SOME NEW BOOKS.

Luther.

The most satisfactory life of *Martin Luther* that we have seen in English is embodied in the latest contribution to The World's Epoch Makers' Series (Scribners). The author, Dr THOMAS M. LINDSAY, professor of Church History in the Free Church College, Glasgow, has relied mainly on Köstlin's well-known work, but he has availed himself of many other authorities enumerated in an appendix, including numerous letters, records of conversations and extracts from diaries, all belonging to Luther's time, but which had not seen the light before the last quarter of a century. The propriety of describing Luther as an epoch-maker from a religious point of view will scarcely be disputed by any one, but it is one of the merits of this book to point out his relation to the political, social and economical aspects also of the revolutionary movement which convulsed central and western Europe in his day.

Leopold von Ranke seems to have been the first historian to teach that the Reformation was a great political force working political transformations not yet ended. It overthrew mediævalism and formulated the modern conditions of political life. It destroyed the mediæval ideal of a Christendom made visibly one by a supreme governor who ruled over the bodies of all men; by a supreme ecclesiastical chief who ruled their souls, and by a dominant scholasticism which kept their minds in due submission. No doubt the authority of Emperor and Pope had been defied by almost every European nation before Luther's day, but the failure of Charles V. to restore the mediæval empire in Germany may be fairly taken as the date on which the old ideas of government passed away forever. It is equally manifest that the Reformation epoch was "the modern birthtime of the individual soul," the beginning of that assertion of the supreme right of individual revolt against every custom, law or theory which would subordinate the man to the caste or class; a revolt which finally flamed out in the French Revolution. As Dr. Lindsay points out, the Swiss peasantry had begun the revolt when they made pikes by tying their scythes on their alpenstocks, and, standing shoulder to shoulder at Morgarten and Sempach, broke the fiercest charges of mediæval knighthood. They then proved that, man for man, the peasant was as good as the noble, and individual manhood, asserted in this rude and borderly fashion, soon began to express itself mentally and morally. The invention of gunpowder and firearms completed what the pike had begun, and mediæval knighthood perished when the princes battered down with cannon strong new fortifications and when Francis von Sickingen, "the last of the knights," was slain while in fancied security. The intense individuality was fed by the events of the time. The invention of the mariner's compass, the discovery of America by Columbus and that of the sea route to the East by Vasco de Gama not only revolutionized ocean-borne trade, but also fired the imaginations of men. The prevailing tenor of the thoughts and speech of the period show that well-informed and intelligent persons felt that they were on the eve of great events; that it was a time of universal expectancy and of widespread individual assertion.

Neither is it less true that the epoch of the Reformation was a time of economic revolution which bore heavily on the poorer classes and stirred them into insurrection. Below the whole mediæval system lay the idea that land was the only economic basis of wealth; and, in the earlier Middle Ages, when each little district produced almost everything required for its own wants, and when the economic function of the towns was to harbor corporations of artisans, exchanging the fruits of their industry for the surplus of farm produce which the peasants brought to their market places, this was undoubtedly the case. The increasing commerce of the towns, however, gradually introduced another source of wealth and this commerce made great strides after the Crusades had opened up the East to European traders. The eventual effect of the new traffic was to make the lesser nobles and the citizens implacable enemies. The nobles waylaid and pillaged the merchant trains, and the cities formed offensive and defensive leagues and persuaded the larger territorial magnates to combine with them in order to secure the peace of the country and to keep the roads safe. The combination of princes and cities against the lesser nobility drove the nobles into a position utterly repugnant to their pride. Already thrust from the position of the exclusive defenders of society by the introduction of infantry and artillery, they now saw themselves distanced by the burghers in the means of living ostentatiously; and while they despised the "pepper sacks," as they called the merchants, they felt themselves degraded unless they could vie with them in dress and adornment on the occasions of public display so dear to the mediæval mind. Their ordinary mode of direct revenge, that, namely, of attacking the convoys of merchandise, or of making their "horses bite off the purses of travellers," had been rendered somewhat dangerous by the combinations of princes and towns, and the only thing left for them to do was to squeeze their unfortunate peasants. The peasant was the pariah of mediæval society. He stood apart from noble, burgher and ecclesiastic. His was the unprotected class, which all might spoil with impunity and which all did in fact oppress. He had, to be sure, memories, transmitted from generation to generation, of common lands, free village communes and inalienable rights belonging to the tillers of the soil; but the introduction of Roman law, primarily and chiefly by ecclesiastical proprietors, a law which did not recognize the old communal rights and looked upon the peasant as a serf, deprived him of legal protection and left him no means of resistance save revolt or flight to the towns, in which he could but swell the class of poorer citizens who remained outside of the guild privileges. It is further to be noted that in the towns the larger commercial opportunities offered by the opening of a sea passage to the East Indies through the discoveries of Vasco de Gama led to a disintegration of the mediæval corporations; the richer merchants formed themselves into trading companies distinct from the old guilds and amassed great wealth. A war of classes ensued; the new trading companies and the greater capitalists against the guilds, the poorer guilds against the richer, the peasants against the nobles and the nobles against the towns and the princes. This seething discontent was aggravated by sudden and mysterious rises in prices, affecting first the articles of foreign produce to which all the richer classes were addicted, and ultimately the ordinary necessaries of life. The cause of the appreciation in values was not, it is now believed, the debasement of the coinage, for that affected a narrow circle only; neither was it the importation of precious metals from America, for it was only later that this inflow took place on a great scale, but rather the larger output of the mines at home. Whatever the cause, the phenomenon was an irritating mystery, and each class in society was disposed to blame some other for the mischievous results. It was into this deep-seated and widespread social discontent that the spark of religious protest fell, the one thing needed to fire the train and kindle a social conflagration.

