Notes on the Wallons.

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The following paper was read :

NOTES *on the WALLONS.* By JOHN BEDDOE, M.D.

My ideas respecting the Wallon physical type are founded upon observations made at Liege, Huy and Dinant, and in smaller number at Verviers, Namur, Givet, and Mezieres-Charleville. Altogether, I took note of the hair and eyes in about 1400 people, but of the measurements of the head in only ten, who were inhabitants of Dinant and the neighbourhood. The description of the Wallon type given in the paper by Drs. Charnock and Blake accords very well with my own opinion. It differs very markedly from the forms prevalent in Flanders and Brabant, Westphalia and the Lower Rhine ; in fact, few ethnological frontiers in Western Europe, I suppose, are better marked than that of the Brabançons and the Wallons, which is crossed by the traveller on his way from Mechlin, Louvain, Landen, and Tirlemont, to Liège, notwithstanding that Liège has long been a great commercial and manufacturing centre, and swarms with strangers and descendants of foreigners, whose presence tends to obscure somewhat the true local type. At Verviers, a little further east, and more among the hills, the type I speak of comes out still more strongly, and the dark, or even coal-black hair of the peasants, their square foreheads, high cheek-bones, aquiline noses, and pointed chins are very conspicuous. Not many miles further, again, as one quits the hills and enters the open country about Aachen, both features and complexions change again, and remind one of those left behind in Brabant, though with certain shades of difference.

To my eye this hatchet-faced Wallon type is fundamentally the same which prevails throughout the whole north of France, from Rheims to Dieppe, though it may be most boldly and strongly marked in the Ardennes. It is the same which William Edwards called *Kimric*, and which Broca and other French anthropologists connect with tall stature and light hair, contrasting it in these and other respects with the dark, short, round-headed type of central and southern France. It abounds in Northern Italy, is pretty common in Brittany and Cornwall, and seems to constitute an element of more or less importance in the population of most parts of the British Isles. But whether there be any good ground for connecting it with a light complexion and fair hair I very much doubt. Light hair is indeed more frequent in the north-east than in most other parts of France ; and it is in the north-east that the *Kimric* type prevails ; but even there, if we adopt the nomenclature of colours which any Englishman would employ, the bulk of the population is dark-haired. The fact is (and I have repeatedly had occasion to recall it to notice) that people's ideas about hair colour differ

more widely than is generally supposed. Observers belonging to a country or district where any particular hue is rare, will be found usually to exaggerate the prevalence of that hue among the people whom they observe. Thus Worsaae, coming from Denmark, where black hair is rare, talks of the dark hair of the southern English, while Frenchmen almost always think and speak of us as a blond-haired people. It will not do, therefore, to reason from a collation of the observations of several persons, as is often done in this matter of hair-colour, unless indeed some such plan as Broca's has been adopted, for reproducing accurate ideas as to the facts.

To resume. We have in the Wallons a population which may be roughly described as long-headed, long-faced, and dark-haired. To the east of them, in the Rhineland, are the Germans, broad-headed, and comparatively light-haired. To the north and north-east the Flemings, Hollanders, Frisians, and Westphalians, all light-haired, and tending on the whole to be broad-headed, such tendency, however, being less marked in the Frisians, and perhaps in the Flemings, than in the others. To the south-west, in the plain-country of northern France, is a people much like to the Wallons in colour and frame of body, and probably also in form of head. But as we proceed westward to the Seine and beyond it, the hair lightens while the Norman impress strengthens. I need not enter into the subject of the distribution of hair colour on this side of the channel.

I regard the Wallons, then, and their hilly, wooded, and difficult country, as a Kimric or Belgic cliff, against which the tide of advancing Germanism has beaten with small effect, while it has swept with comparatively little resistance over the lowlands of Flanders and Alsace, and penetrated into Normandy and Lorraine. I look upon the colour of the hair as a tolerably good index of the proportion of German or Scandinavian blood, inasmuch as it seems to lighten wherever that proportion increases, in France as well as in England or Ireland.

It would be uncandid, however, to omit mention of certain points which seem to favour the view of Professor Huxley, who thinks the Kelts, Belgæ or Kimri, were the first wave of this Germanic tide, and a fair-haired people. The late Prof. Spring of Liège, with whom I discussed the physical type of the Wallons, spoke of them, so far as I can recollect, as long-headed, with oblique eyebrows, high cheek-bones, prominent brows, and angular chins; but he did not recognise the long face and aquiline nose as a part of the true Wallon type, and when I drew his attention to some faces which displayed *my* Wallon type very strongly, he said they were doubtless common, but he thought they were due to a Germanic cross. This I could not agree with, as to my

eye they were utterly un-German. But I must confess that I have seen faces in Friesland and in West Flanders (though not in the Rhineland), which were, except in colour, something like those of my hatchet-faced Wallons, though not quite so strongly marked. The nearest approach, then, that I can make to Professor Huxley's theory is as follows:—I think it possible that the Wallons, together with the population of the greater part of France, *may* have been constituted as a race by the crossing of a dark, round-headed Ligurian breed with a fair long-headed one, nearly allied to the modern Frisians, of whom the Cimbri of Roman history may have been the rear-guard. Such a hypothesis as this would dovetail very fairly with some of Mr. Pike's notions about British ethnology. But as the settlement in Gaul of this hypothetical xanthous Keltic or Kimric people must have been very ancient, I do not think the solution of the much-vexed question of the complexion of the Gauls would be at all assisted by the adoption of this view. Either changes of climate and habits have altered the Wallons and other Belgic Gauls from fair to dark-haired, since the days of Strabo and Ammianus; or else they were then, as now, in the main a dark-haired people. I confess that I am still more inclined towards the latter opinion than the former.

The meeting then separated.

FEB. 19TH, 1872.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, Bart., M.P., F.R.S., *President, in the Chair.*

THE Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following new members were announced: CHRISTOPHER BOWLEY, Esq., Cirencester; RICHARD JOSEPH NUNN, Esq., M.D., Savannah, Georgia, United States of America; EDWARD HARRIS, Esq., Rydal Villa, Longton Grove, Sydenham; JOHN EDWARD PRICE, Esq., F.S.A., 53, Beresford Road, Highbury, N.; and JAMES PEDDIE STEELE, Esq., M.D., B.A., 13, Charlotte Street, Buckingham Gate, S.W.

The following presents were announced, and the thanks of the meeting voted to the respective donors:—

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