SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

AN OUTLINE AND SOURCE BOOK

BY

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CHAPTER II

SUGGESTIBILITY

The higher psychic growths imply association

THE older psychology was individualistic in its interpretations. The contents of the mind were looked upon as elaborations out of personal experience. It sought to show how from the primary sense perceptions are built up ideas, at first simple, then more and more complex — ideas of space, time, number, cause, etc. The upper stories of personality, framed on beliefs, standards, valuations, and ideals, were comparatively neglected. The psychologist failed to note that for these highly elaborated products we are more indebted to our fellow-men than to our individual experience, that they are wrought out, as it were, collectively, and not by each for himself.

Much of one's mental content comes from others

The newer psychology in accounting for the contents of the mind gives great prominence to the social factor. It insists that without interaction with other minds the psychic development of the child would be arrested at a stage not far above idiocy. Such interaction arises necessarily from the suggestibility of human nature. A person cannot unswervingly follow the orbit prescribed by his heredity or his private experience. He does not sit serene at the centre of things and coolly decide which of the examples and ideas that present themselves he shall adopt. Much of what impinges on his consciousness comes with some force. It has momentum, and if he does not yield

to it, it is because his mind resists with a greater force. The weak mind, like Sir James Brooke in "Middlemarch," "takes shape easily, but won't keep shape." Many a man thinks he makes up his mind, whereas, in truth, it is made up for him by some masterful associate or by the man who talked with him last.

Psychic resonance

Stimuli welling up from within may be termed *impulses*, whereas those reaching us directly from without may be termed *suggestions*. The latter may be defined as "the abrupt entrance from without into consciousness of an idea or image which becomes a part of the stream of thought and tends to produce the muscular and volitional effects which ordinarily follow upon its presence."[1] Examples of the working of suggestion are legion. Persons accustomed to being put under the influence of anæsthetics have "gone off" as soon as the familiar chloroform mask was laid on the face, but before any chloroform had been poured on it. A professor of chemistry announced to his auditors: "The bottle which you see before me contains a chemical with a strong and peculiar odor. I wish to see how rapidly the odor will be diffused through the air and will therefore ask each of you to raise the hand as soon as the odor is perceived." With face averted he then poured the liquid over some cotton and started a stop watch. In fifteen seconds most of those in the front row had given the sign, and by the end of a minute three-fourths of the audience claimed to perceive the smell. Yet the bottle contained nothing but distilled water, and the professor had been measuring the power of suggestion and not the diffusibility of an odor![2]

[1] Baldwin, "Handbook of Psychology," II, 297.
[2] *Psychological Review*, VI, 407.

Suggestions are true forces and enact themselves unless they meet resistance. The power to withstand, ignore, or throw off suggestions is one form of *inhibition, i.e.*, will power. Suggestion and imitation are merely two aspects of the same thing, the one being cause, the other effect.

Suggestibility varies according to, —

Suggestibility at sub-human levels

1. *Species.* — It appears to be more marked in gregarious than in solitary creatures. Not all simians are imitative, but the gregarious simians, the monkeys, are proverbially so. Sheep are so imitative that if a file of them be driven through a narrow passage and the leader be made to jump over a stick held across the passage, every one of the file will jump at that place, even if the stick be withdrawn. Only high suggestibility could produce the wonderful instantaneous concert of action seen in the herd of deer or buffalo, the band of wild horses or elephants.

The waxen mind of nature men

2. *Race.* — Suggestibility is not a weakness produced by civilization. We are told that if Samoyeds be sitting about inside their skin tents in the evening and some one creeps up and strikes the tent with his hand, half of them are likely to fall into cataleptic fits. Recent investigations show this nervous instability to be very widespread among the Siberian tribes. We are assured that among the Malays prevails *lâtah*, an uncanny disorder which would be expected of the high-strung nervous systems of ultra-refined Europeans rather than of artless, unsophisticated children of nature like the Malays. Once you have the attention of *lâtah*-struck persons, "by merely looking them hard in the face, they will fall helpless into the hands of the operator, instantly lose all self-control, and go passively through any performance, whether ver-

bally imposed or merely suggested by a sign." [1] The Chinaman, so phlegmatic that he is said to be able to sleep "lying across a wheelbarrow with his mouth open and a fly buzzing inside his mouth," suffers, nevertheless, from nervous instability. In the interior of China in almost every village there develop many cases of auto-suggestion, which pass for demoniac possession. "The most striking characteristic of these cases is that the subject evidences another personality, and the normal personality for the time being is partially or wholly dormant." [2]

The American Indian, far from being impassive, is an extremely susceptible type. The ghost-dance religion that spread among the Indians, 1889–1892, took possession of probably sixty thousand souls. Its central feature was a sacred dance, reënforced by hypnotizing operations by the medicine man upon dancers who began to show signs of ecstasy. Under the power of the emotion and of the passes employed by the medicine man, first one and then another would break from the ring, stagger, and fall down. "They kept up dancing until fully one hundred persons were lying unconscious. Then they stopped and seated themselves in a circle, and as each one recovered from his trance, he was brought to the centre of the ring to relate his experience." [3]

Differences among culture men

Among the civilized races the Celto-Slavs seem to be more suggestive than the English or the Scandinavians. The demonstrativeness of French and Italian audiences is in high contrast to the "phlegm" of English and Ger-

[1] Quoted from Swettenham by Keane, "Man, Past and Present," 236.
[2] Nevius, "Demon Possession," 144.
[3] Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 917.

man audiences. Nothing surpasses the fire and dash of a French cavalry charge. The English are at their best in individualistic fighting, such as defence or retreat. The French and Irish orators hold the palm, while it is the mobs of Frenchmen and of Russians that yield the best material for crowd psychology. Mesmerism and, later, hypnotism originated in France. Politeness and the refinements of intercourse are well-nigh spontaneous with the Irish and the French, owing to their quick susceptibility to slight indications of feeling in the other person. The rudeness so often complained of in the English seems due to an insensitiveness to certain ranges of suggestion.

Why the child is "plastic"

3. *Age.* — Suggestibility is at its maximum in young children, and it is said that most children above the age of seven are hypnotizable.[1] Here is the secret of childhood's "plasticity." The adult may be progressive, *i.e.*, open to new ideas, but he ought not to be plastic, *i.e.*, shaped readily by whatever happens to impinge on him. Juvenile testimony is very untrustworthy, seeing that by a series of skilful leading questions a child may be led to give almost any desired story on the witness-stand. It is the suggestibility of the young that prompts us to segregate youthful offenders, institute juvenile courts, keep vicious women off the street, penalize the dissemination of obscene literature, outlaw "treating," and eliminate the commercial motive from the sale of liquor.

Temperament

4. *Temperament.* — Coe[2] finds those of the sanguine or the melancholic temperament decidedly more suggestible than the choleric. Of seventeen persons who from their

[1] Binet, "La Suggestibilité," sets forth investigations showing a marked normal suggestibility in school children.

[2] "The Spiritual Life," 120.

upbringing had come to expect a striking religious transformation and did experience it (suggestibles), twelve were predominated by sensibility, two by intellect, and three by will. For twelve persons who looked for a conversion but failed to experience it (spontaneous), the corresponding figures are two, nine, and one.

