

GERMAN SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649593231

German Society at the Close of the Middle Ages by E. Belfort Bax

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

E. BELFORT BAX

**GERMAN SOCIETY
AT THE CLOSE OF
THE MIDDLE AGES**



GERMAN SOCIETY.

AT THE CLOSE OF

THE MIDDLE AGES.

BY

Ernest
E. BELFORT BAX

AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION," "THE RELIGION OF
SOCIALISM," "THE ETHICS OF SOCIALISM," "HANDBOOK OF THE
HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY," ETC., ETC.



LONDON

SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO.

1894

11/11/11

Hist. Soc.
H. S. L. L.
12-16-17
15851

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,	1
I. FIRST SIGNS OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REVOLT,	43
II. THE REFORMATION MOVEMENT,	92
III. LITERATURE OF REFORMATION PERIOD,	114
IV. FOLKLORE OF THE REFORMATION,	139
V. THE GERMAN TOWN,	156
VI. THE REVOLT OF THE KNIGHTHOOD,	165
VII. COUNTRY AND TOWN AT THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES,	194
VIII. THE NEW JURISPRUDENCE,	249
APPENDIX A,	231
" B,	260
" C,	272



PREFACE.

THE work, of which the present volume is the first instalment, aims at giving English readers a general view of the social condition and the popular movements of Germany during the period known as that of the Reformation. In accordance with this plan, I have only touched incidentally upon the theological disputes then apparently uppermost in the thoughts of men, or upon the purely political side of things. They are dealt with merely in so far as they immediately strike across the path of social and internal affairs. The present volume, which has a more general character than its successors, deals with a period limited, roughly speaking, by the closing years of the fifteenth century on the one side, and by 1525, the year of the great Peasant rising, on the other. It contains a narrative of the earlier popular revolutionary movements at the close of the Middle Ages, the precursors of the Peasants'

War; and it also deals with the underlying causes, economic, social and juridical, of the general disintegration of the time.

The next volume will treat more in detail the events of the years 1524 to 1526. The third will contain a history of the Anabaptist Movement in Central Europe from its rise at Zwickau in 1522 to its decline after the capture of Münster by the Archiepiscopal and Imperial troops in 1536. The reign of the Saints in Münster naturally forms the leading feature of this portion of the work.

As to the sources for the history of the Germany of this period, I have endeavoured to incorporate everything available that seemed to me important for the proper understanding of the time. The three chief general histories of the Reformation, Ranke's *Geschichte Deutschlands während der Reformations-Zeit*, Janssen's *Geschichte des Deutschen Volkes*, and Egelhaaf's *Deutsche Geschichte im sechszehnten Jahrhundert*, have, it is scarcely necessary to say, been laid under contribution. The standpoint of Ranke, whose history is detailed and

PREFACE.

ix

in certain respects exhaustive, is that of general bourgeois Philistinism. Janssen represents the Ultramontane Catholic view; but, apart from its tendency, every one must admire the brilliant and in most cases accurate scholarship that characterises it. Egelhaaf's work may be regarded as the counterblast to Janssen's. Its point of view is that of "liberal," middle-class German Protestantism; but it also contains many hints and clues which may be followed up by the industrious historian.

To rewrite history in the light of the researches of the later decades of the nineteenth century will be the great task of the next two or three generations. History has to be presented afresh on the basis of primitive communism with its tribal and village groups, with its sexual relations based on the *gens*, with its totemistic religious conceptions, and from the standpoint of a continuous development from these beginnings up to the individualism of the present day founded on the complete disruption of early society.

The average student of any historical period