

The establishment of a Theatre in Montreal, and the general and particular arguments which bear on that question, have several times been revived during a considerable period. The following essay was composed on one of these occasions.

In defending Theatres from the objections which have been urged against them, one would wish to avoid being driven into an extravagant over-rating of their beneficial influence. M. De Belloy, himself an honor to the Drama, has very well said—*il faudroit, pour refuter ces pedans, paroître pedan soi-même. Ne vaut-il mieux avoir raison et se taire.* Perhaps, however, it is best to state moderately the arguments, as in the article that follows this. Might it not also be asked of those who oppose them—If they admit, that the progress of refinement and civilization is necessary? and if they grant, that this necessary tendency of society, should be directed and cultivated? If they say this progress is an evil, will they not admit it should be met as such? If it is a good, that it should be cherished as one? If they allow these truths, the question is at an end; for to form any Utopian scheme, by which society can pass through the last stages of luxury and refinement, without any public demonstrations and effects arising from these, would be no less visionary, than it would, in its consequences, be found erroneous. Let no moralist, no "intellectual-All-in-All," as Mr. Wordsworth expresses it, plead from abuses, nor let him be deceived by the outward repose and death-like stillness, of society; and believe because there is no outward display, of those feelings arising from refinement, that some good has been accomplished. The truth is, the evil is deeper, greater, and more incurable. The darker passions have shed their poison on the heart—the spring of the active virtues is broke—the soul has lost all its divine energy. The picture which the satirist has drawn of solitary refinement, in a luxurious age, is as dreadful as it is true:

Too wretched to endure one lonely day,
 Too proud one friendly visit to repay,
 Too indolent to read—too criminal to pray.

On the contrary; whatever is public passes the ordeal of united minds—if it is wrong, the alarm of virtue is sounded—reason appears at the bar—the better genius of mankind rises to vindicate his nature.

It may not be wrong to state, the origin of those severe censures and anathemas which have been directed against the stage, and to show that it has been, in a great measure, accidental. When the primitive councils and fathers of the Church, opposed their efforts against such entertainments, it was at a time when Paganism yet divided the empires of Europe—when the remains of Heathenism was yet cherished by the people, and their festivals and ceremonies had reference to the mythology of Greece and Rome, or of the North. Afterwards, when persecution ceased, and the Church flourished, christians were not only permitted such amusements, if not contrary to the probity and morals of their religion, but when the subjects were from Scripture, the Priests themselves; as to this day in Spain, Portugal, and South America, were the actors. The Hotel de Bourgogne in Paris, the most ancient