

And in theory it is just the same: a man must wait for the right moment; even the greatest mind is not always able to think for itself at all times. Therefore it is advisable for it to use its spare moments in reading, which, as has been said, is a substitute for one's own thought; in this way material is imported to the mind by letting another think for us, although it is always in a way which is different from our own. For this reason a man should not read too much, in order that his mind does not become accustomed to the substitute, and consequently even forget the matter in question; that it may not get used to walking in paths that have already been trodden, and by following a foreign course of thought forget its own. Least of all should a man for the sake of reading entirely withdraw his attention from the real world: as the impulse and temper which lead one to think for oneself proceed oftener from it than from reading; for it is the visible and real world in its primitiveness and strength that is the natural subject of the thinking mind, and is able more easily than anything else to rouse it. After these considerations it will not surprise us to find that the thinking man can easily be distinguished from the book-philosopher by his marked earnestness, directness, and originality, the personal conviction of all his thoughts and expressions: the book-philosopher, on the other hand, has everything second-hand; his ideas are like a collection of old rags obtained anyhow; he is dull and pointless, resembling a copy of a copy. His style, which is full of conventional, nay, vulgar phrases and current terms, resembles a small state where there is a circulation of foreign money because it coins none of its own.