

Then, although these associations may organize and utilize power, and even in some instances increase it, they do not create power. You may have a well organized association on paper, that looks very imposing; but if there is not interest or zeal to work its machinery, it is just like a very large mill on a very small stream; there is not force enough to run it. But the worst thing about this system of working, is that it tends to destroy individuality. There can be no real greatness of character without independence and individuality. And if we would have men to lead us onward and upward in knowledge and true progress, we must have less aping and imitation of those who have attained distinction, and more honest daring to be ourselves, and to do the work we have to do in our own way. There is a paralyzing slavery to popular opinion widely prevalent. The majority of people are a great deal more anxious to know what is popular in good society, than what is right and true. All the great movements that have lifted humanity up to a higher place, have been inaugurated by the zeal and energy of individuals; and all the great minds who have indicated their right to be held in everlasting remembrance, and stamped their influence on the history of the world's progressive life, have been distinguished by a brave independence, which developed strongly marked individuality of character. If the society aims at achieving any worthy work, join it and co-operate with it by all means. But don't wait for others before you attempt to do anything. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." An earnest soul soon reproduces its convictions in others. And remember that the highest attainable force of character is won not by slavish conformity to popular prejudices or imitation of great men—but by bravely and independently acting out in our own way our convictions of what is right and true.

*Sixth*—Among those features of the times, that can only be mentioned to be condemned, is the disposition to worship any form of power, without regard for the spirit in which it is wielded. There is an extensive proneness to idolatry of mere intellect or genius. Let it be a poet gifted with original genius—a musician of witching melody—an artist of exquisite skill—an engineer of marvellous ingenuity—or a writer of fertile genius, and multitudes are ready to render a homage and applause, little short of idolatry, without regard for the motives that govern the life. And not only so, but if a man wins distinction in any one department of science, there is a strange disposition to set him up as an oracle, and regard his utterances on other matters, of which he may be profoundly ignorant, as unquestionable and decisive. What is splendour of talent without purity of purpose or nobleness of character? Great genius