

**"Self Mastery through Conscious Autosuggestion"**

by EMILE COUE

and

**"The Practice of Autosuggestion  
by the Method of Emile Coue"**

by C. H. BROOKS



# Suggestion and Autosuggestion

By Emile Coué and C. Harry Brooks

Here are the classic texts on the principles and practices of suggestion and autosuggestion. There are full discussions of the nature of the subconscious and conscious mind, the characteristics and power of thought, the function of imagination and the correct use of will power. We are shown how these affect our lives without our desire or knowledge and how to begin to change these effects with the aid of self-suggestion. There is a complete outline of the methods and procedures considered most effective, and they are practical, easily understood and with consistent effort easily applied.

These techniques were originally perfected to assist in curing mental and physical disorders, and the book contains a section of verified case histories and the successes accompanying them. These methods are also shown to be applicable to the education of adults and children and as aids in increasing self-awareness.

Coué maintained that we all have the power to change, heal ourselves and remain healthy, if only we care to use it. Here is a way.

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Emile Coué always maintained that he had no special powers, no 'magnetic fluid', and that he never healed anyone in his life. Yet thousands flocked to his free clinic at Nancy, in the north-east of France, and went away cured, partly cured, or at the very least comforted and greatly strengthened. How was it done? Coué would answer, with his transparent honesty: by the patient himself.

The two texts of this book, one by Coué with some of his cases and enthusiastic tributes, and the other by an Englishman, C. Harry Brooks, with an attractive description of the Nancy clinic, give an account of Coué's method, the theory of auto-suggestion behind it, and how we all possess the power to heal and keep healthy, if we only care to use it. To each of us Coué would say: do it yourself.

*A Suggestion  
and  
a suggestion*

By Emile Coué and C. Harry Brooks

**TWO CLASSIC TEXTS  
ON  
THE HEALING POWER  
OF  
THE MIND**

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# CONTENTS PART ONE :

## SELF MASTERY

1. Self Mastery through Conscious Autosuggestion EMILÉ COUÉ	page 9
2. Thoughts and Precepts EMILÉ COUÉ	page 30
3. Observations on what Autosuggestion Can Do EMILE COUÉ	page 34
4. Education as it Ought to Be EMILE COUÉ	page 37
5. A Survey of the 'Séances' at M. Emile Coué's	page 41
6. Letters from Patients Treated by the Coué Method	page 46
7. The Miracle Within M. BURNAT-PROVINS	page 55
8. Some Notes on the Journey of M. Coué to Paris in October 1919 MME EMILE LEON	page 59
9. 'Everything for Everyone!' MME EMILE LEON	page 62

# CONTENTS PART TWO:

## THE PRACTICE OF AUTOSUGGESTION

### I

#### COUÉ'S NANCY PRACTICE

10. The Clinic of Emile Coué	page 67
11. A Few of Coué's Cures	page 76
12. The Children's Clinic	page 79

### II

#### THE NATURE OF AUTOSUGGESTION

13. Thought is a Force	page 84
14. Thought and the Will	page 89

### III

#### THE PRACTICE OF AUTOSUGGESTION

15. General Rules	page 95
16. The General Formula	page 99
17. Particular Suggestions	page 104
18. How to Deal with Pain	page 109
19. Autosuggestion and the Child	page 112
20. Conclusion	page 116

# **PART ONE**

## **SELF MASTERY**

### **THROUGH CONSCIOUS AUTOSUGGESTION**

by EMILÉ COUÉ

*Our actions spring not from our Will,*

*but from our Imagination.*

*Entile Coué was born at Troyes in 1857, and practised there as a chemist for nearly thirty years. He interested himself increasingly in the powers of the mind in healing, and opened his free clinic at Nancy in 1910. His reputation was spread by his successful cures, all of whom paid tribute to his personal simplicity and charity, and by a theoretical study of his work by Prof. Charles Baudouin, Suggestion and Autosuggestion. He died in 1926.*

*Of all the methods of enlisting the aid of intangible healing forces Coué's is probably the simplest and certainly one of the most popular. The fact that it is in harmony with modern psychology on the one hand, and with Christian teaching on the other (though it has no religious basis, and certainly no supernatural element), has given it an enormously wide appeal. When the two texts that make up this volume were first published in England, in 1922, there was a great demand for them. Both have since been reprinted many times, as may be seen, right down to the present day.*

# CHAPTER I

## *Self Mastery through Conscious Autosuggestion*

**SUGGESTION**, or rather Autosuggestion, is quite a new subject, and yet at the same time it is as old as the world.

It is new in the sense that until now it has been wrongly studied and in consequence wrongly understood; it is old because it dates from the appearance of man on the Earth. In fact autosuggestion is an instrument that we possess at birth, and in this instrument, or rather in this force, resides a marvellous and incalculable power, which according to circumstances produces the best or the worst results. Knowledge of this force is useful to each one of us, but it is peculiarly indispensable to doctors, magistrates, lawyers, and to those engaged in the work of education.

By knowing how to practise it *consciously* it is possible in the first place to avoid provoking in others bad autosuggestions which may have disastrous consequences, and secondly, *consciously* to provoke good ones instead, thus bringing physical health to the sick, and moral health to the neurotic and the erring, the unconscious victims of anterior autosuggestions, and to guide into the right path those who had a tendency to take the wrong one.

**THE CONSCIOUS SELF AND THE UNCONSCIOUS SELF** In order to understand properly the phenomena of suggestion, or to speak more correctly, of autosuggestion, it is necessary to know that two absolutely distinct selves exist within us. Both are intelligent, but while one is conscious the other is unconscious. For this reason the existence of the latter generally escapes notice. It is, however, easy to prove its existence if one merely takes the trouble to examine certain phenomena and to reflect a few moments upon them. Let us take for instance the following examples:

Everyone has heard of somnambulism; everyone knows that a somnambulist gets up at night *without waking*, leaves his room after either dressing himself or not, goes downstairs, walks along corridors, and after having executed certain acts or accomplished certain work, returns to his room, goes to bed again, and shows next day the greatest astonishment at finding work finished which he had left unfinished the day before.

It is, however, he himself who has done it without being aware of it. What force has his body obeyed if it is not an unconscious force, in fact his unconscious self?

Let us now examine the alas! too frequent case of a drunkard attacked by *delirium tremens*. As though seized with madness he picks up the nearest weapon, knife, hammer, or hatchet, as the case may be, and strikes furiously those who are unlucky enough to be in his vicinity. Once the attack is over, he recovers his senses and contemplates with horror the scene of carnage around him, without realizing that he himself is the author of it. Here again is it not the unconscious self which has caused the unhappy man to act in this way?<sup>1</sup>

If we compare the conscious with the unconscious self, we see that the conscious self is often possessed of a very unreliable memory, while the unconscious self, on the contrary, is provided with a marvellous and impeccable memory, which registers without our knowledge the smallest events, the least important acts of our existence. Further, it is credulous and accepts with unreasoning docility what it is told. Thus, as it is the unconscious that is responsible for the functioning of all our organs by the intermediary of the brain, a result is produced which may seem rather paradoxical to you: that is, if it believes that a certain organ functions well or ill, or that we feel such and such an impression, the organ in question does indeed function well or ill, or we do feel that impression.

Not only does the unconscious self preside over the functions of our organism, but also over *all our actions whatever they are*. It is this that we call imagination, and it is this which, contrary to accepted opinion, *always* makes us act even, and *above all*, against *our will* when there is antagonism between these two forces.

**WILL AND IMAGINATION.** If we open a dictionary and look up the word 'will', we find this definition: 'The faculty of freely determining certain acts.' We accept this definition as true and unattackable, although nothing could be more false. This will that we claim so proudly, always *yields* to the imagination. It is an *absolute* rule that admits of no *exception*.

'Blasphemy! Paradox!' you will exclaim. 'Not at all! On the contrary, it is the purest truth,' I shall reply.

In order to convince yourself of it, open your eyes, look round you, and try to understand what you see. You will then come to the conclusion that what I tell you is not an idle theory, offspring of a sick brain, but the simple expression of *a fact*.

Suppose that we place on the ground a plank 30 feet long by 1 foot wide. It is evident that everybody will be capable of going from one end to the other of this plank without stepping over the edge. But now change the conditions of the experiment, and imagine this plank placed at the height of the towers of a cathedral. Who then will be capable of advancing even a few feet along this narrow path? Could you hear me speak? Probably not. Before you had taken two steps you would begin to tremble, and *in spite of every effort of your will* you would be certain to fall to the ground.

Why is it then that you would not fall if the plank is on the ground, and why should you fall if it is raised to a height above the ground? Simply because in the first case you *imagine* that it is easy to go to the end of this plank, while in the second case you imagine that you *cannot* do so.

Notice that your *will* is powerless to make you advance; if you *imagine* that you *cannot*, it is *absolutely* impossible for you to do so. If tilers and carpenters are able to accomplish this feat, it is because they think they can do it.

<sup>1</sup> And what aversions, what ills we create for ourselves, every one of us and in every domain, by not 'immediately' bringing into play 'good conscious autosuggestions' against our 'bad unconscious autosuggestions,' thus bringing about the disappearance of all unjust suffering.

Vertigo is entirely caused by the picture we make in our minds that we are going to fall. This picture transforms itself immediately into fact *in spite of all the efforts of our will*, and the more violent these efforts are, the quicker is the opposite to the desired result brought about.

Let us now consider the case of a person suffering from insomnia. If he does not make any effort to sleep, he will lie quietly in bed. If on the contrary he tries to force himself to sleep by his *will*, the more efforts he makes, the more restless he becomes.

Have you not noticed that the more you try to remember the name of a person which you have forgotten, the more it eludes you, until substituting in your mind the idea 'I shall remember in a minute' to the idea 'I have forgotten,' the name comes back to you of its own accord without the least effort ?

Let those of you who are cyclists remember the days when you were learning to ride. You went along clutching the handle bars and frightened of falling. Suddenly catching sight of the smallest obstacle in the road you tried to avoid it, and the more efforts you made to do so, the more surely you rushed upon it.

Who has not suffered from an attack of uncontrollable laughter, which bursts out more violently the more one tries to control it?

What was the state of mind of each person in these different circumstances? 'I *do not want* to fall, but I *cannot help* doing so'; 'I *want* to sleep, but I *cannot*'; 'I *want* to remember the name of Mrs So-and-so, but I *cannot*'; 'I *want* to avoid the obstacle, but I *cannot*'; 'I *want* to stop laughing, but I *cannot*.'

As you see, in each of these conflicts it is always the *imagination* which gains the victory over the *will*, without any exception.

To the same order of ideas belongs the case of the leader who rushes forward at the head of his troops and always carries them along with him, while the cry 'Each man for himself!' is almost certain to cause a defeat. Why is this ? It is because in the first case the men *imagine* that they must *go forward*, and in the second they *imagine* that they are conquered and must fly for their lives.

Panurge was quite aware of the contagion of example, that is to say the action of the imagination, when, to avenge himself upon a merchant on board the same boat, he bought his biggest sheep and threw it into the sea, certain beforehand that the entire flock would follow, which indeed happened.

We human beings have a certain resemblance to sheep, and involuntarily we are irresistibly impelled to follow other people's examples, *imagining that* we cannot do otherwise.

I could quote a thousand other examples, but I should fear to bore you by such an enumeration. I cannot, however, pass by in silence this fact which shows the enormous power of the imagination, or in other words, of the unconscious in its struggle against the *will*.

There are certain drunkards who wish to give up drinking, but who cannot do so. Ask them, and they will reply in all sincerity that they desire to be sober, that drink disgusts them, but that they are irresistibly impelled to drink against their *will*, in spite of the harm they know it will do them.

In the same way certain criminals commit crimes *in spite of themselves*, and when they are asked why they acted so, they answer, 'I could not help it, something impelled me, it was stronger than I.'

And the drunkard and the criminal speak the truth: they are forced to do what they do, for the simple reason they imagine they cannot prevent themselves from doing so.

Thus we who are so proud of our will, who believe that we are free to act as we like, are in reality nothing but wretched puppets of which our imagination holds all the strings. We only cease to be puppets when we have learned to guide our imagination.

## **SUGGESTION AND AUTOSUGGESTION**

According to the preceding remarks we can compare the imagination to a torrent which fatally sweeps away the poor wretch who has fallen into it, in spite of his efforts to gain the bank. This torrent seems indomitable; but if you know how, you can turn it from its course and conduct it to the factory, and there you can transform its force into movement, heat, and electricity.

If this simile is not enough, we may compare the imagination— 'the madman at home' as it has been called—to an unbroken horse which has neither bridle nor reins. What can the rider do except let himself go wherever the horse wishes to take him ? And often if the latter runs away, his mad career only comes to end in the ditch. If however the rider succeeds in putting a bridle on the horse, the parts are reversed. It is no longer the horse who goes where he likes, it is the rider who obliges the horse to take him wherever he wishes to go.

Now that we have learned to realize the enormous power of the unconscious or imaginative being, I am going to show how this self, hitherto considered indomitable, can be as easily controlled as a torrent or an unbroken horse. But before going any further it is necessary to define carefully two words that are often used without being properly understood. These are the words *suggestion* and *autosuggestion*.

What then is suggestion? It may be defined as 'the act of im-posing an idea on the brain of another'. Does this action really exist? Properly speaking, no. Suggestion does not indeed exist by itself. It does not and cannot exist except on the *sine qua non* condition of transforming itself into *autosuggestion* in the subject. This latter word may be defined as 'the implanting of an idea in oneself by oneself'.

You may make a suggestion to someone; if the unconscious of the latter does not accept the suggestion, if it has not, as it were, digested it, in order to transform it into *autosuggestion*, it produces no result. I have myself occasionally made a more or

less common-place suggestion to ordinarily very obedient subjects quite unsuccessfully. The reason is that the unconscious of the subject refused to accept it and did not transform it into *autosuggestion*.

## THE USE OF AUTOSUGGESTION

Let us now return to the point where I said that we can control and lead our imagination, just as a torrent or an unbroken horse can be controlled. To do so, it is enough in the first place to know that this is possible (of which fact almost everyone is ignorant), and secondly, to know by what means it can be done. Well, the means is very simple; it is that which we have used every day since we came into the world, without wishing or knowing it and absolutely un-consciously, but which, unfortunately for us, we often use wrongly and to our own detriment. This means is *autosuggestion*.

Whereas we constantly give ourselves unconscious autosug-gestions, all we have to do is to give ourselves conscious ones, and the process consists in this: first, to weigh carefully in one's mind the things which are to be the object of the autosuggestion, and according as they require the answer 'yes' or 'no', to repeat several times without thinking of anything else: 'This thing is coming,' or 'this thing is going away'; 'this thing will, or will not, happen, etc., etc. . . .'<sup>1</sup> If the unconscious accepts this suggestion and transforms it into an autosuggestion, the thing or things are realized in every particular.

Thus understood, *autosuggestion* is nothing but hypnotism as I see it, and I would define it in these simple words: *The influence of the imagination upon the moral and physical being of mankind*. Now, this influence is undeniable, and without returning to previous examples, I will quote a few others.

If you persuade yourself that you can do a certain thing, pro-vided this thing be *possible*, you will do it however difficult it may be. If on the contrary you *imagine* that you cannot do the simplest thing in the world, it is impossible for you to do it, and molehills become for you unscalable mountains.

Such is the case of neurasthenics, who, believing themselves incapable of the least effort, often find it impossible even to walk a few steps without being exhausted. And these same neurasthenics sink more deeply into their depression the more effort they make to throw it off, like the poor wretch in the quicksands who sinks in all the deeper the more he tries to struggle out.

In the same way it is sufficient to think a pain is going, to feel it indeed disappear little by little, and inversely, it is enough to think that one suffers in order to feel the pain begin to come im-mediate-ly.

I know certain people who predict in advance that they will have a sick headache on a certain day, in certain circumstances, and on that day, in the given circumstances, sure enough they feel it. They brought their illness on themselves, just as others cure theirs by *conscious autosuggestion*.

I know that one generally passes for mad in the eyes of the world if one dares to put forward ideas which it is not accustomed to hear. Well, at the risk of being thought so, I say that if certain people are ill mentally and physically, it is that they *imagine* themselves to be ill mentally or physically. If certain others are paralytic without having any lesion to account for it, it is that they imagine themselves to be paralysed, and it is among such persons that the most extraordinary cures are produced. If others, again, are happy or unhappy, it is that they *imagine* themselves to be so, for it is possible for two people in exactly the same circumstances to be, the one *perfectly happy*, the other *absolutely wretched*.

Neurasthenia, stammering, aversions, kleptomania, certain cases of paralysis, are nothing but the result of unconscious autosuggestion, that is to say the result of the action of the *unconscious* upon the physical and moral being.

But if our unconscious is the source of many of our ills, it can also bring about the cure of our physical and mental ailments. It can not only repair the ill it has done, but cure real illnesses, so strong is its action upon our organism.

Shut yourself up alone in a room, seat yourself in an armchair, close your eyes to avoid any distraction, and concentrate your mind for a few moments on thinking: 'Such and such a thing is going to disappear,' or 'Such and such a thing is coming to pass'.

If you have really made the autosuggestion, that is to say, if your unconscious has assimilated the idea that you have presented to it, you are astonished to see the thing you have thought come to pass. (Note that it is the property of ideas autosuggested to exist within us unrecognized, and we can only know of their existence by the effect they produce.) But above all, and this is an essential point, **the will must not be brought into play in practising autosuggestion**; for, if it is not in agreement with the imagination, if one thinks: 'I will make such and such a thing happen,' and the imagination says: 'You are willing it, but it is not going to be,' not only does one not obtain what one wants, but even exactly the reverse is brought about.

This remark is of capital importance, and explains why results are so unsatisfactory when, in treating moral ailments, one strives to *re-educate the will*. It is the *training of the imagination* which is necessary, and it is thanks to this shade of difference that my method has often succeeded where others - and those not the least considered - have failed. From the numerous experiments that I have made daily for twenty years, and which I have examined with minute care, I have been able to deduce the following conclusions which I have summed up as laws:

1. When the will and the imagination are antagonistic, it is always the imagination which wins, *without exception*.
2. In the conflict between the will and the imagination, the force of the imagination is *in direct ratio to the square of the will*.

<sup>1</sup>Of course, the thing must be in our power.

3. When the will and the imagination are in agreement, one does not add to the other, but one is multiplied by the other.
4. The imagination can be directed.
5. When the will and the imagination are antagonistic, it is always the imagination which wins, *without exception*.
6. In the conflict between the will and the imagination, the force of the imagination is in *direct ratio to the square of the will*.
7. When the will and the imagination are in agreement, one does not add to the other, but one is multiplied by the other.
8. The imagination can be directed.

(The expressions 'in direct ratio to the square of the will' and 'is multiplied by' are not rigorously exact. They are simply illustrations destined to make my meaning clearer.)

After what has just been said it would seem that nobody ought to be ill. That is quite true. Every illness, whatever it may be, *can yield to autosuggestion*, daring and unlikely as my statement may seem; I do not say *does always yield*, but *can yield*, which is a different thing.

But in order to lead people to practise conscious autosuggestion they must be taught how, just as they are taught to read or write or play the piano.

*Autosuggestion* is, as I said above, an instrument that we possess at birth, and with which we play unconsciously all our life, as a baby plays with its rattle. It is, however, a dangerous instrument; it can wound or even kill you if you handle it imprudently and unconsciously. It can, on the contrary, save your life when you know how to employ it *consciously*. One can say of it as *Æsop* said of the tongue: 'It is at the same time the best and the worst thing in the world.'

I am now going to show you how everyone can profit by the beneficent action of *autosuggestion* consciously applied. In saying 'everyone', I exaggerate a little, for there are two classes of persons in whom it is difficult to arouse conscious autosuggestion:

1. The mentally undeveloped who are not capable of understanding what you say to them.
2. *Those who are unwilling to understand.*

## HOW TO TEACH PATIENTS TO MAKE AUTOSUGGESTIONS

The principle of the method may be summed up in these few words: *It is impossible to think of two things at once*, that is to say that two ideas may be in juxtaposition, but they cannot be super-imposed in our mind.

***Every thought entirely filling our mind becomes true for us and tends to transform itself into action.***

Thus, if you can make a sick person think that her trouble is getting better, it will disappear; if you succeed in making a kleptomaniac think that he will not steal any more, he will cease to steal, etc., etc.

This training, which perhaps seems to you an impossibility, is, however, the simplest thing in the world. It is enough, by a series of appropriate and graduated experiments, to teach the subject, as it were, the A B C of conscious thought, and here is the series: by following it to the letter one can be absolutely sure of obtaining a good result, except with the two categories of persons mentioned above.

***First Experiment<sup>1</sup> - Preparatory.*** - Ask the subject to stand upright, with the body as stiff as an iron bar, the feet close together from toe to heel, while keeping the ankles flexible as if they were hinges. Tell him to make himself like a plank with hinges at its base, which is balanced on the ground. Make him notice that if one pushes the plank slightly either way it falls as a mass without any resistance in the direction in which it is pushed. Tell him that you are going to pull him back by the shoulders and that he must let himself fall in your arms without the slightest resistance, turning on his ankles as on hinges, that is to say keeping the feet fixed to the ground. Then pull him back by the shoulders, and if the experiment does not succeed, repeat it until it does, or nearly so.

***Second Experiment.*** - Begin by explaining to the subject that in order to demonstrate the action of the imagination upon us, you are going to ask him in a moment to think: I am falling backwards, I am falling backwards. . . .' Tell him that he must have no thought but this in his mind, that he must not reflect or wonder if he is going to fall or not, or think that if he falls he may hurt himself, etc., or fall back purposely to please you, but that if he really feels something impelling him to fall backwards, he must not resist but obey the impulse.

Then ask your subject to raise the head high and to shut his eyes, and place your right fist on the back of his neck, and your left hand on his forehead, and say to him: 'Now think: I am falling backwards, I am falling backwards, etc., etc. . . .' and, indeed, 'You are falling backwards, You ... are ... fall... ing ... back . . . wards, etc.' At the same time slide the left hand lightly backwards to the left temple, above the ear, and remove very slowly but with a continuous movement the right fist.

The subject is immediately felt to make a slight movement backwards, and either to stop himself from falling or else to fall completely. In the first case, tell him that he has resisted, and that he did not think just that he was falling, but that he might hurt

<sup>1</sup> These experiments are those of Sage of Rochester.

himself if he did fall. That is true, for if he had not thought the latter, he would have fallen like a block. Repeat the experiment, using a tone of command as if you would force the subject to obey you. Go on with it until it is completely successful or very nearly so. The operator should stand a little behind the subject, the left leg forward and the right leg well behind him, so as not to be knocked over by the subject when he falls. Neglect of this precaution might result in a double fall if the person is heavy.

**Third Experiment.** - Place the subject facing you, the body still stiff, the ankles flexible, and the feet joined and parallel. Put your two hands on his temples without any pressure, look fixedly, with-out moving the eyelids, at the root of his nose, and tell him to think: I am falling forward, I am falling forward . . .' and repeat to him, stressing the syllables, 'You are fall . . . ing for .. . ward, you are fall . . . ing ... for ... ward . . .' without ceasing to look fixedly at him.

**Fourth Experiment.** - Ask the subject to clasp his hands as tight as possible, that is to say, until the fingers tremble slightly, look at him in the same way as in the preceding experiment and keep your hands on his as though to squeeze them together still more tightly. Tell him to think that he cannot unclasp his fingers, that you are going to count three, and that when you say 'three' he is to try to separate his hands while thinking all the time: I cannot do it, I cannot do it . . .' and he will find it impossible. Then count very slowly, 'one, two, three,' and add immediately, detaching the syllables: 'You . . . can . . . not . . . do it ... You can . . . not do . . . it. . . .' If the subject is thinking properly I cannot do it', not only is he unable to separate his fingers, but the latter clasp themselves all the more tightly together the more efforts he makes to separate them. He obtains, in fact, exactly the contrary to what he wants. In a few moments say to him: 'Now think, "I can do it",' and his fingers will separate themselves.

Be careful always to keep your eyes fixed on the root of the subject's nose, and do not allow him to turn his eyes away from yours for a single moment. If he is able to unclasp his hands, do not think it is your own fault; it is the subject's: he has not properly thought 'I cannot'. Assure him firmly of this, and begin the experiment again.

Always use a tone of command which suffers no disobedience. I do not mean that it is necessary to raise your voice; on the contrary, it is preferable to employ the ordinary pitch, but stress every word in a dry and imperative tone.

When these experiments have been successful, all the others succeed equally well, and can be easily obtained by carrying out to the letter the instructions given above.

Some subjects are very sensitive, and it is easy to recognize them by the fact that the contraction of their fingers and limbs is easily produced. After two or three successful experiments, it is no longer necessary to say to them 'Think this' or 'think that'; you need only, for example, say to them simply - but in the imperative tone employed by all good suggestionists - 'Close your hands; now you cannot open them.' 'Shut your eyes; now you cannot open them,' and the subject finds it absolutely impossible to open the hands or the eyes in spite of all his efforts. Tell him in a few moments: 'You can do it now,' and the de-contraction takes place instantaneously.

These experiments can be varied to infinity. Here are a few more: Make the subject join his hands, and suggest that they are welded together; make him put his hand on the table, and suggest that it is stuck to it; tell him that he is fixed to his chair and cannot rise; make him rise, and tell him he cannot walk; put a penholder on the table and tell him that it weighs a hundredweight, and that he cannot lift it, etc., etc.

In all these experiments, I cannot repeat too often, it is not *suggestion* properly so-called which produces the phenomena, but the *autosuggestion* which is consecutive to the suggestion of the operator.

## METHOD OF PROCEDURE IN CURATIVE SUGGESTION

When the subject has passed through the preceding experiments and has understood them, he is ripe for curative suggestion. He is like a cultivated field in which the seed can germinate and develop, whereas before it was but rough earth in which it would have perished.

Whatever ailment the subject suffers from, whether it is physical or mental, it is important to proceed always in the same way, and to use the same words with a few variations according to the case.

### Say to the subject:

'Sit down and close your eyes. I am not going to try and put you to sleep, as it is quite unnecessary. I ask you to close your eyes simply in order that your attention may not be distracted by the objects around you. **Now tell yourself that every word I say is going to fix itself in your mind, and be printed, engraved, and encrusted in it, that there it is going to stay fixed, imprinted, and encrusted, and that without your will or knowledge, in fact perfectly unconsciously on your part, you yourself and your whole organism are going to obey.** In the first place I say that every day, three times a day, in the morning, at midday, and in the evening, at the usual meal times, you will feel hungry, that is to say, you will experience the agreeable sensation which makes you think and say: "Oh! how nice it will be to have something to eat!" You will then eat and enjoy your food, without of course overeating. You will also be careful to masticate it properly so as to transform it into a sort of soft paste before swallowing it. In these conditions you will digest it properly, and so feel no discomfort, inconvenience, or pain of any kind either in the stomach or intestines. You will assimilate what you eat and your organism will make use of it to make blood, muscle, strength and energy - in a word: Life.

'Since you will have digested your food properly, the function of excretion will be normal and every morning, on rising, you will feel the need of evacuating the bowels, and without ever being obliged to take medicine or to use any artifice, you will obtain a normal and satisfactory result.

'Further, every night from the time you wish to go to sleep till the time you wish to wake next morning you will sleep deeply, calmly, and quietly, without nightmares, and on waking you will feel perfectly well, cheerful, and active.

'Likewise, if you occasionally suffer from depression, if you are gloomy and prone to worry and look on the dark side of things, from now onwards you will cease to do so, and, instead of worrying and being depressed and looking on the dark side of things, you are going to feel perfectly cheerful, possibly without any special reason for it, just as you used to feel depressed for no particular reason. I say further still, that even if you have real reason to be worried and depressed, you are not going to be so.

'If you are also subject to occasional fits of impatience or ill-temper, you will cease to have them: on the contrary, you will be always patient and master of yourself, and the things which worried, annoyed, or irritated you will henceforth leave you absolutely indifferent and perfectly calm.

'If you are sometimes attacked, pursued, haunted, by bad and unwholesome ideas, by apprehensions, fears, aversions, temptations, or grudges against other people, all that will be gradually lost sight of by your imagination, and will melt away and lose itself as though in a distant cloud, where it will finally disappear completely. As a dream vanishes when we wake, so will all these vain images disappear.

'To this I add that all your organs are performing their function properly. The heart beats in a normal way and the circulation of the blood takes place as it should; the lungs are carrying out their functions, as also the stomach, the intestines, the liver, the biliary duct, the kidneys and the bladder. If at the present moment any of them is acting abnormally, that abnormality is becoming less every day, so that quite soon it will have vanished completely, and the organ will have recovered its normal function. Further, if there should be any lesions in any of these organs, they will get better from day to day and will soon be entirely healed. [With regard to this, I may say that it is not necessary to know which organ is affected for it to be cured. Under the influence of the autosuggestion, "**Every day, in every respect, I am getting better and better,**" the unconscious acts upon the organ, which it can pick out itself.]

'I must also add - and it is extremely important - that if up to the present you have lacked confidence in yourself, I tell you that this self-distrust will disappear little by little and give place to self-confidence, based on the knowledge of this force of incalculable power which is in each one of us. It is absolutely necessary for every human being to have this confidence. Without it one can accomplish nothing, with it one can accomplish whatever one likes, (*within reason*, of course). You are then going to have confidence in yourself, and this confidence gives you the assurance that you are capable of accomplishing perfectly well whatever you wish to do - *on condition that it is reasonable* - and whatever it is your duty to do.

'So when you wish to do something reasonable, or when you have a duty to perform, always think that it is *easy*, and make the words *difficult, impossible, I cannot, it is stronger than I, I cannot prevent myself from . . .* disappear from your vocabulary; they are not English. What is English is: "*It is easy and I can.*" By considering the thing easy it becomes so for you, although it might seem difficult to others. You will do it quickly and well, and without fatigue, because you do it without effort; whereas if you had considered it as difficult or impossible it would have become so for you simply because you would have thought it so.'

To these general suggestions, which will perhaps seem long and even childish to some of you, but which are necessary, must be added those which apply to the particular case of the patient you are dealing with.

All these suggestions must be made in a monotonous and soothing voice (always emphasizing the essential words), which, although it does not actually send the subject to sleep, at least makes him feel drowsy and think of nothing in particular.

