

AN INTRODUCTION TO NIETZSCHE.

In "Who is to be the Master of the World" Mr. Anthony M. Ludovici attempts a brief exposition of the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. The substance of the book was delivered as lectures at the University of London toward the end of last year. Although Nietzsche died only eight or nine years ago the formative factors that went to the making of him are almost pre-Darwinian, and the bitterness of his revolt—a revolt that placed him in barest antagonism to his age—was the result. Mr. Ludovici avoids the few biographical details that should have been given. Nietzsche was born in 1844, of Polish descent. His school record presents nothing remarkable, and his first stirring emotional experience came in 1858, when he heard the magic music of "Tristan and Isolde." In 1865 he became a student at Leipzig, and devoted himself to classical philology. For the next few years his friendship with Wagner and his discipleship to the philosophy of Schopenhauer are the main facts. From 1869 to 1880 he was Professor of Classical Philology at Basel. In the latter year his health declined so much that he had to resign. The next nine years were spent in travel about Europe, and "Thus Spake Zarathustra" was the product of his leisure—the output of a decade or two of introspection. In 1889 his health broke down completely, and he died a few months later. It is in his classical studies that we must look for the origin of Nietzsche's aristocratic and "Dionysian" philosophy. As a critic of the moral ideas, in fact, he in large measure merely went back to the Greek standpoint, and this naturally led him to the fundamental distinction between the code fit for the great man and the code invented by and serviceable to the mediocre majority. Nietzsche's criticism of Christian morality on these lines provoked bitter hostility; though it is doubtful if it would have done so 20 years later. Appearing when it did it was in a pretty direct line of succession to Wieland and Goethe, Heine and Strauss, Hartmann and Felix Dahn; and Feuerbach had summed up the tendency in a phrase Nietzsche himself might have written. Mr. Ludovici is an enthusiastic disciple of Nietzsche, but he has not succeeded in making his exposition very systematic; however, he gives a clear enough account of the master-morality and the slave-morality, expounds the notion of Superman ("man is something to be surpassed"), and he touches lightly on a few other facets of Nietzsche's many-sided genius. Abundant quotations illustrate the form in which the philosopher chose to clothe his thoughts. (From George Robertson).