

have made a new friend. Something like this is the experience of the hobbyist who for a time fairly saturates himself with Emerson, or Shakespeare, or George Eliot or Herbert Spencer. He may for a winter belong to an Emerson or a Shakespeare club. His acquaintance, then, with such an author twenty years after will be fresher, more intimate than if he had spent twice the time with them, but in a desultory manner.

In these times, when every trade, business or profession requires that a man work under the highest pressure if he is to be successful, it is of paramount importance that he not only have leisure, but that it be wisely employed. His mind, for the time, must be so occupied that it will be withdrawn from his daily avocation. The faculties or energies that are used in his every-day work should be left to rest and recuperate while other faculties are brought into service for the purpose of occupying his leisure to the best advantage, and here is where a wisely chosen hobby is of great use.

If such a man has no hobby to turn his mind to during his leisure he will probably find his business the only thing that can interest him, and so he keeps at it all the time. I have such a man as a neighbor, and a very good neighbor he is, too. As a business man and a manufacturer he is a splendid success. Just a few years ago he was simply a clerk in one of our dry-goods houses. He now owns two factories besides other business interests, and is rated in the hundreds of thousands. But to be in this man's company for half an hour it is nothing but tiresome. I would defy anyone to be in conversation with him for twenty minutes and keep him off his business. Physically he is almost a nervous wreck. He never reads unless he picks up some light novel on the train, or on a Sunday when he is waiting for Monday and business again. Had that man developed a taste for reading, amateur photography, music or botany, his business wouldn't have suffered, and at least one part of his life would have been smooth and pleasant for him.

A man who is a hobbyist is delivered from an awful habit that makes him a nuisance wherever he is—that is, "talking shop." A man such as I have referred to has nothing else to talk about. Seal his lips to his business and he is dumb. He is like the young rural swain who was walking in the moonlight with the object of his affection. For a whole mile he was possessed of an agonizing desire to say something—anything! and at last in desperation he said, "Are your hens laying pretty well?" Now if this young man had been a reader; if he had come fresh from, say Adam Bede, he would have found the fortunes of the sturdy Adam and gentle Dinah Morris a congenial topic and one that might have made the moonlight mile more prosperous.