It is, however, only incidentally that Luther's biographer has to do with the political, social and economical aspects of the Reformation epoch. These did but constitute the environment of the religious movement whereof Luther was the central figure. It is, at the same time, important to remember that they were all there, and that it would be a great mistake, in studying the period, to assume that the religious protest was everything. All the various upheavals combined to make the epoch what it was; and, if the religious purpose gave force to the political agitation, depth to the intellectual and social impulses, and to the economic protests a character more mediæval than modern, we must, on the other hand, remember that these various [movements] in their turn lent strength to the religious movement, and gave it an impetus [which] otherwise it would not have had. The Peasants' War, as it is called, represents the parting of the ways: up to 1525, the Lutheran Reformation had absorbed all the various streams of dissatisfaction; after that, the revolution and the Reformation pursued separate paths, and the revolution gathered around it the more radical elements of the religious revolt which are summed up under the word anabaptism, a name which includes a great variety of conflicting opinions. With all these sides of the great movement of his day Luther had some real connection. He had, for instance, the fullest sympathy with the patriotic aspiration which claimed Germany for the Germans; this aspiration formed the central thought in his Address to the Nobility of the German Nation; but he soon came to see that the times were not ripe for a national centralization, and that partial centralization under the rule of great territorial magnates was all that could be reasonably hoped for. Among the Humanists he never ranked himself. Yet he had very great sympathy with many aspects of the Humanist movement; he made much use of the learned labors of Erasmus, and was recognized as a leader by most of the German promoters of the new learning; his absorbing aim, however, was the reformation of the ecclesiastical and religious life, and that to an extent which was deprecated by some of the more distinguished Humanists. Again, Luther was a peasant's son, and gave utterance over and over again to the wrongs of the class from which he had sprung. He was modern enough, however, to perceive that there are two ways by which wrongs may be redressed, the way of war and the way of peace, and that the way of peace is the only sure path in the long run. To this conviction he held firmly, and he risked his life among infuriated peasants as readily as when he stood before the Emperor and the Diet at Worms. In a word, although, first and foremost, Luther was a religious reformer, his large spiritual personality caused him to share all the aspirations and take part in all the movements of his time. That is why he was accepted by his contemporaries, and has been recognized by posterity, as the representative man of his age.

I.

Martin Luther was born on Nov. 10, 1483, in Eisleben, whither his parents, Hans and Margarethe Luther, had come from Mohra, a little peasant township lying in the northwest corner of the Thuringen Wald. Six months after the birth of Martin, his eldest son, Hans Luther settled in the little village of Mansfeld. Here he was first a miner and then a smelter of copper ore. The Counts of Mansfeld, who owned all the region thereabout, had the habit of building small smelting furnaces and of letting them out on lease to trustworthy miners who desired to better their condition. Hans Luther soon leased one, and then three, of these furnaces. That he early won the respect of his neighbors is evident from the fact that he became in 1491 one of the four members of the village council. The family life was for many years, nevertheless, one of grinding poverty. It was a hard struggle to find food and clothing for seven children, to provide for the education of the eldest boy, to pay the yearly rent of the furnace and to lay by in the family strong box the money to be afterward spent upon the "plenishing" when the three daughters should be carried off to new homes. The future reformer's father and mother were both spare, short and dark-complexioned; the father was of plain peasant stock. "I am a peasant's son," said Luther. "My father, grandfather and great-grandfather were all genuine peasants." Hans Luther was a man of deep, quiet piety, who thought that God could be best served in the common citizen's life, and who heartily despised monks as full of "cant and hypocrisy." He had a strong sense of parental rights, and was a hard disciplinarian. The reformer's mother, on the other hand, Margarethe Ziegler, came of the burgher class, for Hans Luther had married above his station. Between her and her eldest son there was a strong likeness in build of face and body. Luther got from her, besides his mysticism, the strange streaks of superstition which characterized him, the vein of poetry which ran through him, his wit and his love of hymns and of proverbial sayings. Melanchthon, who came to know her well, calls her a model of all womanly worth, and says that she was noted for chastity, reverence for God and prayer. The truth which Luther afterward preached he learned in the home circle at Mansfeld, adding nothing essential. The Reformation of which he was the leader was but the outcome of the old family piety which had flowered during all the previous centuries, heedless of the fact that it had much in it which had little in common with the ecclesiastical system and professional theology that it had long accepted without question.

Young Martin was sent to school at Mansfeld, which, small mining town that it was, had some facilities for primary education. Most of the small parish priests in fifteenth-century Germany belonged to the peasant class, and the singing in the parish churches had to be done by the village boys. As the services were performed in Latin, a modicum of instruction was needed for priests and choristers. Of course the education given was but slight and the method of imparting it was inefficient. The children were taught to read and to write and to do a little ciphering, and they were supposed to be drilled in the Latin declensions and conjugations. The schoolmasters were a poor set of creatures, and their scholars experienced more of the pains than of the pleasures of learning. Luther said that his master treated the boys as the public executioner did thieves; he himself was flogged fifteen times one morning because he could not repeat declensions which he had never been taught. Such village schools could not satisfy the craving for education which awoke all over Europe in the latter half of the fifteenth century. In many a German city the townspeople founded high schools and paid teachers and rectors out of the urban revenues. Martin Luther was sent for a time to Magdeburg, which possessed an institution founded by disciples of Gerard Groot, the great Flemish educationalist. Of the boy's life there we know little, except that he saw two things which made his religious sensibilities tingle and which he never forgot. One was a Prince of Anhalt, who, for his soul's preservation, had become a barefooted friar, carrying a begging sack on his bent shoulders through the town, and worn to skin and bones by fastings, scourgings and prayers. The other was an altar piece in a church, the picture of a ship, "wherein was no layman, not even a king nor a prince; there was none but the Pope with his cardinals and Bishops at the prow, with the Holy Ghost hovering over them, while priests and monks with their oars were at the sides: thus they went sailing heavenward. The laymen were swimming along in the water around the ship. Some of them were drowning, some were pulling themselves up to the ship by ropes which the monks, moved by pity, passed out to them to keep them from drowning. There was no Cardinal, nor Bishop, nor monk, nor priest, in the water, but laymen only." The two visions sank deeply into Luther's heart and probably explain his subsequent adoption of the monastic vocation.

