

fiefs, to be presented by the sovereign, occasioned the most serious quarrel Germany had with Rome, and its tradition had constantly goaded German pride, until the Reformation gave a revenge to the empire, which Maximilian was not slow to take.

This I consider the reason why the Reformation ripened first in that empire. Why Saxony was the precise place, may be accounted for from the fact that in the first years of the 16th century, the balance of Germany turned upon the will of Saxony, which will, also, included protection to Dr. Luther and his cause.

Frederick of Saxony found Protestantism in the streets, and raised it to the level of his own throne. Having founded a university in his town of Wittenberg, he in 1508 called Martin Luther (then in his 25th year) from the Convent of Erfuth to a professor's chair. This Frederick was a great politician, in the meaner sense. His professor made a party in and beyond the bounds of Saxony, and he used the party when it was made. Luther understood and despised him, but like an adroit manager, was willing to be used, provided he might use others in turn. The relation between the professor and the prince is a curious example of clever diplomacy on both sides. They carry on their correspondence through a third party; the elector disclaims Luther's violence in public, but furnishes him hints in private. Luther complains of his patron's selfishness and worldliness in private letters, but exalts him in public as the hope of Germany and the saviour of religion. And this double meaning and dishonest intercourse characterizes all the acts and words of the two leading Reformers.

Now, Elector Frederick was the candidate for the empire, preferred (in the event of old Maximilian's death) by the native German party, who opposed Charles V. as a stranger and a Spanish prince. Maximilian devoted his last years to securing the succession to this grandson, and consequently paid all court to the prince, who alone could decide the election. Finally Charles V. was elected by Frederick resigning in his favor, and bringing his friends to vote for him. Thus, in the last years of Maximilian and first of Charles, Luther's patron and ally was the most powerful and active politician of Germany. It was precisely in these critical years that Protestantism, hovering about the political balance, formed its party, and began to exercise its evil influence in the political order. It is usual to consider Luther as a headlong, rash man, fearless of consequences. Nothing can be less correct. It is very true that he had a hot temper, and a vituperative style, but