

up, talked about, written about, read about and dropped. And all with the same energy and with the same interest, whether it be golf, the bicycle, ping-pong, the latest much-advertised novel or the newest 'fad' in physical culture, mental healing, universal language, etc., *ad libitum*.

"Individuality is almost extinct in our 'cultured' circles. One person's opinions are just like another person's opinions, and are held chiefly because they are the opinions of another person now on the flood-tide of publicity.

"And this superficiality is strongly reflected in our books. How many of the thousands published each year really stand out and last after the publishers and so-called critics have ceased to give them publicity? Where are the novels all the world was reading twelve months ago? What are those who read them reading now? We strongly advocate good novels, and do not by any means think that all reading should be study. What we want to encourage is the reading of books that reach the individual needs of the reader, books from which will really come the true refinement and wide culture that lead to modesty, quiet, and usefulness.

"Our authors just now are really more sinned against than sinning. It is almost a pity to have a bright talented writer bring out a successful book. The first thing demanded is another one. If the book was a good historical novel we must have another, and while it is being made ready for us we must turn publicity upon the author, must see his house, his writing-table, his clothes, his

favorite breakfast, his pet cat, and finally all the manuscripts he once knew were not good enough for publicity, but now brings out in print to catch the public before he has become one of the forgotten "fads" of a given year. Does true refinement and culture pry around and display curiosity concerning the private affairs of others?

"After many conversations, especially with young girls, we are convinced the present condition of affairs rests chiefly upon the mistaken idea most conscientiously held that it is really necessary to know the last new book in order to take rank among the cultured. Some of these girls were totally unfitted to understand several of the books that everybody read last year, but they thought they had read them because they had turned the pages to the end.

"In many cases it would be good if a prohibitive price still kept the newest fiction from the general reader. But here the library steps in and offers for nothing to the non-tax-paying girl what would otherwise be outside her reach, and also more and more impresses on her that she must read and read and read. True, the libraries do excellent work in directing those who wish to do better, but they also provide for those who take books just as they take any other kind of amusement and excitement.

"Readers should take time to think on what subjects they need information, and should then seek it intelligently and restfully. They should be 'individuals' in reading and in all else! The 'young girl' is evidently a power in the American literary world."