From Magdeburg Luther was sent to the High School in Eisenach, where he remained until he entered the University of Erfurt. This was at the time the most renowned seat of learning in Germany. The teaching and course of study was still mediæval, but on what was deemed the advanced side of mediæval thought. The faculty of philosophy prepared the way for the study of law and theology; it began with logic and went through dialectics, rhetoric and music to physics and astronomy. The favorite commentators belonged to the Nominalist school, and Luther learned at Erfurt to call William of Occam his "dear master." Humanism had found entrance before Luther matriculated, and lectures on the purely classical authors had begun to figure in the faculty of philosophy, but the older course of study was not as yet openly attacked. Luther seems not to have looked back with any great delight to his student days at Erfurt. He had a very modest estimate of his own powers as a Latinist. Nevertheless, when he took his master's degree in 1505, he stood second among the seventeen successful candidates. Having thus finished his course in arts with remarkable distinction, he was about to begin the study of law when he suddenly plunged into the Augustinian convent at Erfurt. We have no trustworthy account of the spiritual conflict which ended in the sudden resolve to save his soul within the quiet of cloister walls. There seems to be little doubt that he had a severe illness at the close of the philosophy course, and this, it has been alleged, brought him to the decision. There is a tradition, which Dr. Lindsay sees no reason to disbelieve, that on July 2, 1505, fourteen days before he entered the convent, he was returning from a visit to his parents, and had already reached the village of Stotterheim, close to Erfurt, when he suddenly found himself in a violent thunderstorm, and cried out in fear: "Help me, St. Anna, and I will become a monk!" This, it is said, was the crisis. It is certain that Luther's decision caused his parents great grief.

Fortunately for Luther the prior of the Augustinian convent at Erfurt, John Staupitz, was a large-hearted man. In after years he sympathized with most of the Lutheran doctrines, though he never left the Roman Catholic Church. He made the best of the monastic life which he shared. He insisted that every monk who was fit for it should read theology and study the Scriptures in the Latin version. Luther himself tells us how the monks showed him the great Bible bound in red leather and how the first thing which he read in it was the story of Hannah and Samuel. The scholastic theology he studied until he could repeat from memory the great folios of William of Occam, and he pored over the works of John Gerson, and Bonaventura, and Dionysius. "I still keep those books which tormented me," he said in after years; "Scotus wrote very well on the Master of the Sentences, and diligently essayed to teach upon these matters. Occam was an able and sensible man." It was Occam who brought to Luther's attention the fallibility of Popes, and Gerson who showed him the ecclesiastical value of General Councils.

II.

After Luther was ordained a priest and formally received into the Augustinian order he became the confidant of the heads of his community and was intrusted with many delicate commissions. In 1508 he was appointed professor of philosophy in the small University of Wittenberg, which had been founded a few years before. Three years later his educational work was interrupted by a command to go to Rome on the business of his order. The month which he spent in Rome turned his reverence for the Papacy into loathing. He found the city, which he had greeted as holy, a sink of iniquity; its very priests were openly infidels, and scoffed at the services they performed; the papal courtiers were men of shameless lives; there was truth, the German visitor thought, in the Italian proverb: "If there is a hell, Rome is built over it." While he was in Italy, however, Luther managed to learn something of Hebrew from a Jewish rabbi, and to obtain lessons in Greek from a refugee from Constantinople. After his return to Wittenberg he became a docto[r] of theology and subsequently succeeded Staupitz as regent of the university. Then began the series of expositions which gradually drew to the small town of Wittenberg students from all parts of Germany, and, indeed, of Europe. Besides the lectures which he delivered in his capacity of professor, he undertook the duties of preacher in the town church, which is still standing near the market place. When he preached here, he spoke in plain, nervous German. He made collections of German proverbs and country sayings and used them as illustrations. He had a way of making the Bible seem alive, of showing that it was full of stories of real men and women, who had lived, and thought, and eaten, and slept, and married. In 1516 Luther had additional duties laid upon him, being made the superintendent of a circle of eleven Augustinian convents. In the same year the plague came to Wittenberg, and most of the inhabitants who could do so fled from the town. Luther refused to go.

When Luther became involved in the controversy about indulgences he may be said to have begun the work of reformation. It was on the 1st of November, 1517, that Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses against the sale of indulgences on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg. In these theses at least three main thoughts may be distinguished. Luther asserted that the forgiveness of sin is in the hands of God alone. The Pope, he said, has neither the will nor the power to remit any penalties, except those which he may have imposed by his own authority or by that of the canons. Luther denounced the assertion that the red cross of the Indulgence had equal power with the cross of Christ. He insisted that the law of the Christian life must be a continuous repentance, and that this evangelical repentance is something entirely different from the confession and satisfaction which are per[f]ormed under the ministry of priests. The theses are not to be regarded, however, as constituting a reasoned treatise, but rather as the work of a man who wishes to drive his meaning into the minds of his readers by repeated blows. Dr. Lindsay would describe them as ninety-five sledgehammer strokes, delivered at the grossest ecclesiastical abuse of the age. They were written in such clear, nervous language that no one could fail to understand what they meant, although it might not be so easy to comprehend all that they implied. The theses made a great and instantaneous impression. The speed with which they got into circulation was for the time unprecedented. They were known over the greater part of Germany within a fortnight after they were published, and we are told that they had gone far beyond Germany in four weeks. So effective were they that the sales of papal letters of indulgence declined rapidly.

