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How to Study Shakespeare With Articles on General Literature and Directions for Forming and Conducting Study Circles

By Henry Van Dyke

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An excerpt from the beginning of the first chapter: IT is one thing to read and another thing to study; and yet reading is the chief means and the best method of study when one is trying to understand a writer or a piece of literature. The lover of Shakespeare begins by reading the plays for pure pleasure and ends by reading them for greater pleasure. In the meantime, he may, so to speak, have taken them to pieces, examined their construction, looked at the words in which they are written with a microscope, traced their historical connections, gone back to their sources. In doing this work of analysis for it is necessary to take a thing to pieces in order to find out how it is put together he may become so much interested in the detail of the work that he loses sight of Shakespeare altogether and becomes a student of language, grammar, the structure of style, the evolution of the drama. This is what sometimes happens to the scholar; in studying what may be called the mechanics...



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