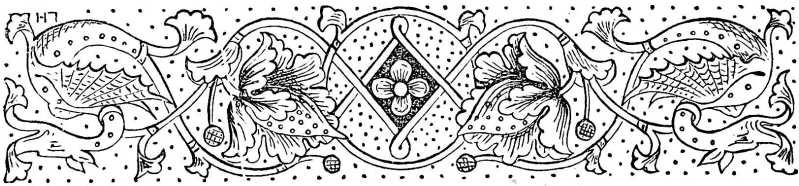


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ON SOME FIXED POINTS IN BRITISH ETHNOLOGY.

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IN view of the many discussions to which the complicated problems offered by the ethnology of the British islands have given rise, it may be useful to attempt to pick out, from amidst the confused masses of assertion and of inference, those propositions which appear to rest upon a secure foundation, and to state the evidence by which they are supported. Such is the purpose of the present paper.

Some of these well-based propositions relate to the physical characters of the people of Britain and their neighbours; while others concern the languages which they spoke. I shall deal, in the first place, with the physical questions.

I. *Eighteen hundred years ago the population of Britain comprised people of two types of complexion—the one fair and the other dark. The dark people resembled the Aquitani and the Iberians; the fair people were like the Belgic Gauls.*

The chief direct evidence of the truth of this proposition is the well-known passage of Tacitus:—

“Ceterum, Britanniam qui mortales initio coluerint, indigenæ an advecti, ut inter barbaros, parum compertum. Habitus corporum varii: atque ex eo argumenta: nam rutilæ Caledoniam habitantium comæ, magni artus Germanicam originem asseverant. Silurum colorati vultus et torti plerumque crines, et posita contra Hispaniam, Iberos veteres trajecisse, easque sedes

occupasse, fidem faciunt. Proximi Gallis et similes sunt; seu durante originis vi, seu procurantibus in diversa terris, positio cœli corporibus habitum dedit. In universum tamen æstimanti, Gallos vicinum solum occupasse, credibile est; eorum sacra deprehendas, superstitionum persuasione; sermo haud multum diversus* . . .”

This passage, it will be observed, contains statements as to facts, and certain conclusions deduced from these facts. The matters of fact asserted are: firstly, that the inhabitants of Britain exhibit much diversity in their physical character; secondly, that the Caledonians are red-haired and large-limbed, like the Germans; thirdly, that the Silures have curly hair and dark complexions, like the people of Spain; fourthly, that the British people nearest Gaul resemble the “Galli.”

Tacitus, therefore, states positively what the Caledonians and Silures were like; but the interpretation of what he says about the other Britons, must depend upon what we learn from other sources as to the characters of these “Galli.” Here the testimony of “divus Julius” comes in with great force and appropriateness. Cæsar writes:—

“Britanniæ pars interior ab iis incolitur, quos natos in insula ipsi memoria proditum dicunt: maritima pars ab iis, qui prædæ ac belli inferendi causa ex Belgio transierant; qui omnes fere iis nominibus civitatum appellantur quibus orti ex civitatibus eo pervenerunt, et bello inlato ibi permanserunt atque agros colere cæperunt.”†

From these passages it is obvious that, in the opinion of Cæsar and Tacitus, the southern Britons resembled the northern Gauls, and especially the Belgæ; and the evidence of Strabo is decisive as to the characters in which the two people resembled one another: “The men [of Britain] are taller than the Kelts, with hair less yellow; they are slighter in their persons.”‡

The evidence adduced appears to leave no reasonable ground for doubting that, at the time of the Roman conquest, Britain contained people of two types, the one dark and the other fair complexioned, and that there was a certain difference between the latter in the north and in the south of Britain: the northern folk being, in the judgment of Tacitus, or, more properly, according to the information he had received from Agricola and others, more similar to the Germans than the latter. As to the distribution of these stocks, all that is clear is, that the dark people were predominant in certain parts of the west of the southern half of Britain, while the fair stock appears to have furnished the chief elements of the population elsewhere.

No ancient writer troubled himself with measuring skulls, and therefore there is no direct evidence as to the cranial characters of the

* Taciti Agricola, c. 11.