When you have come to the end of the series of suggestions, you address the subject in these terms: 'In short, I mean that from every point of view, physical as well as mental, you are going to enjoy excellent health, better health than that you have been able to enjoy up to the present. Now I am going to count three, and when I say "Three," you will open your eyes and come out of the passive state in which you are now. You will come out of it quite naturally, without feeling in the least drowsy or tired; on the contrary, you will feel strong, vigorous, alert, active, full of life; further still, you will feel very cheerful and fit in every way. " **One—Two—Three**".' At the word 'three' the subject opens his eyes, always with a smile and an expression of well-being and contentment on his face.

Sometimes - though rarely - the patient is cured on the spot; at other times, and this is more generally the case, he finds himself relieved, his pain or his depression has partially or totally disappeared, though only for a certain lapse of time.

In every case it is necessary to renew the suggestions more or less frequently according to your subject, being careful always to space them out at longer and longer intervals, according to the progress obtained, until they are no longer necessary - that is to say when the cure is complete.

Before sending away your patient, you must tell him that he carries within him the instrument by which he can cure himself, and that you are, as it were, only a professor teaching him to use this instrument, and that he must help you in your task. Thus, every morning before rising, and every night on getting into bed, he must shut his eyes and in thought transport himself into your presence, and then repeat twenty times consecutively in a monotonous voice, counting by means of a string with twenty knots in it, this little phrase: - 'Every day, in every respect, I am getting better and better.' In his mind he should emphasize the words '*in every respect*,' which applies to every need, mental or physical. This general suggestion is more efficacious than special ones.

Thus it is easy to realize the part played by the giver of the suggestions. He is not a master who gives orders, but a friend, a guide, who leads the patient step by step on the road to health. As all the suggestions are given in the interest of the patient, the unconscious of the latter asks nothing better than to assimilate them and transform them into autosuggestions. When this has been done, the cure is obtained more or less rapidly according to circumstances.

## THE SUPERIORITY OF THIS METHOD

This method gives absolutely marvellous results, and it is easy to understand why. Indeed, by following out my advice, it is impossible to fail, except with the two classes of persons mentioned above, who fortunately represent barely three per cent of the whole. If, however, you try to put your subjects to sleep right away, without the explanations and preliminary experiments necessary to bring them to accept the suggestions and to transform them into autosuggestions, you cannot and will not succeed except with peculiarly sensitive subjects, and these are rare. Everybody may become so by training, but very few are so sufficiently without the preliminary instruction that I recommend, which can be done in a few minutes.

Formerly, imagining that suggestions could only be given during sleep, I always tried to put my patient to sleep; but on discovering that it was not indispensable, I left off doing it in order to spare him the dread and uneasiness he almost always experiences when he is told that he is going to be sent to sleep, and which often makes him offer, in spite of himself, an involuntary resistance. If, on the contrary, you tell him that you are not going to put him to sleep as there is no need to do so, you gain his confidence. He listens to you without fear or any ulterior thought, and it often happens - if not the first time, anyhow very soon - that, soothed by the monotonous sound of your voice, he falls into a deep sleep from which he awakes astonished at having slept at all.

If there are sceptics among you - as I am quite sure there are - all I have to say to them is: 'Come to my house and see what is being done, and you will be convinced by fact.'

You must not, however, run away with the idea that autosuggestion can only be brought about in the way I have described. It is possible to make suggestions to people without their knowledge and without any preparation. For instance, if a doctor who by his title alone has a suggestive influence on his patient, tells him that he can do nothing for him, and that his illness is incurable, he provokes in the mind of the latter an autosuggestion which may have the most disastrous consequences; if, however, he tells him that his illness is a serious one, it is true, but that with care, time, and patience, he can be cured, he sometimes and even often obtains results which will surprise him.

Here is another example: if a doctor, after examining his patient, writes a prescription and gives it to him without any comment, the remedies prescribed will not have much chance of succeeding; if, on the other hand, he explains to his patient that such and such medicines must be taken in such and such conditions and that they will produce certain results, those results are practically certain to be brought about.

If in this hall there are medical men or brother chemists, I hope they will not think me their enemy. I am, on the contrary, their best friend. On the one hand, I should like to see the theoretical and practical study of suggestion on the syllabus of the medical schools for the great benefit of the sick and of the doctors themselves; and on the other hand, in my opinion, every time that a patient goes to see his doctor, the latter should order him one or even several medicines, even if they are not

necessary. As a matter of fact, when a patient visits his doctor, it is in order to be told what medicine will cure him. He does not realize that it is the hygiene and regimen which do this, and he attaches little importance to them. It is a medicine that he wants.

In my opinion, if the doctor only prescribes a regimen without any medicine, his patient will be dissatisfied; he will say that he took the trouble to consult him for nothing, and often goes to another doctor. It seems to me then that the doctor should always prescribe medicines to his patient, and, as much as possible, medicines made up by himself rather than the standard remedies so much advertised and which owe their only value to the advertisement. The doctor's own prescriptions will inspire infinitely more confidence than So-and-so's pills, which anyone can procure easily at the nearest drug store without any need of a prescription.

## HOW SUGGESTION WORKS

In order to understand properly the part played by suggestion or rather by autosuggestion, it is enough to know that the *unconscious self is the grand director of all our functions*. Make this believed, as I said above, that a certain organ which does not function well must perform its function, and instantly the order is transmitted. The organ obeys with docility, and either at once or little by little performs its functions in a normal manner. This explains simply and clearly how by means of suggestion one can stop haemorrhages, cure constipation, cause fibrous tumours to disappear, cure paralysis, tubercular lesions, varicose ulcers, etc.

Let us take, for example, a case of dental haemorrhage which I had the opportunity of observing in the consulting room of M. Gauthé, a dentist at Troyes. A young lady, whom I had helped to cure herself of asthma from which she had suffered for eight years, told me one day that she wanted to have a tooth out. As I knew her to be very sensitive, I offered to make her feel nothing of the operation. She naturally accepted with pleasure, and we made an appointment with the dentist. On the day we had arranged we presented ourselves at the dentist's, and, standing opposite my patient, I looked fixedly at her, saying: 'You feel nothing, you feel nothing, etc., etc.,' and then while still continuing the suggestion I made a sign to the dentist. In an instant the tooth was out without Mile D\_\_\_ turning a hair. As fairly often happens, a haemorrhage followed, but I told the dentist that I would try suggestion without his using a haemostatic, without knowing beforehand what would happen. I then asked Mile D\_\_\_ to look at me fixedly, and I suggested to her that in two minutes the haemorrhage would cease of its own accord, and we waited. The patient spat blood again once or twice, and then ceased. I told her to open her mouth, and we both looked and found that a clot of blood had formed in the dental cavity.

How is this phenomenon to be explained ? In the simplest way. Under the influence of the idea, 'The haemorrhage is to stop,' the unconscious had sent to the small arteries and veins the order to stop the flow of blood, and, obediently, they contracted *naturally*, as they would have done artificially at the contact of a haemostatic like adrenalin, for example.

The same reasoning explains how a fibrous tumour can be made to disappear. The *unconscious* having accepted the idea 'It is to go,' the brain orders the arteries which nourish it to contract. They do so, refusing their services, and ceasing to nourish the tumour, which, deprived of nourishment, dies, dries up, is reabsorbed and disappears.

## THE USE OF SUGGESTION FOR THE CURE OF MORAL AILMENTS AND TAINTS EITHER CONGENITAL OR ACQUIRED

Neurasthenia, so common nowadays, generally yields to suggestion constantly practised in the way I have indicated. I have had the happiness of contributing to the cure of a large number of neurasthenics with whom every other treatment had failed. One of them had even spent a month in a special establishment at Luxemburg without obtaining any improvement. In six weeks he was completely cured, and he is now the happiest man one would wish to find, after having thought himself the most miserable. Neither is he ever likely to fall ill again in the same way, for I showed him how to make use of conscious autosuggestion and he does it marvellously well.

But if suggestion is useful in treating moral complaints and physical ailments, may it not render still greater services to society, in turning into honest folks the wretched children who people our reformatories and who only leave them to enter the army of crime. Let no one tell me it is impossible. The remedy exists and I can prove it.

I will quote the two following cases which are very characteristic, but here I must insert a few remarks in parenthesis. To make you understand the way in which suggestion acts in the treatment of moral taints I will use the following comparison: Suppose our brain is a plank in which are driven nails which represent the ideas, habits, and instincts which determine our actions. If we find that there exists in a subject a bad idea, a bad habit, a bad instinct - as it were, a bad nail - we take another which is a good idea, habit, or instinct, place it on top of the bad one and give a tap with a hammer - in other words we make a suggestion. The new nail will be driven in perhaps a fraction of an inch, while the old one will come out to the same extent. At each fresh blow with the hammer, that is to say at each fresh suggestion, the one will be driven in a fraction further and the other will be driven out the same amount, until, after a certain number of blows, the old nail will come out completely and be replaced by the new one. When this substitution has been made, the individual obeys it.

Let us return to our examples. Little M\_\_\_, a child of eleven living at Troyes, was subject night and day to certain accidents inherent to early infancy. He was also a kleptomaniac, and, of course, untruthful into the bargain. At his mother's request I treated him by suggestion. After the first visit the accidents ceased by day, but continued at night. Little by little they became less frequent, and finally, a few months afterwards, the child was completely cured. In the same period his thieving propensities lessened, and in six months they had entirely ceased.

This child's brother, aged eighteen, had conceived a violent hatred against another of his brothers. Every time that he had taken a little too much wine, he felt impelled to draw a knife and stab his brother. He felt that one day or other he would end by doing so, and he knew at the same time that having done so he would be inconsolable. I treated him also by suggestion, and the result was marvellous. After the first treatment he was cured. His hatred for his brother had disappeared, and they have since become good friends and got on capitally together. I followed up the case for a long time, and the cure was permanent.

Since such results are to be obtained by suggestion, would it not be beneficial - I might even say *indispensable* - to take up this method and introduce it into our reformatories? I am absolutely convinced that if suggestion were daily applied to vicious children, more than fifty per cent could be reclaimed. Would it not be an immense service to render society, to bring back to it sane and well members of it who were formerly corroded by moral decay?

Perhaps I shall be told that suggestion is a dangerous thing, and that it can be used for evil purposes. This is no valid objection, first because the practice of suggestion would only be confided to reliable and honest people - to the reformatory doctors, for instance - and on the other hand, those who seek to use it for evil ask no one's permission.

But even admitting that it offers some danger (which is not so), I should like to ask whoever proffers the objection to tell me what thing we use that is not dangerous? Is it steam? gunpowder? railways? ships? electricity? automobiles? aeroplanes? Are the poisons not dangerous which we, doctors and chemists, use daily in minute doses, and which might easily destroy the patient if, in a moment's carelessness, we unfortunately made a mistake in weighing them out?

### A FEW TYPICAL CURES

This little work would be incomplete if it did not include a few examples of the cures obtained. It would take too long, and would also perhaps be somewhat tiring if I were to relate all those in which I have taken part. I will therefore content myself by quoting a few of the most remarkable.

Mlle M ---D ---, of Troyes, had suffered **for** eight years from asthma which obliged her to sit up in bed nearly all night fighting for breath. Preliminary experiments show that she is a very sensitive subject. She sleeps immediately, and the suggestion is given. From the first treatment there is an enormous improvement. The patient has a good night, only interrupted by one attack of asthma, which lasts only a quarter of an hour. In a very short time the asthma disappears completely and there is no relapse later on.

M. M-- , a working hosier living at Sainte-Savine near Troyes, paralysed for two years as the result of injuries at the junction of the spinal column and the pelvis. The paralysis is only in the lower limbs, in which the circulation of the blood has practically ceased, making them swollen, congested, and discoloured. Several treatments, including the antisyphilitic, have been tried without success. Preliminary experiments successful; suggestion applied by me, and autosuggestion by the patient for eight days. At the end of this time there is an almost imperceptible but still appreciable movement of the left leg. Renewed suggestion. In eight days the improvement is noticeable. Every week or fortnight there is an increased improvement with progressive lessening of the swelling, and so on. Eleven months afterwards, on the 1st of November, 1906, the patient goes downstairs alone and walks '800 yards, and

M. A -----G ---, living at Troyes, has long suffered from enteritis, for which different treatments have been tried in vain. He is also in a very bad state mentally, being depressed, gloomy, unsociable, and obsessed by thoughts of suicide. Preliminary experiments easy, followed by suggestion, which produces an appreciable result from the very day. For three months, daily suggestions to begin with, then at increasingly longer intervals. At the end of this time the cure is complete, the enteritis has disappeared, and his *morals* have become excellent. As the cure dates back twelve years without the shadow of a relapse, it may be considered as permanent. M. G is a striking example of the effects that can be produced by suggestion, or rather by autosuggestion. At the same time as I made suggestions to him from the physical point of view, I also did so from the mental, and he accepted both suggestions equally well. Every day his confidence in himself increased, and as he was an excellent workman, in order to earn more he looked out for a machine which would enable him to work at home for his employer. A little later a factory owner, having seen with his own eyes what a good workman he was, entrusted him with the very machine he desired. Thanks to his skill he was able to turn out much more than an ordinary workman, and his employer, delighted with the result, gave him another and yet another machine, until M. G , who, but for suggestion, would have remained an ordinary workman, is now in charge of six machines which bring him a very handsome profit.

Mme D---, at Troyes, about thirty years of age. She is in the last stages of consumption, and grows thinner daily in spite of special nourishment. She suffers from coughing and spitting, and has difficulty in breathing; in fact, from all appearances she has only a few months to live. Preliminary experiments show great sensitiveness, and suggestion is followed by immediate improvement. From the next day the morbid symptoms begin to lessen. Every day the improvement becomes more marked, the patient rapidly puts on flesh, although she no longer takes special nourishment. In a few months the cure is apparently complete. This person wrote to me on the 1st of January, 1911, that is to say eight months after I had left Troyes, to thank me and tell me that, although pregnant, she was perfectly well. I have purposely chosen these cases dating some time back in order to show that the cures are permanent, but I should like to add a few more recent ones.

M. X---, Post Office clerk at Lunéville. Having lost one of his children in January 1910, the trouble produces in him a cerebral disturbance which manifests itself by uncontrollable nervous trembling. His uncle brings him to me in the month of June. Preliminary experiments followed by suggestion. Four days afterwards the patient returns to tell me that the trembling has disappeared. I renew the suggestion and tell him to return in eight days. A week, then a fortnight, then three weeks, then a month, pass by without my hearing any more of him. Shortly afterwards his uncle comes and tells me that he has just had a letter from his nephew, who is perfectly well. He has taken on again his work as telegraphist which he had been obliged to give up, and the day before he had sent off a telegram of 170 words without the least difficulty. He could easily, he added in his letter, have sent off an even longer one. Since then he has had no relapse.

M. Y---, of Nancy, has suffered from neurasthenia for several years. He has aversions, nervous fears, and disorders of the stomach and intestines. He sleeps badly, is gloomy, and is haunted by ideas of suicide; he staggers when he walks like

a drunken man, and can think of nothing but his trouble. All treatments have failed, and he gets worse and worse; a stay in a special nursing home for such cases has no effect whatever. M. Y comes to see me at the beginning of October 1910. Preliminary experiments comparatively easy. I explain to the patient the principles of autosuggestion, and the existence within us of the conscious and the unconscious self, and then make the required suggestion. For two or three days M. Y has a little difficulty with the explanations I have given him. In a short time light breaks in upon his mind, and he grasps the whole thing. I renew the suggestion, and he makes it himself too every day. The improvement, which is at first slow, becomes more and more rapid, and in a month and a half the cure is complete. The ex-invalid, who had lately considered himself the most wretched of men, now thinks himself the happiest.

M. E---, of Troyes. An attack of gout; the right ankle is inflamed and painful, and he is unable to walk. The preliminary experiments show him to be a very sensitive subject. After the first treatment he is able to regain, without the help of his stick, the carriage which brought him, and the pain has ceased. The next day he does not return as I had told him to do. Afterwards his wife comes alone and tells me that that morning her husband had got up, put on his shoes, and gone off on his bicycle to visit his yards (he is a painter). It is needless to tell you my utter astonishment. I was not able to follow up this case, as the patient never deigned to come and see me again, but some time afterward I heard that he had had no relapse.

Mme T - , of Nancy. Neurasthenia, dyspepsia, gastralgia, enteritis, and pains in different parts of the body. She has treated herself for several years with a negative result. I treat her by suggestion, and she makes autosuggestions for herself every day. From the first day there is a noticeable improvement which continues without interruption. At the present moment this person has long been cured mentally and physically, and follows no regimen. She thinks that she still has perhaps a slight touch of enteritis, but she is not sure.

Mme X - , a sister of Mme T\_\_\_\_ . Acute neurasthenia; she stays in bed a fortnight every month, as it is totally impossible for her to move or work; she suffers from lack of appetite, depression, and digestive disorders. She is cured by one visit, and the cure seems to be permanent, as she has had no relapse.

Mme H -, at Maxeville. General eczema, which is particularly severe on the left leg. Both legs are inflamed, above all at the ankles; walking is difficult and painful. I treat her by suggestion. That same evening Mme H is able to walk several hundred yards without fatigue. The day after the feet and ankles are no longer swollen and have not been swollen again since. The eczema disappears rapidly.

Mme P , at Laneuveville. Pains in the kidneys and the knees. The illness dates from ten years back and is becoming worse every day. Suggestion from me, and autosuggestion from herself. The improvement is immediate and increases progressively. The cure is obtained rapidly, and is a permanent one.

Mme Z - , of Nancy, fell ill in January 1910 with congestion of the lungs, from which she had not recovered two months later. She suffers from general weakness, loss of appetite, bad digestive trouble, rare and difficult bowel action, insomnia, copious night-sweats. After the first suggestion the patient feels much better, and two days

later she returns and tells me that she feels quite well. Every trace of illness has disappeared, and all the organs are functioning normally. Three or four times she had been on the point of sweating, but each time prevented it by the use of conscious auto suggestion. From this time Mme Z has enjoyed perfectly good health.

M. X---, at Belfort, cannot talk for more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour without becoming completely aphonous. Different doctors consulted find no lesion in the vocal organs, but one of them says that M. X suffers from senility of the larynx, and this conclusion confirms him in the belief that he is incurable. He comes to spend his holidays at Nancy, and a lady of my acquaintance advises him to come and see me. He refuses at first, but eventually consents in spite of his absolute disbelief in the effects of suggestion. I treat him in this way nevertheless, and ask him to return two days afterwards. He comes back on the appointed day, and tells me that the day before he was able to converse the whole afternoon without becoming aphonous. Two days later he returns again to say that his trouble had not reappeared, although he had not only conversed a great deal but even sung the day before. The cure still holds good, and I am convinced that it will always do so.

Before closing, I should like to say a few words on the application of my method to the training and correction of children by their parents.

The latter should wait until the child is asleep, and then one of them should enter his room with precaution, stop a yard from his bed, and repeat fifteen or twenty times in a murmur all the things they wish to obtain from the child, from the point of view of health, work, sleep, application, conduct, etc. He should then retire as he came, taking great care not to awake the child. This extremely simple process gives the best possible results, and it is easy to understand why. When the child is asleep his body and his conscious self are at rest and, as it were, annihilated; his unconscious self, however, is awake; it is then to the latter alone that one speaks, and as it is very credulous it accepts what one says to it without dispute, so that, little by little, the child arrives at making of himself what his parents desire him to be.

## CONCLUSION

What conclusion is to be drawn from all this ?

The conclusion is very simple and can be expressed in a few words: We possess within us a force of incalculable power, which, when we handle it unconsciously, is often prejudicial to us. If on the contrary we direct it in a conscious and wise manner, it gives us the mastery of ourselves, and allows us not only to escape and to aid others to escape from physical and mental ills, but also to live in relative happiness, whatever the conditions in which we may find ourselves.

Lastly, and above all, it should be applied to the moral regeneration of those who have wandered from the right path.

EMILÉ COUÉ

## CHAPTER II

### ***Thoughts and Precepts of Emile Coué***

*Taken down literally by MME EMILE LEON, his disciple*

Do not spend your time in thinking of illness you **might have, for if** you have no real ones you will create artificial ones.

**When you make conscious autosuggestions, do it naturally, simply, with conviction, and above all *without any effort*. If unconscious and bad autosuggestions are so often realized, it is because they are made without effort.**

**Be sure that you will obtain what you want, and you will obtain it, so long as it is within reason.**

**To become master of oneself it is enough to think that one is becoming so.... Your hands tremble, your steps falter, tell yourself that all that is going to cease, and little by little it will disappear. It is not in me but in yourself that you must have confidence, for it is in yourself alone that dwells the force which can cure you. My part simply consists in teaching you to make use of that force**

Never discuss things you know nothing about, or you will only make yourself ridiculous.

Things which seem miraculous to you have a perfectly natural cause; if they seem extraordinary, it is only because the cause escapes you. When you know that, you realize that nothing could be more natural.

**When the will and the imagination are in conflict, it is always the imagination which wins.** Such a case is only too frequent, and then not only do we not do what we want, but just the contrary of what we want. For example: the more we try to go to sleep, the more we try to remember the name of someone, the more we try to stop laughing, the more we try to avoid an obstacle, while *thinking that we cannot do so*, the more excited we become, the less we can remember the name, the more uncontrollable our laughter becomes, and the more surely we rush upon the obstacle.

**It is then the imagination and not the will which is the most important faculty of man; and thus it is a serious mistake to advise people to train their wills, it is the training of their imaginations which they ought to set about.**

Things are not for us what they are, but what they seem; this explains the contradictory evidence of persons speaking in all good faith.

By believing oneself to be the master of one's thoughts one becomes so.

**Every one of our thoughts, good or bad, becomes concrete, materializes, and becomes in short a reality.**

## We are what we make ourselves and not what circumstances make us.

Whoever starts off in life with the idea, 'I shall succeed', always does succeed because he does what is necessary to bring about this result. If only one opportunity presents itself to him, and if this opportunity has, as it were, only one hair on its head, he seizes it by that one hair. Further, he often brings about, unconsciously or not, propitious circumstances.

He who on the contrary always doubts himself, never succeeds in doing anything. He might find himself in the midst of an army of opportunities with heads of hair like Absalom, and yet he would not see them, and could not seize a single one, even if he had only to stretch out his hand in order to do so. And if he brings about circumstances, they are generally unfavourable ones. Do not then blame fate, you have only yourself to blame.

People are always preaching the doctrine of effort, but this idea must be repudiated. Effort means will, and will means the possible entrance of the imagination in opposition, and the bringing about of the exactly contrary result to the desired one.

Always think that what you have to do is easy, if possible. In this state of mind you will not spend more of your strength than just what is necessary; if you consider it difficult, you will spend ten, twenty times more strength than you need; in other words, you will waste it.

Autosuggestion is an instrument which you have to learn how to use just as you would for any other instrument. An excellent gun in inexperienced hands only gives wretched results, but the more skilled the same hands become, the more easily they place the bullets in the target.

Conscious autosuggestion, made with confidence, with faith, with perseverance, realizes itself mathematically, within reason.

When certain people do not obtain satisfactory results with autosuggestion, it is either because they lack confidence, or because they make efforts, which is the more frequent case. To make good suggestions it is absolutely necessary to do it *without effort*. The latter implies the use of the *will*, which must be entirely put aside. One must have recourse **exclusively to the imagination**.

Many people who have taken care of their health all their life in vain, imagine that they can be immediately cured by autosuggestion. It is a mistake, for it is not reasonable to think so. It is no use expecting from suggestion more than it can normally produce, that is to say, a progressive improvement which little by little transforms itself into a complete cure, when that is possible.

The means employed by the healers all go back to autosuggestion, that is to say, that these methods, whatever they are, words, incantations, gestures, staging, all produce in the patient the autosuggestion of recovery.

Every illness has two aspects unless it is exclusively a mental one. Indeed, on every

physical illness a mental one comes and attaches itself. If we give to the physical illness the coefficient 1, the mental illness may have the coefficient 1, 2, 10, 20, 50, 100, and more. In many cases this can disappear instantaneously, and if its coefficient is a very high one, 100 for instance, while that of the physical ailment is 1, only this latter is left, a 101 st of the total illness; such a thing is called a miracle, and yet there is nothing miraculous about it.

Contrary to common opinion, physical diseases are generally far more easily cured than mental ones.

Buffon used to say: 'Style is the man.' We would put in that: **'Man is what he thinks.'**

**The fear of failure is almost certain to cause failure,  
in the same way as the idea of success brings success,  
and enables one always to surmount the obstacles that may be met with.**

Conviction is as necessary to the suggester as to his subject. It is this conviction, this faith which enables him to obtain results where all other means have failed.

It is not the person who acts, it is the method.

. . . Contrary to general opinion, suggestion, or autosuggestion, can bring about the cure of organic lesions.

Formerly it was believed that hypnotism could only be applied to the treatment of nervous illnesses; its domain is far greater than that. It is true that hypnotism acts through the intermediary of the nervous system; but the nervous system dominates the whole organism. The muscles are set in movement by the nerves; the nerves regulate the circulation by their direct action on the heart, and by their action on the bloodvessels which they dilate or contract. The nerves act then on all the organs, and by their intermediation all the unhealthy organs may be affected.

**DOCTEUR PAUL JOIRE** *Président of the Société universelle d'Études psychiques*  
(Bull. No. 4 of the S.L.P.)

. . . Moral influence has a considerable value as a help in healing. It is a factor of the first order which it would be very wrong to neglect, since in medicine, as in every branch of human activity, it is the *spiritual forces* which lead the world.

**DOCTEUR LOUIS RENON**  
*Lecturing Professor at the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, and Doctor at the Necker Hospital*

. . . Never lose sight of the great principle of autosuggestion: *Optimism always and in spite of everything, even when events do not seem to justify it.*

**RENE DE DRABOIS** (Bull. 2 of the S.L.P.A.)

Suggestion sustained by faith is a formidable force.

**DOCTEUR A. L.**, Paris (July, 1920)

To have and to inspire unalterable confidence, one must walk with the assurance of perfect sincerity, and in order to possess this assurance and sincerity, one must wish for *the good of others* more than one's own.

*Culture de la Force Morale*, by **C. BAUDOIN**

## CHAPTER III

### ***Observations on what Autosuggestion Can Do***

YOUNG B , 13 years old, enters the hospital in January 1912.

He has a very serious heart complaint characterized by a peculiarity in the respiration; he has such difficulty in breathing that he can only take very slow and short steps. The doctor who attends him, one of our best practitioners, predicts a rapid and fatal issue. The invalid leaves the hospital in February, *no better*. A friend of his family brings him to me, and when I see him I regard him as a hopeless case, but nevertheless I make him pass through the preliminary experiments which are marvellously successful. After having made him a suggestion and advised him to do the same thing for himself, I tell him to come back in two days. When he does so I notice to my astonishment a *remarkable* improvement in his respiration and his walking. I renew the suggestion, and two days afterwards, when he returns, the improvement has continued, and so it is at every visit. So rapid is the progress that he makes that, three weeks after the first visit, my little patient is able to go *on foot* with his mother to the plateau of Villers. He can breathe with ease and almost normally, he can walk without getting out of breath, and can mount the stairs, which was impossible for him before. As the improvement is steadily maintained, little Basks me if he can go and stay with his grandmother at Carignan. As he seems well I advise him to do so, and he goes off, but sends me news of himself from time to time. His health is becoming better and better, he has a good appetite, digests and assimilates his food well, and the feeling of oppression has entirely disappeared. Not only can he walk like everybody else, but he even runs and chases butterflies.

He returns in October, and I can hardly recognize him, for the bent and puny little fellow who had left me in May has become a tall upright boy, whose face beams with health. He has grown 12 centimetres and gained 19 lbs. in weight. Since then he has lived a perfectly normal life; he runs up and down stairs, rides a bicycle, and plays football with his comrades.

Mile X --, of Geneva, aged 13. Sore on the temple considered by several doctors as being of tubercular origin; for a year and a half it has refused to yield to the different treatments ordered. She is taken to M. Baudouin, a follower of M. Coué at Geneva, who treats her by suggestion and tells her to return in a week. When she comes back the sore has healed.

Mile Z-- , also of Geneva. Has had the right leg drawn up for 17 years, owing to an abscess above the knee which had had to be operated upon. She asks M. Baudouin to treat her by suggestion, and hardly has he begun when the leg can be bent and unbent in a normal manner. (There was of course a psychological cause in this case.)

Mme Urbain Marie, aged 55, at Maxeville. Varicose ulcer, dating from more than a year and a half. First visit in September 1915, and a second one a week later. In a fortnight the cure is complete.

Emile Chenu, 10 years old, Grande-Rue, 19 (a refugee from Metz). Some unknown heart complaint with vegetations. Every night loses blood by the mouth. Comes first in July 1915, and after a few visits the loss of blood diminishes, and continues to do so until by the end of November it has ceased completely. The vegetations also seem to be no longer there, and by August 1916 there had been no relapse.

M. Hazot, aged 48, living at Brin. Invalided the 15th of January, 1915, with *specific* chronic bronchitis, which is getting worse every day. He comes in to me in October 1915. The improvement is immediate, and has been maintained since. At the present moment, although he is not completely cured, he is very much better.

M. B---, has suffered for twenty-four years from frontal sinus, which had necessitated eleven operations. In spite of all that had been done the sinus persisted, accompanied by intolerable pains. The physical state of the patient was pitiable in the extreme; he had violent and almost continuous pain, extreme weakness; lack of appetite, could neither walk, read nor sleep, etc. His nerves were in nearly as bad a state as his body, and in spite of the treatment of such men as Bernheim of Nancy, Dejerine of Paris, Dubois of

Bern, X-of Strasburg, his ill health not only continued but even grew worse every day. The patient comes to me in September 1915, on the advice of one of my other patients. From that moment he made rapid progress, and at the present time (1921) he is perfectly well. It is a real resurrection.

M. Nagengast, aged 18, Rue Sellier, 39. Suffering from Pott's disease. Comes to me in the beginning of 1914, having been en-cased for six months in a plaster corset. Comes regularly twice a week to the 'séances', and makes for himself the usual suggestion morning and evening. Improvement soon shows itself, and in a short time the patient is able to do without his plaster casing. I saw him again in April 1916. He was completely cured, and was carrying on his duties as postman, after having been assistant to an ambulance at Nancy, where he had stayed until it was done away with.

M. D ---, at Jarville. Paralysis of the left upper eye-lid. Goes to the hospital where he receives injections, as a result of which the eyelid is raised. The left eye was, however, deflected outwards for more than 45 degrees, and an operation seemed to be necessary. It was at this moment that he came to me, and thanks to autosuggestion the eye went back little by little to its normal position.