Women more suggestible than men

5. *Sex.* — Among the Indian ghost-dancers, "young women are usually the first to be affected, then older women, and lastly men." Coe finds that among those who definitely seek for a striking religious transformation, the proportion of those whose expectation is completely satisfied is decidedly greater among the women. Starbuck's figures,[1] showing six times as many women as men converted at the regular church services, indicates the greater response of women to external suggestion. In conversion "men display more friction against surroundings, more difficulty with points of belief, more doubt arising from educational influences, more readiness to question traditional beliefs and customs, more pronounced tendency to resist conviction, to pray, to call on God, to lose sleep and appetite." For them the period of doubt and struggle is longer than for women. Ellis[2] points out that women are more hypnotizable than men. In every hypnotic clinic women are in a great majority. One authority avers that two-thirds of hysterical women and only one-fifth of hysterical men can be hypnotized. Of 360 persons successfully treated by hypnotic therapeutics in a given time 265 were women, 45 were children, and only 50 were men. Hysteria, the mental side of which is exaggerated suggestibility, is much more common in women than in men. Women make

[1] *American Journal of Psychology*, VIII, 271.
[2] "Man and Woman," ch. XII.

the best mediums. In the Middle Ages witches were estimated to be fifty times as frequent as wizards. As religious leaders women have been conspicuous in that part of religion which covers the field of hypnotic phenomena. In women the stirrings of the inferior nervous centres are not so firmly controlled by the supreme centre as in man. Hence they are at once more suggestible and more emotional.

Women dwarfed by being held in tutelage

The mob susceptibilities in woman cause many strongly to oppose granting women more power in our social or political organization. But women are more than a sex. They are, in a sense, a social class shut out from many of the bracing and individualizing experiences that come to men. "Nowhere in the world," declares Professor Thomas,[1] "do women as a class lead a perfectly free intellectual life in common with the men of the group unless it be in restricted and artificial groups like the modern revolutionary party in Russia." Hence *woman* is by no means synonymous with *human female*. Almost everywhere propriety and conventionality press more mercilessly on woman than on man, thereby lessening her freedom and range of choice and dwarfing her will. Individuality develops through practice in choosing. If women are mobbish, it is largely for the same reason that monks, soldiers, peasants, *moujiks*, and other rigidly regulated types are mobbish. Much of woman's exaggerated impressionability disappears once she enjoys equal access with men to such individualizing influences as higher education, travel, self-direction, professional pursuits, participation in intellectual and public life.

[1] "Sex and Society," 311.

In the normal state indirect suggestion succeeds best

6. *Mental Condition.* — In the normal mental state distraction, *i.e.*, absence of mind, is favorable to the uncritical acceptance of suggestion. The mind must be "caught napping," as it were, in order that an uncongenial suggestion may find lodgment. A number of students are hard at work in the laboratory, absent-mindedly whistling a popular air. An experimenter is able at will to lead their whistling through a medley of well-known airs without their being in the least aware of it. Owing to the absence of his hired men a well-to-do farmer is burdened one evening with the task of milking his sixteen cows. The conclusion of his work at midnight finds him in a "brown study" over a philosophic problem. He takes the eight pails of milk and empties them, one after another, into the swill barrel, coming to realize what he is doing only as he drains the last pail! The "feel" of the full milk-pails had suggested "swill barrel," for one of his daily "chores" was the disposal of skim milk. An absent-minded professor is directed by his wife after dinner to go upstairs and change his clothes preparatory to receiving callers. On going in search of him after the callers have left, she finds him asleep in bed. Undressing had suggested "bed," and bed had suggested "sleep." After an absorbing discussion in a group of smokers a man who finds one cigar enough discovers he has smoked four cigars. The cigars in the open box on the table virtually suggested "Take me!"

By one in the normal state, then, slantwise suggestion is far more likely to be accepted than direct suggestion, on the principle that a flank movement succeeds when a frontal attack fails. The young man who has broken with his old habits and associates may be drawn into the saloon

again by the suggestion from a chance-met former crony, "Let's sit down somewhere and talk over old times," when he would have declined the invitation, "Come and let's have a drink." Shakespeare understood the efficacy of indirect suggestion. The subtlety of Iago consists in his sliding suspicion into Othello's mind without drawing attention upon himself. In Scene III of Act III Othello and Iago enter, and Cassio, who has been beseeching Desdemona to get him forgiven for his escapade, withdraws, too shame-faced to meet his commander. At this Iago exclaims as if to himself, —

"Ha! I like not that.
Oth. What dost thou say?
Iago. Nothing, my lord: or if — I know not what.
Oth. Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?
Iago. Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it;
That he would steal away so guilty like,
Seeing you coming."

When they are left alone after Desdemona's successful intervention on Cassio's behalf, Iago, with every appearance of reticence, contrives to scatter fresh seeds of suspicion in his master's soul.

"*Iago.* My noble lord, —
Oth. What dost thou say, Iago?
Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady, know of your love?
Oth. He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?
Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.
Oth. Why of thy thought, Iago?

Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with her.
Oth. O, yes, and went between us very oft.
Iago. Indeed!
Oth. Indeed! Ay, indeed; discern'st thou aught in that? Is he not honest?
Iago. Honest, my lord?
Oth. Honest, ay, honest.
Iago. My lord, for aught I know.
Oth. What dost thou think?
Iago. Think, my lord!
Oth. Think, my lord!
By heaven, he echoes me
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something;
I heard thee say but now, thou likest not that,
When Cassio left my wife: What didst not like?
And when I told thee how he was in my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst, "Indeed!"
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: If thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.
Iago. My lord, you know I love you.
Oth. I think thou dost.
And for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things in a false disloyal knave
Are tricks of custom; but in a man that's just
They're close dilations working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.
Iago. For Michael Cassio

I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.

Oth. I think so too.

Iago. Men should be what they seem;
Or those that be not, would they might seem none!

Oth. Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago. Why then I think Cassio's an honest man.

Oth. Nay, yet there's more in this;
I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words."

In like manner, by indirect suggestion, veering more and more to direct suggestion as they come under his sway, Mark Antony stirs up the Roman populace against the "honorable men" who have slain Cæsar.

Fasting heightens susceptibility to hallucination and suggestion. The universally recommended regimen for hearing voices, experiencing ecstatic states, and "seeing God" is fasting. There was an ancient saying, "The stuffed prophet shall not see or know secret things." The Indian boy about the time of puberty fasts till he is vouchsafed a vision of his "Manitou." In the earlier days the negro "seekers" fasted in order to experience "conversion." Savage peoples employ fasting, solitude, and physical exhaustion induced by watching, dancing, whirling, shouting, or flagellation, to bring on abnormal states in which suggestibility is extreme. The preternatural resonance of the half-starved human being has long been counted a sign of divine afflatus, and the full-fed healthy man of stable mentality has humbled himself before the emaciated seer of visions and dreamer of dreams.

Fasting heightens suggestibility

Fatigue and hysteria

Overstimulation brings on fatigue and a heightening of suggestibility. Nordau accounts as follows for the prevalence in our time of decadent schools and movements in art and literature.

