

g.ages does much to root up bigotry and uncharitableness; it shows us that our thoughts have been limited and conditioned by the forms of the language of the people amongst whom we were born. We realize that we have not all truth, that our neighbours have their share as well, and that it is necessary to know theirs to make our own complete.

The educational value of the study of foreign literature is also very great. One of my commonest experiences is to hear students express disappointment in connection with their reading of French literature. I am not surprised at it. There are strong reasons why it should be so. In the first place there are such important differences between the English and French languages that it takes an English student a long time to acquire such a knowledge of French as will enable him to appreciate those finer distinctions in the use of words in which the very life and heart of literature consist. Prof. Dowden says in the article cited above, p. 173: "In literature the profound differences which have their origin or expression in diverse modes of speech must remain, however close be the alliance of nations. The German who constructs his sentence in one way can never be master of the same intellectual motions as the Frenchman who constructs his sentence in another. The use during long centuries of this instrument, or of that, has called forth and has determined a characteristic play of thought." This is profoundly true, but it is not the only thing which makes one literature differ from another. The literature of a nation is the outcome of many factors. In estimating it rightly all the past experiences and all the present conditions of the nation must be known—history, tradition, laws, customs, superstitions, climate, geographical position, and a thousand other things

must be investigated and understood. The problem is a very complicated one, and no wonder the young student is dissatisfied with his attempts to master it. The people of any nation grow up with fixed notions as to what is beautiful and proper in literature, and they experience considerable difficulty in shifting their point of view so as to see what other nations admire, and it is natural to suppose that what we cannot see does not exist. The difficulty has been intensified amongst highly educated classes by the almost exclusive attention which has been paid to the literatures of Greece and Rome. It has been drilled into us with such persistence that there is nothing beautiful in literature which is not Greek, or an imitation of Greek, that we are scarcely able to tolerate anything else. But is Greek the only standard in artistic matters? Is it not rather short-sighted narrowness which makes us think so? If we will but open our eyes we shall see that almost all nations which have risen above barbarism have produced forms of literature worthy of admiration. Certainly every nation thinks so with reference to itself, and why should we not be as willing to accept a Frenchman's estimate of French literature as we are to accept an Englishman's estimate of English literature? I remember once in a conversation with a Spaniard offering the opinion that Shakespeare was the greatest of all writers. He said he could not agree with me; he had been taught to believe that Cervantes was greater. It was an epoch in my life; his statement was so unlooked for, and yet on reflection so reasonable, that I found it necessary to reconstruct my views on this matter. I asked myself, Would not an Italian think Dante the greatest, or a Frenchman, Molière? Certainly they would if they honestly said what they felt. The truth is, it is an insolvable