

pursuit of pleasure. It has responsibilities, neglect of which is too perilous to be risked. Fortune has its hostages. It must keep up with the times or be run over.

To be sure, the brains of the family may run out, or its energies fail; and in that case the business that has been its feeder may quickly become a drain. If the family has gone hopelessly to seed, of course the sooner it gets out of active life the better. To close out its business then, is common sense. It is quite a different matter to cut loose from it while the family is still strong, and shows no signs of enfeeblement. That is to invite degeneration, to throw away the apparatus by which the family has got its strength, and wait for sloth to overwhelm it.

We talk a great deal about the want of originality nowadays in anything; we say that everything seems to be vamped up and made over out of something old; all the ideas in literature and art, and to a great degree in science, have been used over and over again until they are threadbare; even the men and women we meet in daily life are cut after one pattern; talent is plentiful, but the genius that creates and originates is almost extinct.

So we talk, while we look back upon the creative past with wistful longing, upon the stagnant present with contempt, and upon an uncreative future with gloomy forebodings. At least we think we do all this; but, as an actual fact, we do nothing of the kind, and we do not take at all kindly to originality and novelty. Witness our aversion or contempt for "cranks," and yet these are the present creative and original specimens of our race, the only ones who march out of the dead level and do something novel. Think of the derision cast upon the first man who carried an umbrella, upon the first woman who wore a hoop, and, later, upon the first woman who did not wear one. There has never been an invention for the good of man that has not been forced upon him against his will, there has never been a movement for the elevation of either sex that has not had to fight its way into favor, and is gratefully accepted only when well worn.

I was led into this train of thought the other night when I went to see a new play.

It was an "adaptation" from some foreign source, and was very clever, well constructed and amusing. The house was packed with people who enjoyed the play to the utmost; in fact they were overwhelmed with delight and mirth. I enjoyed it myself, immensely, and it was not until I had been at home some time that I began to philosophize about it. And then I could not but wonder as I reviewed it. That play not only had absolutely not one original thought, word, or scene, but the plot and situations were so very, very old that no written record of the drama goes back to the time when they were not. I do not of course mean this assertion to be taken in the broad sense of human emotions and passions, which must be the same in all ages, but in the restricted sense of literary and dramatic conception and ingenuity of construction. To go back but a few hundred years, our English ancestors found these self-same situations, and schemes, and dialogues, and plots intensely diverting. They abound in the plays of those times; and it is a strange thing, when one thinks of it seriously, to hear that laugh ringing down through all the political and social eras, surviving all the changes brought about by human progress, not drowned by the roar of cannon, and heard above all the clang of machinery and the screaming of steam-whistles on a winter's night in 1892 in the metropolis of a new world, the same hearty laugh at the same old thing.

And so it is with pictures. We stare and gape at the paintings on the gallery walls produced by original thinkers, and stammer about purple lights and nature's true coloring, and then we are glad to get away to the corners where hang the same sort of pictures we have seen ever since we came into the world, and before them we feel a throb of genuine pleasure, and talk freely and enjoy to our hearts' content.

Nor do we give more than a passing regard to truly original fiction. We are always asking for it, but we don't want it. We submitted to the ugly heroine for a time, but now we have the pretty one of the centuries back again and we mean to hold on to her. She is not as sentimental as she was, and knows more Greek and philosophy, but in all essential particulars she is the same love-beset damsel who has

charmed us for five hundred years. Ditto the hero ; ditto the plot.

I am afraid we love the is more than the might be, or even the ought to be.

NOTWITHSTANDING the multitude of human infirmities, it is happily still the rule that men have the use of five senses that they know of, besides the possibility that they benefit by others of whose existence they are not conscious. The great majority of people can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. For the last three senses to be seriously impaired is uncommon. Multitudes of people have imperfect vision, but most of them are so helped by eye-glasses that they make out very well. Imperfect hearing is much less common than imperfect sight, but it is a much worse scrape when it exists, because so little has been done to help it. If a man has any sight left in him at all, the spectacle-makers can fit him to enjoy the society and share the amusements of his fellows ; but if he is deaf, even in moderation, he may as well make up his mind to be in a considerable measure independent of society. It was a deaf person who was asked in what he took the most pleasure, and replied : " In reading, eating and drinking, the sight of my children, games and sports, and in the prospect of death." It was another deaf man who spoke of the measure of satisfaction he found in talking with a single companion ; but he added, " But hell comes into the room with the third person."

To be handsomely and agreeably deaf is a very elegant accomplishment, fit to exercise social talents of a high order. The person who aspires to it must check, in a considerable measure, a deaf person's natural tendency to shun society and flock by himself. He must continue to mix with his fellows, and when he does so must in so far conceal his infirmity as to make it a cause of discomfort to none but himself. However little he hears he must never seem unduly desirous to hear more, or yet indifferent to what is being said. However impossible it may be for him to take part in conversation he must neither permit himself to be bored nor to appear so. It is his business always to have the means of entertaining himself in his own head, so that while he continues in company his mind may be constantly and

agreeably occupied, however little he may hear. In almost any company a deaf man to whom things that have been said have to be repeated is a check to free discourse ; a deaf man who is eager to hear and cannot is a discomfiting sight ; a deaf man who is bored and wishes himself elsewhere is a depressing influence ; in either case he had better go elsewhere. The tolerable deaf man is one who, being in congenial company, can give pleasure by his mere presence, as he can take pleasure in merely having his friends about him. His thoughts must run, not on what he cannot hear, but on what he sees and feels, and upon the ideas that come into his own mind. A deaf man who is always able to entertain himself, and who is always glad, and never over-anxious, to know what is going on about him, has reasonable grounds for believing that at least he is not an incubus upon society. If to his negative accomplishments he can add the habit of having something worth hearing to say, he can even hope to be considered agreeable, and to have his society as welcome to ordinary selfish people as to the more benevolent.

Whether general society is worth cultivating on these terms is another question, and the opinion that there is more of self-discipline in it than amusement seems not without some basis. Still, deaf people are bound to keep as much alive as they can, and it does not do for people who want to keep alive to live a life of too much solitude. Therefore it is a good plan for deaf people to cultivate a taste for anything that has a social side to it, but to the successful prosecution of which good hearing is not essential. Women, on whom deafness doubtless bears more hardly than on men, and who usually bear it with better grace, are likely to find profit in cultivating, for one thing, a taste for dress ; for good clothes look as well on a deaf woman as on another, and give as much pleasure to the wearer as if she could hear. Moreover, the gratification incident to fine raiment being incomplete until it has been shown, the possession of ravishing toilets is a constant and wholesome incentive to their owner to brave the discomforts of her infirmity and go among people who have eyes in their heads. The cultivation of the dress faculty is less important, but not unimportant, for men.