"The leading characteristic of the hysterical is the disproportionate impressionability of their psychic centres. From this primary peculiarity proceeds a second quite as remarkable and important — the exceeding ease with which they can be made to yield to suggestion. The earlier observers always mentioned the boundless mendacity of the hysterical . . . they were mistaken. The hysterical subject does not consciously lie. He believes in the truth of his craziest inventions. The morbid mobility of his mind, the excessive excitability of his imagination, conveys to his consciousness all sorts of queer and senseless ideas. He suggests to himself that these ideas are founded on true perceptions, and believes in the truth of his foolish inventions until a new suggestion — perhaps his own, perhaps that of another person — has ejected the earlier one. A result of the susceptibility of the hysterical subject to suggestion is his irresistible passion for imitation, and the eagerness with which he yields to all the suggestions of writers and artists. When he sees a picture, he wants to become like it in attitude and dress; when he reads a book, he adopts its views blindly. He takes as a pattern the heroes of the novels which he has in his hand at the moment, and infuses himself into the characters moving before him on the stage." [1]

"When a hysterical person is loudly and unceasingly assured that a work is beautiful, deep, pregnant with the future, he believes in it. He believes in everything sug-

[1] "Degeneration," 25, 26.

gested to him with sufficient impressiveness. When a little cow girl, Bernadette, saw the vision of the Holy Virgin in the grotto of Lourdes, the woman devotees and hysterical males of the surrounding country who flocked thither did not merely believe that the hallucinant maiden had herself seen the vision, but all of them saw the Holy Virgin with their own eyes. M. E. de Goncourt relates that in 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War, a multitude of men, numbering tens of thousands, in and before the Bourse in Paris, were convinced that they had themselves seen — indeed, a part of them had read — a telegram announcing French victories fastened to a pillar inside the Exchange, and at which people were pointing with the fingers; but as a matter of fact it never existed. It would be feasible to cite examples by the dozen of illusions of the senses suggested to excited crowds. Thus the hysterical allow themselves without more ado to be convinced of the magnificence of a work, and even find in it beauties of the highest kind, unthought of by the authors themselves and the appointed trumpeters of their fame.[1]

Nordau's theory of latter-day hysteria

"The enormous increase of hysteria in our days is partly due . . . to the fatigue of the present generation. . . . Fatigue constitutes a true temporary experimental hysteria. . . . One can change a normal into a hysterical individual by tiring him.[2] . . . Now, to this cause — fatigue

[1] *Ibid.*, 32–33.

[2] "Suggestibility from exhaustion or strain is a rather common condition with many of us. Probably all eager brain workers find themselves now and then in a state where they are 'too tired to stop.' The overwrought mind loses the healthy power of casting off its burden, and seems capable of nothing but going on and on in the same painful and futile course. One may know that he is accomplishing nothing, that work done in such a state of mind is always bad work, and that 'that

— which, according to Féré, changes healthy men into hysterical, the whole of civilized humanity has been exposed for half a century. All its conditions of life have, in this period of time, experienced a revolution unexampled in the history of the world. Humanity can point to no century in which the inventions which penetrate so deeply, so tyrannically, into the life of every individual are crowded so thick as in ours. The discovery of America, the Reformation, stirred men's minds powerfully, no doubt, and certainly also destroyed the equilibrium of thousands of brains which lacked staying power. But they did not change the material life of man. He got up and lay down, ate and drank, dressed, amused himself, passed his days and years as he had always been wont to do. In our times, on the contrary, steam and electricity have turned the customs of life of every member of the civilized nations upside down, even of the most obtuse and narrow-minded citizen, who is completely inaccessible to the impelling thoughts of the times."[1] "The humblest village inhabitant has to-day a wider geographical horizon, more numerous and complex intellectual interests, than the prime minister of a petty, or even a second-rate, state a century ago. A cook receives and sends more letters than a university professor did formerly, and a petty tradesman travels more and sees more countries and people than did the reigning prince of other times. All these activities, however, even the simplest, involve an effort of the nervous

way madness lies,' but yet be too weak to resist, chained to the wheel of his thought, so that he must wait till it runs down. And such a state, however induced, is the opportunity for all sorts of undisciplined impulses, perhaps some gross passion, like anger, dread, the need of drink, or the like." — COOLEY, "Human Nature and the Social Order," 41.

[1] *Ibid.*, 36, 37.

system and a wearing of tissue. Every line we read or write, every human face that we see, every conversation we carry on, every scene we perceive through the window of the flying express, sets in activity our sensory nerves and our brain centres. Even the little shocks of railway travelling, not perceived by consciousness, the perpetual noises, and the various sights in the streets of a large town, our suspense pending the sequel of progressing events, the constant expectation of the newspaper, of the postman, of visitors, cost our brains wear and tear. In the last fifty years the population of Europe has not doubled, whereas the sum of its labors has increased tenfold, in part even fifty fold. Every civilized man furnishes, at the present time, from five to twenty-five times as much work as was demanded of him half a century ago." [1]

"In the last twenty years a number of new nervous diseases have been discovered and named. They are exclusively a consequence of the present conditions of civilized life. Many affections of the nervous system already bear a name which implies that they are a direct consequence of certain influences of modern civilization. The terms 'railway-spine' and 'railway-brain,' which the English and American pathologists have given to certain states of these organs, show that they recognize them as due . . . partly to the constant vibrations undergone in railway travelling. Again, the great increase in the consumption of narcotics and stimulants has its origin unquestionably in the exhausted systems with which the age abounds." [2]

The writer doubts the soundness of Nordau's interpretation. It is more likely that the literary and æsthetic

An alternative explanation

[1] *Ibid.*, 39. [2] *Ibid.*, 40, 41.

crazes of our time are connected with the collapse of time-hallowed authorities, are a part of the price we pay to ransom our souls from the spell of the past. Innumerable minds have parted their moorings to tradition before acquiring rudder and steering-wheel. What, then, can be their fate but to drift about helplessly or founder miserably in the cross currents of our age!

Theory of hypnotic phenomena

In the hypnotic trance suggestibility is greatly enhanced, and direct suggestion succeeds best. Hypnotism has been so fully exploited that I shall not dilate here upon the marvellous obedience of the subject to the will of the operator, nor enlarge upon the significance of retroactive and post-hypnotic suggestions. Probably the most rational notion of what really takes place in hypnosis is that given by Sidis.[1] "Abnormal suggestibility is a disaggregation of consciousness, a slit, a scar, produced in the mind, a crack that may extend wider and deeper, ending at last in the total disjunction of the waking, guiding, controlling consciousness from the reflex consciousness, from the rest of the stream of life." In normal suggestibility "the lesion effected in the body of consciousness is superficial, transitory, fleeting. In abnormal suggestibility, on the contrary, the slit is deep and lasting — it is a severe gash. In both cases, however, we have a removal, a dissociation of the waking from the subwaking, reflex consciousness, and suggestion being effected only through the latter. *It is the subwaking, the reflex, not the waking, the controlling consciousness that is suggestible. Suggestibility is the attribute, the very essence of the subwaking, reflex consciousness.*"

[1] "The Psychology of Suggestion," 88, 89.

Suggestibility in the normal and in the abnormal state

In the normal state suggestion should be as indirect as possible in order to catch the inhibitory, waking consciousness "off its guard." In the abnormal state no circumspection is needed; the controlling inhibitory, waking consciousness is more or less dormant, the subwaking, reflex consciousness is exposed, and our suggestions are more effective the more direct they are. "Suggestion varies as the amount of disaggregation, and inversely as the unification of consciousness."

