

head of the family, who ruled his children with a rod of iron, as his father had ruled him. Good effects attended this reverence of forefathers. It gave a certain patrician grandeur and stability to the literature. It encouraged the writing of history, archaeology, and grammar. Its evil effects were that it discouraged any change either in diction, material or in the coinage of new words, and that the style was apt to degenerate into monotony or stiffness.

The Roman family was a prototype of the state. The keynote of the body politic was unity, coupled with strict personal subordination. Individual effort was not encouraged except in so far as it gave strength to the state. In a society so well disciplined, flights of fancy could find no place. Poetry was admitted on condition that it be neither too bizarre nor emotional, that it become as reasonable as prose. This repression of the individual had two effects. One was to give a certain sameness and coldness to all writers. The other was to give the classic qualities of balance, good sense and prudence, and to forbid all excess, into which the Greeks often fell. In consequence we find more sense in Horace than in Pindar, and less buffoonery in Plautus than in Aristophanes.

There is a saying that the soul of a people is reflected in their language, and nowhere could we find a better example of this truth than in the Romans. They were a nation of rulers; Latin says much in few words. They were practical; Latin drops the article, the middle voice, and uses the pronoun very little. They were democrats; Latin was adapted to oratory being sonorous and solemn. They were conservative; we find few new-coined words or forms.

From these few remarks it will be seen that Roman literature must of necessity have been made only with great effort. And that its good qualities and defects both spring from the same causes.

DORNEY ADAMS, '15.