Fellow Members

The frequency and ability with which you have been addressed from this chair, on the various topics which relate to your mental culture and moral improvement, leave to the present incumbrance but the glimmerings of the rich harvests of those who have preceded him, and it is difficult to select a theme which will interest you by its novelty, he trusts that the present moment will not be lost, while your attention is directed to a subject the most new is however not the least important.

The subject offered to your consideration is a particular attention to classical literature.

The young, owing to their inexperience and want of that practical knowledge which they in after life acquire, are incapable of properly appreciating those improvements to be derived from this source, and are apt to inquire, what advantages will result to them from an acquaintance with those languages which on account of their seeming little practical use to mankind, are termed the dead language? By a consideration of this kind does young people frequently hurried to the unjust conclusion, that all classical literature is useless and calculated to waste in a criminal manner both his time and exertions—and instead of laying hold of it as the means by which he is to facilitate his ascent along the rugged path of the hill of science, is but too apt to consider it as an obstacle thrown in his way only to impede his progress—and sometimes even to wish that it were entirely discarded from our seminaries of learning.