

**THE BOOK ON VAGABONDS  
AND BEGGARS  
WITH A VOCABULARY  
OF THEIR LANGUAGE**

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The Book on Vagabonds and Beggars with a Vocabulary of Their Language by John Camden Hotten & Martin Luther

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**JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN & MARTIN LUTHER**

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THE  
**Book of Vagabonds and Beggars:**  
WITH A VOCABULARY OF THEIR LANGUAGE.

EDITED BY  
**MARTIN LUTHER**  
IN THE YEAR 1528.

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, WITH  
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY  
JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN.

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LONDON:  
JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, PICCADILLY.  
1860.

275. c. 67.



## PREFACE.

**A**S a picture of the manners and customs of the Vagabond population of Central Europe before the Reformation, I think this little book, the earliest of its kind, will be found interesting. The fact of Luther writing a Preface and editing it gives it at once some degree of importance, and excites the curiosity of the student.

In this country the *Liber Vagatorum* is almost unknown, and in Germany only a few scholars and antiquaries are acquainted with the book.

In translating it I have endeavoured as much as possible to preserve the spirit and peculiarities of the original. Some may object to the style as being too antique; but this garb I thought preserved a small portion of the original

quaintness, and was best suited to the period when it was written.

For several explanations of old German words, and other hints, I am indebted to a long notice of the *Liber Vagatorum*, which occurs in the "Wiemariſches Jahrbuch," 10<sup>te</sup>, Band, 1856,—the only article of any moment that I know to have been written on the little book.

With respect to the facsimile woodcut, as it was too large to occupy a place on the title, as in the original (of 4to. size), it is here given as a frontispiece.

Perhaps some apology is required for the occasional use of plain-spoken, not to say coarse words. I can only urge, in justification of their adoption, that the nature of the subject would not admit of their being softened,—unless indeed at the expense of the narrative. As it is, I have sent forth this edition in very much more refined language than the great Reformer thought necessary when issuing the old German version.

J. C. H.

*Piccadilly,*  
June 1, 1860.





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## INTRODUCTION.



**V**AGABONDS and Beggars are ancient blots in the history of the world. Idleness, I suppose, existed before civilization began, but feigned distress must certainly have been practised soon after.

In the records of the Middle Ages enactments for the suppression and ordering of vagrancy continually occur. In this country, as we shall see directly, laws for its abolishment were passed at a very early date.

The begging system of the Friars, perhaps more than any other cause, contributed to swell the ranks of vagabonds. These religious mendicants, who had long been increasing in number and dissoluteness, gave