

of Shakspeare, Raleigh and Elizabeth; of Corneille and Richelieu; of Lamartine, Swift, Thiers; of Macaulay, Disraeli, Gladstone. United Germany is no more the work of Bismarck than of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Arndt. Italy has taken again her place among the nations. The impulse which stirred her out of her long ignoble sleep was no less literary than political. The rallying cry of "Italia Irredenta" was a cry of poets and patriots. Observe the case of Portugal; Philip the Second could annex her by force, but the national spirit remained alive in the song of Camoens, and the mighty Spanish failed to absorb even this small and kindred people. In the beginning of the present century Portugal found herself once more trembling on the verge of the same fate; but a little band of patriotic poets and historians rose up and fanned into new flame the fading spark of national sentiment, and the nation lived again. To view the obverse of these instances we need not go far afield. Under the second Charles and James of England literature and politics vied with each other in their degradation.

To find a milder but more immediately applicable illustration we may turn our gaze yet nearer home. The fathers of the American Republic were, for the most part, her literary statesmen. Later, the period of the richest outflowing of American literature, when Emerson, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Bryant, Whittier, were doing their best work, was a shining period in American politics; and such men-of-letters as Bancroft, Palfrey, Everett, adorned the American Congress. At present, surely it will be allowed, things are not quite so well with literature and politics in America. The question of our cynical interrogator at the beginning of this paper is sufficient proof of this. From politics the best men in America are too apt to stand aside in indifference or disdain. The literary output is enormous, but too generally characterized by cleverness rather than by large impulse and strenuous purpose. Certain illustrious exceptions will of course occur to us; but, these aside, would not one almost be justified in complaining that American literature had made alliance with dilettantism, her politics with the saloon?

During periods of estrangement between literature and politics, we may be sure that the fault lies not wholly on the one side or the other. Politics, though perhaps dimly conscious of what she might gain by keeping in touch with the best thought and most unbiassed wisdom of the nation, is alienated by some unpractical Utopianism on the part of a literature that may seem to have withdrawn its finger from the common pulse. Though ready to acknowledge the dangers of the appeal to ignorance and prejudice, she cannot conceal her contempt for mere closet statesmanship,—for political theorizings which are not based on a comprehension of the true inwardness of the ballot-box. On the other hand, the tendency of literature to shirk responsibility for the public weal is at least as old as the days of Plato. It is

Plato, I think, who says that if the wise are too indifferent to concern themselves in the government of the state they must endure to be governed by their inferiors. If the wise are anywhere at the present day, fallen into this predicament, it is not an illustrious one, but they have only themselves to blame. The writers of a nation are, whether they will or no, to a great extent the teachers of the nation. They are false to one of their chief trusts if they languidly leave the great problems of public policy to just anyone who will take the trouble to attempt them. It is not strange that the literary class become impatient with the tools and material which politics is compelled to use. They should not forget, however, that it is the plainest duty of every intelligent citizen in a democratic country to interest himself actively in the public policy. The greater the intelligence and knowledge of the citizen, the more incumbent upon him the duty of exercising his wisdom for the public good. What is true of the individual is true of the class. Without indulging in a wearisome recapitulation we may give our inference a yet wider sweep, and reach the conclusion that on the literature of a nation rests the heaviest political responsibility.

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LUX ET UMBRA.

BY PASTOR FELIX.

IN the black flower of midnight, at the heart,
And midmost auricle of secrecy,
There lie the golden fire-seeds that shall be
The day's broad blossom. Softly fall apart
The silken leaves of dreams, and, lo, *thou art!*
Sweet morn of Expectation, dewy-drest;
While all the spectres that the dark infest,
Soon as the East doth his keen lances dart.

Shew angel faces. Why avert the shade,
The solemn vigil, the mysterious Power;
Filling the soul with awe, stirring the clod,
Bidding the bones to quake? 'Tis thus arrayed
In dusky calyx lies Heaven's shining flower;
Our angel leads through gloom to shew us God.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE Royal Society of Canada will meet in Montreal on the 27th inst. An excellent little handbook has been compiled by the local committee for the use of members and visitors, and from a copy of this Handbook which we have received we gather the information here presented to our readers.

This Society and the Canadian Academy of Arts owe their existence to the intelligent and kindly interest of