The integral self and the sub-selves

The primary self is the self with personality and will. It is, as it were, a synthesis of all one's experience. It alone embodies the results of reflection, and it alone holds life true to a personal ideal. It is the captain of the ship. When it is able to fight back the mutinous crew that swarm up from the forecastle — the appetites and passions — and to hold the ship to her course in spite of side-winds and cross currents — suggestions from without — we have a character. If, now, this primary self is overthrown or put to sleep, the subwaking self becomes master of the ship. This self has little reason, will, or conscience. It has sense, appetite, emotion, intelligence, but not character. It is imitative, servile, credulous, swung hither and thither by all sorts of incoming suggestions. The life it prompts cannot be stable, self-consistent, integrated. It is low on the scale of personality, and a situation that commits to its hands the helm of the individual life is fraught with disaster.

Suggestion and miracle

One of the most important manifestations of abnormal suggestibility in the social field is wonderworking. Says Coe:[1] "Facts like those of suggestive healing have not failed to raise the question whether suggestion may not

[1] "The Spiritual Life," 200.

be the clew to the miraculous element in the lives of the saints, and even in the life of Christ, to say nothing of its bearing upon the wonderworking features of other religions. On the face of the stories of saintly visions, trances, and revelations one can certainly read the imprint of auto-suggestion. Nor must we stop here. Let us consider two exclusive cases of the most strange physical manifestations that have been known to accompany spiritual exaltation. Seven hundred years ago St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Order of Franciscans, after long meditation on the wounds of Christ, found upon his own person sores or 'stigmata' corresponding to the five wounds of the Saviour. Similarly, in the third quarter of this century, Louise Lateau, a devout girl, repeatedly shed blood at the same points. A committee of competent investigators, after carefully examining into her case, became convinced that the phenomena were genuine, and free from intentional deception. But this very wonder has been duplicated in substance by one or more hypnotic subjects through whose skin blood has been caused to exude by suggestion. Lesser phenomena of the same class, such as the production of redness, inflammation, and swelling, have been repeatedly witnessed."

Suggestion in Oriental magic

Certain verified feats of Indian jugglery give color to the belief that in the *art* of hypnotism — as distinct from the *scientific comprehension* of it — the Oriental adepts are far in advance of anything yet attained in our psychopathic clinics. Says Bose:[1] —

"Dr. Hensoldt saw 'in the centre of one of the largest squares in Agra a Yogi plant a mango — an edible tropical fruit about the size of a large pear growing on a

[1] "Hindu Civilization during British Rule," II, 152.

tree which reaches a height of from forty to one hundred and twenty feet. The Yogi dug a hole in the ground about six inches deep, placed the mango in it, and covered it with earth. . . . I was startled to see in the air above the spot where the mango had been buried the form of a large tree, at first rather indistinctly, presenting as it were mere hazy outlines, but becoming visibly more distinct, until at length there stood out as natural a tree as ever I had seen in my life — a mango tree about fifty feet high and in full foliage, with mangoes on it. All this happened within five minutes of the burying of the fruit . . . And yet there was something strange about this tree, a weird rigidness, not one leaf moving in the breeze. . . . Another curious feature I noticed — the leaves seemed to obscure the sun's rays. . . . It was a tree without a shadow.'

"As he approached it it faded, but grew clear again as he receded to his original position; but on his retreating beyond that point it again faded. 'Each individual saw the tree only from the place where he stood.' The English officers not present from the commencement saw nothing at all. Then the Yogi preached — so absorbingly that Dr. Hensoldt 'seemed to forget time and space.' He consequently did not notice the disappearance of the tree. When the Yogi ceased speaking the tree had gone. Then he dug up the mango he had buried. This mango feat he saw five times. Before the palace of the Guikwar of Baroda 'in the open air and in broad daylight,' Dr. Hensoldt declares he saw for the first time — he saw it thrice subsequently — the celebrated rope trick. A Yogi, after preaching a most impressive sermon, 'took a rope about fifteen feet long and perhaps an inch thick. One

end of this rope he held in his left hand, while with the right he threw the other end up in the air. The rope instead of coming down again remained suspended, even after the Yogi had removed his other hand, and it seemed to have become as rigid as a pillar. Then the Yogi seized it with both hands, and to my utter amazement, *climbed up* this rope suspended all the time, in defiance of gravity, with the lower end at least five feet from the ground. And in proportion as he climbed up it seemed as if the rope was lengthening out indefinitely above him and disappearing beneath him, for he kept on climbing until he was fairly out of sight, and the last I could distinguish was his white turban and a piece of this never ending rope. Then my eyes could endure the glare of the sky no longer, and when I looked again he was gone.' As an Oriental traveller and student, Dr. Hensoldt concludes that Hindu adepts have 'brought hypnotism to such a degree of perfection that, while under its influence our senses are no longer a criterion of the reality around us, but can be made to deceive us in a manner which is perfectly amazing.'"

Prestige is conferred by evident power

7. *Source of Suggestion.* — One is most susceptible to suggestions from certain quarters or from certain people — from those clothed with *prestige.* Prestige is that which excites such wonder or admiration as to paralyze the critical faculty. It is not the same at all stages. The boy, trying constantly to do things, admires most those who can do things better than he can or things he cannot do at all. Says Cooley:[1] "His father sitting at his desk probably seems an inert and unattractive phenomenon, but the man who can make shavings or dig a deep hole

[1] "Human Nature and the Social Order," 290–293.

is a hero; and the seemingly perverse admiration which children at a later age show for circus men and for the pirates and desperadoes they read about, is to be explained in a similar manner. What they want is *evident* power."

"The idea of power and the types of personality which, as standing for that idea, have ascendency over us, are a function of our own changing character. At one stage of their growth nearly all imaginative boys look upon some famous soldier as the ideal man. He holds this place as symbol and focus for the aggressive, contending, dominating impulses of vigorous boyhood; to admire and sympathize with him is to gratify, imaginatively, these impulses. In this country some notable speaker and party leader often succeeds the soldier as the boyish ideal; his career is almost equally dominating and splendid, and, in time of peace, not quite so remote from reasonable aspirations."

Kinds and tokens of power

"The simpler and more dramatic or visually imaginable kinds of power have a permanent advantage as regards general ascendency. Only a few can appreciate the power of Darwin, and those few only when the higher faculties of their minds are fully awake; there is nothing dramatic, nothing appealing to the visual imagination, in his secluded career. But we can all *see* Grant or Nelson or Moltke at the headquarters of their armies, or on the decks of their ships, and hear the roar of their cannons. They hold one by the eye and by the swelling of an emotion felt to be common to a vast multitude of people."

Hero-stuff

"This need of a dramatic or visually imaginable presentation of power is no doubt more imperative in the childlike peoples of southern Europe than it is in the sedater and more abstractly imaginative Teutons; but it

is strong in every people, and is shared by the most intellectual classes in their emotional moods. Consequently these heroes of the popular imagination, especially those of war, are enabled to serve as the instigators of a common emotion in great masses of people, and thus to produce in large groups a sense of comradeship and solidarity. The admiration and worship of such heroes is probably the chief feeling that people have in common in all early stages of civilization, and the main bond of social groups."

