STUDIES
IN
EXPRESSIVE
MOVEMENT

ALLPORT
AND
VERNON

CHAPTER X

MATCHING SKETCHES OF PERSONALITY WITH SCRIPT ¹

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The purpose of the following experiment was not to test the claim that certain specific graphological "signs" or formations have precise correlates in the single features of personality, but rather to determine to what extent the *form-quality*, the total impression made by the script as a whole, reveals *patterns* of personality. The method employed was the matching of specimens of handwriting with case studies which described briefly the personalities of the subjects. Though a number of graphologists were included among the judges, they were not called on to make analyses of the scripts, but only to try to identify the personality sketch which corresponded with each script.

The Subjects or Writers. The subjects were ten male adults, ranging in age from 21 to 45 years, the average age being approximately 32. Of these, three were graduate students, two were members of a university faculty, two were college graduates now engaged in business, one was a former college student of good standing who had just left college because of emotional difficulties, one was a postmaster, and one a barber. Two were foreign born, one a Korean and one Italian, but all had received the entire or greater part of their education in this country.

¹ This chapter is condensed from an investigation entitled *Graphic Factors in Relation to Personality*, 1930, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, N. H.

Some of the graphologists quite rightly criticized the homogeneity of the group of subjects. All but two of the subjects had received college training in America, and the majority came from a similar cultural background. That the ease of matching is a direct function of the heterogeneity of the subjects will be demonstrated when the results are given below.

The Handwriting Specimens. Each subject copied a passage of 40 words on uniform paper, with his usual pen and in his natural manner. The passage was selected to include a number of letters such as *t*'s, *d*'s, *I*'s, and punctuation marks, whose formations are often alleged to be of characterological significance. No signatures were included. The accompanying cut (Figure IV) is a reproduc-

'I am sorry,' he said, 'but that is the truth!'
He went back into the house. There were the last
words I ever heard him speak.
I wonder, however, what I had the strength to get up
and go away.

FIGURE IV. ONE OF THE TEN SCRIPTS EMPLOYED
(two-thirds original size).

tion of one of the specimens; the appropriate personality sketch is also given. The subjects were unaware of the use to which their writing was to be put, and though it is not possible to know whether complete naturalness was achieved, yet the instructions given to the subjects sought to secure spontaneous scripts. Photostat reproductions were then made of each specimen, the natural size being retained. The right- and left-hand margins were unaltered;