

auto-suggestion as something quite distinct from the old-fashioned hetero-suggestion. Even the fascination of Nancy itself, the inspiring presence of M. Coué, the practice of treating patients in batches, the "all-embracing sympathy and the universal goodwill were no unimportant factors in the improvement which took place day by day in almost everyone." These are the elements of hetero-suggestion, and it is on these rather than on the individual practice of M. Coué's method that the author lays most stress. Indeed, the *motif* of the book might well have been that auto-suggestion is but the subjective aspect of suggestion.

The book is an interesting example of the wealth of ephemeral literature which is apt to spring up round the centre-piece of any new cult. Its main interest lies in the revelation of the type of personality to whom such a doctrine as M. Coué's makes its surest and strongest appeal.

W. McALISTER.

Part III.—Epitome of Current Literature.

1. Psychology and Psycho-Pathology.

A New Theory of Laughter. (*Psyche*, April, 1922.) McDougall, W.

Herbert Spencer regarded laughter as the bodily expression of the overflow of nervous energy. M. Bergson asserted that laughter is excited by the appearance of mechanical rigidity in the behaviour of our fellows, and that its function is to punish and so prevent the repetition of such machine-like behaviour. Both theories are defective in that (1) they fail in their application to facts, (2) they tell us nothing of the biological function of laughter.

McDougall holds that laughter is an instinct as distinct and specific as those which find expression in fear and anger, and that its purpose is to shield us from the depressing influence which the many minor mishaps and shortcomings of our fellows would inflict on us if we did not possess it. Laughter not only prevents our mind from dwelling upon the depressing objects, but it actually converts these objects into stimulants which promote our well-being, both bodily and mentally, instead of depressing us through sympathetic pain or distress. It is, then, primarily and fundamentally the antidote of sympathetic pain.

C. W. FORSYTH.

A Short Study of the Life and Character of Mohammed. (*Internat. Journ. of Psycho-Analysis*, 1921, i.) Berkeley-Hill, C.

The character and activities of Mohammed, who was a posthumous son, is shown to have had its roots in an intense hatred of his grandfather (who in his case replaced his father), involving a strong infantile fixation in regard to his mother. His jealous dislike was repressed and the aggressive impulses sublimated, so that a solution to the conflict was found in waging a life-long war on the traditions, religious,

political and social of his people. Along with the tendency to attack the authority of the grandfather in the realm of politics and religion there is a willingness to compromise on certain points—an attitude of mind frequently found in psychoneurotics, the desire for parental control never having been entirely lost. He exchanged Mecca for Jerusalem as the "Kebleh," thus linking Islam with the ancient cult of his fathers instead of with Judaism.

Abraham has pointed out that the father is for the child the personification of power and greatness, so that if at any time a child experiences feelings of hostility against his father, the son tends in phantasy to raise the parental authority to the level of sovereignty, so that in the end he himself becomes as it were the son of an imaginary king, and the real father recedes into the position of a sort of foster-father. Mohammed, in his desire to replace his grandfather by himself and to rise to a higher degree of sovereignty than him, had to appeal to the superhuman, as his grandfather was the patriarch of his tribe—the Coreish. He created for himself a religion which had for its central point a Divine Father. He gave to his divine creation unlimited power, such power, in fact, as the child supposes his father to possess. He adopted the God of the Hebrews as the replacement-figure of his grandfather, and by this adoption Allah sprang into being.

Mohammed suffered from the age of four from periodical attacks of a paroxysmal kind, thus indicating a neuropathic temperament. There was ample evidence in his life to show that he was the subject of intense sexual repression, and that this was due to an immensity of certain incestuous fixations. To this cause may be ascribed the scrupulous chastity of Mohammed for the first twenty-five years of his life, and the selection as his first wife the widowed Khadijah, who was fifteen years older than himself. She was a perfect replacement-figure for his mother, whom he had only known as a widow. His second marriage also showed a mother-complex, but his later ones were dependent on a daughter-complex.

Mohammed, as the result of ambivalent feelings towards his grandfather, taught on the one hand that the authority of parents and rulers was to be respected, and on the other hand that it must in certain circumstances be opposed and destroyed—that it was wrong for them to endure the assertion of infidel superiority. In this aspect of Islam doubtless lies the source of its tremendous power, for it stirs up the deeply buried and unconscious complexes against the father, which is an attribute that pervades the mind of all men.

The writer shows that the life-history and influences at work in forming the character of Mohammed are essentially the same as those of Amenhotep, which has previously been analysed by Abraham.

C. W. FORSYTH.

An Experimental Study of the Mechanism of Hallucinations. (Brit. Journ. of Psychol., Med. Sect., April, 1922.) Prince, Morton.

Finding traditional theories unsatisfactory, Prince has experimented in the mechanism of hallucinations for over twenty years. The study of artificial hallucinations (produced by fixing attention as in crystal-