† De Bello Gallico, v. 12.

‡ “The Geography of Strabo.” Translated by Hamilton and Falconeri: v. 5.

fair and the dark stocks. The indirect evidence is not very satisfactory. The tumuli of Britain of pre-Roman date have yielded two extremely different forms of skull, the one broad and the other long; and the same variety has been observed in the skulls of the ancient Gauls.* The suggestion is obvious that the one form of skull may have been associated with the fair, and the other with the dark, complexion. But any conclusion of this kind is at once checked by the reflection that the extremes of long and short-headedness are to be met with among the fair inhabitants of Germany and of Scandinavia at the present day—the South-western Germans and the Swiss being markedly broad-headed, while the Scandinavians are as predominantly long-headed.

What the natives of Ireland were like at the time of the Roman conquest of Britain, and for centuries afterwards, we have no certain knowledge; but the earliest trustworthy records prove the existence, side by side with one another, of a fair and a dark stock, in Ireland as in Britain. The long form of skull is predominant among the ancient, as among modern, Irish.

II. *The people termed Gauls, and those called Germans, by the Romans, did not differ in any important physical character.*

The terms in which the ancient writers describe both Gauls and Germans are identical. They are always tall people, with massive limbs, fair skins, fierce blue eyes, and hair, the colour of which ranges from red to yellow. Zeuss, the great authority on these matters, affirms broadly that no distinction in bodily feature is to be found between the Gauls, the Germans, and the Wends, so far as their characters are recorded by the old historians; and he proves his case by citations from a cloud of witnesses.

An attempt has been made to show that the colour of the hair of the Gauls must have differed very much from that which obtained among the Germans, on the strength of the story told by Suetonius (Caligula, 4), that Caligula tried to pass off Gauls for Germans by picking out the tallest, and making them “*rutilare et summittere comam.*”

The Baron de Belloguet remarks upon this passage:—

“It was in the very north of Gaul, and near the sea, that Caligula got up this military comedy. And the fact proves that the Belgæ were already sensibly different from their ancestors, whom Strabo had found almost identical with their *brothers* on the other side of the Rhine.”

But the fact recorded by Suetonius, if fact it be, proves nothing; for the Germans themselves were in the habit of reddening their hair. Ammianus Marcellinus † tells how, in the year 367 A.D., the

* See Dr. Thurnam “On the two Principal Forms of Ancient British and Gaulish Skulls.”

† Res Gestæ, xxvii.

Roman commander, Jovinus, surprised a body of Alemanni near the town now called Charpeigne, in the valley of the Moselle; and how the Roman soldiers, as, concealed by the thick wood, they stole upon their unsuspecting enemies, saw that some were bathing and others "comas rutilantes ex more." More than two centuries earlier Pliny gives indirect evidence to the same effect when he says of soap:—

"Galliarum hoc inventum rutilandis capillis . . . apud Germanos majore in usu viris quam fæminis."*

Here we have a writer who flourished only a short time after the date of the Caligula story, telling us that the Gauls invented soap for the purpose of doing that which, according to Suetonius, Caligula forced them to do. And, further, the combined and independent testimony of Pliny and Ammianus assures us that the Germans were as much in the habit of reddening their hair as the Gauls. As to De Belloguet's supposition that, even in Caligula's time, the Gauls had become darker than their ancestors were, it is directly contradicted by Ammianus Marcellinus, who knew the Gauls well. "Celsioris staturæ et candidi pæne Galli sunt omnes, et rutili, luminumque torvitate terribiles," is his description; and it would fit the Gauls who sacked Rome.

III. *In none of the invasions of Britain which have taken place since the Roman dominion, has any other type of man been introduced than one or other of the two which existed during that dominion.*

The North Germans, who effected what is commonly called the Saxon conquest of Britain, were, most assuredly, a fair, yellow, or red-haired, blue-eyed, long-skulled people. So were the Danes and Norsemen who followed them; though it is very possible that the active slave trade which went on, and the intercourse with Ireland, may have introduced a certain admixture of the dark stock into both Denmark and Norway. The Norman conquest brought in new ethnological elements, the precise value of which cannot be estimated with exactness; but as to their quality, there can be no question, inasmuch as even the wide area from which William drew his followers could yield him nothing but the fair and the dark types of men, already present in Britain. But whether the Norman settlers, on the whole, strengthened the fair or the dark element, is a problem, the elements of the solution of which are not attainable.

