

In "The Peasant's War in Germany"

*The Peasant's War.* (Macmillan), Mr. E. Belfast Bax furnishes the second of his series of three volumes on the social side of the German reformation. The period is a difficult one to cover owing to the lack of unity in the various separated revolutionary movements, and to their having occurred at nearly the same time. The details of each rising are narrated with careful discrimination between fact and tradition. Occasional digressions, suggested by the events of his period, on the philosophy of socialistic movements in general, and on the scope of modern socialism in particular, seem rather forced, and mar the general excellence of the author's work. A sharp contrast is justly drawn between the essential spirit of the reformation, and the objects sought by the peasant's war. The reformation was wholly individualistic and modern in its tendency, while the material purposes of the peasants were communistic and mediæval, and were therefore doomed to failure in the end. Yet the wrongs of the peasants were not to be borne quietly, and whatever their mistaken remedies, the peasant's war, *per se*, says Mr. Bax, was a laudable effort against unjust conditions. The author's impartiality in treating of the relations of peasants and princes, both before and during the war, is noteworthy, even when emphasizing the inherent rightfulness of the peasant's cause. Unfortunately this same equitable balance is not consistently maintained in the references made to the position of the Lutheran theologians toward the peasant movement. The bare mention of their names brings with it epithets of bitterness and scorn, while Melancthon in particular is designated successively as "malignant toady," "Luther's little dog," and "Luther's jackal." Whatever Mr. Bax's opinion of these men, the use of such terms is certainly not dignified, and most sensibly detracts from the impression of scholarly impartiality otherwise received. A minor criticism from the scholar's point of view is that while we find in the preface a list of authorities, no specific references to them are anywhere made. Nor is there an index, though it may be the intention to supply this for the entire series, in the third and concluding volume, on the Anabaptists, now in preparation. An excellent map of Germany during the reformation (from Spruner-Menke's *Historischer Atlas*) has been included.