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Daniel Wilson
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The Right Hand: Left-Handedness

Throughout history, left-handedness has been viewed as being the mark of the devil, as evidence of mental retardation or neurosis, as showing a predisposition to criminality, or as being linked to every perceived social ill. Even into the nineteenth century, many scientists were of the opinion that left-handedness was the sign of a sinister personality. An eminent ethnologist and one of the first scientific archaeologists, Daniel Wilson (1816–92), who introduced into English the word 'prehistoric', became aware of the fact that there were as many left-handed Stone Age implements as right. As a left-hander himself, he was fascinated by these discoveries. Published in 1891, his last major work gives the results of his studies of left-handedness, which he concludes is hereditary and relates to the dominance of one hemisphere of the brain.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108053068

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2012

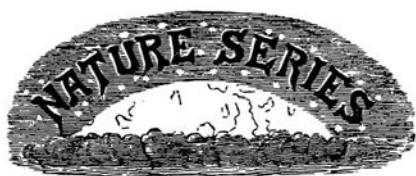
This edition first published 1891
This digitally printed version 2012

ISBN 978-1-108-05306-8 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

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NATURE SERIES

THE RIGHT HAND:
LEFT-HANDEDNESS

BY

SIR DANIEL WILSON, LL.D., F.R.S.E.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
AUTHOR OF 'THE PREHISTORIC ANNALS OF SCOTLAND'
'PREHISTORIC MAN: RESEARCHES INTO THE
ORIGIN OF CIVILISATION,' ETC.

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

AND NEW YORK

1891

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TO
HIS GRANDSON
OSWALD GEORGE WILSON BELL
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY
THE AUTHOR

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PREFACE

THE following treatise includes data originally accumulated in a series of papers communicated to the Canadian Institute and the Royal Society of Canada, aiming at determining the cause of Left-handedness by a review of its history in its archæological, philological, and physiological aspects. In revising the materials thus accumulated in illustration of the subject, with a view to their publication in a connected form, the results of later investigation have been embodied here, not only with the aim of tracing Left-handedness to its true source, and thereby proving the folly of persistently

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viii

PREFACE

striving to suppress an innate faculty of exceptional aptitude, but also to enforce the advantages to be derived by all from a systematic cultivation of dexterity in both hands.

BENCOSIE, TORONTO,
24th April 1891.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
THE HAND	1
CHAPTER II	
THE EDUCATED HAND	12
CHAPTER III	
THE WILLING HAND	23
CHAPTER IV	
PALÆOLITHIC DEXTERITY	31
CHAPTER V	
THE DISHONOURED HAND	62
CHAPTER VI	
THE PRIMITIVE ABACUS	77

x	CONTENTS	
	CHAPTER VII	
THE COMPASS POINTS		PAGE 89
	CHAPTER VIII	
HANDWRITING		97
	CHAPTER IX	
PSYCHO-PHYSICAL ACTION		119
	CHAPTER X	
CONFLICT OF THEORIES		149
	CHAPTER XI	
HAND AND BRAIN		183