

Book Notices.

Classic German Course in English.

By William Cleaver Wilkinson.
New York: Chautauqua Press.
Pp. 327. Price \$1.00.

We have had occasion to commend very highly the previous volumes by this accomplished author, on the Greek, Latin, and French courses in English. His method is to give biographical sketches with criticism of the principal works, and illustrative extracts in English of the great writers of these languages. The current volume will be found of very great interest.

The author gives a vivid characterization and criticism of the literary works of Luther, Klopstock, Lessing, Wieland, Herder, Richter, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, and many others. He does not hesitate strongly to criticise the faults of even illustrious writers. Commending the piety, the moral bravery and the stalwart manliness of the great Luther, he yet says: "His truculence, coarseness and grossness in his championship against Rome (the 'divine brutality of brother Martin,' as Heine called it,) were astounding, were staggering, were incredible, but they belonged to the day as well as to the man. Especially in his controversy with Henry VIII., king of England, did the peasant monk use great plainness of speech for his malice and lies, not against the Saxon prince's son, but against the Majesty of heaven.

"'My ashes alone' he writes in expectation of a cruel martyrdom, 'having been after my death cast into a thousand seas, will persecute and harass this abominable crowd. As long as I live I become the enemy of the papacy; burned, I will be always its enemy.'" This was no empty gasconade. Before the assembled dignities of Europe he took his stand, willing to die for the truth he maintained. "Yet the stormy soul of the battle-welcoming reformer

was sensitive and tractable to music. The lion listened, and listening, became a lamb." His loving letter to his little son Johnny, his grief for his dying Margarita, and his playful humour towards his "dear housewife, Katherine Lutherin, doctress and self-martyress, his gracious lady Katha," go far to condole much of his turbulence and truculence in controversy.

His wrestling prayer at the Diet of Worms, like the patriarch wrestling with the Almighty, strangely moves our souls. "Oh, Thou, my God, stand by me against the reason and Wisdom of the world. Thou must do it! Thou alone! It is not my cause, but thine; it is just and eternal; stand Thou by me, Thou true, eternal God. Hearst Thou not, my God? Art Thou dead! No, Thou canst not die, Thou only hidest Thyself. Then stand by me in the name of Jesus Christ, to be my Shelter and my Buckler, yea, my Firm Tower. Lo! where stayest Thou? Thou, my God, where art Thou? Come, come, I am ready even to lay down my life for this cause, so will I not separate myself from Thee forever. The world shall not be able to force me against my conscience, though it were full of devils, though my body be shattered in pieces, my soul is Thine and belongeth to Thee, and shall remain with Thee forever. Amen, God help me. Amen."

The great achievement of Luther, however, was his translation of the Scripture into the German tongue, which fixed the form of that language, and which makes Luther's Bible more to the Teuton than that of king James is to the English-speaking people.

Of Lessing, our author says he probably at this moment exercises a literary influence, extensive and intensive, not second to any other in the world since Aristotle. He quotes