I am unable to discover any grounds for believing that a Lapp element has ever entered into the population of these islands. So far as the physical evidence goes, it is perfectly consistent with the hypothesis that the only constituent stocks of that population, now,

* *Historia Naturalis*, xxviii. 51.

or at any other period about which we have evidence, are the dark whites, whom I have proposed to call "*Melanochroi*," and the fair whites, or "*Xanthochroi*."

IV. *The Xanthochroi and the Melanochroi of Britain are, speaking broadly, distributed, at present, as they were in the time of Tacitus; and their representatives on the continent of Europe have the same general distribution as at the earliest period of which we have any record.*

At the present day, and notwithstanding the extensive intermixture effected by the movements consequent on civilization and on political changes, there is a predominance of dark men in the west, and of fair men in the east and north, of Britain. At the present day, as from the earliest times, the predominant constituents of the riverain population of the North Sea and the eastern half of the British Channel, are fair men. The fair stock continues in force through Central Europe, until it is lost in Central Asia. Offshoots of this stock extend into Spain, Italy, and Northern India, and by way of Syria and North Africa, to the Canary Islands. They were known in very early times to the Chinese, and in still earlier to the ancient Egyptians, as frontier tribes. The Thracians were notorious for their fair hair and blue eyes many centuries before our era.

On the other hand, the dark stock predominates in Southern and Western France, in Spain, along the Ligurian shore, and in Western and Southern Italy; in Greece, Asia, Syria, and North Africa; in Arabia, Persia, Affghanistan, and Hindostan, shading gradually, through all stages of darkening, into the type of the modern Egyptian, or of the wild Hill-man of the Dekkan. Nor is there any record of the existence of a different population in all these countries.

The extreme north of Europe, and the northern part of Western Asia, are at present occupied by a Mongoloid stock, and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, may be assumed to have been so peopled from a very remote epoch. But, as I have said, I can find no evidence that this stock ever took part in peopling Britain. Of the three great stocks of mankind which extend from the western coast of the great Eurasiatic continent to its southern and eastern shores, the Mongoloids occupy a vast triangle, the base of which is the whole of Eastern Asia, while its apex lies in Lapland. The *Melanochroi*, on the other hand, may be represented as a broad band stretching from Ireland to Hindostan; while the *Xanthochroic* area lies between the two, thins out, so to speak, at either end, and mingles, at its margins, with both its neighbours.

Such is a brief and summary statement of what I believe to be the chief facts relating to the physical ethnology of the people of Britain. The conclusions which I draw from these and other facts are—
(1) That the *Melanochroi* and the *Xanthochroi* are two separate races

in the biological sense of the word race; (2) That they have had the same general distribution as at present, from the earliest times of which any record exists on the continent of Europe; (3) That the population of the British Islands is derived from them, and from them only.

The people of Europe, however, owe their national names, not to their physical characteristics, but to their languages, or to their political relations; which, it is plain, need not have the slightest relation to these characteristics.

Thus, it is quite certain that, in Cæsar's time, Gaul was divided politically into three nationalities—the Belgæ, the Celtæ, and the Aquitani; and that the last were very widely different, both in language and in physical characteristics, from the two former. The Belgæ and the Celtæ, on the other hand, differed comparatively little either in physique or in language. On the former point there is the distinct testimony of Strabo; as to the latter, St. Jerome states that the "Galatians had almost the same language as the Treviri." Now the Galatians were emigrant Volcæ Tectosages, and therefore Celtæ; while the Treviri were Belgæ.

