no end of work and fresh responsibilities, and Luther shouldered his new burdens with even more than his usual zeal. No doubt, he was thankful for any work which took his thoughts away from his sad bereavement.

The Diet was summoned for the 8th April, and in March the Elector invited Luther, Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, and Bugenhagen to a conference at Torgau concerning the Diet. On the 3rd April,

a long cavalcade, consisting of over a hundred and sixty horsemen, might have been seen moving solemnly along the road to Augsburg, led by Prince John, and from the lips of each rider rose Martin Luther's grand hymn, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott."

They reached Coburg on Easter Eve, and here Luther was left at the fortress, while Melanchthon and the others went on to Augsburg. Melanchthon, on whom devolved a large amount of work, had always thoughtful consideration for his friend in the midst of it all, and just before leaving Luther at Coburg, he expressed a fear that he would be dull and lonely. But Luther could always adapt himself to circumstances, and find much to do wherever he was.

In answer to Melanchthon, he said he had much to think out and reflect upon, and that he should devote himself to studying the Psalms and the Prophets in furtherance of his great work of translating the Old Testament.

Meantime, the chief part of the work of the Augsburg Diet rested on Melanchthon, who, however, relied always on the advice of Luther. Very important was the outcome of the Conference—the presentation of the Confession of Augsburg, which took place on 25th June 1530, in the presence of the Emperor, the Elector, John the Constant, the

Margrave, George of Brandenberg, and Philip of Hesse. Luther was still at Coburg, as the ban of the Worms Edict was not yet removed, and it would have been most unwise to disregard it; but he was naturally deeply interested in all that went on, always ready to give his counsel, and constantly praying for the prosperity of the cause. In one of his many letters to Melanchthon, he says—

"I am in truth faithfully by your side. The cause concerns me also, indeed, more than any of you; and it has not been begun lightly, for the sake of honour or worldly good. In this the Holy Ghost is my witness, and the cause itself has showed it until now. If we fall, Christ falls with us; He, the Ruler of the world! And though He should fall, I would rather fall with Christ than stand with the Emperor. Christ is not false, I know. . . Great is my joy to have lived to this hour, when Christ is proclaimed before such an assembly, through so glorious a Confession!"

CHAPTER XV.

CLOSING YEARS

Close of Luther's Life—Bad Health—Attempts on His Life—Narrow Escapes—His Zeal as a Reformer—His Wonderful Capabilities—General Summary.

UTHER'S life, with all its hardships, trials, discouragements, and triumphs, was now drawing to a close.

Although, originally, he had possessed a strong constitution, this had, throughout his life, been so severely tried by poverty, severe mental conflicts, and domestic griefs, that towards the end of his life his health was very broken. It will be remembered how terribly he suffered in the monastery at Erfurt from anguish of spirit; how, at the Wartburg, he was a very martyr to dyspepsia; and how, through all his younger days, his active brain and strong emotions constantly exhausted his system.

While staying at Coburg, he had terribly racking

headaches, giddiness, and continual ringing in the ears, which irritated and distressed him greatly. It was not one ailment he suffered from; he had many. When much excited—as at the conflict at Wittenberg—he was subject to acute, though short, attacks of fever, which left him as weak and helpless as a babe; his digestion was never good, and he was subject to distressing boils. In addition to all this, he had an affection of the throat and chest, and some internal complaint.

His intense grief, too, at the loss, first of his little daughter Elizabeth, and then of Magdalen, not to speak of his father and one or two dearly-loved friends, did much to break down his health and make him prematurely old.

But ill-health and bereavements were not Luther's only troubles. We have already spoken of his poverty, and the straits to which he was reduced at times; in addition to all this, he had, on several occasions, been in great danger of assassination.

Several attempts were made at secret poisoning, which were difficult to guard against; and here, again, Luther had some very narrow escapes indeed. In 1520, a doctor was promised two thousand ducats by some Polish bishops to poison Luther. The doctor was willing, and matters were arranged; but the bishops mentioned it to another doctor, in

confidence, who promptly sent and warned Luther, giving him at the same time a description of the hired agent.

