

PSYCHOLOGY

# Women Scare Easier Than Men

**But That Is a Sign of Strength, Says Psychologist,  
Who Explains That Emotion Is Way of Meeting Emergency**

By MARJORIE VAN de WATER

**I**T IS late at night. You are awakened in the pitch-black room that you occupy alone. You hear a faint sound, as though some one were moving about stealthily in the room or approaching the door.

Do you have a shivery feeling of fear? Is your breathing disturbed, and your heart-beat quickened? Or do you merely experience a mild feeling of curiosity as to whom it could be?

Are you frightened by fire alarms in your neighborhood, by large dogs rushing noisily at you, by high places or precipitous descents, or by traffic rushing close beside you?

If you are driving an automobile when a child suddenly darts out from the curb and you miss running him down by the narrowest possible margin, do you have a panicky desire to cry out, to hide or to take flight?

Most people can recall situations of this sort that have given them a real scare. Some persons are much more subject to fright than others, however.

If you are a woman, you are probably much more subject to fright than are most men. In this matter, popular opinion has been corroborated by scientific evidence gathered by a psychologist at the University of California, Dr. George M. Stratton.

## Daily Record

Using a day by day record of how his subjects felt and acted in the real thrilling situations of life, not the fictitious or synthetic scares of the laboratory, Dr. Stratton made an analysis disclosing what factors are associated with fear and anger.

Sex is one of these factors.

"The frequent opinion that women are more emotional than men is supported," he said in reporting some of his conclusions in the *American Journal of Psychology*. "There is also support for the particular opinion that women are more timid than men."

"The opinion, however, that women are less inclined to anger, that women are more placid in situations which

arouse men to wrath appears quite unsupported."

Is this greater tendency of women to fly off the handle, to become angry, or to tremble with fright over some disturbing incident, indicative of her general weakness? Dr. Stratton disagrees with some psychologists in declaring that it is not. Rather it is a sign of biological strength, he says.

A display of emotion is not necessarily a signal of failure to meet a situation; emotion may be a means of meeting an emergency more adequately. Fear and anger are connected with the invigorating not only of the muscular system, but also of the powers of thought, of impulse, and of desire.

Excitement makes available at the instant a larger array of pertinent ideas and organizes these about the central desire needing their service. Not only are the muscles fortified, but the thoughts, feelings, and impulses are selected, accelerated, intensified, and integrated, with the result that the individual can the better meet the emergency.

## Not Opposites

Perhaps you have thought of anger and fear as opposite poles in emotion. This is not the view of the psychologist. Physiologically and psychologically these two emotions have a great deal in common, so much so that scientists are inclined to consider them as different aspects of the same thing; heads and tails of one common coin. Both are natural responses to an emergency, and whether the resulting action is fight or flight is somewhat a matter of circumstances. How quickly the wild animal will turn from desperate headlong flight to vicious battle when she is at last cornered.

Thus, Dr. Stratton believes that the tendency of women to quicker anger and fear is not a matter of weakness, but of strength. It is in keeping, he says, with her greater power to resist disease, her greater constitutional vigor. It is a part of her endowment for a fuller meeting of important biological and cultural needs.

This natural endowment is constantly being modified by the education girls receive from their parents and companions. Boys are trained in the other direction.

"There is held up before the male's eyes from early boyhood, the ideal of fearlessness, with timidity rebuked and ridiculed," Dr. Stratton said. "Anger, however, is permitted him and condoned; indeed in many a situation his fellows vehemently demand anger in the male. The boy's young companions, male and female, support this ideal as heartily as do his elders.

"The social ideal for the conduct of girls and women, on the other hand, has been quite different, less ready to countenance anger in them, while viewing with leniency or approval some show of fear."

The only child is not the "sissy" that he is sometimes depicted, Dr. Stratton's research indicates. He is not different, in either tendency to fear, or tendency to anger, from other first-born children.

## Oldest Sons Are Brave

A difference was found, however, between the first-born and the younger brothers and sisters. And this difference is not the same for both first-born girls and first-born boys.

The man who has been the oldest boy in the family is less fearful than other men. The woman who has been the oldest girl in the family is more irascible than other women. These differences are slight, and Dr. Stratton explains them as probably due to the influence of the younger ones in the family.

"The first-born if a boy with brothers and sisters," Dr. Stratton says, "may perhaps be a shade more courageous than the only boy—as though the first-born's high office of big brother, with the expectation of courage which it suggests, tended to make him more stalwart in the presence of danger.

