

to do my own work with any vivacity, I know that I must have seasons when nothing is farther from my thoughts than political economy. So with you. * You are more likely to retain zeal and pleasure in your work if from time to time you manage to forget all about books and examinations and methods and teachers' conventions, and even the Education Department itself.

Where are you to find this outside interest? Here the only rule is to *follow your bent*. Let it be botany or geology or any of the sciences, if, after choosing one of them and doing a little work at it in your spare hours, you really find that you care for it. But do not think that it is a fine and virtuous thing to take up geology, for instance, and then pretend to stick to it when you cannot honestly say that it interests you. For then it will become a task, and lose all the value it was intended to have, as a vent for the free play of your own thought.

Possibly, however, some of you are like me—altogether without the slightest taste for natural or physical science in any of its minuter aspects. Then we have the great, the scarcely exhaustible field of literature to fall back upon. I use the term *literature* with some hesitation; for I know what image the word brings up in many minds. It suggests names, dates and those dreadful things "chief works," to be learned by heart and repeated at an examination in the same way as the dates of battles and the lists of imports and exports. What I mean is not reading *about* authors, but the reading *of* authors. And you must not think that you must begin with poetry, and at once tackle Shakespeare and Milton. Poetry is indeed higher than prose; it affords a means of utterance to thought and emotion more elevated, and yet in a way more direct, than prose. But there are very few people

who really care for poetry. They like the jingle of rhyme, and that is all. After all the school poetry we have to learn, it often will do us no harm to have a season of fallow for a few years. Turn to prose. And here the rule I would lay down is not exactly, follow your own bent; but *follow it within the limits already drawn by the judgment of competent readers*. Many a book is just as bad and demoralizing as a sensational newspaper account of a crime; it does not improve a narrative to bind it in book form. But if you take novels, you all know that Walter Scott, Jane Austen, Thackeray, Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot, Nathaniel Hawthorne stand out from the crowd of lesser English writers; and without troubling yourself about those who are on the boundary line of first importance, you can surely find among these some two or three that you can enjoy. Never mind about useful information; don't look up names and words in a dictionary; but just lose yourself for the time in your author's story; until you begin to breathe the air of the Highlands with Scott, to know your way about London with Dickens, or about Salem with Hawthorne. Or if you care not for fiction, or wish for a change, take what often comes very close to it, the literature of travel. Sometimes one feels one has hardly sufficient mental energy to throw oneself into the fortunes of any imaginary group of persons, and yet we want something which will carry us away from our immediate surroundings, and interest us in other ways of life. Let me mention two books very different that have recently given me the most peaceful of pleasant hours, Kinglake's "Eothen," describing a tour in the East without any of the unreal sentiment which most travellers think it their duty to pretend they feel in historic scenes; and Borrow's