

STATESMANSHIP AND LETTERS.

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WHEN we read the lives of those men who have exercised remarkable influence on national affairs, we cannot fail to be impressed by their unwearied industry, as well as by their versatility of genius. Not content with moderate success in some particular department of activity, men of vast minds have been ever ambitious to rise far above the ordinary level of human intellect, and dazzle the world by the variety and perfection of their accomplishments. It would seem as if there need be no definite limit to the range or capacity of true genius. When we have hardly ceased admiring the ability with which an eminent statesman has guided his country through a trying crisis, we may be called upon to contemplate some new effort of his talent in an entirely different field of action. The examples that we find, in the present as well as in the past, of men, eminent both in statesmanship and letters, are very numerous. Statesmen have, time and again, sought refuge from the countless distractions of public life in the pleasant walks of literature, where they have been able to gratify their natural tastes, and win a reputation far more enduring than any dependent on the favour of a political party, or the applause of the senate. As I shall attempt to show in the course of the present article, this reputation has been achieved not only in the department of history—for which political experience admirably fits a writer, by giving him that practical insight into the feelings and motives of public men and political parties, which otherwise he would not so well attain,—but in science, philosophy, poetry and general literature, as well.

Let the reader recall the histories of Greece and Rome in their palmy days, and he will find that then men of action were historiaus, philosophers and poets; or warm patrons of art and literature, when they were not authors themselves. Solon, the wisest and best of Athenian statesmen, devoted all his leisure hours to poetry. His poetical powers were undoubtedly of a high order; for the few fragments which are still extant are distinguished by graceful simplicity and remarkable vigour. Pisistratus and Pericles were not more famous as statesmen than as patrons of art and letters. Xenophon, the historian and philosopher, was a soldier, and took a prominent part in conducting the retreat of the Ten Thousand, of which he has left us so graphic an account in the *Anabasis*, that model of perspicuous narrative. The ablest historian of old, the Athenian Thucydides, was also employed in the military service of his country. Every school-boy knows the commentaries of the great Roman Dictator, who fell by the hands of assassins, and is one of the most remarkable examples that history gives of a combination of talents. Augustus, the first Emperor of Rome, was the friend of Virgil and Horace, and the author of several works; and the Augustan age has ever since been remembered as the most