

world-old institution as we. Why that particular hand was chosen is a question not to be settled, not worth asking except as a kind of riddle; probably arose in fighting; most important to protect your heart and its adjacencies, and to carry the shield on that hand."

The reference to "oldest Hebrews" no doubt had in view what may be regarded as the earliest known statistics of left-handedness on record. The account given in the Book of Judges of the remarkable skill manifested by the left-handed Benjamite warriors is worthy of special note. Left-handedness, if not more prevalent among the tribe of Benjamin than in other Hebrew tribes, appears to have attracted such special attention that those who were noted for it were organized into a separate body of marksmen, renowned for their matchless skill with the sling, as well as for their general dexterity. Ehud, the son of Gera, the deliverer of his people from the servitude of Eglon, King of Moab, was a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and so, as he snatched from his right side the dagger with which he slew the Moabitish king, the motion of his left hand would not excite suspicion. But the very form of the record shows the attribute to be exceptional; and all the more so as occurring in the tribe whose name—*ben yamin*, the son of my right hand,—so specially marks the sense of dignity and honour associated with the right hand. Hence the reference to this select body of seven hundred skilled marksmen is due to the fact that their use of the left hand was at variance with the general practice of their tribe. Had any ancient left-handed people come under the observation of the historical nations whose records have come down to us, this reference to the left-handed Benjamites shows that the fact would have been noted; for the entire number of left-handed slingers barely amounted to 2·7 per cent. Out of twenty-six thousand Benjamites, as we are told, all warriors, there were seven hundred chosen men of the tribe, every one of whom was left-handed, and could sling stones at a hair's-breadth and not miss. Nearly the same relative number, viz., two per cent., is assigned by Professor Hyrtl, of Vienna, as the proportion of left-handed persons at the present day, as determined from observations made by him in one of the most civilized centres of modern Europe.

But some recent disclosures give promise of evidence derived from greatly more ancient records even than the Hebrew scriptures. Discoveries in the department of prehistoric archæology have greatly