Outline of a study of the self

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OUTLINE OF
A STUDY OF THE SELF

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INTRODUCTION

THE authors have discovered, through their experience as teachers, that a study of the ancestry, development, and present constitution of the self is an extremely profitable task for most students. They therefore present this outline as an aid to the systematic and thorough study of the several important aspects of the self.

The purpose of the study is threefold: first, to help you to understand yourself and to become a useful and happy member of society; second, to help you to understand and sympathize with other persons, especially children, and to further their development; third, to arouse your interest in the facts of heredity, of environmental influence, and in the significance of the applied sciences of eugenics and euthenics.

Do the work well. If you do it hastily it will be worse than valueless. Choose times for the study when you can be undisturbedly reminiscent and reflective. Certain of the questions cannot be answered in detail, or not without an excessive amount of labor; regard them as suggestive and do the best you can to get the information which they demand. Do not answer them categorically. Be wholly honest with yourself. Write freely and fully of what you shrink from or are ashamed of as well as of the facts which seem to you creditable. The contents of your report will be accepted in confidence by the instructor.

Be sure to arrange for personal conferences with the instructor and with some of your relatives in order that you may obtain advice and assistance in gathering information.

The object to be studied is the self. We shall study it (1) as a product or expression of heredity; (2) as a developing, reacting mechanism (a going machine); (3) as a conscious and self-conscious willing being; and (4) as a member of social groups.

The general plan of work is indicated in outline below in order that you may view the task as a whole.

1 G. E. Partridge's "An outline of individual study" (New York, 1910) will aid you greatly if carefully read.
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I. THE ANCESTRAL HISTORY OF THE SELF

1. The family tree.

2. A record of family traits:
   (a) Physical or bodily traits,
   (b) Mental traits,
   (c) Moral traits,
   (d) Social traits.

3. A description of the environment and of the physical, mental, moral, and social characteristics which seem to have determined the success and happiness of:
   (a) Your great-grandparents,
   (b) Your grandparents,
   (c) Your parents.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OR GROWTH OF THE SELF

1. Conditions of prenatal life:
   (a) Physical,
   (b) Mental.

2. The self in infancy:
   (a) Circumstances of birth,
   (b) Physical characteristics,
   (c) Mental characteristics.

3. The self in childhood:
   (a) Environmental influences,
   (b) Physical development,
   (c) Mental development,
   (d) Temperament and character,
   (e) Vocational suggestions,
   (f) Habits of special importance,
   (g) Social relations and tendencies.
4. The self in adolescence:
   (a) Environmental influences,
   (b) Physical development,
   (c) Mental development,
   (d) Temperament and character,
   (e) Vocational suggestions,
   (f) Habits of special importance,
   (g) Social relations and tendencies.

III. THE SELF OF TO-DAY

A sketch or biography of the self, concise, complete, fair, which
shall exhibit it: —

1. As an expression of heredity with respect to:
   (a) Physical constitution,
   (b) Mental characteristics,
   (c) Social, vocational, moral, and religious tendencies.

2. As moulded by environment in:
   (a) Physique,
   (b) Mentality,
   (c) Social nature and vocation.

3. As a functioning organism, influenced by and influencing the world
   — animate and inanimate. The self as built up by the inter-
   action of inheritances and environment.
IV. The Significance of the Characteristics of the Self

1. Vocational:
   (a) Relation of physique to occupations,
   (b) Relation of mind and temperament to occupations,
   (c) Bearing of heredity and social position upon vocation.

2. Marital:
   The bearing of the following on (1) congeniality in wedlock
   and (2) the welfare of offspring:
   (a) The inheritances of the self: physical, mental, moral, social,
       vocational,
   (b) The self as moulded by environment: the physical, mental,
       moral, social, religious self,
   (c) The preparation or fitness of the self for the duties and
       responsibilities of parenthood.

3. Social:
   The duties of the self as a member of social groups in the light of
   (a) Physical constitution,
   (b) Mental constitution,
   (c) Moral and religious tendencies,
   (d) Vocation or vocational abilities.