

ON THE INFLUENCE OF LITERATURE

NO. I.

—Ingenuas, didicisse fideliter artes pariter laudabimus
Emolliit mores, nec sunt esse feros.

MANKIND, in general, at least the learned and experienced part; must be fully sensible of the advantages arising from the progress of Science and the state and improvement of literature, especially in a country emerging from its infancy, and aspiring to the name of a free and enlightened colony. Whatever prospect the beauty of Nature, and fertility of soil, the seasonableness of climate, and situation of commercial advantages may hold out to the farmer, the trader or negociant, though they tend all to increase the wealth of the individuals engaged in these various pursuits, each with the aim of his own immediate benefit and prosperity, yet it is fairly to be questioned if all this, alone, would tend to make a state internally happy; unless all orders of society, and all branches of science were equally supported, and summoned to a proportionate share of interest and consideration. In the organization of a new-formed country, it must so happen that her conquerors, and subsequently, the emigrants to her soil, must bring along with them, minds already modelled to the peculiarities and customs of their native clime, and views of aggrandizement and opulence in proportion to their birth and situation in society; for being more the creatures of imitation than invention, (the latter gifted but to a few, the former natural to all) we carry along with us the bias of former customs—those which were instilled the earliest being the most liked and lasting. It is therefore to the government of a colony and to her settlers that she is to look for her amelioration; but unfortunately the views of the one are engrossed chiefly with her political relations and dispositions, and the interests of the other taken up by the absorbing speculations of the “auri sacra fames,” for as gold is the magnet by which the world is moved, and as such, being the object of primary importance, every nerve is strained to that point; and whilst the zest of gain on the part of the government, and its speculators is only looked to,—the zest of learning on the part of the scholar, and his productions may lie unnoticed and unbefriended.

An attachment to a country (like that of the Roman's to his household gods) can only be brought round by the process of time, and by each individual feeling that its hearths are his home, and that the prosperity of his offspring is so interwoven with its own, that his hopes must extend to a period beyond his own sphere of action, in endeavouring to promote the extension of knowledge, and by so doing—rendering its youth learned, enlightened, a credit to the land which gave them birth, and afforded them the means of becoming competitors in science and literature with other countries on the surface of the globe.

In reviewing the histories of the various nations of the earth, we shall find that their systems of education more than any other causes, have