Traits of the born leader

The born leader is one whose superiority seems boundless. If it is only relative, if we can measure it, if we can fathom the secret of it and can see how we can finally attain to it ourselves, he is no longer our hero. In every crisis he must appear to be master of the situation, not perplexed, dubious, or vacillating. His faith in himself and in his undertaking must appear tremorless. He must bear up when others despair, remain serene when they are agitated. His intelligence must overarch and reach beyond that of his followers. Not unbroken success, not measurable excellence, but the gift of striking and stirring the imagination of others is, perhaps, the essential thing in natural leadership. Cooley[1] remarks: "A sense of power in others seems to involve a sense of their inscrutability; and, on the other hand, so soon as a person becomes plain he ceases to stimulate the imagination; we have seen all around him, so that he no longer appears an open door to new life." "The power of mere inscrutability arises from the fact that it gives a vague stimulus to thought and then leaves it to work out the details to suit itself."

[1] "Human Nature and the Social Order," 313–315.

"A strange and somewhat impassive physiognomy is often, perhaps, an advantage to an orator, or leader of any sort, because it helps to fix the eye and fascinate the mind. Such a countenance as that of Savonarola may have counted for much toward the effect he produced. Another instance of the prestige of the inscrutable is the fascination of silence, when power is imagined to lie behind it. The very name of William the Silent gives one a sort of thrill, whether he knows anything of that distinguished character or not. One seems to see a man darkly potent, mysteriously dispensing with the ordinary channel of self-assertion, and attaining his ends without evident means. It is the same with Von Moltke, 'silent in seven languages,' whose genius humbled France and Austria in two brief campaigns. And General Grant's taciturnity undoubtedly fascinated the imagination of the people — after his earlier successes had shown that there was really something in him — and helped to secure to him a trust and authority much beyond that of any other of the Federal generals. It is the same with a personal reserve in every form: one who always appears to be his own master and does not too readily reveal his deeper feelings, is so much the more likely to create an impression of power. He is formidable because incalculable."

Prestige the key to "natural authority"

Acquired prestige is that due to proximity, place, office, etc. The ascendency of the parent in moulding the character of a child is due not alone to the long term of association, but also to the fact that the parent, as the first adult in the child's ken, seems to him limitless in powers and wisdom. This gives the father a long lead over others and procures him obedience after he is no longer able to punish. Prestige of this kind explains the "natural

authority" of teacher over pupil, squire over tenant, priest over flock, officer over men. In France a dashing "man on horseback" like General Boulanger has prestige. In the East the hermit, or *yogi*, is admired and obeyed.

Force *vs.* prestige as inspirer of political obedience

A government not founded on common consent must base its authority on fear or on prestige. The latter is cheaper, and more satisfactory both to rulers and ruled. This is why authoritative governments always surround themselves with prestige-conferring pomp. Thus Dill[1] observes: —

"The imperial government at all times displayed the politic or instinctive love of monarchy for splendor and magnificence. . . . After great fires and desolating wars, the first thought of the most frugal or the most lavish prince was to restore in greater grandeur what had been destroyed. After the great conflagration of 64 A.D., which laid in ashes ten out of the fourteen regions of Rome, Nero immediately set to work to rebuild the city in a more orderly fashion, with broader streets and open spaces. Vespasian, on his accession, found the treasury loaded with a debt of more than a billion and a half dollars. Yet the frugal emperor did not hesitate to begin at once the restoration of the Capitol, and all the other ruins left by the great struggle of 69 A.D. from which his dynasty arose. . . . Titus completed the Colosseum, and erected the famous baths. Domitian once more restored the Capitol, and added many new buildings."

Only popular governments dare to dispense with splendor and be "simple." A reappearance of state and magnificence in a government is good evidence that it no longer expresses the real will of the people.

[1] "Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius," 227.

8. *Duration of Suggestion.* — Reiteration of the same idea in various forms is essential to the production of an effect upon people in a normal state of mind. It takes time for the orator to weave his spell. It is in the closing weeks of the legislative session that the tireless lobbyist registers his triumph over the scruples of the legislators. Advertising, to bring in returns, must be persevered in; it may be months after heavy advertising is begun before the sales swell noticeably. The insurance solicitor knows the efficacy of "follow up" letters and conversations. The reiterated phrases of a church liturgy gradually inspire in the hearer the mood of worship. It is a trick of balladists to call up a certain emotional tone by a recurring phrase at the close of each stanza. Rossetti uses it in "Sister Helen," "Eden Bower," and "Troy Town." Villon's "Ballad of Dead Ladies" owes its effect to the refrain, "But where are the snows of yester year?" Aged couples exhibit sometimes a startling mental and moral resemblance due to the reciprocal influencing of each other for many years. It is a proverb that if you keep on throwing mud some of it will stick. The reform school, or reformatory, requires several years to turn out the "trusty." The educator estimates his power to mould the youth by the time allotted him. Says Mott[1] of the Presbyterian College at Teng-chou Fu, China: "For over thirty years, Dr. Calvin Mateer and his wife devoted the best energies of their lives to the comparatively small number of young men admitted to the college. They made much of personal contact with the students, and estimated that they could personally and deeply influ-

The efficacy of recurrent suggestion

[1] "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation," 93.

ence but about sixty at a time. The students were carefully selected and were kept as a rule for several years."

Moral recrystallization requires time

The officer demands four or five years to convert the gutter-snipe recruit into the finished soldier.[1] The Americanization of the immigrant is not a matter of weeks and months merely. The missionary finds that it is the first batch of converts that costs. Says Mott:[2] —

"In 1882, five years after the missionaries reached Uganda, they had their first baptisms. Up to the end of the seventh year less than a hundred had been baptized. In 1890 the tide began to rise more rapidly. Bishop had meetings in 1891 which were so largely attended that the crush reminded him of Exeter Hall. When the cathedral was dedicated the following year, the audience numbered nearly four thousand. In 1893, during the great revival led by Pilkington, hundreds were converted. The influence of this revival extended far and wide in different directions. At the beginning of 1894 there were only twenty country chapels, but by the end of that year the number had increased to two hundred." This snowball-avalanche effect neatly illustrates the laws of suggestibility. "The wonderful Telugu revival in the Lone Star Mission after nearly a generation of quiet work still serves to lift the faith of the Church."[3] "After many years of deep preparatory work in Fukien Province, the past few years have witnessed the greatest ingathering in the history of missions in China."[4]

[1] Kipling in his barrack-room ballad "The 'Eathen" describes the steps in the process of building up soldierly character, and the result. "Seven Seas," 191.

[2] "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation," 88.

[3] *Ibid.*, 99.

[4] *Ibid.*, 100.

9. *Volume of Suggestion.* — What strikes us from all directions at almost the same instant has a tremendous effect. Says Bagehot:[1] — Effect of a broadside of suggestion

"In 'Eothen' there is a capital description of how every sort of European resident in the East, even the shrewd merchant and 'the post-captain,' with his bright, wakeful eyes of commerce, comes soon to believe in witchcraft,[2] and to assure you, in confidence, that there 'really is something in it.' He has never seen anything convincing himself, but he has seen those who have seen those who have seen those who have seen. In fact, he has lived in an atmosphere of infectious belief, and he has inhaled it. Scarcely any one can help yielding to the current infatuations of his sect or party. For a short time — say some fortnight — he is resolute; he argues and objects; but, day by day, the poison thrives, and reason wanes. What he hears from his friends, what he reads in the party organ,

[1] "Physics and Politics," 93.