Mme L—, of Nancy. Continuous pain in the right side of the face, which had gone on for ten years. She has consulted many doctors whose prescriptions seemed of no use, and an operation is judged to be necessary. The patient comes to me on the 25th of July, 1916, and there is an immediate improvement. In about ten days' time the pain has entirely vanished, and up to the 20th of December there had been no recurrence.

T---- Maurice, aged 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, at Nancy: club feet. A first operation cures, or nearly so, the left foot, while the right one still remains crippled. Two subsequent operations do no good. The child is brought to me for the first time in February 1915; he walks pretty well, thanks to two contrivances which hold his feet straight. The first visit is followed by an immediate improvement, and after the second the child is able to walk

in ordinary boots. The improvement becomes more and more marked, and by the 17th of April the child is quite well. The right foot, however, is not now quite so strong as it was, owing to a sprain which he gave it in February 1916.

Mlle X --, at Blainville. A sore on the left foot, probably of specific origin. A slight sprain has brought about a swelling of the foot, accompanied by acute pains. Different treatments have only had a negative effect, and in a little while a suppurating sore appears which seems to indicate caries of the bone. Walking becomes more and more painful and difficult in spite of the treatment. On the advice of a former patient who had been cured, she comes to me, and there is noticeable relief after the first visits. Little by little the swelling goes down, the pain becomes less intense, the suppuration lessens, and finally the sore heals over. The process has taken a few months. At present the foot is practically normal, but although the pain and swelling have entirely disappeared, the back flexion of the foot is not yet perfect, which makes the patient limp slightly.

Mme R - , of Chavigny. Metritis dating from ten years back. Comes at the end of July 1916. Improvement is immediate, the pain and loss of blood diminish rapidly, and by the following 29th of September both have disappeared. The monthly period, which lasted from eight to ten days, is now over in four.

Mme H - , Rue Guilbert-de-Pivérécourt, at Nancy, aged 49. Suffers from a varicose ulcer dating from September 1914, which has been treated according to her doctor's advice, but without success. The lower part of the leg is enormous (the ulcer, which is as large as a two-franc piece and goes right down to the bone, is situated above the ankle). The inflammation is very intense, the suppuration copious, and the pains extremely violent. The patient comes for the first time in April 1916, and the improvement which is visible after the first treatment continues without interruption. By the 18th of February, 1917, the swelling has *entirely subsided*, and the pain and irritation have disappeared. The sore is still there, but it is no larger than a pea, and it is only a few millimetres in depth; it still discharges very slightly. By 1920 the cure has long been complete.

Mlle D --, at Mirecourt, 16 years of age. Has suffered from attacks of nerves for three years. The attacks, at first infrequent, have gradually come at closer intervals. When she comes to see me on the 1st of April, 1917, she has had three attacks in the preceding fortnight. Up to the 18th of April she did not have any at all. I may add that this young lady, from the time she began the treatment, was no longer troubled by the bad headaches from which she had suffered almost constantly.

Mme M--, aged 43, Rue d'Amance, 2, Malzéville. Comes at the end of 1916 for violent pains in the head from which she has suffered all her life. After a few visits they vanish completely. Two months afterwards she realized that she was also cured of a prolapse of the uterus which she had not mentioned to me, and of which she was not thinking when she made her autosuggestion. (This result is due to the words *'in every respect'* contained in the formula used morning and evening).

Mme D--, Choisy-le-Roi. Only one general suggestion from me in July 1916, and autosuggestion on her part morning and evening. In October of the same year this lady tells me that she is cured of a prolapse of the uterus from which she had suffered for more than twenty years. Up to April 1920 the cure is still holding good.

(Same remark as in the preceding case.) Mme Jouselin, aged 60, Rue des Dominicains, 6. Comes on the 20th of July, 1917, for a violent pain in the right leg, accompanied by considerable swelling of the whole limb. She can only drag herself along with groans, but after the 'séance', to her great astonishment, she can walk *normally* without feeling the least pain. When she comes back four days afterwards, she has had no return of the pain and the swelling has subsided. This patient tells me that since she has attended the 'séances' she has also been cured of white discharges, and of enteritis from which she had long suffered. (Same remark as above.) In November the cure is still holding good.

Mlle G. L-, aged 15, Rue du Montet, 88. Has stammered from infancy. Comes on the 20th of July 1917, and the stammering ceases instantly. A month after I saw her again and she had had no recurrence.

M. Ferry (Eugene), aged 60, Rue de la Côte, 56. For five years has suffered from rheumatic pains in the shoulders and in the left leg. Walks with difficulty leaning on a stick, and cannot lift the arms higher than the shoulders. Comes on the 17th of September, 1917. After the first 'séance', the pains vanish completely and the patient can not only take long strides but even *run*. Still more, he can whirl both arms like a windmill. In November the cure is still holding good.

Mme Lacour, aged 63, Chemin des Sables. Pains in the face dating from more than twenty years back. All treatments have failed. An operation is advised, but the patient refuses to undergo it. She comes for the first time on July 25th, 1916, and four days later the pain ceases. The cure has held good to this day.

Mme Martin, Grande-Rue (Ville-Vieille), 105. Inflammation of the uterus of thirteen years' standing, accompanied by pains and white and red discharges. The period, which is very painful, recurs every twenty-two or twenty-three days and lasts ten to twelve days. Comes for the first time on the 15th of November, 1917, and returns regularly every week. There is visible improvement after the first visit, which continues rapidly until at the beginning of January 1918 the inflammation has entirely disappeared; the period comes at more regular intervals and without the slightest pain. A pain in the knee which the patient had had for thirteen years was also cured.

Mme Castelli, aged 41, living at Einville (M.-et-M.). Has suffered from intermittent rheumatic pains in the right knee for thirteen years. Five years ago she had a more violent attack than usual, the leg swells as well as the knee, then the lower part of the limb atrophies, and the patient is reduced to walking very painfully with the aid of a stick or crutch. She comes for the first time on the 5th of November, 1917. She goes away *without the help of either crutch or stick*. Since then she no longer uses her crutch at all, but occasionally makes use of her stick. The pain in the knee comes back from time to time, but only very slightly.

Mme Meder, aged 52, at Einville. For six months has suffered from pain in the right knee accompanied by swelling, which makes it impossible to bend the leg. Comes for the first time on December 7th, 1917. Returns on January 4th, 1918, saying that she has almost ceased to suffer and that she can walk normally. After that visit of the 4th, the pain ceases entirely, and the patient walks like other people.

EMILE COUÉ

## CHAPTER IV

### *Education as it Ought to Be*

IT may seem paradoxical, but nevertheless the education of a child ought to begin before its birth.

In sober truth, if a woman, a few weeks after conception, makes a mental picture of the sex of the child she is going to bring forth into the world, of the physical and moral qualities with which she desires to see it endowed, and if she will continue during the time of gestation to impress on herself the same mental image, the child will have the sex and qualities desired.

Spartan women only brought forth robust children, who grew to be redoubtable warriors, because their strongest desire was to give such heroes to their country; whilst, at Athens, mothers had intellectual children whose mental qualities were a hundredfold greater than their physical attributes.

The child thus engendered will be apt to accept readily good suggestions which may be made to him and to transform them into autosuggestion which later will influence the course of his life. For you must know that all our words, all our acts, are only the result of autosuggestions caused, for the most part, by the suggestion of example or speech.

How, then, should parents and those entrusted with the education of children avoid provoking bad autosuggestions, and, on the other hand, influence good autosuggestions?

In dealing with children, always be even tempered and speak in a gentle but firm tone. In this way they will become obedient without ever having the slightest desire to resist authority.

Above all - above all, avoid harshness and brutality, for there the risk is incurred of influencing an autosuggestion of cruelty accompanied by hate.

Moreover, avoid carefully in their presence saying evil of anyone, as too often happens, when, without any deliberate intention, the absent nurse is picked to pieces in the drawing room.

Inevitably this fatal example will be followed, and may produce later a real catastrophe.

Awaken in them a desire to know the reason of things and a love of Nature, and endeavour to interest them by giving all possible explanations very clearly, in a cheerful, good - tempered tone. You must answer their questions pleasantly, instead of checking them with, 'What a bother you are! Do be quiet: you will learn that later!'

Never on any account say to a child, 'You are lazy and good for nothing,' because that gives birth in him to the very faults of which you accuse him.

If a child is lazy and does his tasks badly, you should say to him one day, even if it is not true, 'There, this time your work is much better than it generally is. Well done.' The child, flattered by the unaccustomed commendation, will certainly work better the next time, and, little by little, thanks to judicious encouragement, will succeed in becoming a real worker.

At all costs avoid speaking of illness before children, as it will certainly create in them bad autosuggestions. Teach them, on the contrary, that health is the normal state of man, and that sickness is an anomaly, a sort of backsliding which may be avoided by living in a temperate, regular way.

Do not create defects in them by teaching them to fear this or that, cold or heat, rain or wind, etc. Man is created to endure such variations without injury and should do so without grumbling.

Do not make the child nervous by filling his mind with stories of hobgoblins and werewolves, for there is always the risk that timidity contracted in childhood will persist later.

It is necessary that those who do not bring up their children themselves should choose carefully those to whom they are entrusted. To love them is not sufficient, they must have the qualities you desire your children to possess.

Awaken in them the love of work and of study, making it easier by explaining things carefully and in a pleasant fashion, and by introducing in the explanation some anecdote which will make the child eager for the following lesson.

Above all, impress on them that Work is essential for man, and that he who does not work in some fashion or another is a worthless, useless creature, and that all work produces in the man who engages in it a healthy and profound satisfaction; whilst idleness, so longed for and desired by some, produces weariness, neurasthenia, disgust of life, and leads those who do not possess the means of satisfying the passions created by idleness to debauchery and even to crime.

Teach children to be always polite and kind to all, and particularly to those whom the chance of birth has placed in a lower class than their own, and also to respect age, and never to mock at the physical or moral defects that age often produces.

Teach them to love all mankind, without distinction of caste. That one must always be ready to succour those who are in need of help, and that one must never be afraid of spending time and money for those who are in need; in short, that they must think more of others than of themselves. In so doing an inner satisfaction is experienced that the egoist ever seeks and never finds.

Develop in them self-confidence, and teach that, before embarking upon any undertaking, it should be submitted to the control of reason, thus avoiding acting impulsively, and, after having reasoned the matter out, one should form a decision by which one abides, unless, indeed, some fresh fact proves you may have been mistaken.

Teach them, above all, that everyone must set out in life with a very definite idea that he will succeed, and that, under the influence of this idea, he will inevitably succeed. Not indeed that he should quietly remain expecting events to happen, but because, impelled by this idea, he will do what is necessary to make it come true.

He will know how to take advantage of opportunities, or even perhaps of the single opportunity which may present itself, it may be only a single thread of hair, whilst he who distrusts himself is a Constant Guignard with whom nothing succeeds, because his efforts are all directed to that end.

Such a one may indeed swim in an ocean of opportunities, provided with heads of hair like Absalom himself, and he will be unable to seize a single hair, and often determines himself the causes which make him fail; whilst he, who has the idea of success in himself, often gives birth, in an unconscious fashion, to the very circumstances which produce that same success.

But, above all, let parents and masters preach by example. A child is extremely suggestive, let something turn up that he wishes to do, and he does it.

As soon as children can speak, make them repeat morning and evening twenty times consecutively:—

'Day by day, in all respects, I grow better,' which will produce in them an excellent physical, moral and healthy atmosphere.

If you make the following suggestion you will help the child enormously to eliminate his faults, and to awaken in him the corresponding desirable qualities.

Every night when the child is asleep, approach quietly, so as not to awaken him, to within about three or four feet from his bed. Stand there, murmuring in a low monotonous voice the thing or things you wish him to do.

Finally, it is desirable that all teachers should, every morning, make suggestions to their pupils, somewhat in the following fashion.

Telling them to shut their eyes, they should say: 'Children, I expect you always to be polite and kind to everyone, obedient to your parents and teachers, when they give you an order, or tell you anything; you will always listen to the order given or the fact told without thinking it tiresome; you used to think it tiresome when you were reminded of anything, but now you understand very well that it is for your good that you are told things, and consequently, instead of being cross with those who speak to you, you will now be grateful to them.

'Moreover, you will now love your work, whatever it may be; in your lessons you will always enjoy those things which you may have to learn, especially whatever you may not till now have cared for.

'Moreover, when the teacher is giving a lesson in class, you will now devote all your attention, solely and entirely, to what he says, instead of attending to any silly things said or done by your companions, and without doing or saying anything silly yourself.

'Under these conditions as you are all intelligent, for, children, you are all intelligent, you will understand easily and remember easily what you have learned. It will remain embedded in your memory, ready to be at your service, and you will be able to make use of it as soon as you need it.

'In the same way, when you are working at your lessons alone, or at home, when you are accomplishing a task or studying a lesson, you will fix your attention solely on the work you are doing, and you will always obtain good marks for your lessons.'

This is the counsel which, if followed faithfully and truly from henceforth, will produce a race endowed with the highest physical and moral qualities.

EMILE

## CHAPTER V

### ***A Survey of the 'Séances' at M. Emile Coué's***

THE town thrills at this name, for from every rank of society people come to him, and everyone is welcomed with the same benevolence, which already goes for a good deal. But what is extremely poignant is at the end of the seance to see the people who came in gloomy, bent, almost hostile (they were in pain), go away like everybody else: unconstrained, cheerful, sometimes radiant, (they are no longer in pain!). With a strong and smiling goodness of which he has the secret, M. Coué, as it were, holds the hearts of those who consult him in his hand; he addresses himself in turn to the numerous persons who come to consult him, and speaks to them in these terms:—

Well, Madame, and what is your trouble ? . . .

Oh, you are looking for too many whys and wherefores; what does the cause of your pain matter to you ? You are in pain, that is enough.... I will teach you to get rid of that.. . .

\*

And you, Monsieur, your varicose ulcer is already better. That is good, very good indeed, do you know, considering you have only been here twice; I congratulate you on the result you have obtained. If you go on doing your autosuggestions properly, you will very soon be cured. ... You have had this ulcer for ten years, you say ? What does that matter ? You might have had it twenty and more, and it could be cured just the same.

And you say that you have not obtained any improvement? . . . Do you know why? . .

. Simply because you lack confidence in yourself. When I tell you that you are better, you feel better at once, don't you ? Why ? Because you have faith in me. Just believe in yourself and you will obtain the same result.

Oh, Madame, not so many details, I beg you! By looking out for the details you create them, and you would want a list a yard long to contain all your maladies. As a matter of fact, with you it is the mental outlook which is wrong. Well, make up your mind that it is going to get better and it will be so. It's as simple as the Gospel....

You tell me you have attacks of nerves every week. . . . Well, from today you are going to do what I tell you and you will cease to have them. . . .

You have suffered from constipation for a long time? . . . What does it matter how long it is ? ... You say it is forty years ? Yes, I heard what you said, but it is none the less true that you can be cured tomorrow—you hear, tomorrow, on condition, naturally, of your doing exactly what I tell you to do, in the way I tell you to do it. ...

Ah! you have glaucoma, Madame. I cannot absolutely promise to cure you of that, for I am not sure that I can. That does not mean that you cannot be cured, for I have

known it to happen in the case of a lady of Chalon-sur-Saône and another of Lorraine.

Well, Mademoiselle, as you have not had your nervous attacks since you came here, whereas you used to have them every day, you are cured. Come back sometimes all the same, so that I may keep you going along the right lines.

The feeling of oppression will disappear with the lesions, which will disappear when you assimilate properly; that will come all in good time, but you mustn't put the cart before the horse . . . it is the same with oppression as with heart trouble, it generally diminishes very quickly. . . .

Suggestion does not prevent you from going on with your usual treatment. . . . As for the blemish you have on your eye, and which is lessening almost daily, the opacity and the size are both growing less every day.

•To a child (in a clear and commanding voice): Shut your eyes, I am not going to talk to you about lesions or anything else, you would not understand; the pain in your chest is going away, and you won't want to cough any more.

**Observation.** - It is curious to notice that all those suffering from chronic bronchitis are immediately relieved and their morbid symptoms rapidly disappear. . . .

Children are very easy and very obedient subjects; their organism almost always obeys immediately to suggestion.

To a person who complains of fatigue: Well, so do I. There are also days when it tires me to receive people, but I receive them all the same and all day long. Do not say: '*I cannot help it.*' '*One can always overcome oneself.*'

**Observation.** - The idea of fatigue necessarily brings fatigue, and the idea that we have a duty to accomplish always gives us the necessary strength to fulfil it. The mind can and must remain master of the animal side of our nature.

The cause which prevents you from walking, whatever it is, is going to disappear little by little every day: you know the proverb: *Heaven helps those who help themselves*. Stand up two or three times a day supporting yourself on two persons, and say to yourself firmly: '*My kidneys are not so weak that I cannot do it, on the contrary I can.*' . . .'

After having said: 'Every day, in every respect, I am getting better and better,' add: 'The people who are pursuing me *cannot* pursue me any more, they are not pursuing me. . . .'

What I told you is quite true; it was enough to think that you had no more pain for the pain to disappear; *do not think then that it may come back or it will come back.* . . . (A woman, *sotto voce*, 'What patience he has! What a wonderfully painstaking man!')

**ALL THAT WE THINK BECOMES TRUE FOR US. WE MUST NOT THEN ALLOW OURSELVES TO THINK WRONGLY.**

**THINK 'MY TROUBLE IS GOING AWAY,'  
JUST AS YOU THINK YOU CANNOT OPEN YOUR HANDS.**

**The more you say: 'I will not,' the more surely the contrary comes about. You must say: 'It's going away,' and think it. Close your hand and think properly: 'Now I cannot open it.' Try! (she cannot). You see that your will is not much good to you.**

**Observation.** - *This is the essential point of the method.* In order to make autosuggestions, you must eliminate the *will* completely and only address yourself to the *imagination*, so as to avoid a conflict between them in which the will would be vanquished.

To become stronger as one becomes older seems paradoxical, but it is true.

**For diabetes:** Continue to use therapeutic treatments; I am quite willing to make suggestions to you, but I cannot promise to cure you.

**Observation.** - I have seen diabetes completely cured several times, and what is still more extraordinary, the albumen diminish and even disappear from the urine of certain patients.

This obsession must be a real nightmare. The people you used to detest are becoming your friends, you like them and they like you. **Ah, but to will and to desire is not the same thing.**

Then, after having asked them to close their eyes, M. Coué gives to his patients the little suggestive discourse which is to be found in 'Self Mastery.' When this is over, he again addresses himself to each one separately, saying to each a few words on his case.

To the first: 'You, Monsieur, are in pain, but I tell you that from today the cause of this pain, whether it is called arthritis or anything else, is going to disappear with the help of your unconscious, and the cause having disappeared, the pain will gradually become less and less, and in a short time it will be nothing but a moment.'

To the second person: 'Your stomach does not function properly, it is more or less dilated. Well, as I told you just now, your digestive functions are going to work better and better, and I add that the dilation of the stomach is going to disappear little by little. Your organism is going to give back progressively to your stomach the force and elasticity it had lost, and by degrees, as this phenomenon is produced, the stomach will return to its primitive form and will carry out more and more easily the necessary movements to pass into the intestine the nourishment it contains. At the same time, the pouch formed by the relaxed stomach will diminish in size, the nutriment will no longer stagnate in this pouch, and in consequence the fermentation set up will end by totally disappearing.'

To the third: 'To you, Mademoiselle, I say that whatever lesions you may have in your liver, your organism is doing what is necessary to make the lesions disappear every day, and by degrees, as they heal over, the symptoms from which you suffer

will go on lessening and disappearing. Your liver then functions in a more and more normal way, the bile it secretes is alkaline and no longer acid, in the right quantity and quality, so that it passes naturally into the intestines and helps intestinal digestion.'

To the fourth: 'My child, you hear what I say: every time you feel you are going to have an attack, you will hear my voice telling you as quick as lightning, "No, no! my friend, you are not going to have that attack, and it is going to disappear before it comes \_\_\_\_\_"'

To the fifth, etc., etc.

When everyone has been attended to, M. Coué tells those present to open their eyes, and adds: 'You have heard the advice I have just given you. Well, to transform it into reality, what you must do is this: *As long as you live*, every morning before getting up, and every evening as soon as you are in bed, you must shut your eyes, so as to concentrate your attention, and repeat twenty times following, moving your *lips* (that is indispensable) and count-ing *mechanically* on a string with twenty knots in it the following phrase: **"Every day, in every respect, I am getting better and better."**

'There is no need to think of anything in particular, as the words *"in every respect"* apply to everything. **This autosuggestion must be made with confidence, with faith, with the certainty of obtaining what is desired. The greater the conviction of the person, the greater and the more rapid will be the results obtained.**

'Further, every time that in the course of the day or night you feel any physical or mental discomfort, *affirm* to yourself that you will not consciously contribute to it, and that you are going to make it vanish; then isolate yourself as much as possible, and passing your hand over your forehead if it is something mental, or on whatever part that is painful if it is something physical, repeat *very quickly*, moving the lips, the words: "It is going, it is going ... etc., etc.," as long as it is necessary. With a little practice, the mental or physical discomfort will disappear in about 20 to 25 seconds. Begin again every time it is necessary.

'For this, as for the other autosuggestions, it is necessary to act with the same confidence, the same conviction, the same faith, and, above all, without effort.'

M. Coué also adds what follows: 'If you formerly allowed your-self to make bad autosuggestions because you did it unconsciously, now that you know what I have just taught you, you must no longer let this happen. And if, in spite of all, you still do it, you must only accuse yourself, and say *"Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa."*'

And now, if a grateful admirer of the work and of the founder of the method may be allowed to say a few words, I will say: Monsieur Coué shows us luminously that the power to get health and happiness is within us: we have indeed received this gift.

Therefore, suppressing first of all every cause of suffering *created or encouraged by ourselves*, then putting into practice the favourite maxim of Socrates: 'Know thyself,' and the advice of Pope: 'That I may reject none of the benefits that Thy

goodness bestows upon me,' let us take possession of the entire benefit of autosuggestion, let us become this very day members of the 'Lorraine Society of Applied Psychology'; let us make members of it those who may be in our care (it is a good deed to do to them).

By this means we shall follow first of all the great movement of the future of which M. E. Coué is the originator (he devotes to it his days, his nights, his worldly goods, and refuses to accept - but hush! no more of this! lest his modesty refuses to allow these lines to be published without alteration), but above all by this means we shall know exactly the days and hours of his lectures at Paris, Nancy and other towns, where he devotedly goes to sow the good seed, and where we too can go to see him, and hear him and consult him personally, and with his help awake or stir up in ourselves the personal power that everyone of us has received of be-coming happy and well.

May I be allowed to add that when M. Coué has charged an entrance fee for his lectures, they have brought in thousands of francs for the disabled and others who have suffered through the war.

**E. vs . . . OER**

**Note.**

Entrance is free to the members of the Lorraine Society of Applied Psychology.

## CHAPTER VI

### ***Letters from Patients Treated by the Coué Method***

#### EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS ADDRESSED TO M. COUÉ

THE final results of the English Secondary Certificate have only been posted up these two hours, and I hasten to tell you about it, at least in so far as it concerns myself. I passed the viva voce *with flying colours*, and scarcely felt a trace of the nervousness which used to cause me such an intolerable sensation of nausea before the tests. During the latter I was astonished at my own calm, which gave those who listened to me the impression of perfect self-possession on my part. In short, it was just the tests I dreaded most which contributed most to my success. The jury placed me second, and I am infinitely grateful to you for help, which undoubtedly gave me an advantage over the other candidates, . . . etc. [The case is that of a young lady, who, on account of excessive nervousness, had failed in 1915. The nervousness having vanished under the influence of autosuggestion, she passed successfully, being placed second out of more than 200 competitors.]

MLLE V--  
*Schoolmistress, August, 1916*

It is with great pleasure that I write to thank you most sincerely for the great benefit I have received from your method. Before I went to you I had the greatest difficulty in walking 100 yards without being out of breath, whereas now I can go miles without fatigue. Several times a day and quite easily, I am able to walk in forty minutes from the Rue du Bord-de-l'Eau to the Rue des Glacis, that is to say, four kilometres. The asthma from which I suffered has almost entirely disappeared. Yours most gratefully,

**PAUL CHENOT**  
*Rue de Strasbourg, 141, Nancy, August, 1917*

I do not know how to thank you. Thanks to you I can say that I am almost entirely cured, and I was only waiting to be so in order to express my gratitude. I was suffering from two varicose ulcers, one on each foot. That on the right foot, which was as *big as my hand*, is entirely *cured*. It seemed to disappear by magic. For weeks I had been confined to my bed, but almost immediately after I received your letter the ulcer healed over so that I could get up. That on the left foot is not yet absolutely healed, but will soon be so. Night and morning I do, and always shall, recite the pre-scribed formula, in which I have entire confidence. I may say also that my legs were as hard as a stone and I could not bear the slightest touch. Now I can press them without the least pain, and I can walk once more, which is the greatest joy.

**MME LIGNY**  
*Mailleroncourt-Charette (Haute Saône), May, 1918*

N.B.—It is worthy of remark that this lady never saw M. Coué, and that it is only thanks to a letter he wrote her on April 15th that she obtained the result announced in her letter of May 3rd.

\*

I am writing to express my gratitude, for thanks to you I have escaped the risk of an operation which is always a very dangerous one. I can say more: you have saved my life, for your method of autosuggestion has done alone what all the medicines and treatments ordered for the terrible intestinal obstruction from which I suffered for nineteen days had failed to do. From the moment when I followed your instructions and applied your excellent principles, my functions have accomplished themselves quite naturally.

**MME S-**

*Pont à Mousson, February, 1920 \**

I do not know how to thank you for my happiness in being cured. For more than fifteen years I had suffered from attacks of asthma, which caused the most painful suffocations every night. Thanks to your splendid method, and above all, since I was present at one of your séances, the attacks have disappeared as if by magic. It is a real miracle, for the various doctors who attended me all declared that there was no cure for asthma.

**MME V**

*Saint-Did, February, 1920*

I am writing to thank you with all my heart for having brought to my knowledge a new therapeutic method, a marvellous instrument which seems to act like the magic wand of a fairy, since, thanks to the simplest means, it brings about the most extraordinary results. From the first I was extremely interested in your experiments, and after my own personal success with your method, I began ardently to apply it, as I have become an enthusiastic supporter of it.

**DOCTEUR VACHET**

*Vincennes, May, 1920*

For eight years I have suffered from prolapse of the uterus. I have used your method of autosuggestion for the last five months, and am now completely cured, for which I do not know how to thank you enough.

**MME SOULIER**

*Place du Marché, Toul, May, 1920*

I have suffered terribly for eleven years without respite. Every night I had attacks of asthma, and suffered also from insomnia and general weakness which prevented any occupation. Mentally, I was depressed, restless, worried, and was inclined to make mountains out of molehills. I had followed many treatments without success, having even undergone in Switzerland the removal of the turbinate bone of the nose without obtaining any relief. In November 1918 I became worse in consequence of a great sorrow. While my husband was at Corfu (he was an officer on a warship) I lost our only son in six days from influenza. He was a delightful child of ten, who was the joy of our life; alone and overwhelmed with sorrow, I reproached myself bitterly for not having been able to protect and save our treasure. I wanted to lose my reason or to die....When my husband returned (which was not until February), he took me to a new doctor, who ordered me various remedies and the waters of Mont-Dore. I spent the month of August in that station, but on my return I had a recurrence of the asthma, and I realized with despair that *'in every respect'* I was getting worse and worse. It was then that I had the pleasure of meeting you. Without expecting much good from it, I must say, I went to your October lectures, and I am happy to tell you

that by the end of November I was cured. Insomnia, feelings of oppression, gloomy thoughts, disappeared as though by magic, and I am now well and strong and full of courage. With physical health I have recovered my mental equilibrium, and but for the ineffaceable wound caused by my child's loss, I could say that I am perfectly happy. Why did I not meet you before ? My child would have known a cheerful and courageous mother. Thank you again and again, M. Coué.

Yours most gratefully,

**E. ITIER**

*Rue de Lille, Paris, April, 1920*

I can now take up again the struggle I have sustained for thirty years, and which had exhausted me.

I found in you last August a wonderful and providential help. Coming home to Lorraine for a few days, ill, and with my heart full of sorrow, I dreaded the shock which I should feel at the sight of the ruins and distress . . . and went away comforted and in good health. I was at the end of my tether, and unfortunately I am not religious. I longed to find someone who could help me, and meeting you by chance at my cousin's house you gave me the very help I sought. I can now work in a new spirit, I suggest to my unconscious to re-establish my physical equilibrium, and I do not doubt that I shall regain my former good health. A very noticeable improvement has already shown itself, and you will better understand my gratitude when I tell you that, suffering from diabetes with a renal complication, I have had several attacks of glaucoma, but my eyes are now recovering their suppleness. Since then my sight has become almost normal, and my general health has much improved.

**Mlle Th**

*Professor at the Young Ladies' College at Ch  
January, 1920*

I read my thesis with success, and was awarded the highest mark and the congratulations of the jury. Of all these 'honours' a large share belongs to you, and I do not forget it. I only regretted that you were not present to hear your name referred to with warm and sympathetic interest by the distinguished jury. You can consider that the doors of the University have been flung wide open to your teaching. Do not thank me for it, for I owe you far more than you can owe me.

**CH. BAUDOIN**

*Professor at the Institut. J.-J. Rousseau, Geneva*

... I admire your courageousness, and am quite sure that it will help to turn many friends into a useful and intelligent direction. I confess that I have personally benefited by your teaching, and have made my patients do so too.

At the Nursing Home we try to apply your method collectively, and have already obtained visible results in this way.

**DOCTEUR BERILLON**

*Paris, March, 1920*

... I have received your kind letter as well as your very interesting lecture.

I am glad to see that you make a rational connection between hetero and autosuggestion, and I note particularly the passage in which you say that the will

must not intervene in autosuggestion. That is what a great number of professors of autosuggestion, un-fortunately including a large number of medical men, do not realize at all. I also think that an absolute distinction should be established between autosuggestion and the training of the will.