"The first-born, if a girl with brothers and sisters, is inclined to more anger than is the only daughter—as though younger brothers and sisters taxed a girl's resources more than they did a boy's. Younger brothers with their socially-encouraged rebellions against petticoat domination perhaps seed the soil more richly for a crop of anger in the girl, whereas the only daughter can find in the home merely her parents to annoy her."

In previous research, Dr. Stratton has searched for a relation between fear and anger and intelligence and accomplishment in mental work. He found no connection between these emotions and in-

telligence, but that might be because his study at that time was limited to college students all of a rather high grade of intelligence, he explained. A relation may exist at the lower levels of mentality.

Individuals who are irascible or timid are, on the whole, apt to accomplish less than those who have a calmer temperament.

### Hinders Learning

"It is conceivable, and I believe it probable, that a greater readiness to be irritated or fearful is a direct impediment to scholarly achievement," Dr. Stratton said in interpreting these results.

"This is probable, I feel, even though we have evidence that, with other things equal, to assume something like an angry attitude toward a problem, as though to down it, increases the chance of solving it.

"But the assumption of a fighting attitude toward a problem is, of course, different from the assumption of a fighting attitude toward the person who sets the problem, or toward a classmate or a roommate, or the elderly academic fates that do their small best to lessen college pleasures.

"The person inclined to be irritated is too often wasteful of his energy; and the same is true of fear."

The Nordic is not, after all, the most courageous of all the Caucasians and the most terrible in his wrath, Dr. Stratton found. This honor, if honor it be, should very likely go to his neighbors from the south, the Mediterraneans, while the Nordic finds superiority in possession of the virtues of the average—neither phlegmatic like the Alpine nor gusty like the Mediterranean.

This was his finding when he recently compared the anger and fear reactions of 1,000 university students with certain of their physical characteristics.

### Hair Color

Is red hair the flaming signal of a violent temper? Hair color does have a definite though small relationship to tendency to anger, Dr. Stratton found. But it is the dark-haired person who has the most intense anger.

Hair color is not so good an index to temper as is the shape of the head. In the same situations, narrow-headed persons become angrier or more afraid than do those whose heads are of medium proportions or broad. Those with heads of medium width are most phlegmatic, showing the least intense fear and anger.

The greatest contrast is not between those of widely different features, but



Pan-Pacific Press Bureau Photo

### LONE SURVIVOR

*Probably the rarest tree in the world is this member of the hibiscus family, growing in Hawaii National Park on the slopes of the great volcano Mauna Loa, at an altitude of 5900 feet. So far as is known, it is the only living specimen of its entire genus. If it dies, another ancient line of living things will have gone to join the dodo and the passenger pigeon. Efforts to propagate it have thus far been unsuccessful.*

between the middle group and those of one or other of the extremes.

In the Nordic stock, Dr. Stratton points out, a narrow head is joined with light hair and light eyes; in the Alpine, a broad head is combined with medium hair and medium eyes; and in the Mediterranean stock, a narrow head is joined with dark hair and dark eyes.

Among the students studied by Dr. Stratton, only a very few could be defined as belonging to any one of these groups on the basis of all three characteristics, head shape, hair, and eye color. But when the "racial" classification was made on the basis of either head shape and color of eyes or head shape and color of hair, the number of cases was large enough so that the results were significant. It then became evident that those displaying Mediterranean physical characteristics have the most intense emotional reactions. Next came the "Nordics" and last the "Alpine."

"In some respects this order is in accord with the frequent opinion that the South European (for example, the Italian or the Spaniard) is more emotional than the European of the Center or of the Northwest; and with the opinion, perhaps less frequent, that the Alpine is the

most phlegmatic of the three European stocks," Dr. Stratton said.

"The present indications lend no support, however, to the opinion that the race of long-headed, light-haired, blue-eyed folk of Northwestern Europe are the most courageous of all the Caucasians, and the most terrible in their wrath."

Another mystery group was, however, discovered by Dr. Stratton whose physical features do not fit the usual description of European stocks. This group has dark hair and dark eyes and a head of medium width. In its dark hair and eyes, it seems to be Mediterranean and its head-shape seems to be within the border of the Mediterranean stock as often defined. Yet this nameless group is emotionally at the opposite pole from the Mediterranean. They show a lower average degree of fear and of anger than does even the least intense of the three strains, the "Alpine"!

Perhaps you would like to give yourself a score on anger, and find out just how "terrible in wrath" you may be. Watch for the following situations as they may come up in the course of your day. When they arise, and before you have time to "cool off," give yourself a rating. Here are the situations:

### Test For Anger

A friend of yours is unjustly criticized in your hearing.

Some one argues with you insistently against what you believe to be important.

You hear for the first time that a certain person has made a slighting remark about you.

You are rebuked before others by one of your companions.

