

WHEN MEN WORE TAILS.

Young Children Possess Monkey Characteristics.

GRASP WITHOUT USE OF THUMB.

Why Children Take Playthings to Bed—Also, Why Boys Want Hatchets and Girls Dolls—Arguments for Relationship With Arboreal Ancestors.

There is no need to enter into embryological or anatomical details concerning the characters for which children are indebted to monkeys. They possess in common with their adults a rudimentary tail hidden beneath the skin, but this is not a fact that every one can verify on the instant. Yet those who have the care of children can easily see for themselves the scar which the loss of the tail has still left on children's bodies—a scar which is curiously similar to what would obtain after amputation of a tail. Just at the base of the vertebral column—exactly where the tail would protrude through the flesh, if it were functionally active—is a deep circular depression, sufficient almost for the insertion of the little finger. In young babies it is very noticeable; and nurses, while wondering what purpose it serves, abuse it as a place which is difficult to wash. In older children it gradually becomes shallower, and in those about five or seven years old it may or may not be shown. That it marks a place where a tail formerly protruded in our ancestors there can be no doubt from its shape and its position.

Other characters, however, tell the same tale of adaptation. The proportion in length between the arms and legs of a baby when first born is very different to what obtains later in life.

In the method of using its hands the baby shows to the full its descent from arboreal ancestors. When it wishes to take hold of anything, alike a glass or a flower pot, it does not, like an adult, put the hand round it, or even put the thumb inside to use as a lever.

On the contrary, it places all the fingers inside, makes no use of the thumb, and clasps the rim of the flower pot between the fingers and the palm of the hand. This is exactly the action which would be acquired from arboreal ancestors; in going from bough to bough they would take their hands palm first, and would strike from above downward, grasping the bough with the fingers. Such is the action of an infant picking up a cup.

It is probable that from our ancestors' excessive use of bough-grasping that our babies inherit a certain inability to move the fingers with freedom or to extend the hand, especially if the least degree cold. The power to extend the fingers perfectly straight is oftentimes not obtained by children six or seven years of age.

"LULLABY BABY ON THE TREE TOP."

It is remarkable how much unnecessary suffering is inflicted on infants and children because parents fail to recognize the ancestry from "animals," and consequently the instincts, different from those of adults, which children have inherited.

Thus Dr. Louis Robinson has pointed out that as soon as children are able to shift for themselves in bed, they go to sleep on their stomachs with their legs curled up under them; and he has rightly traced this to quadrupedal ancestors. Experience shows that if mothers would only recognize this ancestry the mothers would have far more comfortable nights and better tempered, healthier children.

Even the very manner in which babies are got off to sleep—by rocking in the arms or in a cradle—is an inheritance of arboreal or monkey-like ancestors, because the rocking is an imitation of the to-and-fro swaying of the branches, and such swaying would be the natural accompaniment of sleep with arboreal dwellers. Any rhythmic motion seems to leave a marked impression on organisms. It would, therefore, be reasonable to conclude that the effect of thousands of years of association—as in the case of rocking with sleep in arboreal dwellers—would still be found to influence children very long after arboreal life had been abandoned.

Nowhere is a stage of former arboreal life, with its consequent climbing instinct, manifested more conspicuously than in the insane desire of an infant to climb up stairs.

As soon as crawling is an accomplishment the climbing of stairs is attempted. Remain on the level and crawl about rooms the child will not; it must make for the nearest stairs to climb with loud crows of delight. It is better to let the child climb; even a fall down the whole flight of stairs only checks the climbing mania temporarily, in order that the infant may loudly express its disapprobation of its own clumsiness, and may vent its anger in howls.

An instinct held so tenaciously cannot be regarded as something fortuitous. Darwin considered that the tree-climbing propensity of boys was a relic of monkey ancestors, but he made no observation on the stair-climbing instincts of infants.

INHERIT STEALING FROM MONKEYS.
Another "animal" relic which exists in children is an instinctive desire for stealing, especially for stealing fruit, which, however hard and unripe, seems to give the child pleasure.

Stealing certainly points to the time when every animal had to depend on its own exertions for what food it got, and when the readiest method of obtaining such food was to appropriate without quest on whatever it might come across.

With the above another childish trait may advantageously be compared—namely, the habit of taking things to bed, especially such articles as the child may be attached to; but there is also a desire to take things for fear of other children obtaining them, and when a child takes off to bed such articles as a collection of clothes,

brushes, or an array of old boots, it seems like taking for taking's sake. The earlier inheritance of the maternal instinct is worth noticing further; the doll proclivity of girls is a particular instance of earlier inheritance thereof. Doll-nursing instinct is not shared in the least by any healthy boys, nor can they take to little household duties with the handiness of a girl.

Boys' earlier inheritance is all in the way of offensive weapons, of bows, bats, balls, and noise, with a tendency to teasing and bullying, a feature for which the male has been famous, the sufferer who was put upon being the female—the weaker vessel; weaker because the males fought with one another for her; had she fought with her sisters for the males she could have been the stronger and the bigger brained.

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