At the present day, the physical characters of the people of Belgic Gaul remain distinct from those of the people of Aquitaine, notwithstanding the immense changes which have taken place since Cæsar's time; but Belgæ, Celtæ, and Aquitani (all but a mere fraction of the last two, represented by the Basques and the Britons) are fused into one nationality, "le peuple Français." But they have adopted the language of one set of invaders, and the name of another; their original names and languages having almost disappeared. Suppose that the French language remained as the sole evidence of the existence of the population of Gaul, would the keenest philologist arrive at any other conclusion than that this population was essentially and fundamentally a "Latin" race, which had had some communication with Celts and Teutons? Would he so much as suspect the former existence of the Aquitani?

Community of language testifies to close contact between the people who speak the language, but to nothing else; and philology has absolutely nothing to do with ethnology, except so far as it suggests the existence or the absence of such contact. The contrary assumption, that language is a test of race, has introduced the utmost confusion into ethnological speculation, and has nowhere worked greater scientific and practical mischief than in the ethnology of the British Islands.

What is known, for certain, about the languages spoken in these islands and their affinities may, I believe, be summed up as follows:—

I. *At the time of the Roman conquest, one language, the Celtic, under two principal dialectical divisions, the Cymric and the Gaelic, was spoken throughout the British Islands. Cymric was spoken in Britain, Gaelic in Ireland.*

If a language allied to Basque had in earlier times been spoken in the British Islands, there is no evidence that any Euskarian-speaking people remained at the time of the Roman conquest. The dark and the fair population of Britain alike spoke Celtic tongues, and therefore the name "Celt" is as applicable to the one as to the other.

What was spoken in Ireland can only be surmised by reasoning from the knowledge of later times; but there seems to be no doubt that it was Gaelic; and that the Gaelic dialect was introduced into the Western Highlands by Irish invaders.

II. *The Belgæ and the Celtæ, with the offshoots of the latter in Asia Minor, spoke dialects of the Cymric division of Celtic.*

The evidence of this proposition lies in the statement of St. Jerome before cited; in the similarity of the names of places in Belgic Gaul and in Britain; and, in the direct comparison of sundry ancient Gaulish and Belgic words which have been preserved, with the existing Cymric dialects, for which I must refer to the learned work of Brandes.

Formerly, as at the present day, the Cymric dialects of Celtic were spoken by both the fair and the dark stocks.

III. *There is no record of Gaelic being spoken anywhere save in Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man.*

This appears to be the final result of the long discussions which have taken place on this much-debated question. As is the case with the Cymric dialects, Gaelic is now spoken by both dark and fair stocks.

IV. *When the Teutonic languages first became known, they were spoken only by Xanthochroi, that is to say, by the Germans, the Scandinavians, and Goths. And they were imported by Xanthochroi into Gaul and into Britain.*

In Gaul the imported Teutonic dialect has been completely overpowered by the more or less modified Latin, which it found already in possession; and what Teutonic blood there may be in modern Frenchmen is not adequately represented in their language. In Britain, on the contrary, the Teutonic dialects have overpowered the pre-existing forms of speech, and the people are vastly less "Teutonic" than their language. Whatever may have been the extent to which the Celtic-speaking population of the eastern half of Britain was trodden out and supplanted by the Teutonic-speaking Saxons and Danes, it is quite certain that no considerable displacement of the Celtic-speak-

ing people occurred in Cornwall, Wales, or the Highlands of Scotland; and that nothing approaching to the extinction of that people took place in Devonshire, Somerset, or the western moiety of Britain generally. Nevertheless, the fundamentally Teutonic English language is now spoken throughout Britain, except by an insignificant fraction of the population in Wales and the Western Highlands. But it is obvious that this fact affords not the slightest justification for the common practice of speaking of the present inhabitants of Britain as an "Anglo-Saxon" people. It is, in fact, just as absurd as the habit of talking of the French people as a "Latin" race, because they speak a language which is, in the main, derived from Latin. And the absurdity becomes the more patent when those who have no hesitation in calling a Devonshire man, or a Cornish man, an "Anglo-Saxon," would think it ridiculous to call a Tipperary man by the same title, though he and his forefathers may have spoken English for as long a time as the Cornish man.

