

## THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD.



THE pen is mightier than the sword is a somewhat hackneyed expression. The pen is said to be mightier, because its influence is more potent both for good and for evil. We intend to note only some of the mischievous tendencies of the greater instrument. Passing over the intellectual movements of a more ancient date, which the Pen undoubtedly furthered, we shall make our task easier by considering, and endeavoring to pass a fair judgment upon, its works in the sixteenth and in subsequent centuries.

From the 16th century dates the so-called Reformation, which was brought about, chiefly, by the writings and works of Martin Luther. In speaking of the causes and general features of this momentous religious revolution we may note the great mental awakening which marked the close of the medieval and the opening of the modern ages. This intellectual revival, though often spoken of, in so far as it concerned the northern nations, as an effect of the religion revival, was in reality at once the cause and the effect. It hastened the Reformation and was itself hastened by it.

The greatest factor in bringing about the revival of classic learning was certainly the Printing Press. This recent invention was a powerful agency in the formation of the new religious movement. At the same time that the press scattered broadcast the Bible, it also spread the voluminous writings of men who had begun to doubt its inspiration and to dispute the authority of most of the doctrines and practices of the old Church. These writings stirred up debate and led to questioning and criticism. Luther, when called upon to oppose Tetzel in the controversy anent indulgences, drew up ninety-five theses wherein he fearlessly stated his novelties. By means of the press these theses were scattered with incredible rapidity throughout every country in Europe. The continent was plunged into a perfect tumult of controversy. Henry VIII. of England, ably refuted the writings of Luther. However, the King's base passion for Anne Boleyn induced him later to accept these same writings as a pretext for breaking off alliance with the Holy See. The downfall of the ancient faith of Britain was soon complete ; and while England was eventually to become the foremost of Protestant nations, the country was first to be covered with ruins and pauperism and grinding despotism was to be introduced into the once happy land of Alfred the Great.