For a time, moreover, no one of much weight or distinction came forward to dispute the questions raised, and Luther's own Bishop said that he found nothing heretical in his theses. Meanwhile, however, John Eck, a theological professor in Ingolstadt, and formerly a personal friend of Luther's, was carefully studying the propositions and with increasing dislike. Eck was by far the ablest opponent of Luther that Germany produced, a clear-sighted and learned man and a forcible and ready debater. He saw that the theses were based on principles which would justify the opinions of John Huss, or, as these were commonly called, "the Bohemian Heresy;" and that, if carried out, they would destroy the whole mediæval conception of the supernatural powers of the clergy and the dominion over the laity which the gifts supposed to be bestowed in ordination gave them. He made his first attack upon Luther in a book of annotations on the theses which he called *Obelisks*; and henceforth two men, both sons of peasants stood forward as the champions, the one of the Romish hierarchy, and the other of evangelical liberty.

It was in the so-called Leipsic Disputation that the two German champions were brought face to face. The debate between Luther and Eck, which took place in the presence of Duke George of Saxony, lasted five days. It was confined almost exclusively to questions relating to the supremacy of the Pope over the Catholic Church. When the incidents of the discussion are compared with Dr. Eck's first attack on Luther in his *Obelisks*, it becomes evident that the intention of the papal champion was to force Luther to make admissions which would bear out Eck's accusation, that Luther's theses on indulgences were irreconcilable the hierarchical and priestly conceptions of the Christian ministry on which the external organization of the mediæval Church was based. In this purpose Eck was successful. He compelled Luther, step by step, to avow that the Church is not merely the hierarchy and those dependent on it, but the whole company of faithful believers, ruled by ministers, who are the "servants" of the community. Eck had declared in his *Obelisks* that Luther's theses contained by implication the "Bohemian Heresy," and he tried to bring this out at Leipsic. The exciting moment in the discussion came when the truth of the charge was made evident. "One thing I must tell," said an eyewitness, Fröschel, "which I myself heard in the Disputation and which took place in the presence of Duke George, who came often to the Disputation and listened most attentively; once Dr. Martin spoke these words to Dr. Eck when hard pressed about John Huss: 'Dear Doctor, the Hussite opinions are not all wrong.' Thereupon said Duke George so loudly that the whole audience heard, 'God help us, the pestilence,' and he wagged his head and placed his arms akimbo." Eck was delighted at the outcome of his tactics and he and his friend had no doubt that he remained the victor in the controversy. Luther, on his part, returned to Wittenberg in great depression of spirit, to bury himself in his professional and pastoral work there. His opponents maintained that, inasmuch as he had been forced to declare himself, there now remained only room for a papal bull proclaiming him an excommunicated heretic and delivering him over to the civil authorities for punishment. What Eck did not perceive was that some defeats are really victories. While he was congratulating himself that he had thrust Luther outside the pale of the mediæval Church, he did not see that this was exactly what would give Luther an immense accession of strength. He had proved Luther to be an inflexible antagonist of Rome, and at that time all Germany was looking for just such a champion. That is why the Leipsic Disputation must be accounted the most important episode in Luther's career. It made him for a few years, at least, the "man of Germany" in the eyes of almost every German. Leipsic made Luther see clearly for the first time all that lay in his opposition to indulgences and it made others see it also. He and other men now recognized that the principles laid down in the theses struck at the whole round of mediæval ecclesiastical life. After the disputation with Eck Luther found out and took his true religious position. The effects were soon visible in the sermons and tracts in the vernacular which his tireless pen produced and the printing press sent broadcast over the Fatherland. In the year 1517 only thirty-seven books in the German language had been issued from German presses. On the other hand, the German publications of the year 1518 were seventy-one, no fewer than twenty of which were from Luther's pen. In 1519 the total number of German books published was 111, of which fifty were Luther's; in 1520 the number of printed German books rose to 208, of which 133 were Luther's; while in 1523 498 German books were published, of which 183 were written by Luther. These facts not only exhibit the almost incredible activity of the man, but also show that almost all Germany was eager to read what he printed.

III.