An acquaintance passes without recognizing you, and you believe yourself to have been intentionally "cut."

Some one fails to keep an appointment with you and did not notify you that the appointment could not be kept.

Something of yours which you need is borrowed without your permission.

You are persistently and unpleasantly teased.

### Disturbing Noise

There is continued music, conversation, typing, or the like, which disturbs you while you are trying to study.

There is continued music, conversation, typing, or the like, which disturbs you while you are trying to sleep.

At a theatre, concert, or other public place where you are trying to hear what is being presented, a stranger makes remarks or otherwise acts in a way to distract your attention disagreeably.

You are deprived of an anticipated pleasure upon which you had set your heart.

You have to do a disagreeable task because some one has shirked his duty.

You are treated discourteously by an employee in some office, shop, street car, train, or the like.

A stranger jostles or crowds you without apology.

"Central" of the telephone service delays for some time to give attention to your call, or does not seem to be trying to get the connection you wish, or connects you with the wrong number.

### Cut Off

While telephoning, you are cut off in the midst of your conversation.

You hurry for a street car, and miss it by a very narrow margin.

You hurry for a ferry boat or for a connecting train and miss it by a very narrow margin.

Your score for irascibility depends upon how your reaction fits into the following scale:

If you are not annoyed or irritated in even the slightest degree, score 1.

If you are slightly annoyed, but there

are no physical symptoms of emotion, so far as you can notice, score 2.

If you are irritated, you feel moderate displeasure, and there are physical symptoms of emotion (a very slight frown, or flush, or muscular tension, perhaps) but these are so slight that (it seems to you) they could be noticed only by an attentive observer, score 3.

If you feel an impulse to make cutting remarks; and the physical symptoms of your anger (such as frown, or flushed face, or irregular breathing) must (so it seems to you) be evident to any observer. But the symptoms do not have the character described in the following paragraph, score 4.

If your mental equilibrium is upset

### MEDICINE

## Diet Promises Longer Life For Heart Disease Patients

**C**OMplete rest, a very restricted diet and avoidance of the usual heart drugs will enable many patients to recover from heart attacks and return to a regular life, Dr. A. M. Master of Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, told members of the American Heart Association.

Nearly two-thirds of the private patients so treated by Dr. Master and his associates, Drs. Harry L. Jaffe and S. Dack, are now able to lead normal lives. Another twelve per cent. have returned to light or moderate activity. Some of them are still living fifteen years after their first attack.

Heart disease is not really increasing, in Dr. Master's opinion. He takes an optimistic view of the situation. The increase of heart deaths reported is partly due to better diagnosis and partly to the fact that more persons are living to old age and it is only in the old age group that there is any real increase in deaths from heart disease, Dr. Masters believes. The stress and strain of modern life is not the cause of the increase of heart disease, in his opinion.

"Certainly there was just as much stress and strain in the Dark Ages, the days of the Huns, the plagues, the great fires, Spanish inquisition and the French Revolution as there was in the Great War or during the depression," commented Dr. Master.

The form of heart disease known as coronary artery occlusion has probably occurred just as frequently in the history of man as it does now, he said.

so that your work is interfered with; and you feel an impulse to attack the offender physically, or to throw things, or stamp with your foot, or slam the door, etc., score 5.

If you are stirred to passionate, violent anger; your physical as well as your mental equilibrium is upset; and one or more of the following physical symptoms, are present: trembling, nausea, loss of appetite, inability to talk coherently (voice shaking, sputtering, choking sensation, or the like) pallor, weeping, score 6.

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In this type of heart disease the arteries which supply the heart muscle itself with blood become so narrowed that the blood cannot pass through the tiny vessels. Sometimes the vessels are stopped up by formation of blood clots. It is the latter form of the disease for which Dr. Master and associates found restricted diet and rest a successful treatment.

The diet contains only about 400 calories a day at first and is gradually increased to 800. (The average healthy person who is moderately active needs between 2000 and 3000 calories a day). The restricted diet is continued for from two to five months on the average and the period of complete rest in bed lasts about five weeks. The results are as good as those obtained by the new and radical method of treating heart disease by removing the entire thyroid gland, Dr. Master and associates found.

Both removing the thyroid gland and the rest and diet treatment help the patient to recover by reducing the amount of work his heart must do.

A novel feature of the treatment is avoidance of the drugs usually given to relieve heart attacks, such as nitroglycerine, amyl nitrite, digitalis and ephedrine. Morphine and codeine, however, were given whenever needed to relieve pain and to help the patient to rest.

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Malaria is widespread in Iran, and no organized attempt to control it has ever been undertaken, says a report from Paris.