**DOCTEUR VAN VELSEN**  
*Brussels, March, 1920 \**

What must you think of me ? That I have forgotten you ? Oh, no, I assure you that I think of you with the most grateful affection, and I wish to repeat that your teachings are more and more efficacious; I never spend a day without using autosuggestion with increased success, and I bless you every day, for your method is the true one. Thanks to it, I am assimilating your excellent directions, and am able to control my self better every day, and I feel that I am *stronger*. ... I am sure that you would find it difficult to recognize in this woman, so active in spite of her sixty-six years, the poor creature who was so often ailing, and who only began to be well, thanks to you and your guidance. May you be blessed for this, for the sweetest thing in the world is to do good to those around us. You do much, and I do a little, for which I thank God.

**MM M --**  
*Cesson-Saint-Brieuc*

As I am feeling better and better since I began to follow your method of autosuggestion, I should like to offer you my sincere thanks. The lesion in the lungs has disappeared, my heart is better. I have no more albumen, in short I am quite well.

**MME LEMAITRE**  
*Richemont, June, 1920*

Your booklet and lecture interested us very much. It would be desirable for the good of humanity that they should be published in several languages, so that they might penetrate to every race and country, and thus reach a greater number of unfortunate people who suffer from the wrong use of that all-powerful (and almost divine) faculty, the most important to man, as you affirm and prove so luminously and judiciously, which we call the Imagination. I had already read many books on the will, and had quite an arsenal of formulae, thoughts, aphorisms, etc. Your phrases are conclusive. I do not think that ever before have 'compressed tablets of self-confidence',—as I call your healing phrases—been condensed into typical formulae in such an intelligent manner.

**DON ENRIQUE C**  
*Madrid*

Your pamphlet on 'the self-control' contains very strong arguments and very striking examples. I think that the substitution of imagination for the power of the will is a great progress. It is milder and more persuasive.

**A. F. Reimiremont**

... I am happy to be able to tell you that my stomach is going on well. My metritis is also much better. My little boy had a gland in his thigh as big as an egg which is gradually disappearing.

**E. L --**  
*Saint Cldment (M-et-M.)*

After I had undergone three operations in my left leg on account of a local tuberculosis, that leg became ill again in September 1920. Several doctors declared that a new operation was necessary. They were about to open my leg from the knee to the ankle, and if the operation had failed, they would have had to perform an amputation. As I had heard of your wondrous cures I came and saw you for the first time on the 6th of November, 1920. After the seance, I felt immediately a little better. I exactly followed your instructions and went three times to you. At the third time I could tell you that I was completely cured.

**MME L--**  
*Henry (Lorraine)*

... I will not wait any longer to thank you heartily for all the good I owe you. Autosuggestion has positively transformed me and I am now getting much better than I have been these many years. The symptoms of illness have disappeared little by little, the morbid symptoms have become rarer and rarer, and all the functions of the body now work normally. The result is that, after having become thinner and thinner during several years, I have regained several kilos in a few months. I cannot do otherwise than bless the Coué system.

**Cannes (A. M.)**

Since 1917 my little girl has been suffering from epileptic crises. Several doctors had told me that about the age of fourteen or fifteen they would disappear or become worse. Having heard of you, I sent her to you from the end of December till May. Now her cure is complete, for during six months she has had no relapse.

**PERRIN (CHARLES)**  
*Essey-les Nancy*

For eight years I had suffered from a sinking of the uterus. After having practised your autosuggestion for five months. I have been radically cured. I don't know how to express my deep gratitude.

**MME SOULIE**  
*6, Place du Marché, Toul*

. . Having suffered from a glaucoma since 1917, I have consulted two oculists, who told me that only an operation would put an end to my sufferings, but unfortunately neither of them would assure me of a good result.

In the month of June 1920, after having attended one of your seances, I felt much better. In September I ceased to use the drops of pilocarpine which were the daily bread of my eye, and since then I have felt no more pain. My pupil is no more dilated, my eyes are normal; it is a real miracle.

**MME M**  
*à Soulosse*

A dedication to M. Coué by the author of a medical treatise: To M. Coué, who knew how to dissect the human soul and to extract from it a psychologic method founded on conscious auto suggestion. The master is entitled to the thanks of all; he has cleverly succeeded in disciplining the vagrant (Imagination) and in associating it usefully with the will. Thus he has given man the means of increasing tenfold his moral force by giving him confidence in himself.

**DOCTEUR P. R.**  
*Francfort*

... It is difficult to speak of the profound influence exercised on me by your so kindly allowing me to view so often your work. Seeing it day by day, as I have done, it has impressed me more and more, and as you yourself said, there seems no limit to the possibilities and future scope of the principles you enunciate, not only in the physical life of children but also in possibilities for changing the ideas now prevalent in punishment of crime, in government—in fact, in all the relations of life. . . .

MISS JOSEPHINE M. RICHARDSON

. . . When I came I expected a great deal, but what I have seen, thanks to your great kindness, exceeds greatly my expectation.

**MONTAGU S. MONIER-WILLIAMS, M.D.**  
*London*

### **FRAGMENTS FROM LETTERS ADDRESSED TO MME EMILE LEON, DISCIPLE OF M. COUÉ**

For some time I have been wanting to write and thank you most sincerely for having made known to me this method of autosuggestion. Thanks to your good advice the attacks of nerves to which I was subject have entirely disappeared, and I am certain that I am quite cured. Further, I feel myself surrounded by a superior force which is an unfaltering guide, and by whose aid I surmount with ease the difficulties of life.

MME F-  
*Rue de Bougainville, 4, Paris*

Amazed at the results obtained by the autosuggestion which you made known to me, I thank you with all my heart.

For a year I have been entirely cured of articular rheumatism of the right shoulder from which I had suffered for eight years, and from chronic bronchitis which I had had still longer. The numerous doctors I had consulted declared me incurable, but thanks to you and to your treatment, I have found with perfect health the conviction that I possess the power to keep it.

MME L. T  
*Rue du Laos, 4, Paris*

I want to tell you what excellent results M. Coué's wonderful method has produced in my case, and to express my deep gratitude for your valuable help. I have always been anaemic, and have had poor health, but after my husband's death I became much worse. I suffered with my kidneys, I could not stand upright; I also suffered from nervousness and aversions. All that has gone and I am a different person. I no longer suffer, I have more endurance and I am more cheerful. My friends hardly recognize me, and I feel a new woman; I intend to spread the news of this wonderful method, so clear, so simple, so beneficent, and to continue to get from it the best results for myself as well.

M. L. D---  
*Paris, June, 1920*

I cannot find words to thank you for teaching me your good method. What happiness you have brought to me! I thank God, who led me to make your acquaintance, for you have entirely transformed my life. Formerly I suffered terribly at each monthly

period and was obliged to lie in bed. Now all is quite regular and painless. It is the same with my digestion, and I am no longer obliged to live on milk as I used, and I have no more pain, which is a joy. My husband is astonished to find that when I travel I have no more headaches, whereas before I was always taking tablets. Now, thanks to you, I need no remedies at all, but I do not forget to repeat twenty times morning and evening the phrase you taught me: 'Every day, in every respect, I am getting better and better.'

**Parts, October, 1920**

In re-reading the method I find it more and more superior to all the developments inspired by it. It surpasses all that has been invented of so-called scientific systems, themselves based on the uncertain results of an uncertain science, which feels its way and deceives itself, and of which the means of observation are also fairly precarious in spite of what the learned say: M. Coué, on the other hand, suffices for everything, goes straight to the aim, attains it with certainty, and in freeing his patient carries generosity and knowledge to its highest point, since he leaves to the patient himself the merit of this freedom and the use of a marvellous power. No, really, there is nothing to alter in this method. It is as you so strikingly say: a Gospel. To report faithfully his acts and words and spread his method, that is what must be done, and what I shall do myself as far as is in any way possible.

**p. c.**

I am amazed at the results that I have obtained and continue to obtain daily by the use of the excellent method you have taught me of conscious autosuggestion. I was ill mentally and physically. Now I am well and am also nearly always cheerful. That is to say, that my depression has given way to cheerfulness, and certainly I do not complain of the change, for it is very preferable, I assure you. How wretched I used to be! I could digest nothing; now I digest perfectly well and the intestines act naturally. I also used to sleep so badly, whereas now the nights are not long enough; I could not work, but now I am able to work hard. Of all my ailments nothing is left but an occasional touch of rheumatism, which I feel sure will disappear like the rest by continuing your good method. I cannot find words to express my deep gratitude to you.

**MME FRIRY**

*BoulevardMalesherbes, Paris*

### **EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS ADDRESSED TO MLLE KAUFFMANT, DISCIPLE OF M. COUÉ**

As I have been feeling better and better since following the method of autosuggestion which you taught me, I feel I owe you the sincerest thanks. I am now qualified to speak of the great and un-deniable advantages of this method, as to it alone I owe my recovery. I had a lesion in the lungs which caused me to spit blood. I suffered from lack of appetite, daily vomiting, loss of flesh, and obstinate constipation. The spitting of blood lessened at once and soon entirely disappeared. The vomiting ceased, the constipation no longer exists, I have got back my appetite, and in two months I have gained nearly a stone in weight. In the face of such results observed, not only by parents and friends, but also by the doctor who has been attending me for several months, it is impossible to deny the good effect of autosuggestion and not to declare openly that it is to your method that I owe my

return to life. I authorize you to publish my name if it is likely to be of service to others, and I beg you to believe me,

Yours most gratefully,

**JEANNE GILLI**

*15, Av. Borriglione, Nice, March, 1918*

I consider it a duty to tell you how grateful I am to you for acquainting me with the benefits of autosuggestion. Thanks to you, I no longer suffer from those agonizing and frequent heart stoppages, and I have regained my appetite which I had lost for months. Still more, as a hospital nurse, I must thank you from my heart for the almost miraculous recovery of one of my patients, seriously ill with tuberculosis, which caused him to vomit blood constantly and copiously. His family and myself were very anxious when heaven sent you to him. After your first visit the spitting of blood ceased, his appetite returned, and after a few more visits made by you to his sick bed, all the organs little by little resumed their normal functions. At last one day we had the pleasant surprise and joy of seeing him arrive at your private seance, where, before those present, he himself made the declaration of his cure, due to your kind intervention. Thank you with all my heart.

Yours gratefully and sympathetically,

**A. KETTNER**

*26, Av. Borriglione, Nice, March, 1918*

. . . From day to day I have put off writing to you to thank you for the cure of my little Sylvain. I was in despair, the doctors telling me that there was nothing more to be done but to try the sanatorium of Arcachon or Juicoot, near Dunkirk. I was going to do so when Mme Collard advised me to go and see you. I hesitated, as I felt sceptical about it; but I now have the proof of your skill, for Sylvain has completely recovered. His appetite is good, his pimples and his glands are completely cured, and what is still more extraordinary, since the first time that we went to see you he has not coughed any more, not even once; the result is, that since the month of June he has gained 6 lbs.; I can never thank you enough and I proclaim to everyone the benefits we have received.

**MME POIRSON**

*Liverdun, August, 1920*

How can I prove to you my deep gratitude? You have saved my life. I had a displaced heart, which caused terrible attacks of suffocation, which went on continually; in fact, they were so violent that I had no rest day or night, in spite of daily injections of morphia. I could eat nothing without instant vomiting. I had violent pains in the head which became all swollen, and as a result I lost my sight. I was in a lamentable state and my whole organism suffered from it. I had abscesses on the liver. The doctor despaired of me after having tried everything; blood-letting, cupping and scarifying, poultices, ice, and every possible remedy, without any improvement. I had recourse to your kindness on the doctor's advice.

After your first visits the attacks became less violent and less frequent, and soon disappeared completely. The bad and troubled nights became calmer, until I was able to sleep the whole night through without waking. The pains I had in the liver ceased completely. I could begin to take my food again, digesting it perfectly well, and I again experienced the feeling of hunger which I had not known for months. My headaches ceased, and my eyes, which had troubled me so much, are quite cured, since I am now able to occupy myself with a little manual work.

At each visit that you paid me I felt that my organs were re-turning their natural functions. I was not the only one to observe it, for the doctor who came to see me every week found me much better, and finally there came recovery, since I could get up after having been in bed eleven months. I got up without any discom-fort, not even the least giddiness, and in a fortnight I could go out. It is indeed thanks to you that I am cured, for the doctor says that for all that the medicines did for me, I might just as well have taken none.

After having been given up by two doctors, who held out no hope of cure, here I am cured all the same, and it is indeed a com-plete cure, for now I can eat meat, and I eat a pound of bread every day. How can I thank you ? for I repeat, it is thanks to the suggestion you taught me that I owe my life.

**JEANNE GROSJEAN**  
Nancy, November, 1920

. . . Personally the science of autosuggestion -for I consider it as entirely a *science* - has rendered me great services; but truth compels me to declare that if I continue to interest myself particu-larly in it, it is because I find in it the means of exercising true charity.

In 1915, when I was present for the first time at M. Coué's lectures, I confess that I was entirely sceptical. Before facts a *hundred times* repeated in my presence, I was obliged to surrender to evi-dence, and recognize that autosuggestion always acted, though naturally in different degrees, on organic diseases. The only cases (and those were very rare) in which I have seen it fail are nervous cases, neurasthenia or imaginary illness.

There is no need to tell you again that M. Coué, like yourself, but even more strongly, insists on this point: 'that he never per-forms a miracle or cures anybody, but that he shows people how to cure themselves.' I confess that on this point I still remain a trifle incredulous, for if M. Coué does not actually cure people, he is a powerful aid to their recovery, in 'giving heart' to the sick, in teaching them never to despair, in uplifting them, in leading them . . . higher than themselves into moral spheres that the majority of humanity, plunged in materialism, has never reached.

The more I study autosuggestion the better I understand the divine law of confidence and love that Christ preached us: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour,' and by giving a little of one's heart and of one's moral force to help him to rise if he has fallen and to cure himself if he is ill. Here also, from my Christian point of view, is the application of autosuggestion which I consider as a beneficial and comforting science which helps us to understand that, as the children of God, we all have within us forces whose existence we did not suspect, which, properly directed, serve to elevate us morally and to heal us physically.

Those who do not know your science, or who only know it im-perfectly, should not judge it without having seen the results it gives and the good it does.

Believe me to be your faithful admirer,

**M. L. D--**  
Nancy, November, 1920

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Miracle Within*

*Reprinted from the 'Renaissance politique, littéraire et artistique,'  
of December 18, 1920*

### HOMAGE TO EMILE COUÉ

IN the course of the month of September 1920 I opened for the first time the book of Charles Baudouin, of Geneva, Professor at the Institute J. J. Rousseau in that town.

This work, published by the firm of Delachaux and Niestlé, 26, Rue Saint-Dominique, Paris, is called, *Suggestion et Autosuggestion*. The author has dedicated it '*To Emile Coué, the initiator and benefactor, with deep gratitude*'.

I read it and did not put down the book until I had reached the end.

The fact is that it contains the very simple exposition of a magnificently humanitarian work, founded on a theory which may appear childish, just because it is within the scope of everyone. And if everyone puts into practice, the greatest good will proceed from it.

After more than twenty years of indefatigable work, Emile Coué, who at the present time lives at Nancy, where he lately followed the work and experiments of Liébault, the father of the doctrine of suggestions, for more than twenty years, I say, Coué has been occupied exclusively with this question, but particularly in order to bring his fellow creatures to cultivate *autosuggestion*.

At the beginning of the century Coué had attained the object of his researches, and had disengaged the general and immense force of autosuggestion. After innumerable experiments on thousands of subjects, *he showed the action of the unconscious in organic cases*. This is new, and the great merit of this profoundly modest, learned man is to have found a remedy for terrible ills, reputed incurable or terribly painful, without any hope of relief.

As I cannot enter here into long scientific details, I will content myself by saying how the learned man of Nancy practises his method.

The chiselled epitome of a whole life of patient researches and of ceaseless observations is a brief formula which is to be repeated morning and evening.

It must be said in a low voice, with the eyes closed, in a position favourable to the relaxing of the muscular system; it may be in bed, or it may be in an easy chair, and in a tone of voice as if one were reciting a litany.

Here are the magic words: **'Every day, in every respect, I am getting better and better'**

They must be said twenty times following, with the help of a string with twenty knots in it, which serves as a rosary. This material detail has its importance: it ensures mechanical recitation, which is essential.

While articulating these words, *which are registered by the unconscious*, one must not think of anything particular, neither of one's illness nor of one's troubles, one must be passive, just with the desire that all may be for the best. The formula '*in every respect*' has a general effect.

**This desire must be expressed without passion, without will, with gentleness, but with absolute confidence.**

For Emile Coué, at the moment of autosuggestion, *does not call in the will in any way, on the contrary*; there must be no question of the will at that moment, but the *imagination*, the great motive force infinitely more active than that which is usually invoked, the imagination alone must be brought into play.

**'Have confidence in yourself'**, says this good counsellor, **'believe firmly that all will be well.'** And indeed all is well for those who have faith, fortified by perseverance.

As deeds talk louder than words, I will tell you what happened to myself before I had ever seen M. Coué.

I must go back then to the month of September, when I opened M. Charles Baudouin's volume. At the end of a substantial exposition, the author enumerates the cure of illnesses such as enteritis, eczema, **stammering**, dumbness, a sinus dating from twenty years back which necessitated eleven operations, metritis, salpingitis, fibrous tumours, varicose veins, etc., lastly, and above all, deep tubercular sores, and the last stages of phthisis (case of Mme D , of Troyes, aged 30 years, who has become a mother since her cure; case was followed up, but there was no relapse). All this is often testified to by doctors in attendance on the patients.

These examples impressed me profoundly; *there* was the miracle. It was not a question of nerves, but of ills which medicine attacks without success. This cure of tuberculosis was a revelation to me.

Having suffered for two years from acute neuritis in the face, I was in horrible pain. Four doctors, two of them specialists, had pronounced the sentence which would be enough, of itself alone, to increase the trouble by its fatal influence on the mind: 'Nothing to be done!' This 'nothing to be done' had been for me the worst of autosuggestions.

In possession of the formula: 'Every day, in every respect,' etc., I recited it with a faith which, although it had come suddenly, was none the less capable of removing mountains, and throwing down shawls and scarves, bareheaded, I went into the

garden in the rain and wind repeating gently *I am going to be cured*, I shall have no more neuritis, it is going away, it will not come back, etc. ..." The next day I was cured, and never any more since have I suffered from this abominable complaint, which did not allow me to take a step out of doors and made life unbearable. It was an immense joy. The incredulous will say: 'It was all nervous'. Obviously, and I give them this first point. But, delighted with the result, I tried the Coué Method for an oedema of the left ankle, resulting from an affection of the kidneys reputed incurable. In two days the oedema had disappeared. I then treated fatigue and mental depression, etc., and extraordinary improvement was produced, and I had but one idea: to go to Nancy to thank my benefactor.

I went there and found the excellent man, attractive by his good-ness and simplicity, who has become my friend.

It was indispensable to see him in his field of action. He invited me to a popular 'séance'. I heard a concert of gratitude. Lesions in the lungs, displaced organs, asthma, Pott's disease (!), paralysis, the whole deadly horde of diseases were being put to flight. I saw a paralytic, who sat contorted and twisted in his chair, get up and walk. M. Coué had spoken, he demanded confidence, great, immense confidence in oneself. He said: 'Learn to cure yourselves, you can do so; I have never cured anyone. The power is within you yourselves; call upon your spirit, make it act for your physical and mental good, and it will come, it will cure you, you will be strong and happy.' Having spoken, Coué approached the paralytic: 'You heard what I said, do you believe that you will walk?' 'Yes.' 'Very well then, get up!' The woman got up, she walked, and went round the garden. The miracle was accomplished.

A young girl with Pott's disease, whose vertebral column became straight again after three visits told me what an intense happiness it was to feel herself coming back to life after having thought herself a hopeless case.

Three women, cured of lesions in the lungs, expressed their delight at going back to work and to a normal life. Coué, in the midst of those people whom he loves, seemed to me a being apart, for this man ignores money, all his work is gratuitous, and his extra-ordinary disinterestedness forbids his taking a farthing for it. 'I owe you something,' I said to him; 'I simply owe you every-thing. . . .' 'No, only the pleasure I shall have from your continuing to keep well.'

An irresistible sympathy attracts one to this simple-minded philanthropist; arm in arm we walked round the kitchen garden which he cultivates himself, getting up early to do so. Practically a vegetarian, he considers with satisfaction the results of his work. And then the serious conversation goes on: 'In your *mind* you possess an *unlimited power*. It acts on matter if we know how to domesticate it. The imagination is like a horse without a bridle; if such a horse is pulling the carriage in which you are, he may do all sorts of foolish things and take you to your death. But harness him properly, drive him with a sure hand, and he will go wherever you like. Thus it is with the mind, the imagination. They must be directed for our own good. Autosuggestion, formulated with the lips, is an order which the unconscious receives, it carries it out unknown to ourselves and above all at night, so that the evening autosuggestion is the most important. It gives marvellous results.

When you feel a physical pain, add the formula, '*It is going away ...*' very quickly repeated, in a kind of droning voice, placing your hand on the part where you feel the pain, or on the forehead, if it is a mental distress.

For the method acts very efficaciously on the mind. After having called in the help of the soul for the body, one can ask it again for all the circumstances and difficulties of life.

There also I know from experience that events can be singularly modified by this process.

You know it today, and you will know it better still by reading M. Baudouin's book, and then his pamphlet: *Culture de la Force Morale*, and then, lastly, the little succinct treatise written by M. Coué himself: *Self Mastery*. All these works may be found at M. Coué's.

If, however, I have been able to inspire in you the desire of making this excellent pilgrimage yourself, you will go to Nancy to fetch the booklet. Like myself, you will love this unique man, unique by reason of his noble charity and of his love for his fellows, as Christ taught it.

Like myself also, you will be cured physically and mentally. Life will seem to you better and more beautiful. That surely is worth the trouble of trying for.

**M. BURNAT-PROVINS**

## CHAPTER VIII

### ***Some Notes on the Journey of M. Coué to Paris in October 1919***

THE desire that the teachings of M. Coué in Paris last October should not be lost to others, has urged me to write them down. Putting aside this time the numerous people, physically or mentally ill, who have seen their troubles lessen and disappear as the result of his beneficent treatment, let us begin by quoting just a few of his teachings.

*Question.*—Why is it that I do not obtain better results although I use your method and prayer?

*Answer.*—Because, probably, at the back of your mind there is an *unconscious doubt*, or because you make *efforts*. Now, remember that efforts are determined by the will; if you bring the will into play, you run a serious risk of bringing the imagination into play too, but in the contrary direction, which brings about just the reverse of what you desire.

*Question.*—What are we to do when something troubles us?

*Answer.*—When something happens that troubles you, *repeat* at once, 'No, that does not trouble me at all, not in the least, the fact is rather agreeable than otherwise'. In short, the idea is to work ourselves up in a good sense instead of in a bad.

*Question.*—Are the preliminary experiments indispensable they are unacceptable to the pride of the subject?

*Answer.*—No, they are not indispensable, but they are of great utility; for although they may seem childish to certain people, they are on the contrary extremely serious; they do indeed prove three things:

1. That every idea that we have in our minds becomes *true* for us, and has a tendency to transform itself into action.

2. That when there is a conflict between the imagination and the will, it is always the imagination which wins; and in this case we do exactly the *contrary* of what we wish to do.

3. That it is easy for us to put into our minds, *without any effort*, the idea that we wish to have, since we have been able without effort to think in succession: 'I cannot', and then 'I can'.

The preliminary experiments should not be repeated at home; alone, one is often unable to put oneself in the right physical and mental conditions, there is a risk of failure, and in this case one's self-confidence is shaken.

*Question.*—When one is in pain, one cannot help thinking of one's trouble.

*Answer.*—Do not be afraid to think of it; on the contrary, do think of it, but say to it, 'I am not *afraid of you*'.

If you go anywhere and a dog rushes at you barking, look it firmly in the eyes and it will not bite you; but if you fear it, if you turn back, he will soon have his teeth in your legs.

*Question.*—And if one does a retreat ?

*Answer.*—Go backwards.

*Question.*—How can we realize what we desire ?

*Answer.*—By often repeating what you desire: 'I am gaining assurance', and you will do so; 'My memory is improving', and it really does so; 'I am becoming absolutely master of myself', and you find that you are becoming so. If you say the contrary, it is the contrary which will come about. What you say persistently and very quickly *comes to pass* (within the domain of the reasonable, of course).

Some testimonies:—

A young lady to another lady: 'How simple it is! There is nothing to add to it: he seems inspired. Do you not think that there are beings who radiate influence ?'

An eminent Parisian doctor to numerous doctors surrounding him: I have entirely come over to the ideas of M. Coué.'

A Polytechnician, a severe critic, thus defines M. Coué: 'He is a Power.'

Yes, he is a Power of Goodness. Without mercy for the bad autosuggestions of the 'defeatist' type, but indefatigably pains-taking, active and smiling, to help everyone to develop their person-ality, and to teach them to cure themselves, which is the characteristic of his beneficent method.

How could one fail to desire from the depths of one's heart that all might understand and seize the 'good news' that M. Coué brings ? 'It is the awakening, possible for everyone, of the personal power which he has *received* of being happy and well.'

It is, *if one consents*, the full development of this power which can transform one's life.

Then, and is it not quite rightly so ? it is the strict duty (and at the same time the happiness) of those who have been initiated to spread by every possible means the knowledge of this wonderful method, the happy results of which have been recognized and verified by *thousands* of persons, to make it known to those who suffer, who are sad, or who are overburdened—to all! and to help them to put it into practice.

Then, thinking of France, triumphant but bruised, of her de-fenders, victorious but mutilated, of all the physical and moral suffering entailed by the war, may those who have the power (the greatest power ever given to man is the power of doing good [Socrates]) see that the inexhaustible reservoir of physical and moral forces that the 'Method' puts within our reach may soon become the patrimony of all the nation and through it of humanity

**MME EMILE LEON**

*Collaborator, in Paris, of M. Entile Coué*

## CHAPTER IX

### **'Everything for Everyone!'**

**By MME EMILE LEON, Disciple of M. COUÉ**

WHEN one has been able to take advantage of a great benefit, when this benefit is within reach of everyone, although almost everyone is ignorant of it, is it not an urgent and absolute duty (for those who are initiated) to make it known to those around them? For all can make their own the amazing results of the 'Emile Coué Method'.

To drive away pain is much, but how much more is it to lead into the possession of a new life *all* those who suffer?

Last April we had the visit of M. Emile Coué to Paris, and here are some of his teachings:—

*Question.*—Question of a theist: I think it is unworthy of the Eternal to make our obedience to His will depend on what M. Coué calls a trick or mechanical process: conscious autosuggestion.

**M. Coué.**—Whether we wish it or not, our imagination always overrules our will, when they are in conflict. We can lead it into the right path indicated by our reason by *consciously* employing the mechanical process that we employ *unconsciously* often to lead into the wrong.

And the thoughtful questioner says to herself: 'Yes, it is true, in this elevated sphere of thought, conscious autosuggestion has the power to free us from obstacles *created by ourselves*, which might as it were put a veil between us and God, just as a piece of stuff, hanging in a window can prevent the sun from coming into a room.'

*Question.*—How ought one to set about bringing those dear to one who may be suffering, to make themselves good autosuggestions which would set them free?

*Answer.*—Do not insist or lecture them about it. Just remind them simply that I advise them to make an autosuggestion with the *conviction* that they will obtain the result they want.

*Question.*—How is one to explain to oneself and to explain to others that the repetition of the same words: **I am going to sleep. It is going away,** etc., has the power to produce the effect, and above all so powerful an effect that it is a certain one

*Answer.*—The repetition of the same words forces one to think them, and when we think them they become true for us and trans-form themselves into reality.

*Question.*—How is one to keep inwardly the mastery of one-self?

*Answer.*—To be master of oneself it is enough to think that one is so, and in order to think it, one should often repeat it without making any effort.

*Question.*—And outwardly, how is one to keep one's liberty?

*Answer.*—Self mastery applies just as much physically as mentally.

*Question (affirmation).*—It is impossible to escape trouble or sadness, if we do not do as we should; it would not be just, and autosuggestion cannot, and ought not, to prevent *just suffering*.

*M. Coué* (very seriously and affirmatively).—Certainly and assuredly it ought not to be so, but it is so often—at any rate for a time.

*Question.*—Why did that patient, who has been entirely cured, continually have those terrible attacks ?

*Answer.*—He expected his attacks, he feared them—and so he *provoked* them; if this gentleman gets well into his mind the idea that he will have no more attacks, he will not have any; if he thinks that he will have them, he will indeed do so.

*Question.*—In what does your method differ from others ?

***Answer.*—The difference in my method is, that it is not the *will* which rules us, but the *imagination*; that is the basis, the fundamental basis.**

*Question.*—Will you give me a summary of your 'Method' for Mme R., who is doing an important work?

*M. E. Coué.*—Here is the summary of the 'Method' in a few words: Contrary to what is taught, it is not our will which makes us act, but our imagination (the unconscious). If we often do act as we *will*, it is because at the same time we think that we can. If it is not so, we do exactly the reverse of what we wish. Ex.: The more a person with insomnia *determines* to sleep, the more excited she becomes; the more we *try* to remember a name which we think we have forgotten, the more it escapes us (it comes back only if, in your mind, you replace the idea I have forgotten' by the idea 'it will come back'); the more we strive to prevent ourselves from laughing, the more our laughter bursts out; the more we *determine* to avoid an obstacle, when learning to bicycle, the more we rush upon it.

**We must then apply ourselves to directing our *imagination*, which now directs us; in this way we easily arrive at becoming masters of ourselves physically and morally.**

**How are we to arrive at this result? By the practice of conscious *autosuggestion*. Conscious autosuggestion is based on this principle. Every idea that we have in our mind becomes true for us and tends to realize itself.**

Thus, if we *desire* something, we can obtain it at the end of a more or less long time, if we often repeat that this thing is going to come, or to disappear, according to whether it is a good quality or a fault, either physical or mental.

Everything is included by employing night and morning the general formula: 'Every day, *in every respect*, I am getting better and better.'

*Question.*—For those who are sad—who are in distress?

*Answer.*—As long as you think, 'I am sad', you *cannot* be cheerful, and in order to think something, it is enough to say without effort, 'I do think this thing'. As to the distress, it will disappear, however violent it may be, *that I can* affirm.

A man arrives bent, dragging himself painfully along, leaning on two sticks; he has on his face an expression of dull depression. As the hall is filling up, M. E. Coué enters. After having questioned this man, he says to him something like this: 'So you have had rheumatism for thirty-two years and you cannot walk. Don't be afraid, it's not going to last as long as that again.'

