

Quintuplets Amaze Psychologists as Most 'Identical' Children Ever Known to Science

Resemblance Makes Birth Phenomenon Even Stranger.

By BRUCE CATTON
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TORONTO, Ontario, Nov. 1.—The Dionne quintuplets might provide a bad moment or two for the fingerprint experts, if they should ever decide to submit their prints for examination.

For their fingerprints are amazingly similar.

The different sets, when completely recorded, can be distinguished of course. But if one of the quintuplets should put one slightly smudged print on a sheet of paper, part of her forefinger, for instance—the scientists in charge might find it utterly impossible to tell which of the five sisters had made it.

This is just one illustration of the amazing resemblance the quintuplets have to one another. They are identical quintuplets—a phenomenon as rare among quintuplets (which are an 87,000,000-to-one shot to begin with) as identical twins are among ordinary twins.

Psychologists as biologists use the word, doesn't mean quite what you might suppose. No two people are ever really identical. Even those twins who look so much alike that their own parents get mixed up about them—everyone has known such a pair—are not exactly alike. It's all a matter of degree.

But the Dionne quintuplets—all five of them—come closer to being exactly alike than any pair or group of children ever studied by science before.

THIS fact emerged from a scientific study made by Drs. John W. MacArthur and Norma Ford, biologists on the faculty of the University of Toronto. They base their findings on their own observation and on data collected by Dr. W. E. Blatz, director of the university's St. George's School for Child Study. The biologists made their study as the foundation for an effort to solve one of science's most baffling problems—whether environment or heredity has the greater influence on the development of a person's mental and physical characteristics.

HERE, for the first time, science has a chance to study five children of identical heredity; and scientists will be citing the five little girls from Callander on one side or the other of the perennial argument (or possibly on both sides) for many years to come.

Anyway, what the scientists were primarily interested in was in finding out whether the quintuplets actually are identical.

Identical twins, they point out, are usually the same only in a few characteristics—such as sex, blood groups, color of eyes, hair and skin, and so on. In other instances—the shape of their ears, their finger and palm prints, the shape of face and skull—they are very different.

THE quintuplets had an early experience with fingerprinting, which left them and everyone connected with them very cold. When they were quite small, the provincial government sent a couple of policemen to the place to record the quintuplets' prints. The detectives brought their regulation fingerprinting equipment, with ink and everything.

So the quintuplets got ink on their fingers. Then they got it smudged all over themselves. They got it on the detectives, on the furniture, and on the virginal whiteness of the nurses' uniforms. And—to wind up—they smeared the paper so that no readable prints could be obtained, and then they got offended by so much ink and began to cry, in unison.

THE detectives retired, baffled. The scientists, being also psychologists, solved the problem. They rubbed a cold-cream-and-honey lotion into the skin of a quint's hand. The hand was then pressed firmly on a sheet of glass paper laid on a rubber pad. The hand being removed, the paper was treated with finely powdered and sifted lamp black, and after the excess powder was shaken off, the print was fixed by putting the paper in a solution of resin and alcohol.

The result was a set of prints which would delight J. Edgar Hoover—and which did delight Drs. MacArthur and Ford. To supplement them, plaster casts were made of the hands and feet, which brought out the fine details even better than the ink.

A elaborate study of these prints revealed that the quintuplets are identical.

The total ridge count of the finger patterns differed very little among the quintuplets, for instance, but was considerably different in their brother Ernest and their sisters Rose and

AGE	MARIE	EMILIE	CECILE	ANNETTE	YVONNE
Three months					
Nine months					
18 months					
40 months					
Print of right foot					
Blood group	O	O	O	O	O
Iris color	M4	M4	M4	M4	M4
Iris pattern	9	9	9	9	9
Eye refractive error	+1.25	+1.25	+.75	+.75	+.75
Eye lashes	long curled dark brown				
Eyebrow	light brown				
Hair color	8 (Dark, slightly reddish-brown)				
Hair form	wavy	wavy	wavy	wavy	wavy
Hair whorl	Clock-wise	Counter-clock-wise	Counter-clock-wise	Counter-clock-wise	Counter-clock-wise
Skin color	3 (Light and fair)				

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The remarkable physical similarity of the Dionne quintuplets is graphically expressed in this chart, based on the findings of Biologists John W. MacArthur and Norma Ford. Note how even iris colors and patterns—expressed by measurements on the biologists' testing charts—are the same for all five.

Theresa, whose prints were taken for comparison.

The shape of the finger patterns was also very similar.

Furthermore, each of the quintuplets possesses one or more identical marks—the whorls of the fingers on the palm at the base of the fingers: a rare feature possessed by less than 1 per cent of the general population. Neither Ernest, Rose nor Theresa has one of these.

Here is another thing. If you are one of a pair of identical twins, your right hand will resemble your left hand less than it resembles your twin's right hand. By this standard, Marie and Cecile are identical through their left hands, Yvonne and Annette through their left hands, Yvonne and Cecile through their rights—and Emile, through their rights—had a small temporary mole on the right cheek near the eye, at one time; they are gone now.

THE footprints told the same story the handprints told. From hands and feet the biologists moved up to faces; and it is only fair to report that they often got completely baffled by the five ruddy countenances they were studying.

The quintuplets themselves, however, never make any mistakes in identifying each other, and they become highly amused at the mistakes of their elders.

As you know from their pictures, the quintuplets look alike. The biologists tested the regularity of the girls' features, their involvement and pain-taking way, and at last came to the same conclusion.

The biologists examined the quintuplets to see which hand each girl preferred to use. Emile may turn out to be a southpaw; the others are all right-handed. The quintuplets' blood was tested; all five of them are in the same blood group.

Irma E. McDaniel, Pennsylvania Railroad trainmaster here, has been promoted to service supervisor in St. Louis, it was announced today. He is to succeed E. W. Perrot, who died recently. Mr. McDaniel has been in the service 34 years.

Irvin Closson, 10th Ward chairman, today assumed his duties as president of an executive committee of the 11th District Republican Club.

The committee, organized yesterday, is composed of elected delegates from each of the district Republican clubs. It is to meet monthly after January 1938.

Arthur G. Gresham is to serve as secretary and publicity chairman.

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