

king and his singing soldiers triumphantly held the field.

In all the great German battles for more than three hundred and seventy years, the soul-stirring words of this grand old hymn have "strengthened hand and heart and nerve" for heroic and victorious action. During the Franco-German war this was the favourite song of the German troops. Around their camp-fires, in the valley of the Meuse, and as they marched to meet the foe, this inspiring hymn filled every heart with hope and cheer.

The day after the battle of Sedan, a contingent of the German army was marching on to the French capital. At night they were lodged in a large parish church. The intense strain and excitement of the battle-field were upon them. The memory of that bloody fray, and of their fallen comrades, unmanned them, and they could not rest. Suddenly in the stillness of the evening hour came from the organ loft, at first very softly, but with increasing volume, the strain of this majestic hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God." The officers and men caught up the stirring melody, until, from a thousand hearts and voices, the vaulted aisles re-echoed with holy song.

Another of these strong, inspiring hymns, and one that is scarcely second to Luther's great masterpiece, is Paul Gerhardt's

"Give to the winds thy fears." *

The story of its origin is no doubt prophetic of the comfort and courage its faith-filled stanzas have brought to many a hard-pressed soldier of the cross. Gerhardt's forceful preaching of the Lutheran doctrines greatly displeased his royal master, the Grand Elector, and he sought to silence him.

* John Wesley's translation.

Between the throne and the pulpit a conflict was waged for several years, but the separation between them grew wider all the while. Gerhardt's conscience spoke with weightier authority than Gerhardt's king. At length, in 1659, the unyielding pastor was transferred from his church and home in Berlin to the Archdeaconship of Lubben in Saxony. To this far-off appointment, with his delicate wife and helpless children, he began a journey, which was destined, on account of sickness and delays, to be protracted for several years.

One night the sorrows and sufferings of his loved family pressed upon him sorely, and he went out into a neighbouring wood to gather strength in prayer. While thus engaged, these words of gracious promise, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass," came to his soul with such blessed assurance that he received immediate comfort and strength. Rising from his knees, and walking to and fro in the quiet of the night, he began the composition of this hymn, which has brought such abounding comfort to many another care-laden soul. Returning to the hostelry, he found his wife greatly cast down, and he sought to cheer her with his text and hymn. At length, with trust and confidence in their heavenly Father's love and care, they retired to rest, purposing to

"Leave to His sovereign sway
To choose and to command,"

but "ere sweet sleep their eyelids closed," a thunderous knock at their door filled them with renewed apprehension. Soon, however, fear gave place to joy, when they learned that their midnight visitor was a messenger from Duke Christian of Mensburg offering to the faithful preacher "a church, people,