

Huxley on "The Forefathers of the English People."

Recently Professor Huxley delivered a lecture at St. George's Hall, London, entitled, "The Forefathers of the English People on the Mainland of Europe and Asia." The Professor illustrated his remarks by references to a large map of the two continents, which, he explained, he had specially prepared for the occasion.

Professor Huxley, after a few introductory observations, said:—The English people of the present day present two types of physical structure, which are extremely different in their most marked forms, though they pass into one another by every shade of gradation. The one type is tall, fair-complexioned, yellow or red-haired, and blue-eyed; the other, short, dark-complexioned, black-haired, and black-eyed.

The earliest historical records furnished by Cæsar, Strabo, and Tacitus, of the nature of the population of Britain, take us back nineteen hundred years, and show that, at that time, the physical characters of the population might be described in the same language as at present. The people of Southeastern England and Caledonia were certainly tall, fair, and blue-eyed, with hair varying from yellow to red in hue; while, in South Wales, they had dark hair and complexions, resembling the Spaniards of that day.

Whence was this Celtic-speaking people, with its two contrasted dark and fair forms, which inhabited Britain nineteen hundred hundred years ago, derived? The position of the British Islands is sufficient to suggest the extreme probability that it migrated from Europe, the eastern and the southern faces of these islands being within easy reach of the shores of those countries which are now Norway, Denmark, North Germany, Holland, Belgium, and France.

In the first place, if we turn to the existing population of the continent of Europe and Asia we shall at once recognize our two physical types—the fair and the dark. From Norway to Northeastern France the predominant constituents of the riverain population of the North Sea and of the British Channel are tall, fair-haired, and blue-eyed. In Northwestern France the proportion of short and dark people increases. Until, in Southern and Southwestern France, they are the chief constituents of the population.

There is no reason to think that climatal conditions have anything whatever to do with this singular distribution of the fair and the dark types. Not only do the dark Highlanders live five or six degrees farther north than the fair black-foresters of Germany, but, to the north of all the fair inhabitants of Europe, in Lapland, there lives a race of people, very different in their characters from the dark stock of Britain, but still having black hair, black eyes, and swarthy yellowish complexions. Thus, having regard only to physical characters, the population of Europe falls into three broad bands, which run in a rough way from west to east. In the north is the zone of the black-haired, black-eyed Mongoloid Lapps. In the south is the zone of the people who resemble the dark type of the British islands, and who have been called Melanchroï; between them lies the broad belt of fair people, who have been termed Xanthochroï.

What history tells us, so far as it goes, is quite in accordance with the suggestions of biology. It is certain that, from the fifth century to the tenth, a vast number of people from Scandinavia and North Germany poured into the British islands on all sides, but, as might be expected, most persistently and numerously into the eastern moiety of Britain. They brought with them languages which may properly and conveniently be termed Teutonic, in contradistinction to the indigenous dialects of Celtic. Out of these dialects the language usually known as Anglo-Saxon was developed, and from it, by subse-

quent modification and absorption for the most part of Celtic and French elements, has grown English. The invasion which thus changed the language of Britain introduced no new element into the physical conformation of the people, so far as stature and complexion are concerned, though it may have done so in the matter of cranial conformation. It is unquestioned that Norsemen, Danes, and Saxons were alike tall, fair-haired people, and their immigration strengthened the Xanthochroï element of our population, but added nothing new, unless it were a longer form of head. Thus, to put the matter in another way, tall stature, fair hair, and blue eyes, in a native of Britain, are no evidence of his descent rather from the primary Celtic-speaking than from the immigrant Teutonic-speaking element of our population, or the reverse. He is as likely to be a "Celt" as a "Teuton," and a "Teuton" as a "Celt."

But history teaches us more than this. There is the clearest evidence that the Gauls—the Celtic-speaking people who burnt Rome nearly four centuries before our era—belonged to the fair type, and neither by their stature, their complexions, the color of their eyes or their hair, were distinguishable from such Teutonic-speaking people as the Goths, who sacked Rome four centuries after it; and that, for these eight centuries at any rate, Northwestern, Central, Eastern Europe and the western part of Central Asia were occupied by a tall, fair, blue-eyed people, who were known by the name of Celts, Belgæ, the language which they spoke, Germani, Vædi, or Wænds, or Alani, according to the districts which they occupied, and the language which they spoke.

Those who have any doubts upon this subject had better consult the great work of Kaspar Zeuss, "Die Deutschen und die Nachbarstämme," published thirty years ago; or the excellent discussion, mainly based upon Zeuss, in Prichard; or to the instructive works of Brandes and De Belloguet.

Thus, when history first makes known the Celtic language to us, it is in the mouths of a people physically identical with the Germans and the Slavonians; and when the affinities of the Celtic, the Teutonic, and Slavonic languages are worked out by the philologist they are all found to belong to the same great group of Aryan languages. The argument to be drawn from the physical affinity of the Celtic-speaking with the Teutonic-speaking people is therefore supported and intensified by the linguistic affinities between the Celtic and the Teutonic tongues; and philology concurs with history in testifying to the ethnic unity of the Celtic-speaking people on the left bank of the Rhine with the Teutonic-speaking people to the eastward. In their clothing, in their arms, in their houses, in their employment of horses and wheeled carriages, no differences of moment obtain between the Celtic-speaking and Teutonic-speaking people of old Europe; nor in their fashion of government, their social organization, their morality, or their theology, do there seem to be any greater differences than are readily accounted for by the fact that the Teutonic-speaking nations were more remote from the corrupting influences of wealth and civilization. The Tonga Islanders of Mariner's time offered the same contrast to the Tahitians that the Germans of Tacitus do to the Gauls; but no one would dream, on that ground, of declaring them to be of different races.