There is no doubt that Luther was in great peril many times, and also that he was perfectly aware of it; for in answer to a question from Mathesius respecting this matter, he says: "A person of rank is known to have observed that 'poison seemed to have no effect on me.' I am sure that on more than one occasion I have taken rank poison, and had severe pain and sickness; but the Lord ever and again delivered me from this danger."

But neither pain, sickness, poverty, or danger could discomfit Martin Luther; he suffered for the time, but he never wavered for one moment in his faith in God. He came forth from each trial more zealous, more eager, and more determined to carry on the good work. His best gifts he had consecrated to God, and this fact he never forgot, even in his happy home-life, where it might have been expected that he would be tempted to indulge himself.

As a Reformer he stands out as one of the greatest. He allowed no obstacles to stand in his way; his mind was made up, and he set himself to remove evil and dispute falsehood, in whatever shape it showed itself.

But Martin Luther did not merely destroy, he

also built up, and the building was far more difficult than the destroying and pulling down had been. As a man, alone and unaided, except by God, he set himself to work to build up, little by little, the Reformed Church of Germany. It was work which required the genius of a statesman no less than the enthusiasm of a reformer, for many political questions were involved in the Reformation. It meant also endless worry with petty details of personal conduct and church ritual. Now it was a priest anxious to marry, but unable to overcome his scruples about breaking his vows; then it was a letter demanding Luther's opinion upon the question of plurality of wives; and again it was to settle the vexed question of wearing gowns in the pulpit. In every kind of difficulty it was to the man who had gained them freedom that the people instinctively turned for counsel and guidance.

It was the testing-time for the Reformation; it was also the grand test of the great Reformer. That the Reformation stood the test is a fact which we to-day record with profound thankfulness; that our hero, Martin Luther, emerged from this test an approved *great* man, causes us a thrill of pleasure.

And now it is time to sum up briefly the characteristics of the great Reformer's life. If the reader of this work has learned anything about

Luther, it is surely that the dominant feature of his life was his earnestness. This was the beginning of his religious life, his monastic aspirations, his fervent zeal in discharging the convent duties. It was this earnestness that led to the publication of the famous theses, and to the subsequent Reformation. "Here stand I. I cannot do otherwise; God help me!" It was a striking utterance, but it exactly expressed his position. It has been said that ambition was at the root of Luther's protests, but the charge is too flimsy to be taken seriously. From boyhood he had been impelled forward by an inward impulse which allowed him no rest until he had got at the heart of things. When his investigations into the Bible seemed to be leading him away from the Church of Rome, and into conflict with ecclesiastical authorities, his first feelings were of horror, and his desire was to close his eyes to the corruptions of Rome, and shut his ears against the inward voice that urged him forward. And, if we may say so, Luther found himself a reformer sorely against his will.

That he had his faults like other men, no one disputes; his was a hasty, passionate nature, and when put out, he stayed not to consider his words or actions, but poured out all he thought and felt, caring not who heard him or what they thought of him. His excitable temperament at times led him

to say and do things which he afterwards regretted; but he had rare humility, and never hesitated to acknowledge that he had been in the wrong, and to express his sorrow and compunction for it.

Many comments have been made on his coarseness of language, but it must be remembered that in those days it was customary to speak of the most delicate subjects without reserve; a spade was called a spade, and many things were discussed in the most open manner, which the mere mention of nowadays would be considered absolutely indecent. We must also remember that Luther had never had refined surroundings in his early days; he was born and bred among folks of the humblest class, and in consequence always retained a little of the peasant's roughness of speech and manner. Then, too, the monastic life was anything but conducive to refinement; the absence of womankind was thought to absolve the fraternity from the necessity for careful choosing of words and delicacy of expression.