In 1520 Luther put forth the three books which contain the principles of his proposed reformation. They appeared in the following order: "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, Respecting the Reformation of the Christian Estate;" "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church;" and "Concerning Christian Liberty." Considering these briefly in the inverse order of their publication, we observe that the last-named treatise is an assertion of the priesthood of all believers, which is proclaimed to be the result of justification by faith. It maintained that ceremonies, or what may be called the whole machinery of the Church, are valuable provided they are looked at from the right point of view, and kept in their proper place; while on the other hand they may become almost destructive of the true religious life if they are considered in any other sense than as means to an end. In the last resort the soul of man needs absolutely nothing but the Word of God dwelling within him. This principle was applied by Luther to a definition of the relative positions of the clergy and the laity. He declared that men and women living in the family, in the workshop and in the civic world held their position there, not by a kind of indirect permission wrung by God out of his compassion for human frailties, but by a vocation as direct as that which called men to what by a mistake had been deemed the only religious life. This assertion of the spiritual priesthood of all believers was made for the purpose of delivering the laity from the vague fear of the clergy which had enthralled them. In the "Babylonian Captivity of the Church" Luther contends that everything must be brought to the one test of the authority of the Word of God. The Word of God is a tissue of promises and prayers, and exhibits the union and communion of the believing man and his Saviour. This postulate is applied to a criticism of the elaborate sacramental system of the Roman Church, and the outcome of the application is the averment that the Roman Curia has held the Church of God in bondage to human traditions and commandments which run counter to the plain tenor of God's words. From the summary of the book we learn that while Luther considers it possible to apply the term "sacrament" to all those things as to which a divine promise has been made, yet it is best to limit the use of the word to those promises which have attached to them visibly and divinely appointed signs. The result is that, in his opinion, there are only two veritable sacraments, to wit, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and that the other so-called sacraments are but ceremonies of human institutions. Nothing in the whole round of Romish interference with scriptural commands and messages excited Luther's indignation so much as the method of dealing with the conception of Christian marriage. He points out that there is a clear scriptural law touching the degrees within which marriage is lawful, and that no human regulations ought to forbid marriages outside of these degrees, or permit it within them. He declares himself in favor of the marriage of priests, and says that there is nothing in Scripture or in the usages of the early Church forbidding it. He says that, personally, he detests the thought of divorce, "and even prefers bigamy to it;" but that it is clearly allowed by Christ in certain cases, and that the Roman Curia, by now forbidding and now permitting it, has defied all laws, human and divine, for the sake of money-making.

In his address "To the Nobility of the German Nation Respecting the Reformation of the Christian Estate," Luther applied the principles laid down a little later in his treatise "On Christian Liberty," to the reformation of the political commonwealth. No other writing from Luther's pen produced such an instantaneous, widespread and powerful effect. The treatise was issued from the printing press some time in the beginning of August, and, before the 18th of the month, 4,000 copies were in circulation throughout Germany. It constituted the political and social manifesto of the Reformation, and its effects were seen at the two Diets held at Nuremberg in 1522 and 1524, where its indictments of the Roman Curia were practically adopted. The manifesto owed its power to the spiritual insight, the moral energy and the tact which, in spite of occasional violence of language, was everywhere displayed. The spiritual insight may be recognized in the way in which Luther lays down the principle of the independence of the individual soul of all merely human powers and arrangements, and in which he insists on the equal spiritual rights and responsibilities of layman and cleric, and in which he asserts the true sanctity and spirituality of all natural relationships of family, home, trade and profession: of noble, burgher, artisan and peasant. The moral energy is exhibited in the way in which one abuse after another is brought forward in swift succession, and in which the veil of legal chicanery is stripped from one exaction after another. Its tact is disclosed in the modesty of the preamble: "It is not out of mere arrogance and perversity that I, an individual poor man, have taken upon me to address your Lordships," and it appears in the courteous address to the young Emperor Charles V., of whom German patriots were expecting much. It may also be seen in the omission from the title of all reference to the Holy Roman Empire and in the implied suggestion of "Germany for the Germans," and in the use of the German language, which makes the address an appeal to the whole German people.

Luther propounded a number of suggestions for the correction of existing evils. Some of these, if carried into effect, would have the result of creating a German national church, with an ecclesiastical council to be the highest court of ecclesiastical appeal, and to represent the German Church as the Diet did the German State. Other suggestions aimed at the complete abolition of the supremacy of the Pope over the State. In still others Luther dealt with ecclesiastical abuses which did not spring from the supremacy and greed of Rome, but were productive of much religious and social mischief. Thus he would check the multitude of pilgrimages, which did not tend, he thought, to good morals, and which led men to pursue a life of vagrant beggary. For the same reason he would limit or suppress the mendicant orders. He held that there were too many saints' days and ecclesiastical festivals, which, he said, were only seasons of gluttony, drunkenness and debauchery. He would retain the Sunday only. He also desired to bring some daylight into the convents, both for men and women and asserted that every one who wished to leave a convent should be allowed to do so. He insisted that priests should be allowed to marry, and pointed out that illicit concubinage would be thus prevented. He further said frankly that it was high time for the German Church to come to terms with the Hussites of Bohemia, who, whatever their sins, had never done anything so bad as deliberately to break the safe-conduct which had been given to John Huss. Luther's remaining paragraphs treated briefly of social evils and especially of the rampant beggary by which Germany was disgraced. He calculated how much a town of ordinary size taxed itself through supporting by casual almsgiving the hordes of sturdy beggars who wandered through it. His remedy for the disease was that each town should support its own poor. There is no doubt that this call to the nobility of the German nation, while it appealed to all Germans, produced an especially great effect upon the very class to which it was specifically addressed. It was really the first definite announcement that Germans ought to work together for a united Germany, and was the first practical step taken in the movement to create a German nationality, which has made such an advance in our own generation, and the end of which is not yet.

IV.

Meanwhile at Rome a bull condemning Luther had been prepared and was published there in the middle of the month of June, 1520. The workmanship seems to have been mainly Eck's. The bull cites forty-one propositions, said to be Luther's, and denounces them. All Luther's writings, whenever and wherever found, are ordered to be burnt. The bull was proclaimed in some parts of Germany by Eck and by the Roman Legate, Aleander, and copies of Luther's writings were seized and burnt, but the curious *Documenta Lutherana*, published a few years ago by the Vatican, reveal that the bull was enforced with continually increasing difficulty, and that the excitement caused by burning Luther's books was so great that the Legate sometimes trembled for his life. In Wittenberg no notice of the bull was taken, notwithstanding threats that the privileges of the university would be withdrawn. When Luther learned that his writings had been burned in several parts of Germany he resolved by way of rejoinder to burn the Book of Decretals, that part of the canon law in which the papal supremacy is asserted. So, on Dec. 10, 1520, he posted a notice inviting the students of Wittenberg to witness the burning of the "Anti-Christian Decretals." A great multitude of students, burghers and professors collected in an open space where a great bonfire had been built. One of the masters kindled the pyre; Luther laid the Books of Decretals on the glowing mass, and then, in solemn silence, placed a copy of the bull in the flames, saying in Latin, "As thou hast wasted with anxiety the Holy One of God, so may the eternal flames waste thee." It is scarcely possible for us in the nineteenth century to understand the thrill that went through Germany, and, indeed, all through Europe, when the news spread that a poor monk had burned the Pope's bull. It was not, to be sure, the first time that a bull had been burnt, but heretofore the burners had been great monarchs, with trained armies and a devoted people behind them, while, in this case, the burner was a monk, with nothing but his manhood to back him. The event meant that a new world had come into being; that modern history had begun.