Then, after the preliminary experiments: 'Shut your eyes, and repeat very quickly indeed, moving your lips, the words, "It is going, it is going" [at the same time M. Coué passes his hand over the legs of the patient for twenty to twenty-five seconds]. Now you are no longer in pain, get up and walk [the patient walks]. Quickly! quicker! more quickly still! And since you can walk so well, you are going to run. Run, Monsieur, run!' The patient runs (joyously, almost as if he had recovered his youth), to his great astonishment, and also to that of the numerous persons present at the séance of April 27, 1920. (Clinic of Dr. Bérillon.)

A lady declares: 'My husband suffered from attacks of asthma for many years, he had such difficulty in breathing that we feared a fatal issue; his medical adviser, Dr. X -----, had given him up. He was almost radically cured of his attacks, after only one visit from M. Coué.'

A young woman comes to thank M. Coué with lively gratitude. Her doctor, Dr. Vachet, who was with her in the room, says that the cerebral anaemia from which she had suffered for a long while, which he had not succeeded in checking by the usual means, had disappeared as if by magic through the use of conscious auto-suggestion.

Another person, who had had a fractured leg and could not walk without pain and limping, could at once walk normally. No more pain, no more limping.

In the hall, which thrills with interest, joyful testimonies break out from numerous persons who have been relieved or cured.

A doctor: 'Autosuggestion is the weapon of healing.' As to this philosopher who writes (he mentions his name), he relies on the *genius* of Coué.

A gentleman, a former magistrate, whom a lady had asked to express his appreciation, exclaims in a moved tone: 'I cannot put my appreciation into words—I think it is admirable.' A woman of the world, excited by the disappearance of her sufferings: 'Oh, M. Coué one could kneel to you! You are the merciful God!' Another lady, very much impressed herself, rectifies: 'No, His messenger.'

An aged lady: 'It is delightful, when one is aged and fragile, to replace a feeling of general ill health by that of refreshment and general well-being, and M. E. Coué's method can, I affirm, for I have proved it, produce this happy result, which is all the more complete and lasting since it relies on the all-powerful force which is within us.'

A warmly sympathetic voice calls him the modest name he prefers to that of 'Master': Professor Coué.

A young woman, who has been entirely won over: 'M. Coué goes straight to his aim, attains it with sureness, and, in setting free his patient, carries generosity and knowledge to its highest point, since he leaves to the patient himself the merit of his liberation and the use of a marvellous power.'

A literary man, whom a lady asks to write a little '*chef-d'oeuvre*' on the beneficent 'Method', refuses absolutely, emphasizing the simple words which, used according to the Method, help to make all suffering disappear: 'IT IS GOING AWAY—that is the *chef-d'oeuvre*', he affirms.

And the thousands of sick folks who have been relieved or cured will not contradict him.

A lady who has suffered much declares: 'In re-reading the "Method" I find it more and more superior to the developments it has inspired; there is really nothing to take away nor add to this "Method"—all that is left is to spread it. I shall do so in every possible way.'

And now in conclusion I will say: Although M. Coué's modesty makes him reply to everyone:

'I have no magnetic fluid—  
I have no influence—  
I have never cured anybody—  
My disciples obtain the same results as myself—'

I can say in all sincerity that they tend to do so, instructed as they are in the *valuable 'Method'*, and when, in some far distant future, the thrilling voice of its author called to a higher sphere can no longer teach it here below, the 'Method', his work, will help in aiding, comforting, and curing thousands and thousands of human beings. It must be *immortal*, and communicated to the entire world by generous France—for the man of letters was right, and knew how to illuminate in a word this true, simple, and marvellous help in conquering pain: 'IT IS GOING AWAY!—*There is the chef-d'oeuvre!*'

**B. K. (EMILE LEON)**  
*Paris, June 6, 1920*

## PART TWO

# THE PRACTICE OF AUTOSUGGESTION

BY THE METHOD OF EMILE COUÉ

BY C. HARRY BROOKS

*For what man knoweth the things of a man  
save the spirit of the man which is in him ?*

I CORINTHIANS ii. II

*This book was first published in March, 1922, about eight months before the English edition of Coué's own work, and it had an even greater success. It was the outcome of a visit Mr Brooks paid, with the express purpose of studying and mastering Emile Coué's method, to the clinic at Nancy in the summer of 1921. He differs from Coué only in a minor matter of terminology, and in his interest in the method's moral and religious affinities, which he developed in **Christianity and Autosuggestion**, in collaboration with his friend the Rev. Ernest Charles.*

# I. COUÉ'S NANCY PRACTICE

## CHAPTER X

### *The Clinic of Emile Coué*

THE clinic of Emile Coué, where Induced Autosuggestion<sup>1</sup> was applied to the treatment of disease, was situated in a pleasant garden attached to his house at the quiet end of the rue Jeanne d'Arc in Nancy. It was there that I visited him in the early summer of 1921, and had the pleasure for the first time of witnessing one of his consultations.

We entered the garden from his house a little before nine o'clock. In one corner was a brick building of two storeys, with its windows thrown wide to let in the air and sunshine—this was the clinic; a few yards away was a smaller one-storeyed construction which served as a waiting-room. Under the plum and cherry trees, now laden with fruit, little groups of patients were sitting on the garden seats, chatting amicably together and enjoying the morning sunshine, while others wandered in twos and threes among the flowers and strawberry beds. The room reserved for the treatments was already crowded, but in spite of that eager newcomers constantly tried to gain entrance. The window-sills on the ground floor were beset, and a dense knot had formed in the doorway. Inside, the patients had first occupied the seats which surrounded the walls, and then covered the available floor-space, sitting on camp-stools and folding-chairs. Coué with some difficulty found me a seat, and the treatment immediately began.

The first patient he addressed was a frail, middle-aged man who, accompanied by his daughter, had just arrived from Paris to consult him. The man was a bad case of nervous trouble. He walked with difficulty, and his head, arms and legs were afflicted with a continual tremor. He explained that if he encountered a stranger when walking in the street the idea that the latter would notice his infirmity completely paralysed him, and he had to cling to whatever support was at hand to save himself from falling. At Coué's invitation he rose from his seat and took a few steps across the floor. He walked slowly, leaning on a stick; his knees were half bent and his feet dragged heavily along the ground.

**Coué encouraged him with the promise of improvement. 'You have been sowing bad seed in your Unconscious; now you will sow good seed. The power by which you have produced these ill effects will in future produce equally good ones.'**

The next patient was an excitable, overworked woman of the artisan class. When Coué inquired the nature of her trouble, she broke into a flood of complaint, describing each symptom with a voluble minuteness. 'Madame,' he interrupted, 'you think too much about your ailments, and in thinking of them you create fresh ones.'

Next came a girl with headaches, a youth with inflamed eyes, and a farm-labourer incapacitated by varicose veins. In each case Coué stated that autosuggestion should bring complete relief. Then it was the turn of a business man who complained of nervousness, lack of self-confidence, and haunting fears.

**'When you know the method,' said Coué 'you will not allow yourself to harbour such ideas.'**

**I work terribly hard to get rid of them,' the patient answered.**

**'You fatigue yourself. The greater the efforts you make, the more the ideas return. You will change all that easily, simply, and above all, without effort.'**

**I want to,' the man interjected.**

**'That's just where you're wrong,' Coué told him. 'If you say, "I want to do something", your imagination replies "Oh, but you can't". You must say "I am going to do it", and if it is in the region of the possible you will succeed.'**

A little farther on was another neurasthenic—a girl. This was her third visit to the clinic, and for ten days she had been practising the method at home. With a happy smile, and a little pardonable self-importance, she declared that she already felt a considerable improvement. She had more energy, was beginning to enjoy life, ate heartily and slept more soundly. Her sincerity and naive delight helped to strengthen the faith of her fellow-patients. They looked on her as a living proof of the healing which should come to themselves.

Coué continued his questions. Those who were unable, whether through rheumatism or some paralytic affection, to make use of a limb were called on, as a criterion of future progress, to put out their maximum efforts.

In addition to the visitor from Paris there were present a man and a woman who could not walk without support, and a burly peasant, formerly a blacksmith, who for nearly ten years had not succeeded in lifting his right arm above the level of his shoulder. In each case Coué predicted a complete cure.

In addition to the visitor from Paris there were present a man and a woman who could not walk without support, and a burly peasant, formerly a blacksmith, who for nearly ten years had not succeeded in lifting his right arm above the level of his shoulder. In each case Coué predicted a complete cure.

<sup>1</sup> The term *conscious autosuggestion* used by M. Coué is apt to mislead. Autosuggestion is a faculty not of the conscious mind, but of the Un-conscious. The phrase *induced autosuggestion* is used here to indicate autosuggestion initiated by the conscious choice of the subject.

During this preliminary stage of the treatment, the words he spoke were not in the nature of suggestions. They were sober expressions of opinion, based on years of experience. Not once did he reject the possibility of cure, though with several patients suffering from organic disease in an advanced stage, he admitted its unlikelihood. To these he promised however a cessation of pain, an improvement of morale and at least a retardment of the progress of the disease. 'Meanwhile,' he added, 'the limits of the power of auto-suggestion are not yet known; final recovery is possible.' In all cases of functional and nervous disorders, as well as the less serious ones of an organic nature, he stated that autosuggestion, conscientiously applied, was capable of removing the trouble completely.

It took Coué nearly forty minutes to complete his interrogation. Other patients bore witness to the benefits the treatment had already conferred on them. A woman with a painful swelling in her breast, which a doctor had diagnosed (in Coue's opinion wrongly) as of a cancerous nature, had found complete relief after less than three weeks' treatment. Another woman had enriched her impoverished blood, and increased her weight by over nine pounds. A man had been cured of a varicose ulcer, another in a single sitting had rid himself of a lifelong habit of stammering. Only one of the former patients failed to report an improvement. 'Monsieur,' said Coué, **•you have been making efforts. You must put your trust in the imagination, not in the will. Think you are better and you will become so.'**

Coué now proceeded to outline the theory given in the pages which follow. It is sufficient here to state his main conclusions, which were these:

- (1) Every idea which exclusively occupies the mind is transformed into an actual physical or mental state.
- (2) The efforts we make to conquer an idea by exerting the will only serve to make that idea more powerful.

To demonstrate these truths he requested one of his patients, a young anaemic-looking woman, to carry out a small experiment. She extended her arms in front of her, and clasped the hands firmly together with the fingers interlaced, increasing the force of her grip until a slight tremor set in. 'Look at your hands,' said Coué, 'and think you would like to open them but you cannot. Now try to pull them apart. Pull hard. **You find that the more you try the more tightly they become clasped together.'**

The girl made little convulsive movements of her wrists, really doing her best by physical force to separate her hands, but the harder she tried the more her grip increased in strength, until the knuckles turned white with the pressure. Her hands seemed locked together by a force outside her own control.

'Now think,' said Coué, ' "I can open my hands".'

Slowly her grasp relaxed and, in response to a little pull, the cramped fingers came apart. She smiled shyly at the attention she had attracted, and sat down.

Coué pointed out that the two main points of his theory were thus demonstrated simultaneously: when the patient's mind was filled with the thought 'I cannot', she could not in very fact unclasp her hands. Further, the efforts she made to wrench them apart by exerting her will only fixed them more firmly together.

Each patient was now called on in turn to perform the same experiment. The more imaginative among them - notably the women - were at once successful. One old lady was so absorbed in the thought 'I cannot' as no

Coué reached for his hand and shook it.

'My friend you are cured.'

'C'est merveilleux,' the man answered. 'I believe I am.'

'Prove it,' said Coué. 'Hit me on the shoulder.'

The patient laughed, and dealt him a gentle rap.

'Harder,' Coué encouraged him. 'Hit me harder - as hard as you can.'

His arm began to rise and fall in regular blows, increasing in force until Coué was compelled to call on him to stop.

'Voilà, mon ami, you can go back to your anvil.'

The man resumed his seat, still hardly able to comprehend what had occurred. Now and then he lifted his arm as if to reassure himself, whispering to himself in an awed voice, 'I can, I can'.

A little further on was seated a woman who had complained of violent neuralgia. Under the influence of the repeated phrase 'ça passe' (it's going) the pain was dispelled in less than thirty seconds. Then it was the turn of the visitor from Paris. What he had seen had inspired him with confidence; he was sitting more erect, there was a little patch of colour in his cheeks, and his trembling seemed less violent.

He performed the experiment with immediate success.

'Now,' said Coué, 'you are cultivated ground. I can throw out the seed in handfuls.'

He caused the sufferer first to stand erect with his back and knees straightened. Then he asked him, constantly thinking 'I can', to place his entire weight on each foot in turn, slowly performing the exercise known as 'marking time'. A space was then cleared of chairs, and having discarded his stick, the man was made to walk to and fro. When his gait became slovenly Coué stopped him, pointed out his fault, and, renewing the thought 'I can', caused him to correct it.

Progressive improvement kindled the man's imagination. He took himself in his own hands. His bearing became more and more confident; he walked more easily, more quickly. His little daughter, all smiles and happy self-forgetfulness, stood beside him uttering expressions of delight, admiration and encouragement. The whole company laughed and clapped their hands.

'After the sitting,' said Coué, 'you shall come for a run in my garden.'

Thus Coué continued his round of the clinic. Each patient suffering from pain was given complete or partial relief; those with useless limbs had a varying measure of use restored to them. Coué's manner was always quietly inspiring. There was no formality, no attitude of the superior person; he treated everyone, whether rich or poor, with the same friendly solicitude. But within these limits he varied his tone to suit the temperament of the patient. Sometimes he was firm, sometimes gently bantering. He seized every opportunity for a little humorous by-play. One might almost say that he tactfully teased some of his patients, giving them an idea that their ailment was absurd, and a little unworthy; that to be ill was a quaint but reprehensible weakness, which they should quickly get rid of. Indeed, this denial of the dignity of

disease is one of the characteristics of the place. No homage is paid to it as a Dread Monarch. It is gently ridiculed, its terrors are made to appear second-rate, and its victims end by laughing at it.

Coué now passed on to the formulation of specific suggestions. The patients closed their eyes, and he proceeded in a low, monotonous voice, to evoke before their minds the states of health, mental and physical, they were seeking. As they listened to him their alertness ebbed away, they were lulled into a drowsy state, peopled only by the vivid images he called up before the eyes of the mind. The faint rustle of the trees, the songs of the birds, the low voices of those waiting in the garden, merged into a pleasant back-ground, on which his words stood out powerfully.

**This is what he said:**

'Say to yourself that all the words I am about to utter will be fixed, imprinted and engraven in your minds; that they will remain fixed, imprinted and engraven there, so that without your will and knowledge, without your being in any way aware of what is taking place, you yourself and your whole organism will obey them. I tell you first that every day, three times a day, morning, noon and evening, at mealtimes, you will be hungry; that is to say you will feel that pleasant sensation which makes us think and say: "How I should like something to eat!" You will then eat with excellent appetite, enjoying your food, but you will never eat too much. You will eat the right amount, neither too much nor too little, and you will know intuitively when you have had sufficient. You will masticate your food thoroughly, transforming it into a smooth paste before swallowing it. In these conditions you will digest it well, and so feel no discomfort of any kind either in the stomach or the intestines. Assimilation will be perfectly performed, and your organism will make the best possible use of the food to create blood, muscle, strength, energy, in a word - Life.

'Since you have digested your food properly, the excretory functions will be normally performed. This will take place every morning immediately on rising, and without your having recourse to any laxative medicine or artificial means of any kind.

'Every night you will fall asleep at the hour you wish, and will continue to sleep until the hour at which you desire to wake next morning. Your sleep will be calm, peaceful and profound, untroubled by bad dreams or undesirable states of body. You may dream, but your dreams will be pleasant ones. On waking you will feel well, bright, alert, eager for the day's tasks.

'If in the past you have been subject to depression, gloomy and melancholy forebodings, you will henceforward be free from such troubles. Instead of being moody, anxious and depressed you will be cheerful and happy. You will be happy even if you have no particular reason for being so, just as in the past you were, without good reason, unhappy. I tell you even that if you have serious cause to be worried or depressed, you will not be so.

'If you have been impatient or ill-tempered, you will no longer be anything of the kind; on the contrary, you will always be patient and self-controlled. The happenings which used to irritate you will leave you entirely calm and unmoved.

'If you have sometimes been haunted by evil and unwholesome ideas, by fears or phobias, these ideas will gradually cease to occupy your mind. They will melt away like a cloud. As a dream vanishes when we wake, so will these vain images disappear.

'I add that all your organs do their work perfectly. Your heart beats normally and the circulation of the blood takes place as it should. The lungs do their work well. The stomach, the intestines, the liver, the biliary duct, the kidneys and the bladder, all carry out their functions correctly. If at present any of the organs named is out of order, the disturbance will grow less day by day, so that within a short space of time it will have entirely disappeared, and the organ will have resumed its normal function.

'Further, if in any organ there is a structural lesion, it will from this day be gradually repaired, and in a short period will be completely restored. This will be so even if you are unaware that the trouble exists.

I must also add - and it is extremely important—that if in the past you have lacked confidence in yourself, this self-distrust will gradually disappear. You will have confidence in yourself; I repeat, **you will have confidence**. Your confidence will be based on the knowledge of the immense power which is within you, by which you can accomplish any task of which your reason approves. With this confidence you will be able to do anything you wish to do, provided it is reasonable, and anything it is your duty to do.

'When you have any task to perform you will always think that it is easy. Such words as "difficult", "impossible", "I cannot" will disappear from your vocabulary. Their place will be taken by this phrase: **"It is easy and I can"**. So, considering your work easy, even if it is difficult to others, it will become easy to you. You will do it easily, without effort and without fatigue.'

These general suggestions were succeeded by particular suggestions referring to the special ailments from which Coué's patients were suffering. Taking each case in turn, he allowed his hand to rest lightly on the heads of the sufferers, while picturing to their minds the health and vigour with which they would soon be endowed. Thus to a woman with an ulcerated leg he spoke as follows: 'Henceforth your organism will do all that is necessary to restore your leg to perfect health. It will rapidly heal; the tissues will regain their tone; the skin will be soft and healthy. In a short space of time your leg will be vigorous and strong and will in future always remain so.' Each special complaint was thus treated with a few appropriate phrases. When he had finished, and the patients were called on to open their eyes, a faint sigh went round the room, as if they were awakening reluctantly from a delicious dream.

**Coué now explained to his patients that he possessed no healing powers, and had never healed a person in his life. They carried in themselves the instrument of their own well-being.** The results they had seen were due to the realisation of each patient's own thought. He had been merely an agent calling the ideas of health into their minds. Henceforth they could, and must, be the pilots of their own destiny. He then requested them to repeat, under conditions which will be defined later, the phrase with which his name is associated: **'Day by day, in every way, I'm getting better and better.'**

The sitting was at an end. The patients rose and crowded round Coué, asking questions, thanking him, shaking him by the hand. Some declared they were already cured, some that they were much better, others that they were confident of cure in the future. It was as if a burden of depression had fallen from their minds. Those who had entered with minds crushed and oppressed went out with hope and optimism shining in their faces.

But Coué waved aside these too insistent admirers, and, beckoning to the three patients who could not walk, led them to a corner of the garden where there was a stretch of gravel path running beneath the boughs of fruit trees. Once more impressing on their minds the thought of strength and power, he induced each one to walk without support down this path. He now invited them to run. They hesitated, but he insisted, telling them that they could run, that they ought to run, that they had but to believe in their own power and their thought would be manifested in action.

They started rather uncertainly, but Coué followed them with persistent encouragements. They began to raise their heads, to lift their feet from the ground and run with greater freedom and confidence. Turning at the end of the path they came back at a fair pace. Their movements were not elegant, but people on the farther side of fifty are rarely elegant runners. It was a surprising sight to see these three sufferers who had hobbled to the clinic on sticks now covering the ground at a full five miles an hour, and laughing heartily at themselves as they ran. The crowd of patients who had collected broke into a spontaneous cheer, and Coué, slipping modestly away, returned to the fresh company of sufferers who awaited him within.

The translation given here of Coué's formula differs slightly from that popularised in England during his visit of November, 1921. The above, however, is the English version which he considers most suitable.

## CHAPTER XI

### *A Few of Coué's Cures*

To give the reader a better idea of the results which induced Autosuggestion can yield, I shall here describe a few further cases of which I was myself in some part a witness, and thereafter let some of Coué's patients tell for themselves of the benefits they have derived from its application.

At one of the morning consultations which I subsequently attended was a woman who had suffered for five years with dyspepsia. The trouble had recently become so acute that even the milk diet to which she was now reduced caused her extreme discomfort. Consequently she had become extremely thin and anaemic, was listless, easily tired, and suffered from depression. Early in the proceedings the accounts given by several patients of the relief they had obtained seemed to appeal to her imagination. She followed Coué's remarks with keen interest, answered his questions vivaciously, and laughed very heartily at the amusing incidents with which the proceedings were interspersed. About five o'clock on the same afternoon I happened to be sitting with Coué when this woman asked to see him. Beaming with satisfaction, she was shown into the room. She reported that on leaving the clinic she had gone to a restaurant in the town and ordered a table d'hôte luncheon. Conscientiously she had partaken of every course from the hors d'oeuvres to the café noir. The meal had been concluded at 1.30, and she had so far experienced no trace of discomfort. A few days later this woman returned to the clinic to report that the dyspepsia had shown no signs of reappearing; that her health and spirits were improving, and that she looked upon herself as cured.

On another occasion one of the patients complained of asthma. The paroxysms destroyed his sleep at night and prevented him from performing any task which entailed exertion. Walking upstairs was a slow process attended by considerable distress. The experiment with the hands was so successfully performed that Coué assured him of immediate relief.

'Before you go,' he said, 'you will run up and down those stairs without suffering any inconvenience.'

At the close of the consultation, under the influence of the suggestion 'I can', the patient did this without difficulty. That night the trouble recurred in a mild form, but he continued to attend the clinic and to practise the exercises at home, and within a fortnight the asthma had finally left him.

Among other patients with whom I conversed was a young man suffering from curvature of the spine. He had been attending the clinic for four months and practising the method at home. His doctor assured him that the spine was gradually resuming its normal position. A girl of twenty-two had suffered from childhood with epileptic fits, recurring at intervals of a few weeks. Since her first visit to the clinic six months previously the fits had ceased.

But the soundest testimony to the power of Induced Autosuggestion is that borne by the patients themselves. Here are a few cases personally reported to me either by letter or in conversation:

A man of sixty-three had suffered for more than thirty years from asthma and all the complications attendant upon it. He would spend three-quarters of the night sitting up in bed, inhaling the fumes of anti-asthma powders. The attacks occurred almost daily, especially when the weather was cold and damp; he was unable to take any exercise, and found it impossible even to walk *down* hill. After regular attendance at the clinic and practising the method at home, he experienced so great an improvement that he 'put the powders away in a drawer' and could mount the stairs to the first floor without the slightest difficulty or discomfort.

For fourteen years a woman had suffered from dipsomania. She had tried many forms of treatment but without success. She became so discouraged that she attempted unsuccessfully to commit suicide, and when, shortly afterwards, a friend recommended her to pay a visit to Coué, she agreed on the express understanding that unless she derived benefit from his treatment she would finally put an end to a life which had become an intolerable burden. After a few visits accompanied by home treatment, she was astonished to find that the craving had left her. She began to enjoy calm and peaceful nights; her excessive excitability gave way to a tranquil frame of mind; in fact she became literally a changed woman.

A woman, who had suffered for eight years from prolapse of the uterus, visited Coué and continued to apply his method after her return home. Five months after her first visit, her doctor confirmed that she was completely cured.

Nervous disorders naturally figure widely among the cures effected by Coué. One such sufferer reported as follows: 'I used to feel as though I had a band of iron across my forehead which seemed to be red-hot; added to this, I had heartburn and bad nights with fearful dreams; further, I was subject to severe nervous attacks which went on for months. I felt as though pegs were being driven into the sides of my neck, and when I felt I could not endure these agonies any longer, a feeling would come as if my brain were being smothered in a blanket. All these pains came and went. I had sometimes one, sometimes others. There were occasions when I wanted to die—my sufferings were so acute, and I had to struggle against the idea with great firmness. . . . At last, having spent five weeks at Nancy attending your kindly sittings, I have profited so well as to be able to return home in a state of normal health.'

It may be objected that these cures are of a temporary nature only. Here, however, is an extract from a letter to Coué from a man who cautiously postponed judgment until he was able to satisfy himself on this very point: 'My wife and I have waited nearly a year to thank you for the marvellous cure which your method has accomplished. The very violent attacks of asthma from which my wife suffered have completely disappeared since the visit you paid us last spring. The first few weeks my wife experienced temporary oppression and even the beginnings of an attack, which, however, she was able to ward off within a few minutes by practising autosuggestion. In spite of her great desire to thank you sooner, my wife wished to add more weight to her testimony by waiting for nearly a year. But the bad time for asthma has not brought the slightest hint of the terrible attacks from which you have saved her.'

A man came to Coué suffering from local tuberculosis. He had already had four operations on his left leg and several doctors whom he consulted advised the necessity for a fifth. The leg was to be opened from the knee to the ankle, and if this treatment failed there was no alternative to amputation. After only three visits to Coué's clinic accompanied by the practice of his method at home, the patient told him that he believed he was completely cured. A further communication from the patient some months later confirmed that the doctors agreed that there was no longer any need for an operation as the tuberculous condition seemed to have 'passed of itself'.

Here is an extract from a letter to Coué from an English patient. It speaks for itself:

I cannot leave France without letting you know how grateful I feel for the immense service you have rendered me and mine. I only wish I had met you years ago. Practically throughout my career my curse has been a lack of continuous self-control.

I have been accused of being almost brilliant at times, only to be followed by periodic relapses into a condition of semi-imbecility and self-indulgence.

I have done my best to ruin a magnificent constitution, and have wasted the abilities bestowed upon me. In a few short days you have made me—and I feel permanently—master of myself. How can I thank you sufficiently ?

The rapidity of my complete cure may have been due to what at the time I regarded as an unfortunate accident. Slipping on the snow-covered steps of the train when alighting, I sprained my right knee badly. At the breakfast table, before paying you my first visit, a fellow-guest said to me: "Tell Monsieur Coué about it. He will put it all right."

I laughed and said "Umph!" to myself, and more for the fun of the thing than anything else did tell you. I remember you remarking "That's nothing", and passing on to the more serious part of our conversation, preliminary to commencing your lecture to the assembled patients.

I became more than interested, and when at the conclusion you suddenly turned round and asked me, "How's your knee?" (not having alluded to knees in particular), and I discovered there *wasn't* a knee, I laughed again, as did those who saw me hobble into your room; but I laughed this time from a sense of bewildered surprise and dawning belief. This belief you very soon firmly implanted in me.'

**G. H. (London)**

Finally, here is an extract from a letter written in 1957 by a woman of eighty-five to the author of this book:

'Words simply fail me when I try to express my gratitude to you for the knowledge gained through the reading and putting into practice all the information your book contains.

Although I did not even want to get well, I felt it was due to my son whom I love, to do as he asked me.

It came very, very slowly, just a few minutes a week at first and then I woke one morning *transformed*. I can use no other word.

I am now living in my son's beautiful home, all the household are thinking on the same lines, and each at different stages. It is like Paradise to me after all those dark years.'

**M. H. (Walton-on-Thames)**

## CHAPTER XII

### *The Children's Clinic*

IN different parts of France a little band of workers, recruited almost exclusively from the ranks of former patients, has propagated the ideas of Emile Coué with a success which almost rivals that of their master. Among these helpers none was more devoted or more eminently successful than Mlle Kauffmant. She it was who, at the time of my visit, was managing the children's department of the Nancy clinic.<sup>1</sup>

While Coué was holding his consultations on the ground floor, young mothers in twos and threes, with their babies in their arms, could be seen ascending to the upper storey, where a little drama was performed of a very different nature from that going on below.

In a large room, decorated with bright pictures and equipped with toys, a number of silent young women were seated in a wide circle. Their sick children lay in their arms or played at their feet. Here was a child whose life was choked at the source by hereditary disease - a small bundle of skin and bone with limbs like bamboo canes. Another lay motionless with closed eyes and a deathly face, as if pining to return to the world it came from. A little cripple dragged behind it a deformed leg as it tried to crawl, and nearby a child of five was beating the air with its thin arms in an exhausting nervous storm. Older children were also present, suffering from eye and ear trouble, epilepsy, rickets, any one of the ailments, grave or slight, to which growing life is subjected.

In the centre of this circle sat a young woman with dark hair and a kindly keen face. On her lap was a little boy of four years with a club foot. As she gently caressed the foot, from which the clumsy boot had been removed, she told in a crooning tone, mingled with endearing phrases, of the rapid improvement which had already begun and would soon be complete. The foot was getting better; the joints were more supple and bent with greater ease; the muscles were developing, the tendons were drawing the foot into the right shape and making it straight and strong. Soon it would be perfectly normal; the little one would walk and run, play with other children, skip and bowl hoops. He would go to school and learn his lessons, would be intelligent and receptive. She told him too that he was growing obedient, cheerful, kind to others, truthful and courageous. The little boy had put one arm round her neck and was listening with a placid smile. His face was quite contented; he was enjoying himself.

While Mlle Kauffmant was thus engaged, the women sat silent watching her intently, each perhaps mentally seeing her own little one endowed with the qualities depicted. The children were quiet, some dreamily listening, some tranquilly playing with a toy. Except for an occasional word of advice Mademoiselle was quite indifferent to them. Her whole attention was given to the child on her knee; her

<sup>1</sup> Since this time (July 1921) the clinic has been in some respects reorganised and Mlle Kauffmant has pursued her work independently.

thoughts went out to him in a continual stream, borne along by a current of love and compassion, for she has devoted her life to the children and loves them as if they were her own. The atmosphere of the room was more like that of a church than a hospital. The mothers seemed to have left their sorrows outside. Their faces showed in varying degrees an expression of quiet confidence.

When this treatment had continued for about ten minutes, Mlle Kauffmant returned the child to its mother and, after giving her a few words of advice, turned to her next patient. This was an infant of less than twelve months. While suffering from no specific disease it was continually ailing. It was below normal weight, various foods had been tried unsuccessfully, and medical advice had failed to bring about an improvement. Mademoiselle resumed her seat with the child on her lap. For some time the caresses, which were applied to the child's head and body, continued in silence. Then she began to talk to it. Her talk did not consist of connected sentences, as with the elder child who had learned to speak, but of murmured assurances, as if her thoughts were taking unconsciously the form of words. These suggestions were more general than in the previous case, bearing on appetite, digestion, assimilation, and on desirable mental and moral qualities. The caress continued for about ten minutes, the speech was intermittent, then the infant was returned to its mother and Mademoiselle turned her attention to another little sufferer.