[2] Stoll ("Suggestion und Hypnotismus," Zweite Auflage, 416), in commenting on the atrocious witch trial at Zug, Switzerland, in 1737, points out how completely the learned judges stood under the spell of the universal witchcraft belief of their times. Their judgment was so thoroughly warped that they could not detect in the testimony of the accused the convincing note of truth, nor recognize how perfectly the account of themselves the poor women gave tallied with their circumstances. Among the effects of Kathri Gilli was a small bag of white powder. Her accuser declared it was a poison used for the malicious destruction of cattle, whereas Kathri explained that it was oat flour. Some of it was given to a dog without ill effects. Kathri offered to prove the harmlessness of this powder by partaking of it herself. Nevertheless, the experienced judges were so obsessed by the witchcraft superstition that they saw no convincing proof in the experiment with the dog, failed to draw a rational conclusion from the agreement between the assertion of Kathri and the outcome of the experiment, and deemed the rack a likelier means of eliciting the truth of the matter than testing the powder on Kathri herself!

produces its effect. The plain, palpable conclusion which every one around him believes has an influence greater and yet more subtle; that conclusion seems so solid and unmistakable; his own good arguments get daily more and more like a dream. Soon the gravest sage shares the folly of the party with which he acts and the sect with which he worships."

The secret of the might of public opinion

Men who easily throw off the thousand successive suggestions of everyday life are carried off their feet by the volume of suggestion that emanates from great numbers. This is the secret of the power of public opinion. Bryce[1] has set forth with great clearness the effect upon the individual of the deliquescence of small primitive groups and communities and their merging into a larger society.

Individuality in early society

"In small and rude communities, every free man, or at least every head of a household, feels his own significance and realizes his own independence. He relies on himself, he is little interfered with by neighbors or rulers. His will and his action count for something in the conduct of the affairs of the community he belongs to, yet common affairs are few compared to those in which he must depend on his own exertions. The most striking pictures of individualism that literature has preserved for us are those of the Homeric heroes, and of the even more terrible and self-reliant warriors of the Scandinavian Sagas, men like Ragnar Lodbrog and Egil, son of Skallagrim, who did not regard even the gods, but trusted to their own might and main. In more developed states of society organized on an oligarchic basis, such as were the feudal kingdoms of the Middle Ages, or in socially aristocratic

[1] "The American Commonwealth," II, ch. LXXXIV.

countries such as most parts of Europe have remained down to our own time, the bulk of the people are no doubt in a dependent condition, but each person derives a certain sense of personal consequence from the strength of his group and of the person or family at the head of it. Moreover, the upper class, being the class which thinks and writes, as well as leads in action, impresses its own type upon the character of the whole nation, and that type is still individualistic, with a strong consciousness of personal free will, and a tendency for each man, if not to think for himself, at least to value and to rely on his own opinion.

The rise of great collectivities

"Let us suppose, however, that the aristocratic structure of society has been dissolved, that the old groups have disappeared, that men have come to feel themselves members rather of the nation than of classes, or groups, or communities within the nation, that a levelling process has destroyed the ascendency of birth and rank, that large landed estates no longer exist, and that many persons in what was previously the humbler class are found possessed of property. Under such conditions of social equality the habit of intellectual command and individual self-confidence will have vanished from the leading class, which creates the type of national character, and will exist nowhere in the nation.

And of democracy

"Let us suppose, further, that political equality has gone hand in hand with the levelling down of social eminence." So that each feels that "his vote or voice counts for no more than that of his neighbor, that he can prevail, if at all, only by keeping himself on a level with his neighbor and recognizing the latter's personality as being every whit equal to his own.

The increase of social pressure

"Suppose further that all this takes place in an enormously large and populous country, where the governing voters are counted by so many millions that each individual feels himself a mere drop in the ocean, the influence which he can exert privately, whether by his personal gifts or by his wealth, being confined to the small circle of his town or neighborhood. On all sides there stretches around him an illimitable horizon; and beneath the blue vault which covers that horizon there is everywhere the same busy multitude with its clamor of mingled voices which he hears close by. In this multitude his own being seems lost. He has the sense of insignificance which overwhelms us when at night we survey the host of heaven and know that from even the nearest star this planet of ours is invisible.

The fatalism of the multitude

"When the scene of action is a small commonwealth, the individual voters are many of them personally known to one another, and the causes which determine their votes are understood and discounted. When it is a moderately sized country, the towns or districts which compose it are not too numerous for reckoning to overtake and imagination to picture them, and in many cases their action can be explained by well-known reasons which may be represented as transitory. But when the theatre stretches itself to a continent, when the number of voters is counted by many millions, the wings of imagination droop, and the huge voting mass ceases to be thought of as merely so many individual human beings no wiser or better than one's own neighbors. The phenomena seem to pass into the category of the phenomena of nature. . . . They inspire a sort of awe, a sense of individual impotence, like that which man feels when he contem-

plates the majestic and eternal forces of the inanimate world."

Individuality and numbers

It is perhaps the dwarfing pressure of numbers that explains why vast and populous societies seem to produce small individualities, whereas little societies permit great men to arise. Compare great homogeneous aggregations, such as Egypt, China, Persia, Babylonia, India, with the diminutive communities of Judea, the Greek city-states, the Italian cities of the Middle Ages, the free towns of mediæval Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland, and Switzerland.

SUMMARY

All persons are more or less amenable to the force of suggestion.

Suggestibility seems quite as pronounced among nature men as among culture men.

Experience and reflection in time build up a self with a certain momentum of its own.

The marked suggestibility of woman is partly due to her nervous organization, partly to her subjection to social pressure.

In the normal mental state, indirect suggestion succeeds best; in the abnormal state, direct suggestions may be obeyed.

Hypnosis and kindred states are probably a temporary abeyance of the higher controlling centers, leaving exposed to alien control the less organized and integrated psychoses of the lower centres.

That which produces bedazzlement and obedience is *prestige*. It is not the same for all stages of personal or racial development.

Training or drill involves the building up of stable habits by means of reiterated suggestions.

EXERCISES

1. Explain the deadliness of the innuendo.
2. How is it that with faint praise one can damn a rival more than with downright depreciation?

3. Show why, in exchange or diplomacy, the one who best dissembles his estimate of the thing he has and of the thing the other man has is likely to get the better of the bargain.

4. Account for the fact that the best way to get the offer of the coveted position is to affect an indifference to it.

5. Explain why, in coping with men, boldness is so often justified by the outcome. Is it so in coping with nature?

6. Why is it safer, on meeting a formidable animal, to stand than to run?

7. What is the point of the saying, "He doth protest too much"?

8. Justify by psychology the advice in "Joseph Vance" (p. 48): "When a chap thinks you know he believes in your solvency, don't ondeceive him by orfering him cash. Then he'll know you think he believes you insolvent and never give you a brass farden o' credit."

9. Explain the good moral influence of certain teachers and the utter lack of influence of other teachers.

10. Does the succession of hero types in the development of the boy into the man correspond to the succession of folk heroes in the rise of a people from barbarism to civilization?

