

it designates the obvious mark that speaks to the eye; or, it represents the instrument that leaves the imprint. Thus it is that, when one applies a seal to soft wax, the word character is interchangeably used to mean the imprint produced and the instrument that produced it. Indifferently, then, may the word be used to mean the outward expression of man as well as man himself.

In all walks of life a man's character is a matter that receives much attention; it is discussed at length, and in discussing it one generally restricts himself to the moral make-up of man, to his qualities of heart and mind. It is, moreover, in this restricted sense that the word character is taken, for, as often as we speak of a man's dispositions, it is always of his moral aptitudes and tendencies.

Thus determined, the word character is yet susceptible of other meanings, presenting, as it were, three other aspects, which we will view in turn. If man's exterior characteristics are analysed, character becomes his distinctive sign, his moral trade-mark. But, if we probe the innermost intricacies of his heart, character shadows forth his moral constitution. Again, if we desire to throw into action the main spring that sets in motion a man's greatest value, character becomes his moral energy.

Character the Moral Mark of Man.

Needless is it to observe men very long in order to discover, in spite of the long established unity of human nature, how much they differ morally, even more than physically. However apparent be the physical differences in man, more striking still are the differential moral traits. The distinguishing signs, the moral brand that mark each one of us is, then, our character. Such man, for instance, has high and noble aspirations, full of disinterested self-devotion, the happy possessor of a gentlemanly bearing, and of an inviolable sincerity: it is a good character. On the other hand, such is known to have vile tendencies, gross appetites, inordinate passions; he is coarse and uncouth of manner; he is selfish, either tramples on his conscience, or has none: it is a low and despicable character.

But let us admire this man, whose soul is all generosity, zealous and enterprising, firm in his resolutions, unconfounded by obstacles and unsubdued by pain and trials: it is a rich character, from which