

A SYLLABUS OF PSYCHOLOGY

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A Syllabus of Psychology by William M. Bryant

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WILLIAM M. BRYANT

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PSYCHOLOGY**

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A SYLLABUS OF PSYCHOLOGY

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

This Syllabus, prepared primarily for use in my own classes, is published in its present form with the belief that, as emphasizing the more essential aspects of the subject and omitting minor details, it may prove serviceable as (in the stricter sense) a text for the brief course in Psychology practicable in high schools and academies generally. It is also hoped that, as a summary view of the subject, it may prove acceptable as a guide to private students as well.

I am convinced that, for younger pupils especially, brief text-books are essential to anything like clearness and continuity of results. No doubt this necessitates only so much the greater degree of careful preparation on the part of the teacher. But in any case really vital results can be secured only in the degree in which the teacher throws his whole life into his work. It is, above all, through the contagion of his own personal enthusiasm that interest is to be awakened on the part of his pupils; just as it is only through the freshness and validity of his own knowledge of the subject that his pupils can be led to apprehend its fundamental features, and to assimilate the proper method by which they can hope to become

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independent inquirers. A working teacher will always have working pupils; and this the more if they are not overwhelmed with text-books rendered wholly unmanageable for them by sheer excess of details. For the more immediate purposes of education by far the greater part of details and illustrative matter can best be given directly in the class—it being assumed that the teacher himself is properly equipped.

The outline here presented has developed directly through work in the school-room during the past seven years. I hope I need hardly say that I have drawn freely upon the works of leading thinkers, both ancient and modern. How far my work shows genuine assimilation and organic reproduction of results, the critical reader will, of course, decide for himself. A more extended text-book of the subject for use in more advanced classes is in preparation on the same general plan, and will, as I hope, be ready for issue within the coming year.

For the convenience of private students a selected list of hand and reference books is added at the end of this Syllabus.

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

The favorable reception given to the first edition of this little book leads me to issue the second edition without further change than to add a few brief notes as an appendix.

A SYLLABUS OF PSYCHOLOGY.

I. INTRODUCTION.

In Psychology Mind is considered as an *Individual*; that is, as an *indivisible unit of Energy*. As such it has many *modes* clearly *distinguishable*, but wholly *inseparable* from one another. It is the special function of Psychology as a Science to define the fundamental modes of Mind and to show the necessary relations which those modes sustain one with another. Its task is not to trace individual idiosyncrasies, but rather to outline and account for the essential characteristics of Mind considered in its universal nature or type. And if Psychology takes account of "mental diseases" it does so only that it may the more clearly define the true or normal type.

From its very nature as an indivisible unit of Energy Mind acts always as *one*. All its modes are involved in every act; one or another mode being *predominant* in each act.

The most complex phases are present from the first, but are latest in attaining *maturity* in the course of the unfolding of the individual mind. It is for this latter reason that there is the appearance of serial

development in the unfolding of the several aspects of mind—as if one aspect *began* developing only after the development of another had been *completed*.

In its development Mind presents two strongly contrasted aspects. The first is predominantly Physical and comprises the whole range of *Sensation*. The second is predominantly Spiritual and unfolds in the three mutually inclusive phases of (A) *Intellect*, (B) *Sensibility* and (C) *Will*.

It can here be only remarked in passing that *Consciousness* is the most comprehensive characteristic of mind as a concretely realized unit of Energy. It is, primarily, the *sense of unity and continuity* of the individual life. It is the form of recognition (1) of self as distinguished from external objects, (2) of the identity of the self of present experience with the self of past experiences, and (3) of self as a self—*i. e.*, *self-consciousness*. This last form involves all the higher aspects of experience. The more rudimentary forms, for the very reason that they are rudimentary, are non-reflective. Hence in such forms consciousness is directed outward rather than inward. Much passes in its own process of which the individual is unconscious, or only obscurely conscious. For example, a child's consciousness is mainly of outward appearances in their most immediate (*i. e.*, simplest) character. On the other hand, it has no consciousness of the real nature of those outward appearances. Its attitude toward the facts of the world it lives in is