

the knowledge of a foreign idiom, as far as *reading* is concerned, may be enjoyed by using good translations. But, independently of the fact, that *those* at least who make translations could not do so without a knowledge of the original language, it is undeniable that the peculiar spirit, which, as we said before, pervades the language of every nation, can never be faithfully rendered by translations.

In prose, principally in scientific works, a translator may come very near the original, although, even there, he can never do full justice to the meaning of the first author. But what are translations of *poetry*? At best, even when made by minds of great practical power, they are only imperfect imitations, no more like the original than an indifferent copy of a master-piece of painting. What is poetry? Beautiful thoughts, clothed in a beautiful form. Now, in translations of poetry, this beautiful form is destroyed and lost. The order of words is different in different languages, and, as the beauty of a poetical form of speech, depends in a great measure on this order, it can never be restored in a translation. Some kinds of metre are, peculiarly well adapted to one language, and not to others, and if a translator from a foreign idiom attempt to imitate them in his own, his production will be weak and powerless, if compared with the original. Who ever enjoyed a translation of Virgil, Horace, Homer, Shakspeare, Scott, Byron, and Schiller, like the original? Moreover, a poet often uses images which have particular reference to his country and nationality; words are wanting to express them in another language, and no translator can render them. Lastly, translators are not found for all the literary productions of a foreign nation, chiefly its periodicals, which are often highly interesting and instructive, and principally valuable only at the time they were written; and those who are ignorant of the language must forever remain deprived of this rich and inexhaustible source of enjoyment.

Hitherto we have spoken of the study of foreign languages chiefly as a means of becoming acquainted with the literature of other nations, and what we have said is equally applicable to ancient and modern languages. But while we study the former exclusively for the purpose of communing with the great minds of remote ages, we gain a two-fold and more immediate advantage by the acquisition of modern idioms. Besides learning to enjoy the beauties of foreign literature in the original tongue, we enable ourselves to listen to the *living words* of countless millions of our fellow beings, and to communicate to them our thoughts in their own native idioms, both by speech and writing.

The pleasure and benefit we derive from *this* capacity are truly incalculable, and fully appreciated only by those whom duty or inclination has led to go where other tongues are spoken, and to travel on the high roads