

RIGHT HANDED FOLKS

WHY ARE THEY SO VERY LARGELY IN THE MAJORITY?

There Are Two Factors in the Problem, an Inherited Tendency and Constant Practice—The Origin of the Innate Proclivity.

That the great majority of persons use the right hand with greater skill than the left is doubtless due to two influences—an innate proclivity and constant practice. The preference shown by most infants at the age of one year for the use of the right hand proves that there is an inherited tendency. Further evidence of it is found in the greater ease with which any entirely new act is performed by the right than by the left hand. Training, however, is an important factor. A mature person, having lost the right hand by accident, can achieve wonders with the other if he only exercises patience, perseverance and a strong will.

The more mysterious of the two factors in this problem is the inborn tendency. How did it arise? There are exceptions to the rule. Perhaps two out of every hundred babies are left handed. But when you stop to think of it the natural inclination of the other ninety-eight is remarkable. A great many physiologists have speculated in regard to its cause without reaching any conclusion upon which all could agree.

Dr. George M. Gould says in the Popular Science Monthly that right handedness is so thoroughly ingrained in human nature that it must have been partially developed in the savage ancestors of the race. Primitive man, in his opinion, must have felt a definite need for the exercise of his right hand in preference to his left, and that necessity must have been recognized and obeyed for a long period continuously. The impulse could not well have dictated his habits in eating, for knives and forks are of recent origin, the modern gun had not been invented, and writing was practically unknown. Moreover, in such operations as chipping arrowheads, weaving baskets and welding clubs, bows and arrows it could not have mattered much which hand was employed.

When warfare had been carried to such a stage of advancement as to involve the use of a shield, however, that object was probably held on the left side in order to protect the heart. Then as a matter of convenience the right arm was left free for the more active function of fighting with spear and sword, and with habitual exercise came special skill. An attendant phenomenon was a finer organization of that particular center in the brain which controlled these movements and which was situated in the left half of the organ. The brain is the real seat of all dexterity, and something takes place there in correspondence with external efficiency. With an increased use of the right hand, Dr. Gould thinks, there must have been greater demands upon the right eye, because vision must precede the order to strike or to give peaceful signals. In this way there may have been developed a keener power of vision in the right eye than in the left. Dr. Gould assumes that there was and declares that "right handed people are right eyed" and that in their brains the center of vision is on the left side, in close proximity to that governing the right arm.

While civilization was yet at a low level communication was carried on, especially with strangers, largely in the sign language. Barter laid the foundations of arithmetic and called in to play the digits. The preference already given to the right hand in battle may have guided men in the choice for this service and also in official and social ceremonies. Computation, Dr. Gould points out, was an intellectual process which was conducted in the speech center of the brain. Nature was compelled to take sides in locating the latter, and she placed it to the left of the middle. Dr. Gould thinks that the choice was governed by the employment of the right hand for giving signals. So intimately related are the functions of speech and vision and the control of the muscular efforts with the right arm that action would be quicker if the cerebral centers controlling them were closely associated.

Before discussing the cause of left handedness Dr. Gould calls attention to the fact that with right handed people the left hand is occasionally called upon to perform a task of greater importance than its mate. In eating the fork is used more than the knife. In playing a violin or violoncello the fingering is done with the left hand and the bowing with the right. It is suggested that some of these operations may result from the superiority of the right eye. Perhaps the latter can watch and guide them better when they are performed with the left than with the right hand.

Left handedness is considered by Dr. Gould an inheritance from ancestors, savage or civilized, who were obliged by some misfortune to abandon the use of the right hand. An even more infatu-

believes, there followed a change in the organization of the brain. Owing to disease the center, which had formerly controlled action, lost its vigor and that on the opposite side acquired increased power. Dr. Gould says that the speech center was also transferred from the left side to the right of the brain in consequence. In the transmission of the cerebral peculiarity to offspring he finds the key to the manifestation of left handedness at a tender age.—New York Tribune.

TRICKS OF ANIMALS.

Instances of Where Deceit Takes the Place of Courage.

There are a surprising number of Quaker animals—animals whose regular method of self protection is to offer no resistance to their enemies.

The possum's trick of "shamming dead" is an old story. A writer in the London Spectator cites several other cases of combined cunning and meekness. The hedgehog, the porcupine, the Australian echidna and some of the armadillos refuse to fight, but they are protected by sharp spines or armor. Some of the armadillos are great diggers and take refuge in holes, while porcupines often hide in hollow logs or trees.

Among marine animals is a starfish, often called the "brittle star," which is the despair of collectors. It seems to make it a point of pride that none of its family shall be shown in a bottle or on a museum shelf. When taken from the water this starfish throws off its legs and also its stomachs. The story is told of one collector who thought that he had succeeded in coaxing a specimen into a pail, only to see it dismember itself at the last moment.