With patients who are not yet old enough to speak Mlle Kauffmant sometimes trusted to the caress alone. It seemed to transmit the thoughts of health quite strongly enough to turn the balance in the child's mind on the side of health. But all mothers talk to their children long before the words they use are understood, and Mlle Kaufimant, whose attitude was essentially maternal, reserved to herself the same right. She adhered to no rigid rule; if she wished to speak aloud she did so, even when the child could not grasp the meaning of her words.

This is perhaps the secret of her success; her method is plastic like the minds she worked on. Coué's material - the adult mind - is more stable. It demands a clear-cut, distinct method, and leaves less room for adaptation; but the aim of Mlle Kauffmant was to fill the child within and enwrap it without with the creative thoughts of health and joy. To this end she enlisted any and every means within her power. The child itself, as soon as it is old enough to speak, is required to say, morning and night, the general formula: 'Day by day, in every way, I'm getting better and better.' If it is confined to its bed, it is encouraged to repeat this at any time and to make suggestions of health similar to those formulated in the sittings. No special directions are given as to how this should be done. Elaborate instructions would only introduce hindersome complications. Imagination, the power to pretend, is naturally strong and active in all children, and intuitively they make use of it in their autosuggestions. Moreover, they unconsciously imitate the tone and manner of their instructress.

But the centre of the child's universe is the mother. Any system which did not utilise her influence would be losing its most powerful ally. The mother is encouraged during the day to set an example of cheerfulness and confidence, to allude to the malady only in terms of encouragement - so renewing in the child's mind the prospect of recovery - and to exclude as far as possible all depressing influences from its vicinity. At night she is required to enter the child's bed-chamber without waking the little one

and to whisper good suggestions into its sleeping ear. Thus Mlle Kauffmant concentrated a multiplicity of means to bring about the same result. In this she was aided by the extreme acceptivity of the child's mind, and by the absence of that mass of pernicious spontaneous suggestions which in the adult mind have to be neutralised and transformed. It is in children, then, that the most encouraging results may be expected, I will quote three cases which I myself investigated to show the kind of results Mlle Kauffmant obtained:

A little girl was born without the power of sight. The visual organs were intact but she was incapable of lifting, her eye-lids, and so remained blind to all intents and purposes up to her seventh year. She was then brought by the mother to Mlle Kauffmant. After a fortnight's treatment the child began to blink; gradually this action became more frequent, and a month after the treatment began she could see well enough to find her way unaided about the streets. When I saw her she had learnt to distinguish colours - as my own experiments proved - and was actually playing ball. The details supplied by Mlle Kauffmant were confirmed by the mother.

A child was born whose tuberculous father had died during the mother's pregnancy. Of five brothers and sisters none had survived the first year. The doctors to whom the child was taken held out no hope for its life. It survived, however, to the age of two, but was crippled and nearly blind, in addition to internal weaknesses. It was then brought to Mlle Kauffmant. Three months later, when I saw it, nothing remained of its troubles but a slight squint and a stiffness in one of its knee-joints. These conditions, too, were rapidly diminishing.

Another child, about nine years of age, also of tuberculous parents, was placed under her treatment. One leg was an inch and a half shorter than the other. After a few months' treatment this disparity had almost disappeared. The same child had a wound, of tuberculous origin, on the small of the back, which healed over in a few weeks and had completely disappeared when I saw her.

In each of the above cases the general state of health showed a great improvement. The child put on weight, was cheerful and bright even under the trying conditions of convalescence in a poverty-stricken home, and in character and disposition fully realized the suggestions formulated to it.

Since the suggestions of Mlle Kauffmant were applied individually, the mothers were permitted to enter and leave the clinic at any time they wished. Mademoiselle was present on certain days every week, but this was not the sum of her labours. The greater part of her spare time was spent in visiting the little ones in their own homes. She penetrated into the dingiest tenements, the poorest slums, on this errand of mercy. I was able to accompany her on several of these visits, and saw her everywhere received not only with welcome, but with a respect akin to awe. She was regarded, almost as much as Coué himself, as a worker of miracles. But the reputation of both Coué and Mlle Kauffmant rests on a broader basis even than auto-suggestion, namely on their great goodness of heart.

They both placed not only their private means, but their whole life at the service of others. Neither ever accepted a penny-piece for the treatments they gave, and I have never seen Coué refuse to give a treatment at however awkward an hour the subject

may have asked it. The fame of the school quickly spread to all parts not only of France, but of Europe and America. Coué's work then assumed such proportions that his time was taken up often to the extent of fifteen or sixteen hours a day. Even when nearing his seventieth year, thanks to the health-giving powers of his own method, he was able to keep abreast of his work without any sign of fatigue and without his habitual cheerfulness being clouded by even the smallest complaint. In fact, he was a living monument to the efficacy of Induced Autosuggestion.

It will be seen that Induced Autosuggestion is a method by which the mind can act directly upon itself and upon the body to produce whatever improvements, in reason, we desire. That it is efficient and successful should be manifest from what has gone before. Of all the questions which arise, the most urgent from the viewpoint of the average man seems to be this - Is a suggester necessary? Must one submit oneself to the influence of some other person, or can one exercise this potent instrument of health in the privacy of one's own chamber?

Coué's own opinion has already been quoted. Induced Autosuggestion is *not* dependent upon the mediation of another person. We can practise it for ourselves without others being even aware of what we are doing, and without devoting to it more than a few minutes of each day. It must be admitted however that some people have a much greater aptitude for practising autosuggestion than others. Where difficulties are encountered, they are generally, as in so many other departments of life, self-engendered, and can be best overcome by reducing the method to its simplest form and using the general formula alone.

Here are a few quotations from letters written by those who have thus practised it for themselves.

'For a good many years now a rheumatic right shoulder has made it impossible for me to sleep on my right side and it seriously affected, and increasingly so, the use of my right arm. A masseuse told me she could effect no permanent improvement as there was granulation of the joints and a lesion. I suddenly realised two days ago that this shoulder no longer troubled me and that I was sleeping on that side without any pain. I have now lost any sensation of rheumatism in this shoulder and can get my right arm back as far as the other without the slightest twinge or discomfort. I have not applied any remedy or done anything that could possibly have worked these results except my practise of Coué.'

**L. S. (Sidmouth, Devon).**

'At my suggestion a lady friend of mine who had been ill for a good ten years read *La Maîtrise de soi-meme*. I encouraged her as well as I could, and in a month she was transformed. Her husband, returning from a long journey, could not believe his eyes. This woman who never got up till midday, who never left the fire-side, whom the doctors had given up, now goes out at 10 a.m. even in the coldest weather. Other friends are anxiously waiting to read your pamphlet.'

**L. C. (Paris)**

'I am very much interested in your method, and since your lecture I have, every night and morning, repeated your little phrase. I used to have to take a pill every night, but now my constipation is cured and the pills are no longer necessary. My

wife is also much better in every way. We've both got the bit of string with twenty knots.'

**H. (a London doctor)**

'Your method is doing me more good every day. I don't know how to thank you for the happiness I now experience. I shall never give up repeating the little phrase.'

**E. B. Guiévain (Belgium)**

'I have followed your principles for several months and freed myself from a terrible state of neurasthenia which was the despair of my three doctors.'

**G. (Angoulême)**

'My friend Miss C. completely cured herself of a rheumatic shoulder and knee in a very short time, and then proceeded to turn her attention to her eyesight.'

She had worn spectacles for 30 years and her left eye was much more short-sighted than her right. When she began she could only read (without her glasses and with her left eye), when the book was almost touching her face. In six weeks she had extended the limit of vision so that she saw as far with the left as formerly with the right. Meanwhile the right had improved equally. She measured the distances every week, and when she was here a few days ago she told me she had in three days gained 4 centimetres with her left and 6 centimetres with her right eye. She had done this on her own.'

**G. (London)**

## II. THE NATURE OF AUTOSUGGESTION

### CHAPTER XIII

#### *Thought is a Force*

**AUTOSUGGESTION** is not a pseudo-religion like Christian Science or 'New Thought'. It is a scientific method based on modern discoveries in the realm of the mind. The traditional psychology was regarded by the layman, not without some cause, as a dull and seemingly useless classification of our conscious faculties. But within the past fifty years the science has undergone a great change. A revolution has taken place in it which seems likely to provoke a revolution equally profound in the wider limits of our common life. From a preoccupation with the conscious it has turned to the Unconscious (or subconscious), to the vast area of mental activity which exists outside the circle of our awareness. In doing so it has grasped at the very roots of life itself, has groped down toward the depths where the 'life-force', the elan vital, touches our individual being. What this may entail in the future we can only dimly guess. Just as the discovery of America altered the balance of the Old World, shifting it westward to the shores of the Atlantic, so the discovery and investigation of the Unconscious may well be destined to shift the balance of human life.

Obviously, this is no place to embark on the discussion of so complex a subject. The investigation of the Unconscious is a science in itself, in which different schools of thought are seeking to disengage a basis of fact from conflicting and frequently changing theories. But there is a certain body of fact, experimentally proven, on which the authorities agree, and of this we quote a few features which directly interest us as students of auto-suggestion.

The Unconscious is the storehouse of memory, where every impression we receive from earliest infancy to the last hour of life is recorded with the minutest accuracy. These memories, however, are not inert and quiescent, like the marks on the discs of a gramophone; they are vitally active, each one forming a thread in the texture of our personality. All these impressions combine to help make up the man himself, the ego, the form through which the general life is individualized. The outer man is but a mask; the real self dwells behind the veil of the Unconscious.

The Unconscious is also a power-house. It is the seat of the instinctive emotions, and these provide the force which impels our lives. As Professor McDougall says: 'The instinctive impulses determine the ends of all activities and supply the driving power by which all mental activities are sustained.'<sup>1</sup>

Finally the Unconscious plays the part of supervisor over our physical processes. Digestion, assimilation, the circulation of the blood, the action of the lungs, the kidneys and all the vital organs are controlled by its agency. Our organism is not a clockwork machine which once wound up will run itself. Its processes in all their complexity are supervised by the mind. It is not the intellect; however, which does this

work, but the Unconscious. The intellect still stands baffled by the problem of the human body, lost like Pascal in the profundities of analysis, each discovery only revealing new depths of mystery.

It may be added that the Unconscious never sleeps; during the sleep of the conscious it seems to be more vigilant than during our waking hours.

In comparison with these, the powers of the conscious mind seem almost insignificant. Derived from the Unconscious during the process of evolution, the conscious is, as it were, the antechamber where the crude energies of the Unconscious are selected and adapted for action on the world outside us. In the past we have unduly exaggerated the importance of the conscious intellect. To claim for it the discoveries of civilization is to confuse the instrument with the agent, to attribute sight to the field-glass instead of to the eye behind it. The value of the conscious mind must not be under-rated however. It is a machine of the greatest value, the seat of reason, of the ethical sense, of self-consciousness and artistic appreciation. But it *is* a machine and not the engine, nor yet the engineer. It provides neither material nor power. These are furnished by the Unconscious.

These two strata of mental life are in perpetual interaction one with the other. Just as everything conscious has its preliminary step in the Unconscious, so every conscious thought passes down into the lower stratum and there becomes an element in our being, partaking of the Unconscious energy, and playing its part in supervising and determining our mental and bodily states. If it is a healthful thought we are so much the better; if it is a diseased one we are so much the worse. It is this transformation of a thought into an element of our life that we call Autosuggestion. Since this is a normal part of the mind's action we shall have no difficulty in finding evidence of it in our daily experiences.

Walking down the street in a gloomy frame of mind you meet a buoyant, cheery acquaintance. The mere sight of his genial smile acts on you like a tonic, and when you have chatted with him for a few minutes your gloom has disappeared, giving place to a cheerfulness and confidence. What has effected this change?—Nothing other than the idea in your own mind. As you watched his face, listened to his good-natured voice, noticed the play of his smile, your conscious mind was occupied by the idea of cheerfulness. This idea on being transferred to the Unconscious became a reality, so that without any logical grounds you became cheerful.

Few people, especially young people, are unacquainted with the effects produced by hearing or reading ghost-stories. You have spent the evening, let us say, at a friend's house, listening to terrifying tales of apparitions. At a late hour you leave the fireside circle to make your way home. The states of fear imaged before your mind have realized themselves in your Unconscious. You tread gingerly in the dark places, hurry past the church-yard and feel a distinct relief when the lights of home come into view. It is the old road you have so often traversed with perfect equanimity, but its cheerful associations are overlooked and the commonest objects tinged with the colour of your subjective states. Autosuggestion cannot change a post into a spectre,

<sup>1</sup> *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, fifteenth ed., 1920, p. 44.

but if you are very impressionable it will so distort your sensory impressions that common sounds seem charged with supernatural significance and every-day objects take on terrifying shapes.

In each of the above examples the idea of a mental state - cheerfulness or fear - was presented to the mind. The idea on reaching the Unconscious became a reality; that is to say, you actually became cheerful or frightened.

The same process is much easier to recognize where the resultant state is not mental but bodily.

One often meets people who take a delight in describing with a wealth of detail the disorders with which they or their friends are afflicted. A sensitive person is condemned by social usage to listen to a harrowing account of some grave malady. As detail succeeds detail the listener feels a chilly discomfort stealing over him. He turns pale, breaks into a cold perspiration, and is aware of an unpleasant sensation at the pit of the stomach. Sometimes, generally when the listener is a child, actual vomiting or a fainting fit may ensue. These effects are undeniably physical; to produce them the organic processes must have been sensibly disturbed. Yet their cause lies entirely in the idea of illness, which, ruthlessly impressed upon the mind, realizes itself in the Unconscious.

This effect may be so precise as to reproduce the actual symptoms of the disease described. Medical students engaged in the study of some particular malady frequently develop its characteristic symptoms.

Everyone is acquainted with the experience known, as 'stage fright'. The victim may be a normal person, healthy both in mind and body. He may possess in private life a good voice, a mind fertile in ideas and a gift of fluent expression. He may know quite surely that his audience is friendly and sympathetic to the ideas he wishes to unfold. But let him mount the steps of a platform. Immediately his knees begin to tremble and his heart to palpitate; his mind becomes blank or chaotic, his tongue and lips refuse to frame coherent sounds, and after a few stammerings he is forced to make a ludicrous withdrawal. The cause of this baffling experience lay in the thoughts which occupied the subject's mind before his public appearance. He was afraid of making himself ridiculous. He expected to feel uncomfortable, feared that he would forget his speech or be unable to express himself. These negative ideas, penetrating to the Unconscious, realized themselves and precisely what he feared took place.

If you live in a town you have probably seen people who, in carelessly crossing the street, find themselves in danger of being run down by a vehicle. In this position they sometimes stand for an appreciable time 'rooted', as we say, 'to the spot'. This is because the danger seems so close that they imagine themselves powerless to elude it. As soon as this idea gives place to that of escape they get out of the way as fast as they can. If their first idea persisted, however, the actual powerlessness resulting from it would likewise persist, and unless the vehicle stopped or turned aside they would infallibly be run over.

One occasionally meets people suffering from a nervous complaint known as St Vitus's Dance. They have a disconcerting habit of contorting their faces, screwing

round their necks or twitching their shoulders. It is a well-known fact that those who come into close contact with them, living in the same house or working in the same office, are liable to contract the same habit, often performing the action without themselves being aware of it. This is due to the operation of the same law. The idea of the habit, being repeatedly presented to their minds, realizes itself, and they begin to perform a similar movement in their own persons.

Examples of this law present themselves at every turn. Have you ever asked yourself why some people faint at the sight of blood, or why many of us turn giddy when we look down from a great height.

If we turn to the sufferers from neurosis we find some who have lost their powers of speech or of vision; some, like the blacksmith we saw in Coué's clinic, who have lost the use of their limbs; others suffering from a functional disturbance of one of the vital organs. The cause in each case is nothing more tangible than an idea which has become realized in the Unconscious mind.

These instances show clearly enough that the thoughts we think do actually become realities in the Unconscious. But is this a universal law operating in every life, or merely something contingent and occasional? Sometimes irrelevant cheerfulness seems only to make despondency more deep. Certain types of individual are only irritated by the antics of a circus clown. Physicians listen to the circumstantial accounts of their patients' ailments without being in the least discomposed. These facts seem at first sight at variance with the rule. But they are only apparent exceptions which serve to test and verify it. The physical or mental effect invariably corresponds with the idea present in the mind, but this need not be identical with the thought communicated from without. Sometimes a judgment interposes itself, or the idea may call up an associated idea which possesses greater vitality and therefore dislodges it. A gloomy person who meets a cheerful acquaintance may mentally contrast himself with the latter, setting his own troubles beside the other's good fortune, his own grounds for depression beside the other's grounds for satisfaction. Thus the idea of his own unhappiness is strengthened and sinking into the Unconscious makes still deeper the despondency he experienced before. In the same way the doctor, listening to the symptoms of a patient, does not allow these distressful ideas to dwell in his conscious mind. His thought passes on immediately to the remedy, to the idea of the help he must give. Not only does he manifest this helpfulness in reasoned action, but also, by Unconscious realisation, in his very bearing and manner. Or his mind may be concentrated on the scientific bearings of the case, so that he will involuntarily treat the patient as a specimen on which to pursue his researches. The steeplejack experiences no giddiness or fear in scaling a church spire because the thought of danger is immediately replaced by the knowledge of his own clear head and sure foot.

This brings us to a point which is of great practical importance in the performance of curative autosuggestion. No idea presented to the mind can realize itself unless the mind accepts it.

Most of the errors made hitherto in this field have been due to the neglect of this fundamental fact. If a patient is suffering from severe toothache it is not of the slightest use to say to him: 'You have no pain.' The statement is so grossly opposed

to the fact that 'acceptation' is impossible. The patient will reject the suggestion, affirm the fact of his suffering, and so, by allowing his conscious mind to dwell on it, probably make it more intense.

We are now in a position to formulate the basic law of autosuggestion as follows: - **Every idea which enters the conscious mind, if it is accepted by the Unconscious, is transformed by it into a reality and forms henceforth a permanent element in our life.**

This is the process called 'Spontaneous Autosuggestion'. It is a law by which the mind of man has always worked, and by which all our minds are working daily.

The reader will see from the examples cited, and from others which he will constantly meet, that the thoughts we think determine not only our mental states, our sentiments and emotions, but the delicate actions and adjustments of our physical bodies. Trembling, palpitation, stammering, blushing - not to speak of the pathological states which occur in neurosis - are due to modifications and changes in the blood-flow, in muscular action and in the working of the vital organs. These changes are not voluntary and conscious ones, they are determined by the Unconscious and come to us often with a shock of surprise.

It must be evident that if we fill our conscious minds with ideas of health, joy, goodness, efficiency, and can ensure their acceptance by the Unconscious; these ideas too will become realities, capable of lifting us on to a new plane of being. The difficulty which has hitherto so frequently brought these hopes to naught is that of ensuring acceptance. This will be treated in the next chapter.

To sum up, the whole process of Autosuggestion consists of two steps:

- (1) The acceptance of an idea.
- (2) Its transformation into a reality. Both these operations are performed by the Unconscious. Whether the idea is originated in the mind of the subject or is presented from without by the agency of another person is a matter of indifference. In both cases it undergoes the same process: it is submitted to the Unconscious, accepted or rejected, and so either realized or ignored. Thus the distinction between Autosuggestion and Heterosuggestion is seen to be both arbitrary and superficial. In essentials all suggestion is Autosuggestion. The only distinction we need make is between Spontaneous Autosuggestion, which takes place independently of our will and choice, and Induced Autosuggestion, in which we consciously select the ideas we wish to realize and purposely convey them to the Unconscious.

## CHAPTER XIV

### *Thought and the Will*

IF we can get the Unconscious to accept an idea realization follows automatically. The only difficulty which confronts us in the practice of Induced Autosuggestion is to ensure acceptance, and this is a difficulty which no method prior to that of Emile Coué has satisfactorily surmounted.

Every idea which enters the mind is charged, to a greater or less extent, with emotion. This emotional charge may be imperceptible, as with ideas to which we are indifferent, or it may be very great, as when the idea is closely related to our personal interests. All the ideas we are likely to make the subjects of Induced Autosuggestion are of the latter class, since they refer to health, energy, success or some goal equally dear to our hearts. The greater the degree of emotion accompanying an idea, the more potent is the autosuggestion resulting from it. Thus a moment of violent fright may give rise to effects which last a lifetime. This emotional factor also plays a large part in securing acceptance.

So far as one can see, the acceptance or rejection of an idea by the Unconscious depends on the associations with which it is connected. Thus, an idea is accepted when it evokes similar ideas charged with emotion of the same quality. It is rejected when it is associated with contrary ideas, which are therefore contrary in their emotional charge. In the latter case, the original idea is neutralized by its associations, somewhat in the same way as an acid is neutralized by an alkali. An example will serve to make this clearer.

You are on a cross-channel boat on a roughish passage. You go up to a sailor and say to him in a sympathetic tone: 'My dear fellow, you're looking very ill. Aren't you going to be sea-sick?' According to his temperament he either laughs at your 'joke' or expresses a pardonable irritation. But he does not become sick because the associations called up are contrary ones. Sea-sickness is associated in his mind with his own immunity from it, and therefore evokes not fear but self-confidence. Ruthlessly pursuing your experiment you approach a timid-looking passenger. 'My dear sir, how ill you look!

I feel sure you are going to be sea-sick. Let me help you down below.' He turns pale. The word 'sea-sickness' associates itself with his own fears and forebodings. He accepts your aid down to his berth and there the pernicious autosuggestion is realized. In the first case the idea was refused, because it was overwhelmed by a contrary association; in the second the Unconscious accepted it, since it was reinforced by similar ideas from within.

But supposing to a sick mind, permeated with thoughts of disease, a thought of health is presented. How can we avoid the mal-association which tends to neutralize it?

We may think of the Unconscious as a tide which ebbs and flows. In sleep it seems to submerge the conscious altogether, while at our moments of full wakefulness, when the attention and will are both at work, the tide is at its lowest ebb. Between these two extremes are any number of intermediary levels. When we are drowsy, dreamy, lled into a gentle reverie by music or by a picture or a poem, the Unconscious tide is high; the more wakeful and alert we become the lower it sinks. This submersion of the conscious mind is called by Baudouin the 'Outcropping of the Subconscious'. The highest degree of outcropping, compatible with the conscious direction of our thoughts, occurs just before we fall asleep and just after we wake.

It is fairly obvious that the greater the outcropping the more accessible these dynamic strata of the mind become, and the easier it is to implant there any idea we wish to realize.

As the Unconscious tide rises the active levels of the mind are overflowed; thought is released from its task of serving our conscious aims in the real world of matter, and moves among the more primal wishes and desires which people the Unconscious, like a diver walk-ing the strange world beneath the sea. But the laws by which thought is governed on this sub-surface level are not those of our ordinary waking consciousness. During outcropping association by contraries does not seem readily to take place. Thus the mal-association, which neutralized the desired idea and so prevented acceptance, no longer presents itself. We all know what happens during a 'day-dream' or 'brown-study,' when the Unconscious tide is high. A succession of bright images glides smoothly through the mind. The original thought spins itself on and on; no obstacles seem to stop it, no questions of probability arise; we are cut off from the actual con-conditions of life and live in a world where all things are possible. These day-dreams cause very potent autosuggestions, and one should take care that they are wholesome and innocent; but the important point is that on this level of consciousness association seems to operate by similarity, and emotion is comparatively intense. These conditions are highly favourable to acceptance.

If, on getting into bed at night, we assume a comfortable posture, relax our muscles and close our eyes, we fall naturally into a stage of semi-consciousness akin to that of day-dreaming. If now we intro-duce into the mind any desired idea, it is freed from the inhibiting associations of daily life, associates itself by similarity, and attracts emotion of the same quality as its own charge. The Unconscious is thus caused to accept it, and inevitably it is turned into an auto-suggestion. Every time we repeat this process the associative power of the idea is increased, its emotional value grows greater, and the autosuggestion resulting from it is more powerful. By this means we can induce the Unconscious to accept an idea, the normal associations of which are contrary and unfavourable. The person with a disease-soaked mind can gradually implant ideas of health, filling his Unconscious daily with healing thoughts. The instrument we use is thought, and the condition essential to success is that the conscious mind shall be lulled to rest.

Systems which hitherto have tried to make use of autosuggestion have failed to secure reliable results because they did not place their reliance on Thought, but tried to compel the Unconscious to accept an idea by exercising the Will. Obviously, such attempts are doomed to failure. By making efforts of the will we automatically wake our-selves up, suppress the encroaching tide of the Unconscious, and thereby destroy the condition by which alone we can succeed.

It is worth our while to note more closely how this happens. A sufferer, whose mind is filled with thoughts of ill-health, sits down to compel himself to accept a good suggestion. He calls up a thought of health and makes an effort of the will to impress it on the Unconscious. This effort restores him to full wakefulness and so evokes the customary association - disease. Consequently, he finds himself contemplating the exact opposite of what he desired. He summons his will again and recalls the healthful thought, but since he is now wider awake than ever, association is even more rapid and powerful than before. The disease-thought is now in full possession of his mind and all the efforts of his will fail to dislodge it. Indeed the harder he struggles the more fully the evil thought possesses him.

This gives us a glimpse of the discovery to which Coué's success is due; namely, that when the will is in conflict with an idea, the idea invariably gains the day. This is true, of course, not only of Induced Autosuggestion, but also of the spontaneous suggestions which occur in daily life. A few examples will make this clear.

Most of us know how, when we have some difficult duty to perform, a chance word of discouragement will dwell in the mind, eating away our self-confidence and attuning our minds to failure. All the efforts of our will fail to throw it off; indeed, the more we struggle against it the more we become obsessed by it.

Very similar to this is the state of mind of the person suffering from stage-fright. He is obsessed with ideas of failure, and all the efforts of his will are powerless to overcome them. Indeed, it is the state of effort and tension which makes his discomfiture so complete.

Sport offers many examples of the working of this law.

A tennis player is engaged to play in an important match. He wishes of course to win, but fears that he will lose. Even before the day of the game his fears begin to realize themselves. He is nervy and 'out of sorts'. In fact, the Unconscious is creating the conditions best suited to realize the thought in his mind—failure. When the game begins his skill seems to have deserted him. He summons the re-sources of his will and tries to compel himself to play well, straining every nerve to recapture the old dexterity. But all his efforts only make him play worse and worse. The harder he tries the more signally he fails. The energy he calls up obeys not his will but the idea in his mind, not the desire to win but the dominant thought of failure.

The fatal attraction of the bunker for the nervous golfer is due to the same cause. With his mind's eye he sees his ball alighting in the most unfavourable spot. He may use any club he likes, he may make a long drive or a short; as long as the thought of the bunker dominates his mind, the ball will inevitably find its way towards it. The more he calls on his will to help him, the worse his plight is likely to be. Success is not gained by effort but by right thinking. The champion golfer or tennis player is not a person of herculean frame and immense will-power. His whole life has been dominated by the thought of success in the game at which he excels.

Young persons sitting for an examination sometimes undergo this painful experience. On reading through their papers they find that all their knowledge has suddenly deserted them. Their mind is an appalling blank and not one relevant

thought can they recall. The more they grit their teeth and summon the powers of the will, the further the desired ideas flee. But when they have left the examination room and the tension relaxes, the ideas they were seeking flow tantalisingly back into the mind. Their forgetfulness was due to thoughts of failure previously nourished in the mind. The application of the will only made the disaster more complete.

This explains the baffling experience of the drug taker, the drunkard, the victim of some vicious craving. His mind is obsessed by the desire for satisfaction. The efforts of the will to restrain it only make it more overmastering. Repeated failures convince him at length that he is powerless to control himself, and this idea, operating as an autosuggestion, increases his impotence. So, in despair, he abandons himself to his obsession, and his life ends in wreckage.

We can now see, not only that the will, in the sense of effort, is incapable of vanquishing a thought, but that as fast as the will brings up its big guns, thought captures them and turns them against it.

This truth, which Baudouin calls the Law of Reversed Effort, is thus stated by Coué:

**'When the imagination and the will are in conflict the imagination invariably gains the day. \*'**

**'In the conflict between the will and the imagination, the force of the imagination is in direct ratio to the square of the will'**

The mathematical terms are used, of course, only metaphorically.

The facts set forth in this statement have not hitherto been challenged. The examples cited above and our own daily experiences amply prove the reality of the process revealed in this law. But several critics, including Dr William Brown, the Bishop of Manchester and the Dean of Chester, have objected to the terms in which it is expressed. In this instance the question of terminology is so important that we cannot afford to shirk it.

The term *imagination* is, perhaps, not wholly a happy one. It is not the imagination, 'the faculty of forming images in the mind', which directly determines our autosuggestions, but rather the images them-selves—in other words, our thoughts. I have therefore taken the liberty, in these pages, of substituting *thought* for *imagination*.

The second difficulty is not so easily avoided. The term *will* is unfortunately ambiguous. The will may be regarded as the 'purposive self,' the personality pushing forward as a unity towards a desired goal.<sup>1</sup> It is manifest that if we thus define the will, there can be no question of conflict between the will and thought. In this general sense the will and thought cannot be separated, for we have made the faculty of thinking part of the will. But one must beg leave to doubt whether the popular conception of the will is so broad and philo-sophical as this. The will is generally regarded as the exclusively dynamic element in the personality, and we think that the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Dean of Chester, *M. Coué and his Gospel of Health*, p. 28: 'When I speak of my will, I mean *myself purposively directing myself*. My will is myself'

will can be called up by resolute effort to take sides when the mind is in a state of disagreement with itself, and to secure the triumph of one element in our personality over that which opposes it. Thus if we are afraid of something, we make an effort of will to cast out the fear; if we are tempted to a wrong action, we make an effort of will to cast out the temptation. In each case the effort of will tends to fail: the fear and the wrong desire are rendered still more powerful by our effort to overcome them. But, nevertheless, it is this purely dynamic factor that the 'man in the street' understands by the will; and since Coué's gospel is addressed, not to the specialist, but to all who have need of it, he too, uses the word in this popular sense. It is obvious that Coué's critics mean by the will what Coué means by a synthesis of right thought and will. When we realize this we see that the Coué doctrine is not an attack upon the will. It is an attack upon the wrong sort of will, or (according to your definition of the term) upon the misuse of the will. It teaches that the will can be used effectively only when it is exerted in harmony with the thought in the mind, when it follows the direction of the dominant personality. 'If they (the will and thought) are in harmony,' he says, 'if we say "I will and I can", the conditions are perfect.'

