

DOUBT YOUR OWN EYES.

HUMAN VISION IS NOT ALWAYS TO BE RELIED UPON.

Many Cases of Defective Eyesight Which Are Often Unsuspected—Some Interesting Experiments—Curious Instances of Optical Delusions.

While the eyesight of many people is defective, a still greater number have eyes which are unlike each other in seeing power, says a recent writer. In fact, many practically make use of one eye only; the other, having been originally a little defective, was by degrees called on for duty less and less, and accordingly degenerated. One gentleman is reported who could see with his right eye, the figures on the face of a clock five eighths of an inch high at 12 ft., while he could see them as clearly with the left eye only at eight inches distance, and, curiously enough, this extraordinary difference in the powers of vision of both eyes was not detected by him until he had reached middle age.

Many people are unable to keep one eye shut and the other open at the same time. This is especially common with children, but less frequent with adults, and it will be readily understood that in such cases considerable differences in the powers of the eyes may exist without being suspected. Sir John Herschel mentions the case of an elderly person who by chance made the unpleasant discovery that he was altogether blind in one eye.

Some simple and easily performed experiments give interesting glimpses into the constitution of the eye. Go into a dark room with a candle. Looking at the wall, which should be of a uniform dark tint, on moving the candle up and down, close to the outer side of one eye, so that the light falls very obliquely into it, one of which are called "Purkinje's figures," will be seen. This is an appearance of a series of diverging and branched red lines on a dark field, in the interspace of two or three of which is a sort of cup-shaped disc. These lines are the blood vessels of the retina, and the disc is the "yellow spot" or most sensitive part of the eye.

In the same situation, looking still at the dark wall and keeping the eye fixed on one point, hold the candle at arm's length and move it to and fro for a distance of about two inches on a level with the point towards which the eye is directed, and a little to the right and left of it, when a faint light may be seen moving in the opposite direction to the candle and on the other side of the point looked at. The light, if more nearly inspected, is seen to be an inverted image of the candle flame, equal in size to it, but very faint, and is, in fact, the light of the candle reflected from the lens of the eye. Other internal parts of the eye also reflect some of the light that falls into it, but the images formed by them are not so easily seen.

It is well known that the pupil contracts mechanically in bright light and expands in faint light, but it has been found that, to some extent, this change is under the control of the will. A scientific observer, writing on this subject, says that when fronting a window or other light he can make the pupil expand or contract at the desire of anyone looking into his eye. The pupil is contracted while he steadily looks at the light, and when he wishes to expand it, all that is necessary is to take his attention away from the eye and fix it on some other part of the body without moving his eyes. This he does, say, by biting his tongue, pinching his arm, or in some such way. The sensitiveness of the retina is diminished by this means, and the pupil dilates. It contracts again when the mind is once more recalled to the eye and the bright light.

Photographs have been taken of the interior of the eye, some of which show the optic nerve and the branching blood-vessels of the retina, and others show an inverted picture of the objects to which the eye was directed depicted on the retina. Photographs of the eye in darkness, taken by means of the magnesium flash-light, show the pupil dilated to an extraordinary size, and the iris reduced to a mere ring.

The fact has often been noted that at times, when a sudden idea or image presents itself to the intellect, there is a distinct and sometimes even a painful sensation of luminosity produced in the eye, which is occasionally intense enough to be observable even in broad daylight. A current of electricity produces a sensation of light in the eye, and, of course, everyone has seen the "stars" which arise from a blow on the head.

Helmholtz has proved that the interior of the eye is itself luminous, and he was able to see the movement of his arm, in total darkness, by the light of his own eye. Speaking of this in a recent lecture, Professor Tesla, the electrician, called it one of the most remarkable experiments recorded in the history of science, and said that probably only a few men could satisfactorily repeat it, as very likely such luminosity of the eye is only found in connection with uncommon activity of the brain and great imaginative power.

There is a remarkable sympathy between the eyes. So much is this the case that any serious injury to the one is almost certain to affect the other, hence the necessity which often arises for the removal of the injured eye mainly for the sake of saving the other. This sympathy has been shown by Dr. Chauveau to extend so far that colour perceived by one eye alone excites the retina of the other. This is shown in the following way: If a white surface is observed for a short time through colored glass with one eye, while the other is screened, on removing the colored glass the white ground appears to be tinted with the colour complementary to that of the glass. This is a common and well-known result, but the point is that if the first eye is closed and the screened eye opened, the whole surface appears tinted with the same colour as the glass.

There are many curious optical illusions connected with eyes. If letters cut out of blue and red paper are stuck on a screen of black velvet and viewed from a suitable

distance, the red letters appear to some people to be nearer than the blue, while about as many see the blue nearer than the red. Looked at with one eye closed this difference disappears, and both sets of letters appear equally distant. If one who sees the red letters nearer than the blue covers his pupils on the outer or temporal side with a black screen the red will retreat, and soon appear to be behind the blue; while if one who sees the blue as nearer than the red covers his pupils on the inner or nasal side, the red appears to come forward and the blue to shrink back.

TOLD BY THE HAND.

Simple Methods by Which Character May Be Analyzed.