W. H. Hudson describes the death feigning habits of a small South African fox common on the pampas. If caught in a trap or overtaken, it collapses as if dead and to all appearances is dead. "The deception is so well carried out that dogs are constantly taken in by it. When one withdraws a little way from a feigning fox and watches him very attentively a slight opening of the eye may be detected. Finally, when left to himself, he does not recover and start up like an animal that has been stunned, but slowly and cautiously raises his head first and only gets up when his foes are at a distance. I was once riding with a gaucho when we saw on the open level ground in front of us a fox not yet fully grown standing still and watching our approach. All at once it dropped, and when we came up to the spot it was lying stretched out, with eyes closed and apparently dead. Before passing on my companion, who said it was not the first time that he had seen such a thing, lashed it vigorously with his whip for some moments without producing the slightest effect."

Dogs show much the same tendency when they lie down meekly, with their heads down and tails tucked in, and invite a beating. Puppies are just as good at this as hardened veterans. Some kinds of beetles, many of the woolly caterpillars which have poisonous hairs on their backs and numerous spiders adopt similar tactics. Even the weed louse has the same trick and rolls itself into a ball.

In the whole animal kingdom if anything runs away there is always found something to run after it. The badger, which defends itself wickedly when attacked, is often used for baiting.

Perhaps the commonest instance of passive resistance is the land tortoise, which draws up its front piece and pulls in its head and legs and defies its foes by locking them out.

Mistakes Attract Attention.

The average person takes pleasure in calling attention to errors in spelling or grammar in signs. The mistakes furnish them a temptation to display their knowledge that is hard to resist. "Every now and then," said a local haberdasher the other day, "I fix up a window sign with a misspelled word or an error in grammar in it. Dozens of people drop in to tell me where it's wrong. Of course I act surprised and thank them. Then the chances are I sell them something."

At a Kansas City theater there used to be an advertising curtain which bore the word "versus" spelled "verses." The word attracted more comment than many of the acts did. It made people talk about the theater, and in the theatrical business to get the public to talking about things is the first step toward money making. So many people began to bother the house manager about the misspelled word, however, that he finally had to have it changed.—Kansas City Times.

Badly Brought Up Soldiers.

During an official massacre at the village of Kouklisk the Turkish commandant—a fat major—slept and smoked in the shade of a tree near the scene of carnage. The trumpet sounded for the assault, and the soldiers proceeded to rob, kill, burn and violate. The trumpet next sounded the retreat, but the troop refused to obey, and the fat major continued to sleep and smoke. When spoken to about the excesses of his men, he replied: "What can one do? They are badly brought up."

MISSOURI RIVER BOATS.

Trips of the Old Side Wheelers in the Early Days.

In the early days there was a regular line of packets between St. Louis and St. Joseph, all side wheelers, and the average round trip occupied eight days. A boat left St. Louis every day for the Missouri river, and as there were fourteen boats in the line each boat made a round trip once every two weeks during the season. During the winter the boats ran between St. Louis and New Orleans.

Coming up the river the boats ran all night, but in going down they always laid up as soon as darkness set in. In going down the river the boats usually left St. Joseph early in the afternoon and laid up for the night at Weston, where there was always a lot of freight to load. The next day they went to Lexington, the next to Booneville and the next to St. Louis. Occasionally during high water a boat would leave Lexington at daylight and reach St. Louis in time for breakfast the next morning.

The boats carried from 200 to 400 passengers on the trip up the river, counting the immigrants on the deck, but going back they only had cabin passengers. The cabin fare from St. Louis to St. Joseph ranged from \$10 to \$15, which included meals and stateroom. The boats were all supplied with fine cooks, and the passengers lived on the best that money could buy.

The average boat carried 500 to 600 tons of freight in addition to passengers. During low water freight that now costs 20 cents a hundred cost \$2.50 a hundred. The expense of a round trip from St. Louis to St. Joseph, including loading and unloading, was estimated at \$4,000, and the income from cost to \$7,000. Each boat carried a crew of from 80 to 100 men. The average value of the boats in the line was probably \$45,000 each.

The boats were often off sand bars, where they sometimes remained for a day and night, but altogether the time was made surprisingly well. A pilot who had a reputation for keeping his boat off the bars commanded as high as \$500 a month. Each boat was provided with two pilots, and this expense usually amounted to from \$600 to \$1,000 a month. All a river pilot saved he put in his watch chain. You could tell a high priced pilot by the size of the links in his gold watch chain. A rattling good first mate who knew how to handle a boat after it struck a bar received \$250 a month.

Poker was a favorite river amusement, and it was not an uncommon sight to see eight or ten games going at the same time in the main cabin of a steamboat. And the playing was for actual money, which was displayed in stacks on the tables.

Among the famous boats on the river at that time were the Kate Kinney, F. G. Aubry, Morning Star, John D. Perry, Sioux City, Omaha, Carrier and the James H. Lucas. The last named made the fastest run in the history of the river—59 hours and 22 minutes from St. Louis to St. Joseph.

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