

THE ETHICAL OUTLOOK OF THE CURRENT DRAMA.

CHAPTER I.—THE DRAMA HISTORIC.

A BRIEF sketch of this institution in its historical manifestations may not be out of place here, as it may tend to give us a view point in this discussion which should be decidedly advantageous.

It need not be denied that the dramatic element, or histrionic instinct, is native to the race, and in various forms this fact can be detected even among the peoples most distinct from our own, in time and condition. To personate another, by actions, words and other modes of expression, is simply the mimetic power native in a lesser or greater degree to the human being in all conditions and stages of development. The war-dances of the savage, as well as the private theatrical of a Herod, the third act of which reached its climax in the murder of the Baptist, are evidences of this universal principle from widely-separated fields, and the examples might be multiplied indefinitely.