CHAPTER III

THE CROWD

THE strength of multiplied suggestion is at its maximum when the individual is in the midst of a throng, helpless to control his position or movements. The same pressure on the body that prevents voluntary movement conveys promptly to him all the electrifying swayings and tremors that betray the emotions of the mass. This squeeze of the crowd tends to depress the self-sense. Says James:[1] — Individuality and voluntary movement

"In a sense, then, . . . the 'Self of selves,' when carefully examined, is found to consist mainly of the collection of these peculiar motions in the head and between the head and the throat. I do not for a moment say that this is all it consists of . . . but I feel quite sure that these cephalic motions are the portions of my innermost activity of which I am most distinctly aware. If the dim portions which I cannot yet define should prove to be like unto these distinct portions in me, and I like other men, it would follow that our entire feeling of spiritual activity, or what commonly passes by that name, is really a feeling of bodily activities, whose exact nature is by most men overlooked."

Sidis[2] goes further in declaring: "If anything gives us a strong sense of our individuality, it is surely our voluntary movements. We may say that the individual self

[1] "The Principles of Psychology," I, 301.
[2] "The Psychology of Suggestion," 299.

grows and expands with the increase of variety and intensity of its voluntary activity; and conversely, the life of the individual self sinks, shrinks with the decrease of variety and intensity of voluntary movements." Often a furious naughty child will suddenly become meek and obedient after being held a moment as in a vise. On the playground a saucy boy will abruptly surrender and "take it back" when held firmly on the ground without power to move hand or foot. The cause is not fear, but deflation of the ego.

Depression of the self sense in the throng

Here, perhaps, is the reason why individuality is so wilted in a dense throng, and why persons of a highly developed but somewhat fragile personality have a horror of getting nipped in a crowd. It is said that in the French theatre of the old régime the standing portion of the audience (pit) was always more emotional and violent in its demonstrations than the sitting portion (parquet), and that the providing of seats for the pit spectators greatly quieted their demeanor. The experienced orator knows that a standing open-air crowd is very different in response from a seated indoor audience, and changes his style accordingly.

Fixation of attention

Nevertheless, a holiday jam in a railroad station or at a race-course is no mob. A crowd self will not arise unless there is an orientation of attention, expectancy, a narrowing of the field of consciousness that excludes disturbing impressions. When a crowd is entering the critical state, we hear of "strained attention," "sea of upturned faces," "bated breath," "ominous hush," "a silence such that you can hear a fly buzz or a pin drop." The following newspaper account[1] of a Paderewski matinée shows the rôle of expectancy and inhibition:

[1] See Sidis, "The Psychology of Suggestion," 301.

"There is a chatter, a rustling of programmes, a waving of fans, a nodding of feathers, a general air of expectancy, and the lights are lowered. A hush. All eyes are turned to a small door leading on to the stage; it is opened. Paderewski enters. . . . A storm of applause greets him, . . . but after it comes a tremulous hush and a prolonged sigh, . . . created by the long, deep inhalation of upward of three thousand women. . . . Paderewski is at the piano. . . . Thousands of eyes watch every commonplace movement [of his] through opera-glasses with an intensity painful to observe. He the idol, they the idolaters. . . . Toward the end of the performance the most decorous women seem to abandon themselves to the influence. . . . There are sighs, sobs, the tight clinching of the palms, the bowing of the head. Fervid exclamations: 'He is my master!' are heard in the feminine mob."

Excitement

An excited throng easily turns mob because excitement weakens the reasoning power and predisposes to suggestions in line with the master emotion. Thus, frightened persons are peculiarly susceptible to warnings, angry persons to denunciations, expectant persons to promises, anxious persons to rumors. An agitated gathering is tinder, and the throngs that form in times of public tension are very liable to become mobs.

Elements in the crowd that profit by the heightened suggestibility

Although crowding, fixation of attention, and excitement exalt suggestibility, all members of the crowd do not experience this in the same degree. There are at least two descriptions of people who, in the give-and-take of the throng, are more likely to impose suggestions than to accept them. The *intelligent* are able to criticise and appraise the suggestions that impinge upon them. They are quick to react if a suggestion clashes with their in-

terests or their convictions, whereas the ignorant are at the mercy of the leader or the claque, and may be stampeded into a course of action quite at variance with their real desires. The *fanatical and impassioned* are little responsive to impressions from without, because of their inner tension. Being determined from within, they emit powerful suggestions, but are hard to influence. There is thus a tendency for the warped and inflamed members to impart their passion to the rest and to sweep along with them the neutral and indifferent. This is why, as the crowd comes under the hypnotic spell, the extremists gain the upper hand of the moderates.

Emotionalism of the crowd

Feelings, having more means of vivid expression, run through the crowd more readily than ideas. Masked by their anonymity, people feel free to give rein to the expression of their feelings. To be heard, one does not speak; one shouts. To be seen, one does not simply show one's self; one gesticulates. Boisterous laughter, frenzied objurgations, frantic cheers, are needed to express the merriment or wrath or enthusiasm of the crowd. Such exaggerated signs of emotion cannot but produce in suggestible beholders exaggerated states of mind. The mental temperature rises, so that what seemed hot now seems lukewarm, what felt tepid now feels cold. The intensifying of the feelings in consequence of reciprocal suggestion will be most rapid when the crowd meets under agitating circumstances. In this case the unbridled manifestation of feeling prevails from the first, and the psychic fermentation proceeds at a great rate.

Arrest of thought in the crowd

To the degree that feeling is intensified, reason is paralyzed. In general, strong emotion inhibits the intellectual processes. In a sudden crisis we expect the sane act

from the man who is "cool," who has not "lost his head." Now, the very hurly-burly of the crowd tends to distraction. Then, the high pitch of feeling to which the crowd gradually works up checks thinking and results in a temporary imbecility. There is no question that, taken herdwise, people are less sane and sensible than they are dispersed.

The crowd leader

In a real deliberative assembly there is a possibility that the best thought, the soundest opinion, the shrewdest plan advanced from any quarter will prevail. Where there is cool discussion and leisurely reflection, ideas struggle with one another, and the fittest are accepted by all. In the fugitive, structureless crowd, however, there can be no fruitful debate. Under a wise leader the crowd may act sagaciously. But there is no guarantee that the master of the crowd shall be wiser than his followers. The man of biggest voice or wildest language, the aggressive person who first leaps upon a table, raises aloft a symbol, or utters a catching phrase, is likely to become the bell-wether.

The psychic process in the crowd

Under these conditions — heightened suggestibility and emotion, arrested thinking — three things will happen when an impulse, whether emanating from a spectacle, an event, or a leader, runs through the crowd.

1. *Extension.* — By sheer contagion it extends to unsympathetic persons. Thus by-standing scoffers have been drawn into a revival maelstrom,[1] law-abiding persons

[1] Davenport tells of a young man who happened to be standing as a spectator on the fringe of a Southern camp-meeting of two thousand people. "He had had no religious experience and at that time did not wish any. The crowd was laboring under great religious excitement, and reflex phenomena were abundantly in evidence. Suddenly my friend found himself with his hands pressed against his lungs, shouting,

CHAPTER IV

MOB MIND

PRESENCE is not essential to mass suggestion. Mental touch is no longer bound up with physical proximity. With the telegraph to collect and transmit the expressions and signs of the ruling mood, and the fast mail to hurry to the eager clutch of waiting thousands the still damp sheets of the morning daily, remote people are brought, as it were, into one another's presence. Through its organs the excited public is able to assail the individual with a mass of suggestion almost as vivid as if he actually stood in the midst of an immense crowd.