It was on March 6, 1521, that Luther received from the newly elected Emperor Charles V. a summons and safe-conduct to appear at the Diet held in Worms and show cause why the Papal bull should not be enforced against him. His protector, the Elector of Saxony, trembled for the fate of the reformer. Luther was reminded that John Huss had been burned at the Council of Constance, in spite of the Imperial safe-conduct. The message reached Luther at the last stage of his journey, and he replied "that he would go to Worms if there were as many devils there as tiles on the roofs. If Huss had been burnt, the truth had not been burnt with him." Soon after his arrival in Worms he was summoned before the Diet. The Emperor presided; below him sat the six Electors; the Princes, lay and clerical, filled the hall. On a table was a pile of books, Luther's writings. He had never been in such a presence before; his voice seemed to fail him; men thought that his spirit was broken at last. He was asked whether these books were his, and, if so, whether he stood by what he had written, or would recant. He begged for time to consider his answer, and a respite was granted until the following day. The evening and night were for Luther a time of terrible depression, conflict, despair and prayer. On the following evening, that of April 18, 1521, he appeared again before the Diet. This time he was ready with his answer; his voice had recovered its clear, musical note, and his demeanor was calm and fearless. He first spoke for some two hours in German. When he had done, the Emperor asked him to repeat what he had said in Latin. Then the Emperor, through Eck, told Luther that he was not there to question matters which had been settled in General Councils long ago, and that he must give a plain answer "without horns," whether he would retract all that he had said contradicting the decisions of the Council of Constance, in which case he would be dealt with leniently. Luther replied: "Since your Imperial Majesty requires a plain answer, I will give one without horns or hoofs. It is this: That I must be convinced either by the testimony of Scripture, or by clear arguments. I cannot trust the Pope or Councils by themselves, since it is as clear as daylight that they have not only erred, but contradicted themselves. I am bound by the Scriptures which I have quoted. My conscience is thirled to the Word of God. I may not and will not recant, because to act against conscience is neither honest nor safe." This he said in German and Latin. Then, after a pause, he added in German: "Here I take my stand; I can do naught else; may God help me!"

The Diet was presently adjourned, and Luther was sent back to his lodgings. The Germans, foes as well as friends, were proud of the sturdy position he had taken, and praised his speeches. The Emperor, on his part, had not been much impressed; "he will never make a heretic of me," he said. Next day the Emperor proposed formally that Luther should be condemned, but the Germans pressed for delay, and, as his private negotiations with the Pope were not yet ended, the Emperor consented. It would not have been safe to subject Luther to the fate of Huss. German Princes came to Luther's lodgings to congratulate him; among them young Philip of Hesse, who grasped Luther by the hand, saying: "You were in the right, Doctor; may God help you." Franz von Sickingen threatened to attack the town in spite of the Emperor's presence if Luther came to any harm. At last Luther got leave of the Emperor to quit Worms and return to Wittenberg. Thereupon the Pope's Legate hastened to complete the bargain which Charles V. wanted to make. The Pope pledged himself to interfere no more with the Inquisition in Spain, and to support Charles against Francis I. of France in Italy. Then, on May 26, the Diet having been closed, the Emperor signed the official document placing Luther under the ban of the Empire. Nothing was now needed but to secure Luther's person and burn him as a heretic. He had suddenly disappeared, however, and no one knew where he was.

Aleander, the Papal Legate, came nearest the truth when he said that he believed that the "Old Fox," meaning the Elector of Saxony, had hidden him somewhere. Luther had, in truth, found refuge in the Wartburg, that stronghold wherein St. Elizabeth had lived the happiest part of her life with husband and children. Here he remained in deference to the wishes of the Elector of Saxony until the troubles in Wittenberg compelled him to go thither. It was during his retirement in the Wartburg that he translated the New Testament from the original Greek into German, and published his tract on "Monastic Vows." The effect of the latter treatise was that a chapter of the Augustinian Order held at Wittenberg gave all monks permission to leave their convents if they desired to do so, merely enjoining a strict observance of the rule of celibacy upon those who voluntarily remained. The importance of Luther's version of the New Testament is set forth by Dr. Lindsay in discriminating yet appreciative words. We are reminded that other translations of the Bible into German had been made long before. It is asserted, indeed, by Janssen that fourteen complete versions of the whole Bible in High German, and five, in Low German, had appeared before 1518. These versions, however, made from the Latin of the Vulgate, were mostly uncouth, and not very easily understood by the common people. Luther may almost be said to have created the German language, considered as a vehicle of literary expression. Born in Thuringia, he was brought up on the boundary between the two German tongues, and used neither High German nor Low German, but a third form of speech, which united the two vernaculars. Thus his Bible gave Germany a common language. This new intellectual possession preserved the unity of the German people through times of political and ecclesiastical division as no Emperor ever did or could have done. The translation of the Old Testament was not begun in the Wartburg. Luther felt that he required help for such a task. After he was back in Wittenberg a band of scholars set themselves to the work, and it was slowly accomplished and published in instalments. In 1534 the first complete edition of the Bible appeared. By this time no fewer than sixteen revised editions of the New Testament had been issued.

