

arising from the Drama, which I have foretold to their fellow subjects.

No kind of composition, in modern times, has been the means of introducing to the public more men of literary genius, whether Poets or Critics, than the Drama. The names of those great men are so well known that, to recapitulate them here, might seem impertinent.— I shall only observe, that, whether their fame now rests upon their Dramatic performances, or on works of greater importance, is a circumstance that does not the least detract from the merit here ascribed to the Drama; than which no department of literature is so ready to confer, upon a youthful genius, fame and applause. The Dramatic Poet sees before him the reward of his labours, not distant or posthumous, but rapidly and feelingly bestowed by his contemporaries. If the honours paid to literary talents in the Olympic Games in Greece, proved such a spur to genius; bursts of applause from admiring audiences in Britain must have a like effect. Though, at present, I can recollect no instance of emulation excited in a British youth, similar to that which sprang so feelingly in the breast of Thucydides, when he saw the History of Herodotus crowned by his admiring countrymen; still I have no doubt, but if our manners permitted such a free and open disclosure of every emotion of the soul, examples among us would not be wanting of equal enthusiasm.

But the good effects of a well regulated English Theatre in Montreal, would not be confined to poetic genius alone. Dramatic performances would encourage a species of philosophical criticism, which, in our age, has been much cultivated and improved by Kames, Blair, Johnson, Melmoth, Harris and Richardson: their labours in that particular province, have tended much, not only to illustrate literary subjects, but also to discover the origin and trace the progress of the most delicate movements of the soul, and to point the way to their admiring successors, of giving a full and satisfactory view of the human mind. Such an elegant and interesting study as liberal criticism of theatrical performances, would certainly have attractions for a few individuals among us. Example would increase their number, and quickly produce a small circle of taste; in which genius might securely try its powers, before it winged its solitary way, in hopes

“to climb

“The steep, where fame’s proud temple shines afar.”

Such, indeed, is the connection between all the branches of the Belles Lettres, that a beginning in any one, will gradually lead to the cultivation of the whole; though it must be allowed that Eloquence and Poetry are the best foundations for a solid fabric of original Literature.

G.