If, when the hand is held open, the first and second fingers fall widest apart, the person possesses independence of thought; if, on the contrary, the third and fourth are widest apart, the person is noted for independence of action. Should both these signs be visible, there is great originality and self-reliance. Conventionality and fear of Mrs. Grundy are denoted in the opposite manner by the fingers leaning together, as if for support, and curling towards the palm.

The nails will be found to repay inspection: If short, rather wide than long—with the skin growing high up—they denote a quick temper, love of teasing, with a leaning towards criticism and contradiction. If the skin at the bottom is straight instead of curved, the person will be subject to fits of passionate anger. Very large nails, curved at the bottom, belong to an ideal business man, with a cool and careful head. Fluted nails are ominous signs of consumption. The much-concaved almond nails are indicative of sweet temper, unless rosy pink to the edge, in which case fits of irritation may be expected, of short duration, and quickly succeeded by sunshine.

By means of the thumb alone many deductions may be made. Thus, a thumb bending inwards shows avarice, especially if the fingers lean in the direction of the direction of the thumb; the contrary sign is a proof of generosity or even extravagance. A straight thumb is a desirable possession, indicating prudence and good sense; should it be set low down on the hand, the fortunate owner will be endowed with a considerable proportion of talent.

People with small thumbs are inclined to be sentimental and act chiefly from impulse; if the subjects of your investigations be a woman, love will be the aim of her existence; she will be more sensitive than intellectual, and more fascinating to the average man than her stronger-minded sister with the well-developed thumbs.

For the comfort of the latter, it may be said that they are never coquettes, and it their love be more a matter of head, it is also more enduring.

Too long a thumb shows a tyrant and despot; if short but thick at the top, we have before us an awakened customer, excessively obstinate and subject to extremes of joy or anger. Moral, avoid arguments with such a person!

He Was His Own Barber.

Stagshawbank, in Northumberland, used to be the meeting place for the whole country side on the annual fair day. On one of these occasions a swaggering blade entered a drinking booth, and, for the benefit of those assembled there, he held forth for some time on his own exploits and cleverness.

Observing in a corner a quiet, inoffensive-looking man, and thinking to raise a laugh at his expense, he inquired— "Who's your barber when you shave yourself?"

The quiet man quietly replied—"Clem the Clogger, of Wark."

The clever man, thinking that, leaving the catch out of the question he had a sure thing, having heard of this Clem the Clogger as a great fighter and bully, and therefore hardly a man to set up as a barber, offered to wager the quiet man a sovereign he was wrong.

"Done," said the simple one. "Well, when you shave yourself, how can Clem the Clogger be your barber?"

"Why, man alive, I'm Clem the Clogger, and I shave myself. Isn't that enough?"

The sharp man evidently thought it was, for he paid the bet as quickly as possible and departed amidst the smiles of the audience, who were pleased to see the tables turned.

Unexpected Causes of Fire.

Moistened metal turnings and chips have been known to take fire owing to chemical action.

A rat gnawing at a box of wax vestas ignited the lot, and caused a fire which resulted in damage to the tune of some £400.

A running belt which caught in a mass of greasy waste set fire to the heap by friction and demolished the building.

A flood burned one factory by causing a pile of iron filings to oxidise so rapidly as to become intensely heated and so fire the woodwork.

A lens exposed to the sun's rays in an optician's window frequently acts as a burning-glass before being noticed, and several fires have occurred from this cause alone.

A match carelessly dropped beneath a lace curtain was stepped upon, ignited, and instantly the drapery was ablaze.

A cockchafer crawled from an oil receptacle to a gas jet, where the creature's oily body took fire, and, falling, spread the flames.

A stream from the fireman's hose, curious as it may appear, started a second fire while putting out the first, the water having penetrated an adjoining building containing quicklime.

A nail glanced from a carpenter's hammer on to a steel wheel in a jute factory, and produced a spark which set fire to the place.

PUBLISHING THE Banns.

Curious Incidents Which are Said to Have Happened in England.

A few years ago a ludicrous, albeit vexatious, incident occurred at a church in Larkhall, says an English paper. A rustic couple, after having had the banns published the prescribed number of times, proceeded to the church to be joined in holy wedlock. The service was conducted without a hitch until the officiating clergyman arrived at that part where he asked, "William Wisher, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?" when the bridegroom replied, with some astonishment, that his name was not William Wisher. The ceremony was, of course, suspended, and on investigation being made as to the cause of the mistake, it transpired that the bridegroom had written to the sexton of the church requesting him to have the banns published, and concluded his letter thus: "So no more from your Well Wisher and Mary Williams." The sexton, supposing that William Wisher was the name of the intending Benedict, published the banns accordingly, and the disappointed couple were compelled to await the publication of the banns in their proper names.

A unique instance of the banns being forbidden by the intending bridegroom happened at the parish church of Seaford about the middle of the century. While the minister was reading the announcement he was interrupted by one of the congregation, who called out loudly, "I forbid the wedding." He was requested to walk into the vestry and explain his reasons for so doing. "Are you a relation?" queried the clergyman. "No," replied the man, "I'm the bridegroom himself; but having learned that Ciss has a tongue that, after marriage, will run faster than the clack of her master's mill, I am resolved to be off; so your reverence may marry her yourself, if you please."

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