

King's College, Windsor.

JUNE 24, 1858.

ESSAY READ BY PROFESSOR STIEFELHAGEN, IN THE COLLEGE HALL.

HAVING been requested by the Rev. President of this College to make a few observations on the department which I conduct in the plan of education followed here, I will try, in respectful compliance, to show why foreign languages should be studied, and how that study should be pursued.

The mind of rational beings requires variety in the impressions which affect it. Variety and change form the chief element and sustenance of its life; without them it would sink into death-like torpor. Therefore, nothing was farther from the design of the Creator than monotony. How wisely do we see it guarded against throughout the Universe! Wherever we cast our eyes we see the most beautiful variety. In looking beyond this earth, we see it in all the heavenly bodies, those countless worlds which have moved in their surely appointed paths for millions of years, without coming in contact with each other, because we know that they vary in size and orbit, from the immense sphere, of whose magnitude and distance our limited understanding can scarcely form a conception, to the smallest satellite of the smallest planet; and, if it were within the limits of our observation, we should probably find the same variety in their external and internal structure, and the matter of which they consist. And if we look at the beautiful planet which was assigned to us as our earthly abode, we see that it is governed by the same all-ruling laws of change and variety. By a slight inclination of its axis to the orbit which it describes round our great luminary, the delightful change in the seasons and in the length of days and nights was permanently provided for; and the most beautiful variety was forever secured to the different parts of our globe at the time of its formation, by giving them a different structure and soil, and placing them in different positions to the same all-animating Sun. Hence, wherever we look on earth, we see diversity. We see it in climate, in vegetation and minerals, in animals, and lastly, in the highest order of created beings, who are to rule over and enjoy all, in *men*. Now, to these alone it was given to conceive ideas, and to utter these ideas by intelligible signs and sounds; and it entered no more into the design of the Creator that they should all do this in the same manner—that is, have the same *language*—than that they should all live in the same climate, eat the same food, and be surrounded by the same