Ireland, at the earliest period at which we have any knowledge, contained, like Britain, a dark and a fair stock, which, there is every reason to believe, were identical with the dark and the fair stocks of Britain. When the Irish first became known they spoke a Gaelic dialect, and though, for many centuries, Scandinavians made continual incursions upon, and settlements among them, the Teutonic languages made no more way among the Irish than they did among the French. How much Scandinavian blood was introduced there is no evidence to show. But after the conquest of Ireland by Henry II., the English people, consisting in part of the descendants of Cymric speakers, and in part of the descendants of Teutonic speakers, made good their footing in the eastern half of the island, as the Saxons and Danes made good theirs in England; and did their best to complete the parallel by attempting the extirpation of the Gaelic-speaking Irish. And they succeeded to a considerable extent; a large part of Eastern Ireland is now peopled by men who are substantially English by descent, and the English language has spread over the land far beyond the limits of English blood.

Ethnologically, the Irish people were originally, like the people of Britain, a mixture of Melanochroi and Xanthochroi. They resembled the Britons in speaking a Celtic tongue; but it was a Gaelic and not a Cymric form of the Celtic language. Ireland was untouched by the Roman conquest, nor do the Saxons seem to have had any influence upon her destinies, but the Danes and Norsemen poured in a contingent of Teutonism, which has been largely supplemented by English and Scotch efforts.

What then is the value of the ethnological difference between the Englishman of the western half of England and the Irish-

man of the eastern half of Ireland? For what reason does the one deserve the name of a "Celt," and not the other? And further, if we turn to the inhabitants of the western half of Ireland, why should the term "Celts" be applied to them more than to the inhabitants of Cornwall? And if the name is applicable to the one as justly as to the other, why should not intelligence, perseverance, thrift, industry, sobriety, respect for law, be admitted to be Celtic virtues? And why should we not seek for the cause of their absence in something else than the idle pretext of "Celtic blood?"

I have been unable to meet with any answers to these questions.

V. *The Celtic and the Teutonic dialects are members of the same great Aryan family of languages; but there is evidence to show that a non-Aryan language was at one time spoken over a large extent of the area occupied by Melanochroi in Europe.*

The non-Aryan language here referred to is the Euskarian, now spoken only by the Basques, but which seems in earlier times to have been the language of the Aquitanians and Spaniards, and may possibly have extended much further to the East. Whether it has any connection with the Ligurian and Oscan dialects are questions upon which, of course, I do not presume to offer any opinion. But it is important to remark that it is a language the area of which has gradually diminished without any corresponding extirpation of the people who primitively spoke it; so that the people of Spain and of Aquitaine at the present day must be largely "Euskarian" by descent in just the same sense as the Cornish men are "Celtic" by descent.

Such seem to me to be the main facts respecting the ethnology of the British Islands and of Western Europe, which may be said to be fairly established. The hypothesis by which I think (with De Belloguet and Thurnam) the facts may best be explained is this: In very remote times Western Europe and the British Islands were inhabited by the dark stock or the Melanochroi alone, and these Melanochroi spoke dialects allied to the Euskarian. The Xanthochroi, spreading over the great Eurasiatic plains westward, and speaking Aryan dialects, gradually invaded the territories of the Melanochroi. The Xanthochroi, who thus came into contact with the Western Melanochroi, spoke a Celtic language; and that Celtic language, whether Cymric or Gaelic, spread over the Melanochroi far beyond the limits of intermixture of blood, supplanting Euskarian, just as English and French have supplanted Celtic. Even as early as Cæsar's time, I suppose that the Euskarian was everywhere, except in Spain and in Aquitaine, replaced by Celtic, and thus the Celtic speakers were no longer of one ethnological stock, but of two. Both in France and in England a

third wave of language—in the one case Latin, in the other Teutonic—has spread over the same area. In France, it has left a fragment of the primary Euskarian in one corner of the country, and a fragment of the secondary Celtic, in another. In the British Islands only outlying pools of the secondary linguistic wave remain in Wales, the Highlands, Ireland, and the Isle of Man. If this hypothesis is a sound one, it follows that the name of Celtic is not properly applicable to the Melanochroic or dark stock of Europe. They are merely, so to speak, secondary Celts. The primary and aboriginal Celtic-speaking people are Xanthochroi—the typical Gauls of the ancient writers and the close allies by blood, customs, and language, of the Germans.

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