

and use bad grammar or slang? This is the kind of boys and girls that sometimes stand before a looking-glass and wonder why they are never invited into society.

OUR UNDISCOVERED SELVES.

Read at the meeting of the Young Folks Guild Unity Church, Chicago, Ill., by Alice L. Griggs, in 4th. mo., 1893.

"For a long time I have been waiting for myself." Thus a Persian poet expresses his realization of the vast difference which exists between our ordinary every day self and that other self which lies deep within us, hidden from the eyes of men. There are many who can sympathize with the poet, who not only wait, but even search for that deeper self, which, they dimly feel, must be grander and nobler than that with which they and their friends are in some degree familiar.

Probably we have all at times felt that desire to investigate and explore the depths of the soul. But, in some way or other, we are often baffled and driven back, for the soul is a mysterious and intangible thing.

We should hardly expect material laws to hold sway over a realm so little material. There is one law, however, which I think may apply here. When we hold a book an inch before our eyes, we are unable to read a word; when we stand too close to a picture, we do not see the beautiful landscape, but only a confused blotch of color. To this principle is due the difficulty we experience in our endeavors to learn our real self. It has been said: "The true reason why we know ourselves so little lies in the difficulty we find in standing at a proper distance from ourselves, in taking up the right point of view, so that the details may help, rather than hide the general effect."

We may study the inner self of a friend and reach a conclusion much more nearly correct than his judgment of himself, or our estimate of our own nature. It is the impossibility of

getting outside of ourselves a sufficient distance to get a good focus that prevents just self analysis.

If we have within us a nature, so important, and so subtle and elusive, the question arises: "What is it? Is it soul or character? In his interesting study, "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," Oliver Wendell Holmes, advances the proposition that in every man there are three selves—his real self, known only to his Creator; the self known to his friends, and finally, that self which he himself sees.

In some cases these three may be almost identical; he may be so true to the real nature that his friends estimate him correctly. That they are usually widely different is evident from our ordinary experience. Every day, consciously or unconsciously, we pass judgments which, could we look into the person's inner self, would be radically different. In the same way we come to equally erroneous conclusions about ourselves.

The outward seeming is often very different from the inward reality. A man may appear generous, unselfish and pure, when in reality his heart is full of selfishness and sin. Or he may be made by circumstances to appear base, when his real nature is true and noble.

The story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde finds its counterpart in the life of many a man. Dr. Jekyll represents the reputation, Mr. Hyde the character. And here, I think, we may gain some idea of the nature of that inner undiscovered self, and can also give to it a name, *Our character*, that outward and visible sign of the inner and spiritual man. But what makes the soul express itself in character you may ask? and how does character develop? Is it the stamp set upon the metal of our true selves at birth, or is it by the slow processes by which gold is separated from the baser substances, the smelting in the great furnace of life, the rubbing and polishing, till at the last the true metal comes forth with the stamp of its value upon it.