

A than in the faces of  
grown men



A man's face, if we can read it aright, is indeed an index of his character. We can tell what sort of man he is by the expression of his countenance, as we can tell the species of shell-fish by its shell; for as a shell-fish secretes its shell, so the soul secretes its physical face. It is we ourselves who make our faces; and we make them gradually and unconsciously to express our inner character. Character is simply the sum total of confirmed habits; and as a Tidbit is formed, it slowly writes its characteristic marks on the face, and gives its own look to the eyes. It is harder to read character in the faces of unformed children than in the faces of grown men and women, though one can generally detect meanness or frankness even in the face of a child; but the older people get and the more fixed their habits, the easier it becomes to tell what sort of people they are, from their faces. Certain kinds of faces almost anyone can read.

You cannot mistake the red and bloated face of the drunkard, the sour face of the discontented, the pride in the face of the arrogant, the crafty look in the eyes of the sneak. But it takes a trained and careful observer to read some faces, for some clever people can make their faces like masks to hide their real selves. A falsehearted man may have an apparently frank and open face; a cruel man may wear a deceptively kindly smile; a rogue may look very honest at first sight. As Hamlet said, " A man may smile and smile, and be a villain.

" But there is always something in the face that will betray such people to an acute observer especially in the most expressive features, the eyes and the mouth. A look in the eyes, the way he shapes his mouth, may betray the hidden meanness, cruelty, craftiness or selfishness that lurks behind the

friendly smile and the frank look. Certain it is that dishonesty , lust and cruelty, honesty, purity and kindness, all leave their indelible marks on the face.