



Suggestion and Autosuggestion: A Psychological and Pedagogical Study Based Upon the Investigations Made by the New Nancy School (Classic Reprint)

Charles Baudouin

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Excerpt from Suggestion and Autosuggestion: A Psychological and Pedagogical Study Based Upon the Investigations Made by the New Nancy School

The dissociation of hypnotism from mysticism and superstition was efficiently begun by two investigators, Alexandre Bertrand and James Braid. Bertrand (*Traite du somnambulisme*, Paris, 1823; *Du magnétisme animal en France*, Paris, 1826) insisted especially upon the psychological determinants of the phenomena in question. He maintained that what we now call the hypnotic state was brought about through the influence of the imagination of the patients acting upon themselves. Herein we have the germ of Coue's theory of autosuggestion as expounded in the following pages. Braid, on the other hand (various writings, from 1841 to his death in 1860), inclined at the outset rather to the physiological explanation of what he was the first to term "hypnotism." It is interesting to note that Braid was a pioneer in the therapeutic use of reflective autosuggestion. He describes his own sufferings, in September, 1844, from a severe attack of muscular rheumatism, which had made it impossible for him to sleep for three successive nights. He then hypnotised himself in the presence of two friends. "At the expiration of nine minutes they aroused me, and, to my agreeable surprise, I was quite free from pain, being able to move in any way with perfect ease... I had seen like results with many patients; but it is one thing to hear of pain, and another to feel it. My suffering was so exquisite that I could not imagine anyone else ever suffered so intensely as myself on that occasion; and therefore I merely expected mitigation, so that I was truly and agreeably surprised to find myself quite free from pain.

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