

against this sacrament ; and there can be no doubt that the Reformer, whose days and nights were occupied with the accomplishment of his great work, saw on this occasion his thoughts assume a material form, in the same manner as all those whose minds are strongly preoccupied with a subject perceive it distinctly before them, and mistake it for a reality, until the tension of the mind is relaxed and they return to the real life which is around them.

One writer, M. Claude, will only regard this conference as a parable, a species of myth imagined by Luther, engendered, he says, by reading monkish works, where the Tempter is often introduced. The character of Satan in this case being not a reality but a philosophical abstraction, or a symbolical representation of our evil passions.

Luther has himself refuted this supposition of M. Claude, in his *Missa Privata*, where this vision is related. After expatiating on the power which is given to Satan, he says, "This explains to me how it sometimes happens that men are found dead in their beds—it is Satan who has strangled them. Emser, Ecolampadius, and others like them, who have fallen into the clutches and under the ban of Satan, have thus died suddenly."

In a scientific point of view Luther is proved to have had hallucinations ; but was he insane ? A question which we consider must be answered entirely in the negative. At the period of the Reformation Satan had an immense power ; he was mixed up with the religious opinions of the time ; he was spoken of in books and conversation ; he was represented in the paintings and sculptures of the period ; and all evil was attributed to him. The ideas of Luther, exalted by perpetual controversy, by the dangers of his situation, by the fulminations of the Church, and by continually dwelling on religious subjects, would naturally fall under the influence of the demon, which he saw everywhere, and to whom he attributed all the obstacles he encountered, and who—like his contemporaries—he conceived interfered in all the affairs of life.

The hallucinations, if we may so express ourselves, belonged to society and not to the individual. This character of universality, which is observed in the extravagancies of the Middle Ages, originated in the circumstance that matters of faith had subjugated mankind ; while, on the other hand, the liberty of free examination would cause the predominance of the individual. Thus, in our own times, where individuality has attained its maximum development, insanity of a common type has almost disappeared, and has been replaced by forms of insanity peculiar to each individual.

"There is no episode in our annals," says M. Buchon, "which excites so much admiration and interest as the brief history of the arrival of Joan of Arc in the French camp—her exploits, her courage and her martyrdom. This extraordinary event has given rise to the most opposite opinions. Those who participated in the ideas of the period, believed her to have been truly inspired with