Mob mind without the crowd

Formerly, within a day, a shock might throw into a fever all within a hundred miles. The next day it might agitate the zone beyond, but meanwhile the first body of people would have cooled down and become ready to listen to reason. And so, while a wave of excitement passed slowly over the country, the entire folk was at no moment in a state of agitation. Now, however, our space-annihilating devices make a shock well-nigh simultaneous. A vast public shares the same rage, alarm, enthusiasm, or horror. Then, as each part of the mass becomes acquainted with the sentiment of all the rest, the feeling is generalized and intensified. In the end the public swallows up the individuality of the ordinary man in much the same way the crowd swallows up the individuality of its members.

The public

Differences between crowd and public

Nevertheless, public and crowd are not identical in their characteristics. If by the aid of a telephonic news service — as in Budapest — people were brought into immediate touch, there would still be lacking certain conditions of the mob state. The hurly-burly, the press and heave of the crowd are avoided when contact is purely mental. As we have seen, in the throng the means of expressing feeling are much more effective than the facilities for expressing thought. But in a dispersed group feeling enjoys no such advantage. Both are confined to the same vehicle — the printed word — and so ideas and opinions run as rapidly through the public as emotions.

The psychology of the public more normal

One is member of but one crowd at a time, but by reading a number of newspapers, one can belong to several publics with, perhaps, different planes of vibration. So far as these various unanimities cross and neutralize one another, the suction of the public will be weakened. The crowd may be stampeded into folly or crime by accidental leaders. The public can receive suggestions only through the columns of its journal, the editor of which is like the chairman of a mass-meeting, for no one can be heard without his recognition. For all these reasons the psychology of the public, though similar to that of the crowd, is more normal.

Ours is the era of publics

Ours is not the era of hereditary rulers, oligarchies, hierarchies, or close corporations. But neither is it, as some insist, "the era of crowds." It is, in fact, *the era of publics*. Those who perceive that to-day under the influence of universal discussion the old fixed groupings which held their members so tenaciously — sects, parties, castes, and the like — are liquefying, that allegiances sit lightly, and that men are endlessly passing into new

combinations, seek to stigmatize these loose associations as "crowds." The true crowd is, however, in a declining rôle. Universal contact by means of print ushers in "the rule of public opinion," which is a totally different thing from "government by the mob."

Craze and fad are symptoms of mob mind

The principal manifestations of mob mind in vast bodies of dispersed individuals are the *craze* and the *fad*. These may be defined as *that irrational unanimity of interest, feeling, opinion, or deed in a body of communicating individuals, which results from suggestion and imitation*. In the chorus of execration over a sensational crime, in the clamor for the blood of an assassin, in waves of national feeling, in political "land-slides," in passionate "sympathetic" strikes, in cholera scares, in popular delusions, in religious crazes, in migration manias, in "booms" and panics, in agitations and insurrections, we witness contagion on a gigantic scale, favored in some cases by popular hysteria.

Theory of the craze

As there must be in the typical mob a centre which radiates impulses by fascination till they have subdued enough people to continue their course by sheer intimidation, so for the *craze* there must be an excitant, overcoming so many people that these can affect the rest by mere volume of suggestion. This first orientation may be produced by some striking event or incident. The murder of a leader, an insult to an ambassador, the predictions of a crazy fanatic, the words of a "Messiah," a sensational proclamation, the arrest of an agitator, a *coup d'état*, the advent of a new railroad, the collapse of a prominent bank, a number of deaths by an epidemic, a series of mysterious murders, an inexplicable occurrence, such as a comet, an eclipse, a star shower, or an earthquake,—

CHAPTER XXII

PUBLIC OPINION

Social irresolution is not the same as individual irresolution

A DISCUSSION that attracts general attention finds its natural issue in a state of *public* (or *social*) *opinion*.[1] The formation of this may best be observed during a discussion that must close at a certain date, *i.e.*, a campaign. A campaign is a social deliberation. This does not necessarily mean general individual irresolution. If nobody had made up his mind, there could be no conflict whatever in the social mind. Says Tarde:[2] —

"Let us suppose, although it is an hypothesis that could never be realized, that all the members of the nation were simultaneously and indefinitely in a state of indecision. Then war would be at an end, for an ultimatum or a declaration of war presupposes the making of individual decisions by cabinet officers. For war to exist, the clearest type of the logical duel in society, peace must first have been established in the minds of the ministers or rulers who before that hesitated to formulate the thesis and antithesis embodied in the two opposing armies. For the same reason there would be no more election contests.

[1] The reader should distinguish *preponderant opinion* from *public opinion*. There is a preponderant opinion as to coeducation, or the legitimacy of the tontine life insurance policy, or the moral effects of religious revivals, but not a public opinion. The latter implies the direction of social attention usually, though not necessarily, in view of some collective decision or action.

[2] "Laws of Imitations," 165.

There would be an end to religious quarrels and to scientific schisms and disputes, because this division of society into separate churches or theories presupposes that some single doctrine has finally prevailed in the previously divided thought or conscience of each of their respective followers. Parliamentary discussions would cease. There would be an end to litigation. . . . There would be an end to the struggles and encroachments of different kinds of law, such as those between the customary law and the Roman law of mediæval France, for such national perplexity means that individuals have chosen one or the other of the two bodies of law."

A campaign is a struggle between groups of convinced men

All these instances of social struggle imply that over a part of society irresolution has ceased. The effort of each party is to destroy the irresolution still remaining, or to create doubt in the minds of those who have gone with the other side. In a campaign the public is like a more or less inert substance placed between two chambers containing different active acids. The acid that eats into and assimilates this substance the more rapidly is the propaganda of the winning party. Sometimes there is a simple acid acting on a homogeneous substance — the communion cup agitation in a certain church, or the policy of withdrawal from the state militia mooted in a labor organization. Usually, however, the substance is heterogeneous, and each acid has a number of ingredients, — arguments, appeals, proposals, planks, — each of which is presumed to be effective with some section of the public. The acid must be complex when, as in a political campaign, the entire public is being acted upon.

Primary impression

The affinities individuals develop are by no means determined simply by the rational balancing of opposing con-

siderations. There is first the factor of prepossession and prejudice. Says Bryce:[1] "Every one is, of course, predisposed to see things in some one particular light by his previous education, habits of mind, accepted dogmas, religious or social affinities, notions of his own personal interest. No event, no speech or article ever falls upon a perfectly virgin soil; the reader or listener is always more or less biassed already. When some important event happens, which calls for the formation of a view, these preëxisting habits, dogmas, affinities, help to determine the impression which each man experiences, and so are factors in the view he forms."

The hierarchy of authorities

This original impression is soon overlaid by a variety of influences of social origin. Nearly every man looks for guidance to certain quarters, bows to the example of trusted leaders, of persons of influence or authority. Every editor, politician, banker, capitalist, railroad president, employer, clergyman, or judge has a following with whom his opinion has weight. He, in turn, is likely to have *his* authorities. The anatomy of collective opinion shows it to be organized from centres and subcentres, forming a kind of intellectual feudal system. The average man responds to several such centres of influence, and when they are in accord on a particular question he is almost sure to acquiesce. But when his authorities disagree, there results either confusion or else independence of judgment.

We might compare the individual to a cell in the social brain knit to other cells by *afferent* and *efferent* filaments of influence. When he influences more people than have the power to influence him, the *efferent* filaments pre-

[1] "The American Commonwealth," II, ch. LXXVI.