

among the anthropoid apes ; and the occasional occurrence of left-handedness should be easily accounted for. If, on the other hand, it has its origin in a habit engendered by enforced usage resulting from combined action, as in the reaping field, at the oar, at the forge, or in concerted military action, this involves only the concurrent use of either hand ; and it need no more surprise us to find lefthanded races, than to observe that our usage in writing from left to right reverses that of ancient semitic nations. On the latter assumption indeed it would seem opposed to all probability that, alike in the Old and the New World, nations living apart, in utter ignorance of each other, should be found uniformly manifesting a preference for the same hand. But no example of a lefthanded race is known, unless a vague reference previously quoted from Stobæus can be accepted in proof of it ; while the preferential use of one hand, long anterior to any historical evidence of righthandedness, is proved by terms for right and left hand occurring in the vocabularies alike of ancient civilized nations, and of untutored savages, such as those of New Zealand, Polynesia, and Australia ; as well as among the rudest tribes of the New World. It only remains to determine whether in every case the so-called right hand has been the member of that side of the body to which we apply the term. If the superiority of one hand over the other is no more than the result of acquired habit, consequent on the necessity for uniform action in many combined operations, then it is inconceivable that among races isolated, and without intercourse throughout the historic period, as in the Pacific Islands, Australia, and America, all should have chanced to adopt the same hand. But if, on the contrary, the dexterity of the right hand is dependent on organic causes common to man, then the exceptional and abnormal character of lefthandedness becomes obvious. Hence the desirableness of observing the manifestations of any preferential use of one or the other hand among savage races. The Maories of New Zealand, as already noted, manifest a prevalent righthandedness, especially in the use of the musket in their war dances. The musket, it has to be borne in remembrance, is purposely constructed for a righthanded people ; and hence, as a righthanded instrument, it would have sufficed to determine the bias, among any people previously using either hand indifferently ; but the Maori tongue proves the existence of a native righthandedness altogether prior to European intercourse ; and the same appears to be characteristic of