When the will and thought act harmoniously, there is no inner conflict, no sense of effort and strain, but a sense of harmony and triumphant progress. But if the will is used to reinforce an element in our personality which is in conflict with other elements we aggravate the dissociation, exhaust ourselves in futile effort, and end by strengthening the very element we purposed to overthrow.

This misuse of the will against which Coué warns us is an obstacle to success in our dealings with the outside world. Occurring when the mind is in a state of discord, it serves only to increase that discord, frittering away our vital energy and leaving us impotent and en-feebled. If our mind is obsessed by fear of failure all our efforts to overcome this idea only make it more irresistible. We run our heads against it like a goat butting a brick wall. Indeed in this way we can magnify the smallest difficulty until it becomes insurmountable; we can make molehills into mountains. This is precisely what the neurasthenic does. The idea of a difficulty dwells unchanged in his mind, and all his efforts to overcome it only increase its dimensions, until it overpowers him and he faints in the effort to cross a street. We have to realize that as long as we are obsessed with fear of failure all our efforts are futile. Our will can only be brought into effective action by substituting confidence for fear, calm expectancy of success for anxiety and worry. The methods by which autosuggestion can help us to effect this change are outlined in succeeding chapters.

During the actual practice of autosuggestion, the application of effort is fatal. Autosuggestion succeeds when the mind is fully occupied by the thought of the improvements we need and desire. But the mere presence of internal conflict denotes that the mind is not so occupied. The exertion of effort during autosuggestion in itself argues the presence of an obstacle which needs to be overcome. Effort demands opposition as a necessary condition of its existence; therefore, if we try to force the mind to entertain and accept an autosuggestion by effort, we awaken automatically whatever contrary associations the mind can furnish, and so defeat our own object. The primary and all-important rule in the practice of autosuggestion is this: Avoid effort!

One other interesting fact emerges from an examination of the foregoing examples. In each case we find that the idea which occupied the mind was of a final state, an accomplished fact. The golfer was thinking of his ball dropping into the bunker, the tennis player of his defeat, the examinee of his failure. In each case the Unconscious realized the thought in its own way, chose inevitably the means best suited to arrive at its end - the realization of the idea. In the case of the golfer the most delicate physical adjustments were necessary. Stance, grip and swing, all contributed their quota, but these physical adjustments were performed unconsciously, the conscious mind being unaware of them. From this we see that we need not suggest the way in which our aim is to be accomplished. If we fill our mind with the thought of the desired end, provided that end is possible, the Unconscious will lead us to it by the easiest, most direct path.

Here we catch a glimpse of the truth behind what is called 'luck'. We are told that everything comes to him who waits, and this is literally true, provided he waits in the right frame of mind. Some men are notoriously lucky in business; whatever they touch seems to 'turn to gold'. The secret of their success lies in the fact that they confidently expect to succeed. There is no need to go so far as the writers of the school of 'New Thought', and claim that suggestion can set in motion transcendental laws outside man's own nature. It is quite clear that the man who expects success, of whatever kind it may be, will unconsciously take up the right attitude to his environment; will involuntarily close with fleeting opportunity, and by his inner fitness command the circumstances without.

# III. THE PRACTICE OF AUTOSUGGESTION

## CHAPTER XV

### *General Rules*

WITH our knowledge of the powerful effect which an idea produces, we shall see the importance of exercising a more careful censorship over the thoughts which enter our minds. Thought is the legislative power in our lives, just as the Will is the executive. We should not think it wise to permit the inmates of prisons and asylums to occupy the legislative posts in the State, yet when we harbour ideas of passion and disease, we allow the criminals and lunatics of thought to usurp the governing power in the commonwealth of our being.

In future, then, we shall seek ideas of health, success and goodness; we shall treat warily all depressing subjects of conversation, the daily list of crimes and disasters which fill the newspapers, and those novels, plays and films which harrow our feelings, without trans-muting by the magic of art the sadness into beauty.

This does not mean that we should be always self-consciously studying ourselves, ready to nip the pernicious idea in the bud; nor yet that we should adopt the ostrich's policy of sticking our heads in the sand and declaring that disease and evil have no real existence. The one leads to egotism and the other to callousness. Duty sometimes requires us to give our attention to things in themselves evil and depressing. The demands of friendship and human sympathy are imperious, and we cannot ignore them without moral loss. But there is a positive and a negative way of approaching such subjects.

Sympathy is too often regarded as a passive process by which we allow ourselves to be infected by the gloom, the weakness, the mental ill-health of other people. This is sympathy perverted. If a friend is suffering from small-pox or scarlet fever you do not seek to prove your sympathy by infecting yourself with his disease. You would recognize this to be a crime against the community. Yet many people submit themselves to infection by unhealthy ideas as if it were an act of charity—part of their duty towards their neighbours. In the same way people deliver their minds to harrowing stories of famine and pestilence, as if the mental depression thus produced were of some value to the far-away victims. This is obviously false—the only result is to cause gloom and ill-health in the reader and so make him a burden to his family. That such disasters should be known is beyond question, but we should react to them in the manner indicated in the last chapter. We should replace the blank recognition of the evil by the quest of the means best suited to overcome it; then we can look forward to an inspiring end and place the powers of our will in the service of its attainment.

Oh, human soul, as long as thou canst so,  
Set up a mark of everlasting light  
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow . . .  
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night,  
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home

Autosuggestion, far from producing callousness, dictates the method and supplies the means by which the truest sympathy can be practised. In every case our aim must be to remove the suffering as soon as possible, and this is facilitated by refusing acceptance to the bad ideas and maintaining our own mental and moral balance.

Whenever gloomy thoughts come to us, whether from without or within, we should quietly transfer our attention to something brighter. Even if we are afflicted by some actual malady, we should keep our thought from resting on it as far as we have the power to do so. An organic disease may be increased in its severity by allowing the mind to brood on it, for in so doing we place at its disposal all the resources of our organism, and so direct our life-force to our own destruction. On the other hand, by denying it our attention and opposing it with curative autosuggestions, we reduce its power and much facilitates normal medical treatment. Even in the most serious organic diseases the element contributed by wrong thought may be as great as that which is purely physical.

There are times when temperamental failings, or the gravity of our affliction, places our imagination beyond our ordinary control. The suggestion operates in spite of us; we do not seem to possess the power to rid our minds of the adverse thought. Under these conditions we should never struggle to throw off the obsessing idea by force. Our exertions only bring into play the law of reversed effort, and we flounder deeper into the slough. Coué's technique, however, which will be outlined in succeeding chapters, should give us the means of mastering ourselves, even under the most trying conditions.

Of all the destructive suggestions we must learn to shun none is more dangerous than fear. In fearing something the mind is not only dwelling on a negative idea, but it is establishing the closest personal connection between the idea and ourselves. Moreover, the idea is surrounded by an aura of emotion, which considerably intensifies its effect. Fear combines every element necessary to give to an auto-suggestion its maximum power. But happily fear, too, is susceptible to the controlling power of autosuggestion. It is one of the first things which a person cognisant of the means should seek to eradicate from his mind.

For our own sakes, too, we should avoid dwelling on the faults and frailties of our neighbours. If ideas of selfishness, greed, vanity, are continually before our minds there is great danger that we shall sub-consciously accept them, and so realize them in our own character. The petty gossip and backbiting, so common in a small town, produce the very faults they seem to condemn. But by allowing our minds to rest upon the virtues of our neighbours, we reproduce the same virtues in ourselves.

But if we should avoid negative ideas for our own sakes, much more should we do so for the sake of other people. Gloomy and despondent men and women are

centres of mental contagion, damaging all with whom they come in contact. Sometimes such people seem involuntarily to exert themselves to quench the cheerfulness of brighter natures, as if their Unconscious strove to reduce all others to its own low level. But even healthy, well-intentioned people scatter evil suggestions broadcast, without the least suspicion of the harm they do. Every time we remark to an acquaintance that he is looking ill, we tend to damage his health; the effect may be imperceptible but by repetition it grows greater. A man who accepts in the course of a day fifteen or twenty suggestions that he is ill, has gone a considerable part of the way towards actual illness. Similarly, when we thoughtlessly commiserate with a friend on the difficulty of his daily work, or represent it as irksome and uncongenial, we make it a little harder for him to accomplish, and thereby slightly diminish his chances of success.

If we must supervise our speech in contact with adults, with children we should exercise still greater foresight. The child's Unconscious is far more accessible than that of the adult; the selective power exercised by the conscious mind is much feebler, and consequently the impressions received realize themselves with greater power. These impressions are the material from which the child's growing life is constructed, and if we supply faulty material the resultant structure will be unstable. Yet the most attentive and well-meaning mothers are often engaged in sowing the seeds of weakness in their children's minds. The little ones are constantly told they will take cold, will be sick, will fall down, or will suffer some other misfortune. The more delicate the child's health, the more likely it is to be subjected to adverse suggestions. It is too often saturated with the idea of bad health, and comes to look on disease as the normal state of existence and health as exceptional. The same is equally true of the child's mental and moral upbringing. How often do foolish parents tell their children that they are naughty, disobedient, stupid, idle or vicious? If these suggestions were accepted, which, thank Heaven, is not always the case, the little ones would in very fact develop just these qualities. But even when no word is spoken, a look or a gesture can initiate an undesirable autosuggestion. The same child, visited by two strangers, will immediately make friends with the one and avoid the other. Why is this? - Because the one carries with him a healthful atmosphere, while the other sends out waves of irritability or gloom.

'Men imagine,' says Emerson, 'that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue and vice emit a breath every moment.'

With children, above all, it is not sufficient to refrain from the expression of negative ideas; we must avoid harbouring them altogether. Unless we possess a bright positive mind the suggestions derived from us will be of little value.

The idea is gaining ground that some part of what is called hereditary disease is transmitted from parent to child, not physically but mentally - that is to say, by means of adverse suggestions continually renewed in the child's mind. Thus if one of the parents has a tendency to tuberculosis, the child often lives in an atmosphere laden with tuberculous thoughts. The little one is continually advised to take care of its lungs, to keep its chest warm, to beware of colds, etc., etc. In other words, the idea is repeatedly presented to its mind that it possesses second-rate lungs. The realization of these ideas, the actual production of pulmonary tuberculosis, is thus facilitated.

But all this is no more than crystallized commonsense. Everyone knows that a cheerful mind suffuses health, while a gloomy one produces conditions favourable to disease. 'A merry heart doeth good like a medicine,' says the writer of the Book of Proverbs, 'but a broken spirit drieth the bones.' But this knowledge, since it lacked a scientific basis, has never been systematically applied. We have regarded our feelings far too much as *effects* and not sufficiently as *causes*. We are happy because we are well; we do not recognize that the process will work equally in the reverse direction—that we shall be well because we are happy. Happiness is not only the result of our conditions of life; it is also the creator of those conditions. Auto-suggestion lays weight upon this latter view. Happiness must come first. It is only when the mind is ordered, balanced, filled with happy, sweet and joyous thoughts, that it can work with its maximum efficiency. When we are habitually happy our powers and capabilities come to their full blossom, and we are able to work with the utmost effect on the shaping of what lies outside us.

Happiness, you say, cannot be ordered like a chop in a restaurant. Like love, its very essence is freedom. This is true; but, like love, it can be wooed and won. It is a condition which everyone experiences at some time in life. It is native to the mind. By the systematic practice of Induced Autosuggestion we can make it less a fleeting visitant and more a regular tenant of the mind, which storms and stresses from without cannot so easily dislodge. This idea of the indwelling happiness, inwardly conditioned, is as ancient as thought. By autosuggestion we can go far towards realizing it in our own lives.

## CHAPTER XVI

### *The General Formula*

WE saw that an unskilled golfer, who imagines his ball is going to alight in a bunker, unconsciously performs just those physical movements needful to realize his idea in actual fact. In realizing this idea his Unconscious displays ingenuity and skill none the less admirable because opposed to his desire. From this and other examples we concluded that if the mind dwells on the idea of an accomplished fact, a realized state, the Unconscious will tend to produce this state. If this is true of our spontaneous autosuggestions it is equally true of the self-induced ones.

It follows that if we consistently think of happiness we become happy; if we think of health we become healthy; if we think of goodness we become good. Whatever thought we continually think, provided it is reasonable, tends to become an actual condition of our life.

Traditionally we rely too much on the conscious mind. If a man suffers from headaches he searches out, with the help of his physician, their cause; discovers whether they come from his eyes, his digestion or his nerves, and purchases the drugs best suited to put him right. If he wishes to improve a bad memory he practises" one of the various methods of memory training. If he is the victim of a pernicious habit he is left to counter it by efforts of the will, which too often exhaust his strength, undermine his self-respect, and only leave him worse off than before. How simple in comparison is the method of Induced Autosuggestion! He need merely think the end—a head free from pain, a good memory, a mode of life in which his bad habit has no part, and these states are gradually evolved without his being aware of the operation performed by the Unconscious.

But even so, if each individual difficulty required a fresh treatment - one for the headache, one for the memory, one for the bad habit and so on - then the time needful to practise autosuggestion would form a considerable part of our waking life. Happily the researches of the Nancy School have revealed a further simplification. This is obtained by the use of a general formula which sets before the mind the idea of a daily improvement in every respect, mental, physical and moral.

In the original French this formula runs as follows: 'Tous les jours, à tous points de vue, je vais de mieux en mieux.' The English version which Coué considered most satisfactory is this: '*Day by day, in every way, I'm getting better and better.*' This is very easy to say, the youngest child can understand it, and it possesses a rudimentary rhythm, which exerts a lulling effect on the mind and so aids in calling up the Unconscious. But if you are accustomed to any other version, such as that recommended by the translators of Baudouin, it would be better to continue to use it. Religious minds who wish to associate the formula with God's care and protection might do so after this fashion: 'Day by day, in every way, by the help of God, I'm getting better and better.' It is possible that the attention of the Unconscious will thus be turned to moral and spiritual improvements to a greater extent than by the ordinary formula.

But this general formula possesses definite advantages other than mere terseness and convenience. The Unconscious, in its character of surveyor over our mental and physical functions, knows far better than the conscious the precise failings and weaknesses which have the greatest need of attention. The general formula supplies it with a fund of healing, strengthening power, and leaves it to apply this at the points where the need is most urgent.

It is a matter of common experience that people's ideals of man-hood or womanhood vary considerably. The sensitive man is apt to depreciate the powers he possesses and exaggerate those he lacks; while his self-satisfied neighbour can see no good in any virtues but his own. It is quite conceivable that a person left free to determine the nature of his autosuggestions by the light of his conscious desire might use this power to realize a quality not in itself admirable, or even one which, judged by higher standards, appeared pernicious. Even supposing that his choice was good he would be in danger of over-developing a few characteristics to the detriment of others and so destroying the balance of his personality. The use of the general formula guards against this. It saves a man in spite of himself. It avoids the pitfalls into which the conscious mind may lead us by appealing to a more competent authority. Just as we leave the distribution of our bodily food to the choice of the Unconscious, so we may safely leave that of our mental food, our Induced Autosuggestions.

The fear that the universal use of this formula would have a standardizing effect, modifying its users to a uniform pattern, is unfounded. A rigid system of particular suggestions might tend towards such a result, but the general formula leaves every mind free to unfold and develop in the manner most natural to itself. The eternal diversity of men's minds can only be increased by the free impulse thus administered.

We have seen previously that the Unconscious tide rises to its highest compatible point with conscious thought just before sleep and just after awaking, and that the suggestions formulated then are more assured of acceptance. It is these moments that we select for the repetition of the formula.

But before we pass on to the precise method, a word of warning is necessary. Even the most superficial attempt to analyse intellectually a living act is bound to make it appear complex and difficult. So our consideration of the processes of outcropping and acceptance has inevitably invested them with a false appearance of difficulty. Autosuggestion is above all things easy. Its greatest enemy is effort. The more simple and unforced the manner of its performance the more potently and profoundly it works. This is shown by the fact that its most remarkable results have been secured by children and by simple French peasants.

It is here that Coué's directions for the practice differ considerably from those of Baudouin. Coué insists upon its easiness, Baudouin tends to complicate it. The four chapters devoted by the latter to 'relaxation', 'collection', 'contention', and 'concentration', produce in the reader an adverse suggestion of no small effect. They leave the impression that autosuggestion is a perplexing business which only the greatest foresight and supervision can make successful. Nothing could be more calculated to throw the beginner off the track.

We have seen that Autosuggestion is a function of the mind which we spontaneously perform every day of our lives. The more our induced autosuggestions approximate to this spontaneous prototype the more potent they are likely to be. Baudouin warns us against the danger of setting the intellect to do the work of intuition, yet this is precisely what he himself does. A patient trying by his rules to attain outcropping and implant therein an autosuggestion is so vigilantly attentive to what he is doing that outcropping is rendered almost impossible. These artificial aids are, in Coué's opinion, not only unnecessary but hindering. Autosuggestion succeeds when conscious and Unconscious co-operate in the acceptance of an idea. Coué's long practice has shown that we must leave the Unconscious, as senior partner in the concern, to bring about the right conditions in its own way. The fussy attempts of the intellect to dictate the method of processes which lie outside its sphere will only produce conflict and so condemn our attempt to failure. The directions given here are amply sufficient, if conscientiously applied, to secure the fullest benefits of which the method is capable.

Take a piece of string and tie in it twenty knots. By this means you can count with a minimum expenditure of attention, as a devout Catholic counts his prayers on a rosary. The number twenty has no intrinsic virtue; it is merely adopted as a suitable round number.

On getting into bed close your eyes, relax your muscles and take up a comfortable posture. These are no more than the ordinary pre-liminaries of dropping off. Now repeat twenty times, counting by means of the knots, the general formula: 'Day by day, in every way, I'm getting better and better.'

The words should be uttered aloud; that is, loud enough to be audible to your own ears. In this way the idea is reinforced by the movements of lips and tongue and by the auditory impressions conveyed through the ear. Say it simply, without effort, like a child absently murmuring a nursery rhyme. Thus you avoid an appeal to the critical faculties of the conscious, which would lessen the out-cropping. When you have got used to this exercise and can say it quite 'unselfconsciously', begin to let your voice rise or fall - it does not matter which - on the phrase 'in every way'. This is perhaps the most important part of the formula, and is thus given a gentle emphasis. But at first do not attempt this accentuation; it will only needlessly complicate and, by requiring more conscious attention, may introduce effort. Do not try to think of what you are saying. On the contrary, let the mind wander at will; if it rests on the formula all the better, if it strays elsewhere do not recall it. As long as your repetition does not come to a full-stop your mind-wandering will be less disturbing than would be the effort to recall your thoughts.

Baudouin differs from Coué as to the manner in which the formula should be repeated. His advice is to say it 'piously', with all the words separately stressed. No doubt it has its value when thus spoken, but the attitude of mind to which the word 'pious' can be applied is unfortunately not habitual with every one. The average man in trying to be 'pious' might end by being merely artificial. But the child still exists in the most mature men. The 'infantile' mode of repeating the formula puts one in touch with deep levels of the Unconscious where the child-mind still survives. Coué's remarkable successes have been obtained by this means, and Baudouin advances no cogent reason for changing it.

These instructions no doubt fall somewhat short of our ideal of a thought entirely occupying the mind. But they are sufficient for a beginning. The sovereign rule is to *make no effort*, and if this is observed you will intuitively fall into the right attitude. This process of Unconscious adaptation may be hastened by a simple suggestion before beginning. Say to yourself, I shall repeat the formula in such a way as to get the best effects from it'. This will bring about the required conditions much more effectively than any conscious exercise of thought.

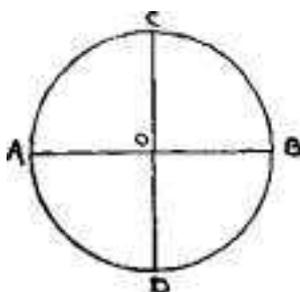
On waking in the morning, before you rise, repeat the formula in exactly the same manner.

Its regular repetition is the foundation stone of the Nancy method and should never be neglected. In times of health it may be regarded as an envoy going before to clear the path of whatever evils may lurk in the future. But we must look on it chiefly as an educator, as a means of leavening the mass of adverse spontaneous suggestions which clog the Unconscious and rob our lives of their true significance. Say it with faith. When you have said it your conscious part of the process is completed. Leave the Unconscious to do its work undis-turbed. Do not be anxious about it, continually examining yourself for signs of improvement. The farmer does not turn over the clods every morning to see if his seed is sprouting. Once sown it is left till the green blade appears. So it should be with suggestion. Sow the seed, and be sure the Unconscious powers of the mind will bring it to fruition, and all the sooner if your conscious ego is content to let it rest.

*Say it with faith!* You can only rob Induced Autosuggestion of its power in one way—by believing that it is powerless. If you believe this it becomes ipso facto powerless for you. The greater your faith the more radical and the more rapid will be your results; though if you have only sufficient faith to repeat the formula twenty times night and morning the results will soon give you in your own person the proof you desire, and facts and faith will go on mutually supplement-ing each other.

Faith reposes on reason and must have its grounds. What grounds can we adduce for faith in Induced Autosuggestion? The examples of cures already cited are outside your experience and you may be tempted to pooh-pooh them. The experiment of Chevreul's pen-dulum, however, will show in a simple manner the power possessed by a thought to transform itself into action.

Take a piece of white paper and draw on it a circle of about five inches radius. Draw two diameters *A B* and *C D* at right angles to each other and intersecting at *O*. The more distinctly the lines stand out the better—they should be thickly drawn in black ink. Now take a lead pencil or a light ruler and tie to one end a piece of cotton about eight inches long; to the lower end of the cotton fasten a heavy metal button, of the sort used on a soldier's tunic. Place the paper on a table so that the diameter *A B* seems to be horizontal and *C D* to be vertical, thus:



Stand upright before the table with your miniature fishing rod held firmly in both hands and the button suspended above the point  $O$ . Take care not to press the elbows nervously against the sides.

Look at the line  $AB$ , think of it, follow it with your eyes from side to side. Presently the button will begin to swing along the line you are thinking of. The more your mind dwells easily upon the idea of the line the greater this swing becomes. Your efforts to *try* to hold the pendulum still, by bringing into action the law of reversed effort, only makes its oscillations more pronounced.

Now fix your eyes on the line  $CD$ . The button will gradually change the direction of its movement, taking up that of  $CD$ . When you have allowed it to swing thus for a few moments transfer your attention to the circle, follow the circumference round and round with your eyes. Once more the swinging button will follow you, adopting either a clock-wise or a counter clockwise direction according to your thought. After a little practice you should produce a circular swing with a diameter of at least eight inches; but your success will be directly proportional to the exclusiveness of your thought and to your efforts to hold the pencil still.

Lastly think of the point  $O$ . gradually the radius of the swing will diminish until the button comes to rest.

Is it necessary to point out how these movements are caused? Your thought of the line, passing into the Unconscious, is there realized, so that *without knowing it* you execute with your hands the imperceptible movements which set the button in motion. The Unconscious automatically realizes your thought through the nerves and muscles of your arms and hands. What is this but Induced Autosuggestion?

The first time you perform this little experiment it is best to be alone. This enables you to approach it quite objectively.

## CHAPTER XVII

### *Particular Suggestions*

THE use of particular suggestions outlined in this chapter is of minor importance compared with that of the general formula—'Day by day, in every way, I'm getting better and better.' The more deeply Coué pursues his investigations, the more fully he becomes con-vinced that all else is secondary to this. It is not difficult to make a guess as to why this should be. In the general formula, the attention is fully absorbed by the idea of betterment. The mind is directed away from all that hinders and impedes and fixed on a positive goal. In formulating particular suggestions, however, we are always skating on thin ice round our faults and ailments, always touching on subjects which have the most painful associations. So that our ideas have not the same creative positiveness. However that may be, it is a matter of experience that the general formula is the basis of the whole method, and that all else is merely an auxiliary - useful, but inessential to the main object.

We have seen that a partial outcropping of the Unconscious takes place whenever we relax our mental and physical control, and let the mind wander; in popular language, when we fall into a 'brown study' or a 'day-dream'. This outcropping should be sought before the special suggestions are formulated.

But again we must beware of making simple things seem hard. Baudouin would have us perform a number of elaborate preparatives, which, however valuable to the student of psychology, serve with the layman only to distract the mind and by fixing the attention on the mechanism impair the power of the creative idea. Moreover, they cause the subject to exert efforts to attain a state the very essence of which is effortlessness, like the victim of insomnia who 'tries his hardest' to fall asleep.

In order to formulate particular suggestions, go to a room where you will be free from interruption, sit down in a comfortable chair, close your eyes, and let your muscles relax. In other words, act precisely as if you were going to take a siesta. In doing so you allow the Unconscious tide to rise to a sufficient height to make your particular suggestions effective. Now call up the desired ideas through the medium of speech. Tell yourself that such and such ameliorations are going to occur. Do this without making the slightest effort to impress these ideas on the mind or to force the attention to dwell on them. There must be no sense of strain but rather one of ease and relaxation.

But here we must give a few hints as to the *form* these suggestions should take.

We should never set our faith a greater task than it can accomplish. A patient suffering from deafness would be ill-advised to make the suggestion: 'I can hear perfectly.' In the partial state of outcropping such an idea would certainly call up its contrary. Thus we should initiate a suggestion antagonistic to the one we desired. In this way we only court disappointment and by losing faith in our instrument rob it of its efficacy.

Further, we should avoid as far as possible all mention of the ailment or difficulty against which the suggestion is aimed. Indeed, our own attention should be directed not so much to getting rid of wrong conditions as to cultivating the opposite right ones in their place. If you are inclined to be neurasthenic your mind is frequently occupied with fear. This fear haunts you because some thwarted element in your personality, surviving in the Unconscious, gains through it a perverse satisfaction. In other words, your Unconscious enjoys the morbid emotional condition which fear brings with it. Should you succeed in banishing your fears you would probably feel dissatisfied, life would seem empty. The old ideas would beckon you with promises, not of happiness of course, but of emotion and excitement. But if your suggestions take a positive form, if you fill your mind with thoughts of self-confidence, courage, outward activity and interest in the glowing and vital things of life, the morbid ideas will be turned out of doors and there will be no vacant spot to which they can return.

Whatever the disorder may be, we should refer to it as little as possible, letting the whole attention go out to the contrary state of health. We must dwell on the 'Yes-idea', affirming with faith the realization of our hopes, seeing ourselves endowed with the triumphant qualities we lack. For a similar reason we should never employ a form of words which connotes doubt. The phrases, 'I should like to', 'I am going to try', if realized by the Unconscious, can only produce a state of longing or desire, very different from the actual physical and mental modifications we are seeking.

Finally, we should not speak of the desired improvement entirely as a thing of the future. We should affirm that the change has already begun, and will continue to operate more and more rapidly until our end is fully attained.

Here are a few examples of special suggestions which may prove useful.

For deafness: Having closed the eyes and relaxed body and mind, say to yourself something of this nature: 'From this day forth my hearing will gradually improve. Each day I shall hear a little better. Gradually this improvement will become more and more rapid until, in a comparatively short space of time, I shall hear quite well and I shall continue to do so until the end of my life.'

A person suffering from unfounded fears and forebodings might proceed as follows: 'From to-day onward I shall become more and more conscious of all that is happy, positive and cheerful. The thoughts which enter my mind will be strong and healthful ones. I shall gain daily in self-confidence, shall believe in my own powers, which indeed at the same time will manifest themselves in greater strength. My life is growing smoother, easier, brighter. These changes become from day to day more profound; in a short space of time I shall have risen to a new plane of life, and all the troubles which used to perplex me will have vanished and will never return.' A bad memory might be treated in some such terms as these: 'My memory from today on will improve in every department. The impressions received will be clearer and more definite; I shall retain them automatically and without any effort on my part, and when I wish to recall them they will immediately present themselves in their correct form to my mind. This improvement will be accomplished rapidly, and very soon my memory will be better than it has ever been before.'

Irritability and bad temper are very susceptible to autosuggestion and might be thus treated: 'Henceforth I shall daily grow more good humoured. Equanimity and cheerfulness will become my normal states of mind, and in a short time all the little happenings of life will be received in this spirit. I shall be a centre of cheer and helpfulness to those about me, infecting them with my own good humour, and this cheerful mood will become so habitual that nothing can rob me of it.'

Asthma is a disease which has always baffled and still baffles the ordinary methods of medicine. It has shown itself, however, in Coué's experience, pre-eminently susceptible to autosuggestive treatment. Particular suggestions for its removal might take this form: 'From this day forward my breathing will become rapidly easier. Quite without my knowledge, and without any effort on my part, my organism will do all that is necessary to restore perfect health to my lungs and bronchial passages. I shall be able to undergo any exertion without inconvenience. My breathing will be free, deep, delightful. I shall draw in all the pure health-giving air I need, and thus my whole system will be invigorated and strengthened. More-over, I shall sleep calmly and peacefully, with the maximum of refreshment and repose, so that I awake cheerful and looking forward with pleasure to the day's tasks. This process has this day begun and in a short time I shall be wholly and permanently restored to health.'

It will be noticed that each of these suggestions comprises three stages:

- (1) Immediate commencement of the amelioration.
- (2) Rapid progress.
- (3) Complete and permanent cure.

While this scheme is not essential, it is a convenient one and should be utilized whenever applicable. The examples are framed as the first autosuggestions of persons new to the method. On succeeding occasions the phrase 'from this day forth,' or its variants, should be replaced by a state-ment that the amelioration has already begun. Thus, in the case of the asthmatic, 'My breathing is already becoming easier,' etc.

Particular suggestions, though subsidiary in value to the general formula, are at times of very great service. The general formula looks after the foundations of our life, building in the depths where eye cannot see or ear hear. Particular suggestions are useful on the surface. By their means we can deal with individual difficulties as they arise. The two methods are complementary.

