

settled convictions formed from the investigation of facts, lifts us above the mere opinions of others. Accordingly, whilst we diligently labour to collect information from every source, let us beware of sinking our own individuality so far as to become the mere receptacles of other men's thoughts—the parrot-like propagators of opinions received by the eye and ear and spoken from the memory not the heart.

We rejoice that there is no influence brought to bear upon us in this institution calculated to repress freedom of opinion, but that independence of inquiry is not only urged, but even demanded from us.

Nowhere is a man more likely to be thrown back upon his own resources, or more surely taught to rely upon his own powers of mind, than in those free discussions which necessarily hold a prominent place in a Society such as ours.

Not seldom, perhaps, does a man for the first time experience the pleasure which attends the creative power of the mind when forced to deliver an extemporaneous speech elicited in the heat of debate. Not seldom has he learned for the first time really to respect his own opinions, when he finds that, in the judgment of the Society, they are superior to those of his opponents.

It is only when a man is really convinced of a truth, that he should presume to teach it to others. Let us then seek to have convictions of our own. Let us dare to express them; and if there be anything further required to constitute true heroism, it is to stand by our convictions when we have expressed them. This alone will give us true independence—true individuality of character. Let us remember, then, that if egotism is odious, and self-conceit abominable, a want of due self-respect is as great a defect in a man's character as either.