

Ambidexterity.

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Before reading this paper, perhaps I should say that I am greatly indebted to several authors for many of the ideas expressed, and with but few exceptions, I have been free to change the wording of any ideas I may have found to suit the needs of this paper.

Being conscious of the fact that the papers presented to this Association should be of such a character as to promote discussion and be of individual helpfulness, I have therefore some hesitancy in reading to you a paper that has been all too hurriedly put together.

Ambidexterity, as the derivation of the word implies, is the power of using both hands alike. This is only an acquisition of the few. That, as a general rule, one hand is not used as readily as the other, is a fact which is attested to every day by the discomfiture of the great majority of practising dentists. Just why one should be wholly right-handed or left-handed, depends, no doubt, on certain organic laws that give a bias in infancy, and which is continued throughout life.

But that one should remain wholly right-handed or left-handed after volition comes into conscious play, and the hand obeys the will, depends entirely upon the will whether it should be otherwise or not. The bias towards the right hand is strongly confirmed and emphasized by training, while the bias towards the left hand, by the same course, is being constantly opposed, and, as a consequence, the left-handed, as a rule, are ambidextrous. The state of ambidexterity may be acquired in the right-handed where there is a determined will and a highly-endowed muscular sensibility.

It is accepted, as a general rule, that the left hemisphere of the brain is larger than the right, as a result of the anatomical arrangement by which the greater artery of the left side becomes larger than that of the right, giving thereby increased nutrition to the left hemisphere; as a natural consequence, there would be a greater flow of cerebral power from the left hemisphere, and as the muscles of the right arm and hand receive their stimulus from certain areas in the left hemisphere, these muscles would be the first to respond.