Particular suggestions prove very valuable in reinforcing and rendering permanent the effects obtained by the technique for over-coming pain, which will be outlined in the next chapter. Before commencing the attack we should sit down, close our eyes and say calmly and confidently to ourselves: 'I am now going to rid myself of this pain.' When the desired result has been obtained we should suggest that the state of ease and painlessness now re-established will be permanent, that the affected part will rapidly be toned up into a condition of normal health, and will remain always in that desirable state. Should we have obtained only a lessening of the trouble without its complete removal our suggestion should take the form: 'I have obtained a considerable degree of relief, and in the next few minutes it will become complete. I shall be restored to my normal condition of health and shall continue so for the future.' Thus our assault upon the pain is made under the best conditions, and should in every case prove successful.

We should employ particular suggestions also for overcoming the difficulties which confront us from time to time in our daily lives, and for securing the full success of any task we take in hand. The use of the general suggestion will gradually strengthen our self-confidence, until we shall expect success in any enterprise of which the reason approves. But until this consummation is reached, until our balance of self-confidence is adequate for all our needs, we can obtain an over-draft for immediate use by means of particular suggestion.

We have already seen that the dimensions of any obstacle depend at least as much upon our mental attitude towards it as upon its intrinsic difficulty. The neurasthenic who imagines he cannot rise from his bed cannot do so because this simple operation is endowed by his mind with immense difficulty. The great mass of normal people commit the same fault in a less degree. Their energy is expended in doing their daily work, and partly in overcoming the resistance in their own minds. By the action of the law of reversed effort the negative idea they foster frequently brings their efforts to naught, and the very exertions they make condemn their activities to failure.

For this reason it is necessary, before undertaking any task which seems to us difficult, to suggest that it is in fact easy. We close our eyes and say quietly to ourselves, 'The work I have to do is easy, quite easy. Since it is easy I can do it, and I shall do it efficiently and successfully. Moreover, I shall enjoy doing it; it will give me pleasure, my whole personality will apply itself harmoniously to the task, and the results will be even beyond my expectation.' We should dwell on these ideas, repeating them tranquilly and effort-lessly. Soon our mind will become serene, full of hope and confidence. Then we can begin to think out our method of procedure, to let the mind dwell on the means best suited to attain our object. Since the impediments created by fear and anxiety are now removed our ideas will flow freely, our plans will construct themselves in the quiet of the mind, and we shall come to the actual work with a creative vigour and singleness of purpose.

By a similar procedure the problems of conduct which defy solution by conscious thought will frequently yield to autosuggestion. When we are 'at our wits' end,' as the saying goes, to discover the best path out of a dilemma, when choice between conflicting possibilities seems impossible, it is worse than useless to continue the struggle. The law of reversed effort is at work paralysing our mental faculties. We should put it aside, let the waves of effort subside, and suggest to ourselves that at a particular point of time the solution will come to us of its own accord. If we can conveniently do so, it is well to let a period of sleep intervene, to suggest that the solution will come to us on the morrow; for during sleep the Unconscious is left undisturbed to realize in its own way the end we have consciously set before it.

This operation often takes place spontaneously, as when a problem left unsolved the night before yields its solution apparently by an inspiration when we arise in the morning. 'Sleep on it' still remains the best counsel for those in perplexity, but they should preface their slumbers by the positive autosuggestion that on waking they will find the difficulty resolved. In this connection it is interesting to note that autosuggestion is already widely made use of as a means of waking at a particular hour. A person who falls asleep with the idea in his mind of the time at which he wishes to wake, will wake at that time. It may be added that wherever sleep is utilized

for the realization of particular suggestions, these suggestions should be made in addition to the general formula, either immediately before or immediately after; they should not be substituted for it.

With some afflictions, such as fits, the attack is often so sudden and unexpected that the patient is smitten down before he has a chance to defend himself. Particular suggestions should be aimed first of all at securing due warning of the approaching attack. We should employ such terms as these: 'In future I shall always know well in advance when a fit is coming on. I shall be amply warned of its approach. When these warnings occur I shall feel no fear or anxiety. I shall be quite confident of my power to avert it.' As soon as the warning comes—as it will come, unmistakably—the sufferer should isolate himself and use a particular suggestion to prevent the fit from developing. He should first suggest calm and self-control, then affirm repeatedly, but of course without effort, that the normal state of health is reasserting itself, that the mind is fully under control, and that nothing can disturb its balance. All sudden paroxysms, liable to take us unexpectedly, should be treated by the same method, which in Coué's experience has amply justified itself.

Nervous troubles and violent emotions, such as fear and anger, often express themselves by physical movements. Fear may cause trembling, palpitation, chattering of the teeth; anger a violent clenching of the fists. Baudouin advises that particular suggestions in these cases should be directed rather against the motor expression than against the psychic cause, that our aim should be to cultivate a state of physical impassiveness. But since a positive suggestion possesses greater force than a negative, it would seem better to attack simultaneously both the cause and the effect. Instead of anger, suggest that you will feel sympathy, patience, good humour, and consequently that your bodily state will be easy and unconstrained.

A form of particular suggestion which possesses distinct advantages of its own is the quiet repetition of a single word. If your mind is distracted and confused, sit down, close your eyes, and murmur slowly and reflectively the single word 'Calm'. Say it reverently, drawing it out to its full length and pausing after each repetition. Gradually your mind will be stilled and quietened, and you will be filled with a sense of harmony and peace. This method seems most applicable to the attainment of moral qualities. An evil passion can be quelled by the use of the word denoting the contrary virtue. The power of the word depends largely upon its aesthetic and moral associations. Words like joy, strength, love, purity, denoting the highest ideals of the human mind, possess great potency and are capable, thus used, of dispelling mental states in which their opposites predominate. The name Reflective Suggestion, which Baudouin applies indifferently to all autosuggestions induced by the subject's own choice, might well be reserved for this specific form of particular suggestion.

The field for the exercise of particular suggestions is practically limitless. Whenever you feel a need for betterment, of whatever nature it may be, a particular suggestion will help you. But it must once more be repeated that these particular suggestions are merely aids and auxiliaries, which may, if leisure is scant, be neglected.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *How to Deal with Pain*

PAIN, whether of mind or body, introduces a new element for which we have hitherto made no provision. By monopolizing the attention it keeps the conscious mind fully alert and so prevents one from attaining the measure of outcropping needful to initiate successfully an autosuggestion. Thus if we introduce the 'no-pain' idea into the conscious, it is overwhelmed by its contrary - pain, and the patient's condition becomes, if anything, worse.

To overcome this difficulty quite a new method is required. If we speak a thought, that thought, while we speak it, must occupy our minds. We could not speak it unless we thought it. By continually repeating 'I have no pain' the sufferer constantly renews that thought in his mind. Unfortunately, after each repetition the pain-thought insinuates itself, so that the mind oscillates between 'I have no pain' and 'I have some pain', or 'I have a bad pain'. But if we repeat our phrase so rapidly that the contrary association has no time to insert itself, we compel the mind willy-nilly to dwell on it. Thus by a fresh path we reach the same goal as that attained by induced outcropping: we cause an idea to remain in occupation of the mind without calling up a contrary association. This we found to be the prime condition of acceptance, and in fact by this means we can compel the Uncon-scious to realize the 'no-pain' thought and so put an end to the pain.

But the sentence 'I have no pain' does not lend itself to rapid repetition. Even if we were dexterous enough to articulate the words successfully, we should only meet with a new difficulty. The most emphatic word in the phrase is 'pain'; involuntarily we should find ourselves stressing this word with particular force, so strengthening in our minds the very idea we are trying to dislodge.

We shall do best to copy as closely as we can Coué's own procedure. The phrase he uses, 'ça passe,' makes no mention of the hurt; it is extremely easy to say, and it produces an unbroken stream of sound, like the whirr of a machine or the magnified buzz of an insect, which, as it were, carries the mind off its feet. The phrase recommended by Baudouin, 'It is passing off', produces no such effect, and in fact defies all our attempts to repeat it quickly. On the whole, the most suitable English version seems to be 'It's going'. Only the word 'going' should be repeated, and the treatment should conclude with the emphatic statement 'gone!' The word 'going', rapidly gabbled, gives the impression of a mechanical drill, biting its way irresistibly into some hard substance. We can think of it as drilling the desired thought into the mind.

If you are suffering from any severe pain, such as toothache or headache, sit down, close your eyes and assure yourself calmly that you are going to get rid of it. Now gently stroke with your hand the affected part and repeat at the same time as fast as you can, producing a continuous stream of sound, the words: 'It's going, going... gone!' Keep it up for about a minute, pausing only to take a deep breath when

necessary, and using the word 'gone' only at the conclusion of the whole proceeding. At the end of this time the pain will either have entirely ceased or at least sensibly abated. If the pain has ceased suggest that it will not return; if it has only diminished suggest that it will shortly pass away altogether. Now return to whatever employment you were engaged in when the pain began. Let other interests occupy your attention. If in a reasonable space, say half an hour, the pain still troubles you, isolate yourself again, suggest once more that you are going to master it, and repeat the procedure.

It is no exaggeration to say that by this process any pain can be mastered. It may be that you will have to return several times to the attack, or that the pain will cease only to return again. But do not be discouraged; attack it firmly and you will succeed.

The same procedure is equally effective with distressing states of mind - worry, fear, despondency. In such cases the stroking movement of the hand should be applied to the forehead.

Even in this exercise no more effort should be used than is necessary. Simply repeat rapidly the word which informs you that the trouble is going, and let this, with the stroking movement of the hand, which, as it were, fixes the attention to that particular spot, be the sum and substance of your effort. With practice it will become easier, you will 'drop into it'; that is to say, the Unconscious will perform the adaptations necessary to make it more effective. After a time you should be able to obtain relief in twenty to twenty-five seconds. But the effect is still more far-reaching: you will be delivered from the fear of pain. Regarding yourself as its master, you will be able with the mere threat of treatment to prevent it from developing.

It may be that the pain attacks you in the street, or in some public place where the audible repetition of the phrase would attract attention. In that case it is best to close the eyes for a moment and formulate this particular suggestion: 'I shall not add to this trouble by thinking about it; my mind will be occupied by other things; but on the first opportunity I shall make it pass away.' Then as soon as you can conveniently do so make use of the phrase 'It's going'. When you have become expert in the use of this form of suggestion you will be able to exorcise the trouble by repeating the phrase mentally—at any rate if the words are outlined with the lips and tongue. But the beginner should rely for a time entirely on audible treatment. By dropping it too soon he will only risk disappointment.

It sometimes happens that a patient is so prostrated by pain or misery that he has not the energy to undertake even the repetition of the word 'going'. The pain-thought so obsesses the mind that the state of painlessness seems too remote even to contemplate. Under these circumstances it seems best to employ this strategy. Lie down on a bed, sofa, or arm-chair and relax both mind and body. Cease from all effort—which can only make things worse—and let the pain-thought have its way. After a time your energies will begin to collect themselves, your mind to reassert its control. Now make a firm suggestion of success and apply the method. Get another person to help you, as Coué helps his patients, by performing the passes with the hand and repeating the phrase with you. By this means you can make sure of success. This seemingly contradictory proceeding is analogous to that of the angler 'playing' a fish. He waits till it has run its course before bringing his positive resources into play.

Baudouin recommends an analogous proceeding as a weapon against insomnia. The patient, he says, should rapidly repeat the phrase 'I am going to sleep' letting his mind be swept away by a torrent of words. Once more the objection arises that the phrase 'I am going to sleep' is not such as we *can* rapidly repeat. But even if we substitute for it some simple phrase which can be easily articulated it is doubtful whether it will succeed in more than a small percentage of cases. Success is more likely to attend us if we avail ourselves of the method of reflective repetition, mentioned in the last chapter. We should take up th

## CHAPTER XIX

### ***Autosuggestion and the Child***

IN treating children it should be remembered that autosuggestion is primarily not a remedy but a means of insuring healthy growth. It should not be reserved for times when the child is sick, but provided daily, with the same regularity as meals.

Children grow up weakly not from lack of energy, but because of a waste and misapplication of it. The inner conflict, necessitated by the continual process of adaptation which we call growth, is often of quite unnecessary violence, not only making a great temporary demand on the child's vital energy, but even locking it up in the Unconscious in the form of 'complexes,' so that its future life is deprived of a portion of its due vitality. A wise use of autosuggestion can help to preclude these disasters. Growth can be ordered and controlled. The necessary conflicts can be brought to a successful issue, the unnecessary ones avoided.

Autosuggestion may very well begin *before* the child is born. It is a matter of common knowledge that a mother must be shielded during pregnancy from any experience involving shock or fright, which may exert a harmful effect on the developing embryo, and may in extreme cases result in abortion, or in physical deformity or mental weakness in the child. Instances of this ill-effect have often been observed, and the link between cause and effect appears unmistakable.<sup>1</sup> There seems good reason to believe that these cases are partly due to spontaneous autosuggestions operating in the maternal Unconscious; since during pregnancy the mother moulds her little one not only by the food she eats but also by the thoughts she thinks. The heightened emotionality characteristic of this state bespeaks an increased tendency to outcropping, and so an increased suggestibility. Thus spontaneous autosuggestions are far more potent than in the normal course of life. But, happily, induced autosuggestions are aided by the same conditions, so that the mother awake to her powers and duties can do as much good as the ignorant may do harm.

**See Baudouin: *Suggestion and Autosuggestion*, pp. 92-5.**

Without going into debatable questions, for medical authorities are still far from unanimous on these matters, one can find many helpful ways of aiding and benefiting the growing life by autosuggestive means. The mother should avoid with more than ordinary care all subjects, whether in reading or conversation, which bear on evil in any form, and she should seek whatever uplifts the mind and furnishes it with beautiful and joyous thought. But the technical methods of autosuggestion can also be brought into action.

The mother should suggest to herself that her organism is furnish-ing the growing life with all it needs, and that the child will be strong and healthy in mind, in body, and in character.

These suggestions should be in general terms bearing on qualities of undoubted good, for obviously it is not desirable to define an independent life too narrowly. They need consist only of a few sentences, and should be formulated night and morning immediately before or after the general formula. Furthermore, when the mother's thoughts during the day stray to the subject of her child, she can take this opportunity to repeat the whole or some part of the particular suggestion she has chosen. These few simple measures will suffice. Any undue tendency of the mind to dwell on the thought of the child, even in the form of good suggestions, should not be encouraged. A normal mental life is in itself the best of conditions for the welfare of both mother and child. For her own sake however the mother might well suggest that the delivery will be painless and easy.

The only direct means of autosuggestion applicable to the child for some months after birth is that of the caress, though it must be remembered that the mental states of mother and nurse are already stamping themselves on the little mind, forming it inevitably for better or worse. Should any specific trouble arise, the method of Mlle Kauffinant should be applied by the mother. **Taking the child on her knee she should gently caress the affected part, thinking the while of its reinstatement in perfect health.** It seems generally advis-able to express these thoughts in words. Obviously, the words themselves will mean nothing to an infant of two or three months but they will hold the mother's thought in the right channel, and this thought, by the tone of her voice, the touch of her hand, will be communicated to the child. What is the psychological nature of this process we need not inquire, but the baby is psychically as well as physically so dependent on the mother that her mental states are communicated by means quite ineffective with adults. Love in itself exerts a suggestive power of the highest order.

When the child shows signs of understanding what is said to it, before it begins itself to speak, the following method should be applied. After the little one has fallen asleep at night, the mother enters the room, taking care not to wake it, and stands about a yard from the head of the cot. She proceeds then to formulate in a whisper such suggestions as seem necessary. If the child is ailing the suggestion might take the form of the phrase 'You are getting better', repeated twenty times. If it is in health the general formula will suffice. Particular suggestions may also be formulated bearing on the child's health, character, intellectual development, etc. These of course should be in accordance with the instructions given in the chapter devoted to particular suggestions. On withdrawing, the mother should again be careful not to awaken the little one. Should it show signs of waking, the whispered command 'sleep', repeated several times, will lull it again to rest. Baudouin recommends that during these suggestions the mother should lay her hand on the child's forehead. The above, however, is the method preferred by Coué.

This nightly practice is the most effective means of conveying autosuggestions to the child-mind. It should be made a regular habit which nothing is allowed to interrupt. If for any reason the mother is unable to perform it, her place may be taken by the father, the nurse, or some relative. But for obvious reasons the duty belongs by right to the mother, and, when a few weeks' practice has revealed its suitable beneficent power, few mothers will be willing to delegate it to someone less suitable.

This practice, as stated above, may well begin before the child has actually learned to speak, for its Unconscious will already be forming a scheme more or less distinct of the significance of the sounds that reach it, and will not fail to gather the general drift of the words spoken. The date at which it should be discontinued is less easy to specify. Growth, to be healthy, must carry with it a gradual increase in independence and self-sufficiency. There seems to be some slight danger that the practice of nightly suggestions, if continued too long, might prolong unduly the state of dependence upon parental support. Reliable indications on this point are furnished, however, by the child itself. As soon as it is able to face its daily problems for itself; when it no longer runs to the parent for help and advice in every little difficulty, the time will have arrived for the parental suggestions to cease.

As soon as a child is able to speak it can be taught to repeat the general formula night and morning in the same way as an adult.<sup>1</sup>

Thus when the time comes to discontinue the parent's suggestions, their effect will be carried on by those the child formulates itself. There is one thing more to add: in the case of boys it would seem better at the age of seven or eight for the father to replace the mother in the role of suggester, while the mother, of course, performs the office throughout for her girls. Should any signs appear that the period of puberty is bringing with it undue difficulties or perils, the nightly practice might be resumed in the form of particular suggestions bearing on the specific difficulties. It must be remembered, however, that the child's sexual problem is essentially different from that of the adult, and the suggestions must therefore be in the most general terms. Here as elsewhere the end alone should be suggested, the Unconscious being left free to choose its own means.

As soon as the child has learnt to speak it should not be allowed to suffer pain. The best method to adopt is that practised by Coué in his consultations. Let the child close its eyes and repeat with the parent, 'It's going, going . . . gone!' while the latter gently strokes the affected part. But as soon as possible the child should be encouraged to overcome smaller difficulties for itself, until the parent's help is eventually almost dispensed with. This is a powerful means of developing self-reliance and fostering the sense of superiority to difficulties which will be invaluable in later life.

That children readily take to the practice is shown by these examples, which are again quoted from letters received by Coué.

'Your youngest disciple is our little David. The poor little chap had an accident today. Going up in the lift with his father, when quite four feet up, he fell out on his head and on to a hard stone floor. He was badly bruised and shocked, and when put to bed lay still and kept saying: "ça passe, ça passe," over and over again, and then looked up and said, "no, not gone away". Tonight he said again "ça passe" and then added, "nearly gone". So he is better.'

**B. K. (London).**

Even quite tiny children seem to take to Coué's method of dealing with pain. Here is an extract from another letter:

<sup>1</sup>A more rhythmic formula for children would be: *I am growing) day by day, A better boy (or girl) in every way.*

'Our cook's little niece, aged 23 months - the one we cured of bronchitis - gave herself a horrid blow on the head yesterday. Instead of crying she began to smile, passed her hand over the place and said sweetly, "ça passe". Hasn't she been well brought up?'

All these methods are extremely simple and involve little expenditure of time and none of money. They have proved their efficacy over and over again in Nancy, and there is no reason why a mother of average intelligence and conscientiousness should not obtain equally good results. Naturally, first attempts will be a little awkward, but there is no need for discouragement on that account. Even supposing that through the introduction of effort some slight harm were done - and the chance is comparatively remote—this need cause no alarm. The right autosuggestion will soon counteract it and produce positive good in its place. But any mother who has practised autosuggestion for herself will be able correctly to apply it to her child. At first glance the procedure may seem revolutionary, but think it over for a moment and you will see that it is as old as the hills. It is merely a systematization on a scientific basis of the method mothers have intuitively practised since the world began, 'Sleep, baby, sleep. Angels are watching o'er thee,' - what is this but a particular suggestion? How does a wise mother proceed when her little one falls and grazes its hand? She says something of this kind: 'Let me kiss it and then it will be well.' She kisses it, and with her assurance that the pain has gone the child runs happily back to its play.

## CHAPTER XX

### *Conclusion*

INDUCED Autosuggestion is not a substitute for medical practice. It will not make us live for ever, neither will it free us from all the common ills of life. What it may do in the future, when all its implications have been realized, all its resources exploited, we cannot say. There is no doubt that a generation brought up by its canons would differ a great deal from the population of today. But our immediate interest is with the present.

The adult of today carries in his Unconscious a memory clogged with a mass of adverse suggestions which have been accumulating since childhood. The first task of Induced Autosuggestion will be to clear away this mass of mental lumber. Not until this has been accomplished can the real man appear and the creative powers of autosuggestion begin to manifest themselves.

By the use of this method each one of us should be able to look forward to a life in which disease is a diminishing factor. But how great a part it will play depends upon the conditions we start from and the regularity and correctness of our practice. Should disease befall us we possess within a potent means of expelling it, but this does not invalidate the complementary method of destroying it from without. Autosuggestion and the usual medical practice should go hand in hand, each supplementing the other. If you are ill, call in your doctor as before, but enlist the resources of Induced Autosuggestion to reinforce and extend his treatment.

In this connection it must be insisted on that autosuggestion can be utilized for every ailment, whatever its nature, and whether its inroads be grave or slight. Every disease is either strengthened or weakened by the action of the mind. We cannot take up an attitude of neutrality. Either we must aid the disease to destroy us by allowing our minds to dwell on it, or we must oppose it and destroy it by a stream of healthful dynamic thought. Too frequently we spontaneously adopt the former course.

The general opinion that functional and nervous diseases alone are susceptible to suggestive treatment is at variance with the facts.

During Coué's thirty years of practice, in which many thousands of patients were treated, he found that organic troubles yield as easily as functional, that bodily derangements are not harder to cure than nervous and mental. He made no such distinctions; an illness is an illness whatever its nature. As such Coué attacked it, and in 98 per cent of cases he attained in greater or less degree a positive result.

Apart from the permanently insane, in whose minds the machinery of autosuggestion is itself deranged, there are only two classes of patient with whom Induced Autosuggestion seems to fail. One consists of persons whose intelligence is so low that the directions given are never comprehended; the other of those who lack

the power of voluntary attention and cannot devote their minds to an idea even for a few consecutive seconds. These two classes, however, are numerically insignificant, together making up not much more than 2 per cent of the population.

Autosuggestion is equally valuable as an aid to surgical practice. A broken bone - the sceptic's last resource - cannot of course be treated by autosuggestion alone. A surgeon must be called in to mend it. But when the limb has been rightly set and the necessary mechanical precautions have been taken, autosuggestion will provide the best conditions for recovery. It can prevent lameness, stiffness, unsightly deformity and the other evils which a broken limb is apt to entail, and it can shorten considerably the normal period of convalescence.

It is sometimes stated that the results obtained by autosuggestion are not permanent. This objection is really artificial, arising from the fact that we ignore the true nature of autosuggestion and regard it merely as a remedy. When we employ autosuggestion to heal a malady our aim is so to leaven the Unconscious with healthful thoughts, that not only will that specific malady be excluded, but all others with it. Autosuggestion should not only remove a particular form of disease, but lessen the tendency to disease as a whole.

If after an ailment has been removed we allow our mind to revert to unhealthy thoughts, they will tend to realize themselves in the same way as any others, and we may again fall a victim to ill-health. Our sickness may take the same form as on the preceding occasion, or it may not. That will depend in some degree on our thought. But by the regular employment of the general formula we can hinder any such recurrence. Instead of reverting to unhealthy states of mind we shall progressively strengthen the healthy and creative thought that has already helped us, so that with each succeeding day our defence will be stronger. Not only do we thus avoid a relapse into former ailments but we clear out of our path those which lie in wait for us in the future.

We saw that in the Nancy clinic some of the cures effected are almost instantaneous. It would be a mistake, however, to embark on the practice of Induced Autosuggestion with the impression that we are going to be miraculously healed in the space of a few days. Granted sufficient faith such a result might very likely ensue; nay, more, we have records of quite a number of such cases, even where the help of a second person has not been called in. Here is an example. A friend of mine, M. Albert P., of Bordeaux, had suffered for more than ten years with neuralgia of the face. Hearing of Coué, he wrote to him, and received instructions to repeat the general formula. He did so, and on the second day the neuralgia had vanished and has never since returned. But such faith is not common. Immediate cures are the exception, and it will be safer for us to look forward to a gradual and progressive improvement. In this way we shall guard against disappointment. It may be added that Coué prefers the gradual cure, finding it more stable and less likely to be disturbed by adverse conditions.

We should approach autosuggestion in the same reasonable manner as we approach any other scientific discovery. There is no hocus-pocus about it, nor are any statements made here which experience cannot verify. But the attitude we should beware of most is that of the intellectual amateur, who makes the vital things

of life small coin to exchange with his neighbour of the dinner-table. Like religion, autosuggestion is a thing to practise. A man may be conversant with all the creeds in Christendom and be none the better for it; while some simple soul, loving God and his fellows, may combine the high principles of Christianity in his life without any acquaintance with theology. So it is with autosuggestion.

Autosuggestion is just as effective in the treatment of moral delinquencies as in that of physical ills. Drunkenness, kleptomania, the drug habit, uncontrolled or perverted sexual desires, as well as minor failings of character, are all susceptible to its action. It is as powerful in small things as in great. By particular suggestions we can modify our tastes. We can acquire a relish for the dishes we naturally dislike, and make disagreeable medicine taste pleasant.

By way of anticipating an objection it may be stated that the Coué method of Induced Autosuggestion is in no sense inferior to hypnotic suggestion. Coué himself began his career as a hypnotist, but being dissatisfied with the results, set out in quest of a method more simple and universal. Conscious autosuggestion, apart from its convenience, can boast one great advantage over its rival. The effects of hypnotic suggestion are often lost within a few hours of the treatment. Where-as by the use of the general formula the results of Induced Autosuggestion go on progressively increasing.<sup>1</sup>

Here we touch again the question of the suggester. We have already seen that a suggester is not needed, that autosuggestion can yield its fruits to those who practise it unaided. But some persons cannot be prevailed on to accept this fact. They feel a sense of insufficiency; the mass of old wrong suggestions has risen so mountain high that they imagine themselves incapable of removing it. With such the presence of a suggester is an undoubted help. They have nothing to do but lie passive and receive the ideas he evokes. Even so, however, they will get little good unless they consent to repeat the general formula.

But as long as we look on autosuggestion as a remedy we miss its true significance. Primarily it is a means of self-culture, and one more potent than any we have hitherto possessed. It enables us to develop the mental qualities we lack; efficiency, judgment, creative imagination, all that will help us to bring our life's enterprise to a successful end. Most of us are aware of thwarted abilities, powers undeveloped, impulses checked in their growth. These are present in our Unconscious like trees in a forest, which, overshadowed by their neighbours, are stunted for lack of air and sunshine. By means of autosuggestion we can supply them with the power needed for growth and bring them to fruition in our conscious lives. However old, however infirm, however selfish, weak or vicious we may be, autosuggestion will do something for us. It gives us a new means of culture and discipline by which the 'accents immature', the 'pur-poses unsure' can be nursed into strength, and the evil impulses attacked at the root. It is essentially an individual practice, an individual attitude of mind. Only a narrow view would split it up into categories, debating its application to this thing or to that. It touches our being in its wholeness. Below the fussy perturbed little ego, with its local habitation, its name, its

<sup>1</sup>Authorities are not yet unanimous as to whether the *artificial* dis-sociation of the mind produced by hypnosis is harmless and desirable. The method of autosuggestion described in this book is free from any objection on these grounds since it utilizes a *normal* state of dissociation which inevitably supervenes as we fall asleep.

habits and views and oddities is an ocean of power. Whatever is of you comes eventually thence, however perverted by the prism of self-consciousness. Autosuggestion is a channel by which the powers of this ultimate being are raised to the level of our life here and now.

### **What prospects does autosuggestion open to us in the future?**

It teaches us that the burdens of life are, at least in large measure, of our own creating. We reproduce in ourselves and in our circum-stances the thoughts of our minds. It goes further. It offers us a means by which we can change these thoughts when they are evil and foster them when they are good, so producing a corresponding betterment in our individual life. But the process does not end with the individual. The thoughts of society are realized in social con-ditions, the thoughts of humanity in world conditions. What would be the attitude towards our social and international problems of a generation nurtured from infancy in the knowledge and practice of autosuggestion? If fear and disease were banned from the individual life, could they persist in the life of the nation? If each person found happiness in his own heart would illusory greed for possession survive? The acceptance of autosuggestion entails a change of attitude, a revaluation of life. If we stand with our faces westward we see nothing but clouds and darkness, yet by a simple turn of the head we bring the wide panorama of the sunrise into view.

That Coué's discoveries may profoundly affect our educational methods is beyond question. Hitherto we have been dealing directly only with the conscious mind, feeding it with information, grafting on to it useful accomplishments. What has been done for the develop-ment of character has been incidental and secondary. This was inevitable so long as the Unconscious remained undiscovered, but now we have the means of reaching profounder depths, of endowing the child not only with reading and arithmetic, but with health, character and personality.

But perhaps it is in our treatment of the criminal that the greatest revolution may be expected. The acts for which he is immured result from nothing more than twists and tangles of the threads of thought in the Unconscious mind. This is the view of eminent authorities. But autosuggestion takes us a step further. It shows how these discords of character may be resolved. Since Coué has succeeded in restoring to moral health a youth of homicidal tendencies, why should not the same method succeed with many of the outcasts who fill our prisons? At least the younger delinquents should prove susceptible. But the idea underlying this attitude entails a revolution in our penal procedure. It means little less than this: that crime is a disease and should be treated as such; that the idea of punishment must give place to that of cure; the vindictive attitude to one of pity.

This brings us near to the ideals of the New Testament, and indeed, autosuggestion, as a force making for goodness, is bound to touch closely on religion.

It teaches the doctrine of the inner life. It asserts that within are the sources of calm, of power and of courage, and that the man who has once attained mastery of the inner sphere is armed against any-thing that may befall him. This truth is apparent in the lives of great men. Great achievements have been wrought by those who had the

fortitude to follow the directions of an inner voice, even in contradiction to the massed voices they heard without.

Suppose we find that the power Christ gave to His disciples to work miracles of healing was not a gift conferred on a few selected individuals, but was the heritage of all men; that the kingdom of heaven within us to which He alluded was available in a simple way for the purging and elevation of our common life, for procuring sounder health and sweeter minds. Is not the affirmation contained in Coué's formula a kind of prayer? Does it not appeal to something beyond the self-life, to the infinite power lying behind us?

Autosuggestion is no substitute for religion; it could be a new weapon added to the religious armoury. If as a mere scientific technique it can yield such results, what might it not do as the expression of those yearnings for perfection which religion incorporates?