

of this association, the zeal that you have displayed in the promotion of its object, the general approbation which our institution has received from society at large, and the liberal support which it has hitherto obtained, and there is no doubt will continue to obtain, afford sufficient proof that we are not such strangers to the literature of other nations, as some ignorant or prejudiced writers would fain make the world believe.

I have heard it objected, that if we turn our attention too much to foreign literature, we are in danger of impairing the purity of our language, by the introduction of foreign words and modes of speech. I do not think the danger lies there. Language can only be corrupted by a want of taste, but our taste will be improved by the study of the great writers of France, Italy, Germany and Spain. Horace did not think that the Latin idiom could be corrupted by the reading of the Greek models when he recommended their daily and nightly perusal to the scholars of his day.

vos exemplaria Græca
Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.

No, gentlemen, the corruption of languages is the fruit of vulgarity and ignorance; knowledge, on the contrary, improves whatever it touches. Our language may be enriched by the study which I recommend; it can never be corrupted.

We have been repeatedly accused by modern British writers, of impairing the purity of our common idiom. A few words and modes of speech peculiar to this country, have been and are every day cited with affectation by critics and travellers in proof of that assertion. I cannot omit this opportunity of showing the falsity of the accusation. Permit me to address you a few words upon the subject, and to conclude this address by proving to you that there is much greater danger of the English language being corrupted on the other side of the Atlantic than in the United States.

Mr. Bulwer, in his interesting work, entitled "England and the English," has justly observed that "the English of the present day are not the English of twenty years ago." The same observation may be with equal truth applied to the language. The English of this day is not the same that it was