

son of the different editions on which he worked, till by change of term or transposition of phrase, he hit upon the exact expression which most fully and tersely expressed the Divine thought, and satisfied his own spiritual perception of its significance. In this, too, he sought the co-operation of well-known men; and so much interest did they evince in the effort to secure accuracy that they sometimes returned fourteen successive days to the reconsideration of a single doubtful clause or word. In matters, such as points of natural history, which lay outside their own knowledge, Luther did not hesitate to seek the aid of specialists, and even employed butchers to dissect animals in his own presence, that he might discriminate and render accurately the various sacrificial terms of the Levitical code.

Testimonies to the value of this great work might be quoted from writers of all schools of thought and belief. Poets, philosophers, and divines, men of the most varied tendencies, parties, and confessions, all alike regard this version not only as the first and greatest classical work in modern high German, in a literary point of view, but as worthy of the loftiest position, and deserving to be read before all, and in preference to all. Hitherto, whatever there was of literature—and there was little indeed worthy of the name—was in the hands of one class, the learned; Luther and his associates belonged to no class, but to the people. "His Bible," says Hegel, "became a people's book;" a "fundamental work for the instruction of the people." Vital in every part, clothed in the racy language of common life, its history, poetry, doctrines, and precepts became a most effective means of mental stimulus and instruction, awoke and expanded the intelligence of common men, and moved them to reflection on subjects of the highest moment.

Hence, for the first time in the history of Germany a popular literature was created and was widely diffused. During the last twenty years of the fifteenth century only about forty German works were published. After Luther's appearance the number was simply enormous, and cannot now be specifically enumerated; but up to 1523 hundreds were published, while in that very year, besides Luther's own, no less than 215 by other writers appeared. In other words, more than four-fifths of all that came from the press were in favour of the new movement, while not more than twenty were decidedly Roman Catholic publications.

One production of the German mind owes its origin directly to Luther and the movement he originated. When translating the Psalms, he conceived the idea of making a paraphrase of them for congregational worship, that the people might take a much larger part in service than they had done before. Mere paraphrase, however, did not suffice; original compositions were inspired by the Holy Scriptures, to which he adapted the solemn melodies of the ancient church, and the plaintive airs of popular songs. He himself was said to be the author of thirty-six hymns and paraphrases and of several original tunes adapted to them, and thus enriched the hymnology of the modern evangelical church.

Popular poetry and satire were awakened by, and devoted to, the new movement. Hutten published his bitterest invectives against Rome in verse. He and others, inspired by a positive conviction of the truth, depicted the corruptions and errors of popery in long and vivid descriptions which exercised enormous influence. Hans Sachs, the greatest poet of the day, devoted his genius to the same cause. Thoughts awakened in a mind of rare originality, and instructed by the Word of God, form the basis of many of his ingenious poems, rendered none the less attractive by a slight smack of the workshop, with which this honest shoemaker delighted all classes of the nation.

Art, too, became imbued and ennobled by the spirit of a purified and Scriptural Christianity. Lucas Kranach employed his pencil in works which harmonized with the evangelical faith, or represented scenes, characters, and passions depicted in Scripture narrative, and served to illustrate the pages of the new version. Albrecht Dürer, in the very maturity of his powers, was profoundly affected by the new spiritual life, and the most perfect, perhaps,