After Luther's return to Wittenberg the Reformation spread through Germany in a simple and natural fashion, without any attempt at preconcerted action or any design to impose a new form of church government or a new and uniform order of public worship. Luther was not without hope that the great ecclesiastical principalities would become secular lordships; that the Bishops would take the lead in ecclesiastical reform, and that there would be a national church in Germany, altered in externals as little as possible, enough only to permit free scope to evangelical preaching and teaching. It is true that before the year 1524 had ended, the Pope's legate managed to bring together at Ratisbon the Princes of Austria and Bavaria and the representatives of the ecclesiastical States in South Germany, and there to induce them to agree that, provided the sales of indulgences and various ecclesiastical extortions were put an end to, no further concessions should be made in doctrine. It is true, also, that the Emperor Charles V. had set himself firmly against the whole Reformation movement, and that in his hereditary dominions of the Netherlands he had already sent martyrs for the faith to the flames. Still, all these things did not prevent such a skilled and wary statesman as the old Elector of Saxony from expecting a peaceful and, so far as Germany was concerned, a unanimous solution of the religious difficulty. Suddenly a storm burst which was to shatter such optimistic expectations and to change fundamentally Luther's conception of what was to be looked for from the "common man" in Germany. We refer to the terrible conflagration known as the "Peasants' War," which quickly followed the revolt of the nobles under Franz von Sickingen.

V.

Was Luther responsible for "The Peasant's War?" Undoubtedly his message was democratic. It destroyed the barriers of the aristocracy of the saints, it levelled the barriers between the priest and the layman, it preached the equality of all men before God and the right of every trusting man to stand in God's presence, whatever might be his rank or condition of life. The Reformation, as Luther preached it, gave a voice to the grievances of the people, and not only attacked the merciless exactions of the churchmen, but also had hard words for the oppressors among the secular Princes and free nobles and for the luxurious and money-getting life of the burghers. Dr. Lindsay likewise acknowledges that no other epoch-making man has ever flung about wild words in such reckless profusion. Luther had the defects of his calling. He had the gift of strong, smiting phrases which seemed to pierce the very heart of a subject, of words which lit up a matter with the vividness of a lightning flash. Whatever he said or wrote stuck fast in the memory and the imagination, and he launched forth letters or pamphlets from the press about almost everything. His words fell in the souls full of the fermenting passions of the time that were readier to remember the incitements than the cautions, and that longed to translate speech into action. Humble men refused to believe that Luther's ideas belonged to the realm of spiritual life only, and that the commands and exactions of Popes and Bishops were the only human prescriptions to be resisted. On the other hand, it would not be difficult to show that the Peasants' War had no place in Luther's plans for the regeneration of Germany. His ideal had always been a religious reformation, brought about by preaching and teaching, and owing nothing to violence. He seemed unable to measure the inevitable effects of his own sledgehammer words on minds excited by oppression or by passion. Before the storm burst, he did his best to show that no good would come from insurrection. After it burst, he risked his life over and over again in the visits paid to disaffected districts to warn the people of the dangers they were running. In May, 1525, when the rebels had committed sanguinary excesses, he wrote a vehement tract, "Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants." In this terrible pamphlet he hounded on the princes to crush the rising. Dr. Lindsay admits that, when all is said that can be reasonably said in explanation of his conduct at this time, one cannot but feel that the language of this pamphlet is an ineffaceable stain on Luther which no extenuating circumstance can wipe out.

It is certain that the Peasants' war had a lasting and disastrous effect not only on the Reformation, but on Luther himself. Up to the year 1525 the Lutheran movement had absorbed all the various elements of discontent in Germany, and Luther seemed to have the whole land behind him. In that year came the parting of the ways. The conservative ecclesiastical Reformation of which Luther was the representative was rudely cut off from many of the popular aspirations which had given it an appearance of great strength. The dream of a united and democratic Germany was rudely dispelled. The conservative religious Reformation resulted in the evolution not of a national church of Germany, but of territorial churches under the protection of such territorial magnates as embraced the Reformed faith. As for Luther himself, the Peasants' war planted in him a deep distrust of the "common man" which prevented him from believing in a democratic church, and led him to bind his movement in the fetters of secular control. He did his best within Germany to thwart attempts to construct anything like a democratic church government. His dislike and distrust of the "common man" was largely at the root of his inability to appreciate the heroic Zwinglius and his fellow Switzers, an inability which worked many an evil to the German Reformation, and is chargeable with many of the calamities of the Thirty Years' War.

VI.

Let us turn to what Dr. Lindsay has to say about Luther's own marriage, and about his sanction of the bigamous union contracted by the Landgrave of Hesse. The Reformer's wife, Catherine von Bora, had been one of nine nuns who, in 1523, escaped from a Cistercian convent in beer barrels, and found refuge in Wittenberg. She belonged to a noble but impoverished family, and had take n the veil at the age of 16. At the time of her marriage, in 1525, she was a dignified maiden of six and twenty, with a high, fair forehead and bright black eyes. His "Kaethe," as Luther called her, was no ordinary woman. She was a good housewife, but she was much more besides. She took an increasing share, as the years w[ent] on, in all her husband's work. There i[s] [no] doubt that her loving care prolonged her [hus]band's life. His profound respect for he[r] [and his] trust in her came out strongly in his will[, which] bequeathed to her everything that he [had], declaring that it was more fitting that his [chil]dren should be dependent on their m[other] than the mother on her children.

