

"And were this world all devils o'er,  
And watching to devour us,  
We lay it not to heart so sore,  
Not they can overpower us.  
And let the Prince of Ill  
Look grim as e'er he will,  
He harms us not a whit :  
For why ? His doom is writ,  
A word shall quickly slay him.

"God's word, for all their craft and force,  
One moment will not linger,  
But spite of Hell, shall have its course,  
'Tis written by his finger.  
And though they take our life,  
Goods, honour, children, wife,  
Yet is their profit small;  
These things shall vanish all,  
The City of God remaineth."

Such is Luther's spiritual battle song, that was sounding through his own heart as he approached the memorable Diet of Worms. No wonder that "prophet-like, that lone one stood, with dauntless words and high," before the most august assembly the world could then produce—no wonder that Popes and Conclaves, and Imperial Diets were weak before him, when he had such inspiring music in his heart. It reminds one of the blasts of the priests' trumpets before the walls of Jericho—not sweet or harmonious, but strong to shiver the strongholds of the enemy. Carlyle says of it, "there is something in it like the sound of alpine avalanches, or the first murmur of earthquakes; in the very vastness of which dissonance a higher unison is revealed to us. Luther wrote this song in a time of blackest threatenings, which however could in no wise become a time of despair."

It is touching to find, at a later day, when the returning tide of Romanism threatened to overwhelm young Protestantism, this grand, strong hymn of Luther nerving the hearts of Gustavus Adolphus and his heroic warriors. Every reader of history knows how much Protestantism owes to Gustavus Adolphus and his noble Swedes—how his strong arm stayed the flood, and established the faith for which he contended, in Germany. On the morning of his last battle, when the armies of Gustavus and Wallenstein were drawn up waiting till the mists dispersed, he commanded Luther's heroic hymn to be sung by the whole army. We can fancy how these strong warriors, as they stood in battle array, waiting for the death grapple with the foe, made Luther's brave words peal along the sky, lifting up their hearts to the God of battles, in whose cause they were fighting. Surely never was hymn sung with such fervour, except perhaps by Cromwell's Ironsides, when they lifted up

their voices in singing the 117th Psalm (Rouse's version) after the victory of Dunbar. Immediately after, the soldiers joined in singing the battle song of Gustavus Adolphus, accompanied by the drums and trumpets of the whole army. The mist rose; the morning sun flashed on the two armies. Gustavus knelt, and at the head of his host repeated his usual battle prayer, "O Lord Jesus bless our arms, and this day's battle, for the glory of Thy holy name." He fell that day in the thickest of the fight, on the field of Lutzen; but his army gained the victory, and Protestantism was saved. Here are two stanzas of his battle song as translated in the *Lyra Germanica*:—

"Fear not, O little flock, the foe,  
Who madly seeks your overthrow,  
Dread not his rage and power,  
What though your courage sometimes faints  
His seeming triumph o'er God's saints  
Lasts but a little hour.

"Amen! Lord Jesus grant our prayer;  
Great Captain, now Thine arm make bare,  
Fight for us once again!  
So shall the saints and martyrs raise  
A mighty chorus to Thy praise,  
World without end. Amen!"

Luther knew well the power of song, and the whole Reformed Church speedily felt the influence of his music and hymns. Walther, a distinguished musician of that day, lent his assistance. Speaking of his own and Luther's labours he says, "I have spent many a happy hour in singing with him, and have often seen the dear man so happy and joyful in spirit while singing, that he could neither tire nor be satisfied. He conversed splendidly upon music." That noble congregational tune "the old Hundreth" is usually ascribed to Luther, but it seems the original composer was William Franc, and Luther only modified and varied it. Speedily, throughout Germany, congregational singing became the characteristic of the Reformation, the people joyfully lifting up their voices in praise to God. Germany is emphatically the land of hymns. The people are naturally musical, and it is rare to find any one in a church who does not sing. How prolific Germany has been in hymns may be judged of by the fact mentioned by Hallam in his "Literature of Europe," that "at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the number of religious songs was reckoned at 33,000, and that of their authors at 500." "No other nation," he remarks, "has so much of this poetry." Knapp's "Selection" contains 3,066 hymns, and the names of 400 writers. To-day, German sacred song is as fresh and flowing a current as ever.