

"By despising all that has preceded us, we teach others to despise ourselves. Where there is no established scale nor rooted faith in excellence, all superiority—our own as well as others—soon comes to the ground. By applying the wrong end of the magnifying glass to all objects indiscriminately, the most respectable dwindle into insignificance, and the best are confounded with the worst. . . . If, with the diffusion of knowledge, we do not gain an enlargement and elevation of views, where is the benefit?"

—HAZLITT: *On Reading New Books.*