

They are the school in which he educates himself, and he who learns his lesson at this fount of knowledge becomes a veritable teacher and student. He is engaged in "the greatest study of mankind, as man," and no one is truly learned who does not know himself. In the words of Stephen, "Every man is in himself a continent of undiscovered characters, and happy he who acts the Columbus to his own soul." Hence the man who wishes to make progress, true progress, must employ his time and take advantage of opportunity for self-improvement, for the cultivation of his character, and the grinding down of his sharp edges, until he becomes pleasing to himself and pleasing to others. From all the persons, places and things with which he has connections he draws his lessons; they all supply him with a few grains of knowledge, and precious they are. If he sees perfection and nobility he experiences a desire to elevate himself to the height of the nature he contemplates; if he encounters gross and meanness his spirit recoils and he is taught what to avoid. If insulted, he has the occasion of practising mortification and charity; if despised, he can discipline himself in humility and meekness, which will finally become for him a triumph over all. In a word, self-culture consists in eradicating the tares of vice from the soil of our character, and planting the wheat of virtue, in bringing to the surface all that is good, noble and beautiful in us, reflecting it in the honest and open countenance that we turn to the world, for, as Bishop Spalding says, "even as the light clothes the rugged and jagged mountain with loveliness, so a noble mind transfigures its nature."

And in these days especially, when science and art are forging ahead with such rapid strides, men are needed, men of character, honorable, upright, trustworthy and virtuous, men of whom it can be said that the world is the better for their lives. Too often it happens that the reverse takes place; character and virtue are sacrificed to ambition, worldly honor and fame, for the sake of pleasures, and particularly for riches. Thus we see that Christian thought and aims do not keep pace with material progress, a circumstance that is the root of many evils. Scientific discoveries and inventions, intellectual prodigies and standing armies cannot make a country prosperous; at the basis there must be morality, and we have this only when man has formed himself, knows himself, knows his duties to himself, to his neighbor, to society, and, above all, to his God. How broad the field, how rich the harvest, but, alas, how few the harvesters! What opportunities for men to reap and to gather