

if I may say so, into their own soil; the time will come when they will seek your fields, and gather treasures there to carry home.

Permit me to show you what advantage a nation gains, what even unmerited glory it acquires by a familiar acquaintance with foreign literature. You all remember the beautiful lines of Voltaire in his tragedy of *Alzire*.

Des Dieux que nous servons connais la différence,
Les tiens t'ont commandé le meurtre et la vengeance,
Et le mien, quand ton bras vient de m'assassiner,
M'ordonne de te plaindre et de te pardonner.

You all know also how much these lines have been applauded by the French and other European critics, and how often they are cited in praise of the French poet; but what, perhaps, you do not know, is, that he is only entitled to the honour of the versification, and that the idea is borrowed from the English poet Rowe, in his tragedy of *Tamerlane*.

Now learn the diff'rence 'twixt thy faith and mine,
Thine bids thee lift the dagger to my breast,
Mine bids thee live.

The sublime sentiment which these words convey is more briefly and more happily expressed by the English than by the French poet, yet I do not remember that credit has been given for it to the former. But Rowe was an obscure writer in comparison to Voltaire, and the author of *Alzire* has alone enjoyed the glory which in justice belonged to the author of *Tamerlane*.

These, gentlemen, are a few among the many reasons that I might adduce, if time permitted, in favour of cultivating more and more the literature of continental Europe. You will not expect that I should give you here a dissertation on the peculiar merits of that of each different nation, that I should treat you with an abridgment of the works of Bouterwek on general literature, of Laharpe and Chénier on that of France, of Muratori and Maffei on that of Italy, of Schlegel and De Stael on that of Germany, and of Bouterwek again, or of our own Ticknor, on that of Spain. I do not come here to instruct, but to encourage and excite you. Nor do you want the little instruction that I could give. I would rather expect to receive it from you. The existence