Whatever may be said about Luther, his character, with its defects, was undoubtedly sincere and genuine, and as a man and a Christian his personal character was excellent. Gifted with extraordinary eloquence and a wonderful personality, with an extraordinary intellect and much common sense, he was, withal, brave and courageous,

kind and generous to a degree, and his very worst enemies have never been able to prove a mean or dishonourable action against him.

But all these surface faults cannot detract much from our high estimate of Martin Luther as a man and a public character. Even apart from those gifts of eloquence, of personal magnetism, and wonderful sagacity in reading men's hearts and the signs of the times, we are constrained to feel that the monk of Wittenberg, the fearless recusant of Worms, the laborious translator and student of the Wartburg, was indeed a very great man.

CHAPTER XVI.

DEATH.

Luther's Last Journey—Catherine's Forebodings—Death of Luther—His Last Words.

T was in January 1546 that Luther went to Eisleben, with the view of settling some family disputes that had arisen between two brothers, the Counts of Mansfeld.

Although he was in a precarious state of health at the time, he had no idea that this would be his last journey on earth, and he left home in buoyant spirits. Catherine, however, was unusually depressed, and parted from him with tears; she had a curious presentiment that she should never see him again, an idea which Luther did his best laughingly to dispel. During the journey he wrote to her several times, cheerfully and hopefully, saying he was better; but Catherine could not rid herself of her forebodings.

It was a curious coincidence that Martin Luther, who had been born at Eisleben a poor miner's son, should, after sixty-three years, return to his birthplace as one of the greatest men in the empire to die.

At first it appeared likely that through Luther's influence a reconciliation would be effected between the two brothers; but fresh difficulties and complications arose, entailing a vast amount of worry, which naturally told upon Luther greatly in his enfeebled state. Yet we find him writing cheerfully to Catherine on the 14th, saying he hoped to be home some time during the week. By this time the quarrel had been practically settled, and the brothers were made friends.

On the evening of the 17th, however, he was taken seriously ill, and suffered great pain. Somehow, as soon as this illness seized him, he seemed to know it would end fatally; he was, however, wonderfully brave and patient, until the pain becoming almost unbearable, he exclaimed to Dr. Jonas—

"Oh, how I suffer! Dear Dr. Jonas, I think that here in Eisleben, where I was born and baptized, I shall die."

And so it proved. A few more hours of extreme bodily suffering and Martin Luther was at rest, his warfare accomplished, his victory won. In the same place where he had opened his eyes

LUTHER'S STATUE AT WORMS.

on the earthly life, his spirit awoke to the heavenly one.

During his last moments he repeated over and over again, "*In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis*" ("Into Thy hands I commit my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O God, the God of Truth"). And then again, "Lord Jesus Christ, accept my soul. O Heavenly Father, though I must leave this body and be torn from life, yet I know for sure that I shall abide eternally with Thee, and that no one can take me out of Thy hands."

His last words were in answer to Dr. Jonas, who, afraid he was past hearing, called out in a loud voice, "Reverend father, do you remain fixed in faith in Christ, and in the doctrine you have preached?"

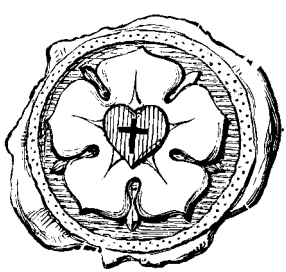
And Luther, rousing himself, said distinctly, "Yes, yes."

A few minutes afterwards, he turned over, and quietly and peacefully passed away.

So died this great man, leaving behind him the memory of a brave, upright, noble life, in which a splendid work had been accomplished, and a huge evil successfully combated.

The man is dead, but his work and deeds will live for all time, and still lead and help the doubtful, comfort the downcast, and encourage the timid.

For it is impossible that any earnest seeker after truth can lay down the story of Martin Luther without feeling braced up for renewed striving, and, if need be, for even severer conflict, as he contrasts his own small difficulties and troubles with the mighty struggle which was undertaken, single-handed, in the strength of God, by the poor monk of Wittenberg three hundred years ago.



LUTHER'S SEAL.

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