Hence, there can be no reasonable doubt that the fair element of the Celtic-speaking population of these islands 1900 years ago was simply the western fringe of that vast stock which can be traced to Central Asia, and the existence of which on the confines of China in ancient times is testified by Chinese annals. Throughout the central parts of the immense areas which it covers, the people of this stock speak Aryan languages—belonging, that is, to the same family as the old Persian, or Zend, and the Sanskrit. And they remain still largely represented among the Afghans and the Siakpoots on the frontiers of Persia on the one hand, and Hindostan on the other. But the old Sanskrit literature proves that the Aryan population of India came in from the northwest, at least three thousand years ago. And in the Vedas these people portray themselves in characters which might have fitted the Gauls, the Germans, or the Goths. Unfortunately there is no evidence whether they were fair-haired or not. In India there was a pre-existing dark-complexioned people more like the Australians than any one else, and speaking a group of languages called Dravidian. They were fenced in on the north by the barrier of the Himalayas; but the Aryans poured from the plains of Central Asia over the Himalayas, to the great river basins of the Indus and the Ganges, where they have been, in the main, absorbed into the pre-existing population, leaving as evidence of their immigration an extensive modification of the physical characters of the population, a language, and a literature. Italy is to the Alps what Hindostan is to the Himalayas. The Po is its Ganges. Four centuries B. C. it was peopled mainly by the dark and short stock represented by Ligurians, Etruscans, and old Italians. The Gauls poured into it over the northwestern passes, and settled in Cis-Alpine Gaul, modifying the physical characters and the language of the population, but becoming lost eventually in the great Roman nationality. The correspondence of the names of places in Gaul and ancient Britain fully confirms Cæsar's statement that the Belgic Gauls had, at some comparatively recent time, colonized Southeastern Britain in great numbers. But the primitive colonization of Britain from the mainland by the fair people is doubtless of extreme antiquity.

I have now, I believe, accounted for the fair Celtic-speaking population of ancient Britain. There remains the problem, Why did Britain contain another Celtic-speaking population of a totally different type? The key to this riddle is, I believe with Dr. Thurman, Belloguet, and others, afforded by history and philology. History, which tells us by the mouths of Cæsar, Strabo, and Tacitus, that the Aquitane, who lived beyond the Garonne, were a small and dark people like the Iberians, who spoke a language different from that of Gaul. Philology, which tells us that this language was the Euskarian, is represented by the modern Basque, which is unlike every other European language, and which once covered a vastly greater area than it now occupies—the great majority of the people who once spoke it having now acquired other languages.

Thus, once more, physical and philological ethnology, properly viewed, concur. The physically distinct stock turns out to be linguistically distinct—to have, in fact, all the ethnological characters of a distinct race. In Spain and in the old Aquitania the Euskarian language lingers only among a fragment of the population which physically retains, to a great extent, its dark complexion and short stature. In Britain, the same process of extinction seems to have been consummated as far back as the time of Tacitus. For from what has been said it can hardly be doubted that the Silures and the dark type in general were the outliers of the continental

Euskarian-speaking dark type, just as the British Belgæ, and the fair type in general, were the offshoots of the continental Celtic-speaking fair type. And just as in Western and Middle Gaul, and in Spain, the Celtic-speaking fair people had, even in the time of Cæsar, largely supplanted and absorbed the dark stock, so in Britain, it is to be supposed that it had altogether absorbed it, and that the dark stock had given up their Euskarian for the Celtic language.

All these reasonings may be thus put into the form of a probable hypothesis. The chain of the Alps, the densely wooded highlands of Central Europe, known in old times as the Hercynian forest, with the broad Rhine in its lower course, form a natural compact between the vast central plains of Eurasia and Western and Southern Europe. Before England was peopled by the ancestors of its present population, the latter region, including the north shore of the Mediterranean, Spain, Gaul, and perhaps the shores of the Baltic, were occupied by people of the dark type, who may by possibility have been the chief people of the so-called bronze age. These people occupied the British islands wholly or in part, and were very probably at first their sole occupants. And in Spain, France, and Britain they spoke Euskarian dialects.

During this time the fair stock, with its Aryan languages, wandered over the great Eurasian plain to the east of the rampart, from Siberia to the frontiers of China, and from Siberia to those of Persia and India. But at length the fair people found their vast plains too narrow or the luxuries beyond its natural barriers too tempting, and they began to overflow—as "Celts," into Western Europe; as Zende and Vedic Aryas, into Persia and into Hindostan. The Celtic-speaking fair people, passing into Gaul, partly extirpated and partly mixed with the pre-existing dark Euskarian-speaking population, imposing their language and habits on all the northern, middle, and eastern parts of Gaul, and extending widely into Spain. From Gaul they passed into Britain and Celticized it still more completely; so that, though much of the old blood of the dark stock remained, its language vanished.

The Teutonic-speaking people were simply another wave of the same great Aryan ocean of Central Eurasia. They treated the Celtic-speakers exactly as the latter had treated the dark stock, and before another century has passed the Celtic language will probably be as much a thing of the past in these islands as the Euskarian is.

If this is a fair picture of the general course of events, it furnishes the explanation of the fact from which we started, namely, the presence in the British Islands of two distinct ethnical elements—a fair and a dark.

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