

THE MORAL MARK OF MAN.

I.



WELL deserved and sincere thanks are offered to the REVIEW for the kind welcome it gives to this present essay, which is not scientific, but purely ethical. If I write from a moral standpoint, it is for the sole reason that ethics teach men how to live. Live we must more or less time; hence, of paramount importance is it to learn the art of living. That real men, men worthy of the name, men endowed with lofty ideals, are few is the constant cry of the age. Quite otherwise would it be if, instead of following blindly the leading string of their misdirected inclinations, men were to take resolutely in hand the education of their will and the formation of their character.

Theoretically, a man's character is susceptible of formation and betterment. There is no one who carries not within him the nucleus of a hero, as well as that of a scoundrel. The rose and the nefarious weed may spring up from a same soil. Practically though, limited indeed is the number of those who will courageously breast the difficulties inherent to the arduous task of self-culture and self-mastery, for man is, and always will be, his own, his most tyrannical and persistent enemy. "*J'aime encore mieux forger mon âme que la meubler*," said Montaigne. May, then, the first part of this essay, which is more or less the adaptation of a masterly little book published in French, prove helpful to my readers of "good will" who feel the laudable ambition of "forging their soul" in order to acquire the most desirable of accomplishments, the most telling of all virtues—virility of character.

What is Character?

The word, etymologically considered, signifies to engrave or to etch. Though numerous are the acceptations of the term under consideration, yet it maintains the same sense of its primitive origin. The first idea it conveys to the mind is that image, vivid and clear, of those Grecian artists deeply furrowing tablets of marble and of bronze to inscribe thereon some national exploits, or to commemorate the mighty deeds of mighty men in indelible characters. Again,