Ethnology of Cornwall

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL REVIEWS AND MISCELLANEA.

Readers of the Journal are invited to communicate any new facts of especial interest which come under their notice. Short abstracts of, or extracts from, letters will be published at the discretion of the Editor. Letters should be marked "Miscellanea" and addressed to The Secretary, 3, Hanover Square, W.

ETHNOLOGY OF CORNWALL.

The following letter has been addressed to me by my distinguished friend Dr. Paul Topinard, who desires to publish it in the *Journal of the Institute*. It contains his impressions as to the prevailing physical types which he found in Cornwall, during a short visit which he made to that county last September. As he desires my comments I add them hereto.

Dr. Topinard sees little difference between the Cornish and other Englishmen, so far as physical type is concerned. This does not surprise me, though I do not quite agree with him. An English observer, like myself, accustomed to English types, naturally has his attention directed on visiting Cornwall, to those persons, be they many or few, who present *un-English* types, rather than to those, however numerous, who have a familiar aspect. The Cornish do not differ materially in cephalic index from other Englishmen; and no doubt the points of likeness are more numerous than those of divergence, and must necessarily strike a foreign anthropologist forcibly.

My own analysis of the Cornish population would be, I think, as follows :

1. The Neolithic race of Britain, which we have got into the habit of calling Iberian. In Cornwall, I think, there are traces of Phœnician or other Semitic admixture.
2. The British or bronze brachykephal, much more in evidence in Cornwall than, for example, in Wiltshire. I account for this by the recession of the military caste before the invading Saxons, such military caste having retained most of the original brachycephalic element.
3. The Saxon or other Teutonic invaders and settlers.

The physical type which most strikes my eye in Cornwall is the first-named, crossed by the second, and thus improved in stature and general vigour of aspect. The complexion is largely derived from the first.

The short, sturdy, round-faced type so prevalent in Devon, but less so in Cornwall, is always a puzzle to me. Is it merely a modification of the ordinary English "Batavian" type? What is its relation to Dr. Topinard's Pont l'Abbé type? Does it descend from the old Damnonians? Was it reinforced from Bretagne after the conquest? I cannot tell.

JOHN BEDDOR.

TO DR. JOHN BEDDOE.

Dear Sir,

I must tell you the results of the trip which I made to the Land's End, Cornwall, after the Meeting of the British Association at Bristol. I visited particularly two of the villages which you pointed out to me, Newlyn and Mousehole, and also another, St. Ives.

My purpose, as you know, was to compare the anthropological types I should find with those, four in number, which I had previously ascertained in Bretagne, and described in a letter to Dr. Garson, published in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vol. xxviii, 1897, p. 99. Those four types of Bretagne were: 1st. A dark, short, good-looking type which is found principally in the centre of the peninsula, and which I consider as the descendant of one of the three races of the Neolithic period, the one which itself descends from the principal race of the Palæolithic period, both known in France under the name of the Mediterranean race, or, as you say in England, of the Iberian race. 2nd. A fair and tall type with blue eyes, blond hair, and a reddish complexion, which came during the 5th century principally, I do not say entirely, from the other side of the Channel. 3rd. A brachycephalous type with a big head, a rather flattened and unpleasant face, a short neck, square shoulders and trunk, etc., found, for example, among the Bigoudens of Pont l'Abbé, and descending from the brachycephalous race of the Neolithic period. 4th. A type of moderate stature with a long, quadrilateral, somewhat flattened and phænozygous face, a square and full forehead, square jaws and chin, etc.; this type being the most numerous, being found principally at the periphery of the country, and being the result of crossing between the 2nd and 3rd types mostly, if not entirely.

Well, in Cornwall I found nothing reminding me of the 1st and 4th types, but some characters of the 3rd type in a few individuals, and many people of the 2nd. My conclusion was that the population of Cornwall is now thoroughly English in type.

Nevertheless, I found that the average was less fair, less blue-eyed, less long-faced, less tall than in other parts of England. We cannot ascribe those differences to the British who were repulsed into Cornwall by the Anglo-Saxons, because we know not if there was any physical difference between those British and the Anglo-Saxons, the ones speaking a Kymric language and the others a Teutonic language. The probability is that the present type of Cornwall comes from the crossing of a fair people, either British or Anglo-Saxon, or more likely both, with an anterior dark population which was the Silures, who worked the tin mines of Land's End, as said by the writers of antiquity. If so, I ought to have found some vestiges of my 1st type of Bretagne, which was akin to the Silures. It is to be sought for by some other observer who can devote more time than I did.

Now, accepting the hypothesis that the British, and not the Anglo-Saxons, played their part in the formation of the present type of Cornwall, and comparing this with the most expanded present type of Bretagne, my 4th, one might say that the very great difference between the two finds its explanation in this: The British of Bretagne were crossed mostly with a brachycephalous population, and those of Cornwall with a dark and short population of Silures.

I submit these views to you: none have more authority to give them their proper weight.

I remain, yours most faithfully,

DR. PAUL TOPINARD.

Paris, November 12th, 1898.

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