

Literary newspapers, since they print the daily smatterings of commonplace people, are especially a cunning means for robbing from the aesthetic public the time which should be devoted to the genuine productions of art for the furtherance of culture.

Hence, in regard to our subject, the art of _not_ reading is highly important. This consists in not taking a book into one's hand merely because it is interesting the great public at the time--such as political or religious pamphlets, novels, poetry, and the like, which make a noise and reach perhaps several editions in their first and last years of existence. Remember rather that the man who writes for fools always finds a large public: and only read for a limited and definite time exclusively the works of great minds, those who surpass other men of all times and countries, and whom the voice of fame points to as such. These alone really educate and instruct.

One can never read too little of bad, or too much of good books: bad books are intellectual poison; they destroy the mind.