

I hear with pleasure what the Minister of Education said about the formation of private libraries. While you are teaching others, do not forget your own culture. After hot summer days in the schoolroom, you will be more inclined for fresh air than for books. But there are winter evenings and Sundays; there is the close of life. Besides the public or travelling libraries, have little libraries of your own, with your favorite authors, to be taken down when the fancy strikes you. Editions of the Classics are now very cheap. It is far better to be thoroughly familiar with one great writer than to know a little of twenty less great. For serious literature, in forming such a little library, there are Bacon's Essays, marvelous condensations of wisdom in language the most majestic. There are Lamb's Essays of Elia, ever charming. There are Macaulay's Essays, unrivalled for brilliancy of style, though a little too cock-sure. Melbourne said he wished he were as cock-sure of anything as Tom Macaulay was cock-sure of everything. In English History, I cannot help calling attention to Knight's Popular History, though being in eight volumes with wood cuts it is rather an expensive book. It gives a fair and lively narrative of events with a full account of the manners, literature, and general life of the people, all in a genial and liberal spirit without taint of party. In Biography, Boswell's Johnson is supreme. In poetry, Chaucer soars singing joyously as a skylark in the literary dawn; but perhaps from the archaism of his language he is to most people rather a subject of study than a source of pleasure pure and simple. Never be tired of reading Shakespeare. The more you read him the more you will find in him. The first six books of "Paradise

Lost," are about the most sublime of human compositions. If you want perfect rest turn to Cowper's "Task." All Scotchmen worship Burns, and we will join them if they will let us take the poetry without adding the man. Then comes the stirring age of the Revolution and with it a galaxy of poets of the deeper kind, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge, Keats. At last we have Tennyson, supreme in Art and the mirror of our own age, with its science, its speculations and its doubts. Of the recent works of fiction I do not know much nor care to know much more. For political and theological novels I have no taste; let us have our politics and theology straight. Miss Austen, I fear, is out of date, for you though not for me, who can remember that state of society. It is a pity, for she is a little female Shakespeare with the very rare gift of endowing her characters with life. Nobody has ever written such tales as Scott, and in reading anything of his, you enjoy intercourse with a truly noble gentleman. Thackeray is not really cynical, while he teaches you deep lessons in human nature. In Dickens I delight. He not only makes us laugh, but does us good. There can be no better religious exercise than reading his "Christmas Carol." George Eliot, of course, is admirable, though rather philosophic and austere. But choose freely for yourselves. Make your little library of your own favorites; only make your own little library.

Now young ladies and gentlemen, you are at the opening of life, while I am at its close. You are peering anxiously, as once I was, into the misty veil which, at starting, hides from each of us his or her destiny. Behind that veil may there for each of you be happiness. There surely is, if you do your duty.