Luther's relation to the bigamous mar[riage] contracted by Philip of Hesse is discuss[ed at] considerable length. This man, the brigh[test,] boldest and by far the most capable of the Evangelical Princes, had married, w[hen] barely 19, a daughter of Duke George [of] Saxony, and in that age of sexual licen[se] had been a faithful husband to her, in all outward respects at least. We have not the lady's story, but the husband's is that she was of morose temper, had a disagreeable disease and was given to drink. Latterly, he declared, that married life with her was impossible, and that the terms on which he was with her prevented him from going to the Lord's Table. He had thought of divorce, but he knew that the strong opinions entertained by Luther on the subject of Henry VIII.'s treatment of his first wife, Katherine of Aragon, made it impossible for him to get the Evangelical theologian to consent to such a thing. Brooding over the matter he convinced himself that there were cases in which a man might take two wives, and that his was a case in point. He declared truly enough that, had he been a Romanist, he could have easily got a dispensation to keep a concubine. He intrenched himself in the idea that polygamy was permitted under the Old Testament and was not positively forbiden under the New. Matters at last came to a crisis. Philip had fallen in love with Margarethe von der Saal, whom he met when on a visit to his sister, the Duchess Elizabeth. The young lady, who was a distant relation of Luther's wife, refused to have anything to do with him unless she could be legally married to him, and her mother's idea of a legal marriage was one at which Bucer, the renowned Strasburg theologian, Luther and Melanchthon, or at least two of them, should be present as witnesses, together with envoys from John Frederick, the Saxon Elector, and Maurice, Duke of Saxony, which two Princes were respectively the second cousin and the nephew of Philip's wife. Philip prepared his own case, adducing some precedents of Princes being allowed to take a second wife, and won over Bucer to his side. There is no doubt that this action of Philip's caused profound grief to Luther. The Landgrave had been bringing the matter before him for thirteen years with increasing emphasis. Dr. Lindsay thinks that it can scarcely be said that Luther's final answer to the question was due to the fear of displeasing a leading Evangelical Prince.

It is clear that the proposed second marriage must have been looked upon as a personal indignity by young Maurice of Saxony, whose power everybody recognized. Luther also knew that his own Elector not only felt that the Landgrave's intention ran counter to the fundamental laws of Christian morals, but regarded it as an affront to the House of Saxony. These things are mentioned by the author of this book, not to palliate Luther's conduct, but for the purpose of elucidating the whole situation. It is frankly admitted by Dr. Lindsay that the document forwarded to the Landgrave by Luther, Melanchthon and Bucer is very sad reading. It may be summarized thus: We are now living under the Gospel which does not prescribe rules for the regulation of the external life and has not expressly prohibited bigamy. In individual cases of dire need, and to prevent worse results, the pastorate may sanction bigamy in a purely exceptional way. Such a bigamous marriage is a true marriage (the necessity being proved) in the sight of God and of conscience, but it is not a true marriage with reference to public law or customs. Therefore such a marriage ought to be kept secret, and the dispensation which is given for it ought to be kept under the seal of confession. It is certain that Luther repented of his action in this matter when it was too late. He was not himself present at the marriage, though Landgrave Philip by a stratagem secured Melanchthon as a witness. The effect of the formal answer forwarded by Luther, Melanchthon and Bucer was simply to deceive a poor maiden. The Emperor Charles V. declared that Margarethe had never been married at all, and was simply Philip's concubine. From this bigamous marriage the confederacy of Protestant Princes received a shock from which it never recovered, and Maurice of Saxony took his revenge on Philip on the outbreak of the religious war which occurred shortly after Luther's death. It must not be supposed that evangelical theologians approved of Luther's conduct. Most of them disapproved of it strongly, and the remonstrances of some had the effect of inducing Melanchthon to withdraw his acquiescence in the paper which he had signed along with Luther and Bucer. The evangelical cause, however, had to sustain the burden cast upon it by this strange document.

We have said that Dr. Lindsay has given us a discriminating study of his subject. This is made evident in the final chapter, where it is admitted that Luther, although the man of his epoch, did not adequately represent it. The first half of the sixteenth century had elements of culture which Luther either deliberately rejected or was unable to appropriate. There were elements, for instance, in the culture of men like Erasmus and Sir Thomas More which Luther could not appreciate. His age was fertile in economic suggestions which to him were a sealed book. He might have learned much even from such fanatics as Münzer, or the leaders in the Peasants' War. His inability to see the promise and potency of life which lay in the rude strivings of the "common man" marred his reforming work and still paralyzes the European portions of the Church which bears his name. Again, his conduct toward Zwinglius and the Swiss, as also the strong language which he used toward opponents reveals a fund of intolerance which is not what one might expect from so great a man. It is manifest, however, that his contemporaries did not and could not pass the same judgment. His very defects may have aided him in doing what he managed to accomplish. It is certain that, while he lived, he held the Protestant forces together as only a man of relative broadmindedness could have done. His sincerity, his patience and his power of separating what was essential from what was accidental are evident enough when we recall what occurred after his death when he was no longer there to hold in check the petty orthodoxes and heterodoxes that broke out among his followers. It is the fate of most authors of revolutions to be devoured by the movement which they have called into being. Luther occasioned the greatest revolution which western Europe has ever seen, and he ruled it till his death. History shows but few other men possessed of such kingly powers. Moreover, though he has been dead for centuries, he is still living in the German nation. As even Döllinger admits, he has stamped the imperishable seal of his soul alike upon the German language and the German mind, so that "even those Germans who abhor him most as the arch heretic and seducer of the nation cannot escape his influence; they must discourse with his words, and think with his thoughts."

M. W. H.