

In order to read what is good one must make it a condition never to read what is bad; for life is short, and both time and strength limited.

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Books are written sometimes about this, sometimes about that great thinker of former times, and the public reads these books, but not the works of the man himself. This is because it wants to read only what has just been printed, and because *_similis simili gaudet_*, and it finds the shallow, insipid gossip of some stupid head of to-day more homogeneous and agreeable than the thoughts of great minds. I have to thank fate, however, that a fine epigram of A.B. Schlegel, which has since been my guiding star, came before my notice as a youth: