

**THE PEOPLES  
OF  
EUROPE**

# **Table of Contents**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1 'Races'

2 Language Families—Introductory

3 The Peoples of Romance Speech

4 The Peoples of German Speech

5 Some Peoples intermediate between Romance and Germanic in speech

6 Peoples of Low German and Scandinavian Speech

7 The Peoples on the Eastern Border of Europe-of-the-Sea

8 The Slav-speaking Peoples and the Borders of the East

9 Some Phases of Evolution of European Life before the Industrial Revolution

10 Aspects of Modern Europe

## **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

## INTRODUCTION

If there be any truth in the view that our philosophical theories grow out of our circumstances, it cannot be doubted that the philosophy of change, sometimes optimistically called progress, is curiously appropriate to Europe. The intimate juxtaposition of small areas of mountain and plateau, of river and sea, of valley and plain has multiplied contacts between men of diverse activities, experience, and outlook, and has thus encouraged not only exchange of ideas but also fermentation of thought. Economically, also, the trend has always been towards mutual dependence, and the penetration of inland seas far into the Continent has further assisted intercourse from far-off times. A self-sufficing community left to itself will evolve a routine and may stagnate therein; external contacts are most important in that they may ward off this danger. On the other hand, it must be remembered that these contacts may prove disastrous by breaking threads of tradition developing towards a fuller realization of the good life. Thus social importations into many regions of the Mediterranean in the days of the growth of the Roman dominion were brought about through conquest followed by transportation of the enslaved foemen, with grievous results both to Rome and to the slaves. Or again, the rapid growth of British trade at the Industrial Revolution brought many new contacts that, as in the case of Rome long before, promoted exploitation on a large scale, and made the stories both of the factory-children of England and of the slaves of America stand dismally parallel with those of the slaves of ancient Rome. In both instances the loss of social and intellectual heritage involved in these ugly schemes is full of fateful consequences, which worked

themselves out in the case of Rome and may be doing so in the case of Britain. Contact and association without alien dominations, whether personal or regional, at any rate are of the utmost value as refreshers, and Europe has had unequalled opportunities in this direction.

But Europe, as known in current geography, is not an effective human unit. In a certain broad sense it becomes one if we add to it a good deal of South-west Asia and North Africa, so that all the frame of the Mediterranean, Euxine, and Caspian is included. In a more real and detailed sense, however, we should be careful to distinguish that portion which is intimately affected by the sea from that part which is in the first place the threshold of the great interior.

Europe, west of the Pripet Marshes, rarely suffers from extreme heat, and its winter frosts are less severe and prolonged than those of Muscovy. The temperature north and west of the Alps varies just enough on either side of the optimum of 60°-64° F. to provide desirable physiological stimuli, with only short and irregular periods when conditions are really harmful. The Russian plain beyond the Pripet Marshes is, on the other hand, subject to painful extremes which seriously limit man's efficiency in both winter and summer, and leave him but short periods in spring and autumn for effective freshness and enterprise. In consequence of this, Western Europe, or we may call it Europe-of-the-Sea, shows continuity of activity through the changing seasons, a continuity of thought and criticism which has exercised a powerful influence on government and social order, while the sea, as above suggested, has promoted contacts and kept things moving. In Europe-of-the-Sea, at least where we do not get the ill effects of alien domination above mentioned, we thus find that, between the warrior leaders

and the labourers, the traders and professional people or middle class have developed power and have acted as a cement for society on the one hand, and as organizers for its maintenance on the other. Spain (with its long struggle between Christianity and Islam), Ireland (under English domination), the Balkans (under one dominator after another and finally under the Turk), all show historic inhibitions which have delayed and hampered the healthy development of a society free to work for that fuller realization of the good life. Elsewhere it is noteworthy that there have been many attempts, some successful for a time and all valuable, to secure real participation by the people in their problems of social organization, real liberation from the inhibitions involved in government by a superposed class or group. In spite of the difficulties of the present generation, the tendency is for these attempts to gain in power and scope, and to overstep the artificial boundaries of nation and state which are becoming a bed of Procrustes for the peoples of Europe.

On the other hand, east of the Pripet Marshes the long periods of trying climate, coming regularly in winter and in summer, limit, for the folk who have to live unprotected lives, the possibilities of the effective vigilance and criticism whereby the western European organizations are kept going. There is actual pressing need of a routine of tradition on which to fall back in these times of stress. There is also the fear of the grassland tribes tending to keep the people organized on a traditional basis as war leaders and labourers, while the distance from the sea diminishes trade and the middle class, and helps to maintain localism, which in its turn strengthens routine. There we thus find typically a middle class largely immigrant and alien to the military and labouring classes, and this further complicates the problems of social development and organization.

Europe, east and west, thus shows striking contrasts which have fateful consequences; there are also contrasts of importance between north and south. The latitude of most of Europe is such that the sun's rays strike the soil too obliquely to act chemically upon it with sufficient rapidity to decompose fresh material for plant growth as fast as plants use it up. In the Mediterranean region this is hardly the case, but in several parts the soil possibilities are very indifferent, so that our contrast is more between Europe and the Tropics than between north and south in Europe, though it is a valuable clue to many of the differences between the German plain and the Paris basin. Broadly we may say that our latitude has made a really self-dependent agriculture almost an impossibility for Europe, and we note in illustration that Bohemia is suffering sadly because foreign fertilizers could not be imported in 1914-18. The problem of diminishing fertility has made itself insistent again and again in European life, and has proved a goad to drive men to agricultural experiment on the one hand and to trade as a supplementary source of wealth on the other. The contrast between Europe and many parts of China in this respect is a profitable study, if we do not exaggerate, as is so often done, the supposed stagnation of the Orient.

From trade the men of Europe have been lured on into large-scale industry with the application of coal, oil, water, and sundry other forms of power in immense amounts. The opportunities for domination and consequently exploitation which this has brought are working out fatefully for us all in many varieties of hurtful contacts, needing humanization most urgently if the situation is to be saved for our children.

The process of change, we realize, has progressed faster and farther in the west than in the east of Europe, which goes forward

against the pressure of severe inhibitions that make its problems differ from our own. At times we are content to look down upon the wild ways of East and South-east Europe, forgetting that in many respects, such as the exposure of severed heads recently commented upon as happening in the Balkans, we were not long ago at least as wild as they seem to be now. But we must also guard against the thought that they are merely some steps behind us on the path we all are treading; that concept of human evolution as a procession along a path is a wrong and very misleading one. We must reach the broader view which thinks of East Europe not as undeveloped West, but as diverse.

In our changeful continent we may thus follow out one of the most varied and perilous of the stories of men, a story of hardly-won triumph over serious obstacles, triumph maintained for a while in the face of serious threats that never ceased. It is a story that leads us to the appreciation of Europe's precarious position of industrial and administrative leadership, with its implications of conflict and unsettlement that make our Chinese friends think of us as the White Peril.

We may study our physical racial origins and see how every modern European people has come to be composed of moderately diverse elements, probably attaining some of their present characteristics during the marked changes of climate and opportunity accompanying the retreat of the glaciers at the close of the great Ice Age of Europe, and developing them further with changes of location and opportunity in subsequent times. We may see, as it were afar off, facts that will be clearer to the scientific men of fifty years hence, facts of the Mendelian inheritance of physical characters, leading, on the one hand, to the maintenance of types very little changed even through thousands of years, and

on the other to the combination of diverse heritages from many sources, making an individual in many cases a mosaic of characteristics from different ancestral types.

We may study the languages and religions of European peoples and see that in the days before writing and markets became features of local life, languages changed, albeit slowly, spreading in waves of civilization, with only a subordinate relation to the waves of racial type. And if languages spread in waves of civilization, this has been the case still more in matters of religion, though folk tradition has a remarkable power of resurgence that leads to the local adaptation of religious movements time after time.

We may finally study economic activities and follow their influence in waves, the power and direction of which are affected by racial facts because temperament is no doubt related to physical type, but are more governed by language distributions because difference of language makes such a bar to economic intercourse, at least in early stages. In later stages, with the utilization of coal and steam the international web is woven more closely and more subtly, and this has sadly aggravated the catastrophe due to its rupture by the clumsiness of politicians in the years leading on to 1914.

And all through the process of evolution of races, of language and religion and of industry, we may follow the social life of the European peoples and the development of its organization and its expression in response to those processes of evolution. We must see at the same time how it both affects and reflects alterations which are always occurring in the European environment through changes of climate, rising and sinking of the land, clearing of



forests and draining of swamps by mankind, development of communications, and other results of the labour of man.

# 1

## 'Races'

Human diversities are deep enough to make the idea of 'European Man' a mere abstraction; we need to think rather of 'European Men' and to study with that broad fact always in mind, realizing that Russians and ourselves are not to be thought of as at different steps on the same ladder, and that the unity which has undoubtedly been trying to grow up in Europe must be a unity-in-diversity with an accompanying growth of education in toleration and breadth of appreciation.

As physical racial facts may be claimed to be to a large extent very old, it will be well to begin our survey with them, but for our present purposes it is permissible to neglect the scattered facts thus far ascertained about the European men of the days before the close of the last major phase (Würmian phase) of the Ice Age. From the period of climatic improvement (Aurignacian) next succeeding, we have several human skeletons that demonstrate the presence already at that early time of diverse physical types. One type, known from two skeletons at Grimaldi (lower Aurignacian), as well as from later remains, shows features in the mouth and nose as well as in the very long and high skull which relate it to types that have become specialized as Negroids of various kinds in Africa, but need not have had marked negroid characters in the first instance. Another type also possessed of a very long and high-ridged skull is known from several skeletons (Brunn, Brux, Combe Capelle, &c.), of which that from Brunn is the best known. There can be little doubt that this type with its strong brows, deep-set low

eyes, cheek-bones projecting at the sides, broad nose, projecting upper jaw and dark colouring is an element in the modern population of remote spots in several parts of the maritime fringe of Europe to-day, and was an important element (whatever its colouring then) among the people of the 'Kurgan' burials so numerous along the borders of the South Russian steppe. Nor can we any longer doubt that this type, modified in the course of time, has been an important element in the evolution of modern European breeds. A third type remains mysterious; it is that represented by the skeleton of an old man at Cro-Magnon with tall stature and a fairly long head, which, however, was not very high or ridged. The nose was narrower, but the eyes were low and the jaws and cheek-bones very strong. The matter has been confused by the frequent application of the term 'Cro-Magnon Type' to all the above indiscriminately, mainly on the ground of long-headedness, and this makes it difficult at times to ascertain what writers really mean when they speak of survivals of the Cro-Magnon type in modern populations. There is, however, no doubt from Collignon's careful descriptions that both the Cro-Magnon and the Combe Capelle types survive in the Dordogne district of Central France, and it seems likely that the former as well as the latter also survives at least in the north of the Iberian peninsula.

However this may be, it seems clear that the peoples of Europe in the Aurignacian and the next following ages (Solutrean and Magdalenian) were long-headed, with varied accompanying characters which may still be seen nowadays. Those were ages of intermittent retreat of the Ice Sheets which had for ages previously made Europe so inhospitable to mankind, but at the end of the Magdalenian Age the snow line definitively crept up the mountain sides to something like its present level, and the mountain regions

were made available for a beginning of human occupation. The coming of broad-headed men, probably from Asia Minor, then less divided from Europe, is characteristic of this period of change, and the mountain axis of Europe has ever since been a region of broad-headed men, separating provinces of long-headed men to the north around the Baltic and (for a time) in Russia, and to the south around the western Mediterranean, then becoming increasingly cut off from tropical Africa by the supervention of desert conditions, in place of grassland, in what we now call the Sahara.

The long-headed men around the Baltic and in early prehistoric Russia became, in course of time, what is called the Nordic race, and those around the western Mediterranean, with allied elements in the Aegean Isles, the Mediterranean race. In both cases they include survivors of the Combe Capelle type, and in the latter at least some of the Grimaldi type as well, and they are both still long-headed, though in both there has been a general, if slight, rounding of the head, so that it is less long and narrow than it was in early times. In the cool and cloudy north, with long continuance of the open-air life, sex maturity has come late, growth has been long continued, muscularity and the accompanying roughness of bone have been maintained and even developed, the nose has grown long and narrow, and with it the face has lengthened, the colouring has become fair. In the sunny south the settled life is of old standing, and sex maturity comes early. Growth is not so long continued, muscularity is less developed, and the tendency is towards smoothness of bone, the nose and face are moderate, the colouring is rather dark.

The provinces of Nordic and Mediterranean races are widely separated by the mountain zone in Central Europe, but in the west they grade into one another, and here the old long-headed type has

become neither purely Nordic nor purely Mediterranean. Especially in Britain, of old a refuge of the past off the shores of Europe, Aurignacian types have persisted markedly, and this is still more noteworthy in Ireland. The mass of the population of our islands is long-headed and intermediate in character between the two differentiated races, tall, gaunt, and dark in parts of the Scottish Highlands and North Wales, short and almost Mediterranean in parts of South Wales and Ireland, and 'betwixt and between' almost everywhere. Probably almost every hundred, not to say every parish, of the British Isles has examples of these Intermediate Types, as well, of course, as of Nordics due to immigrations from Scandinavia and the Baltic.

The broad-heads of the mountain axis of Central Europe are technically called the Alpine race. They are distinguished by a thick-set appearance, rather straight brown or chestnut hair, grey to brown eyes, often a dry whitish skin, a short face, a moderate nose, sometimes pointing out rather markedly. In the Illyrian Alps and parts of the Carpathians, and stretching from the latter, on the south side of the Pripet Marshes away into Muscovy, this stock is often tall and dark. In the Swiss and French Alps it is rather short and stocky. In the Balkan Peninsula it is often characterized by a flattening of the back of the very high and short head; in the west the tendency is rather towards general rounding of the head.

It is interesting to notice from the above that the main facts of distribution of race type in Europe probably date from the beginning of the Neolithic Age, the period of ultimate recession of the great Ice Sheets. In the subsequent ages there has probably been modification of the race types to some extent, but the main facts of distribution of human stocks in Europe became settled in that early time.

Some of the modifications of this scheme must be noticed briefly.

The old long-headed stocks of the Steppe border in South Russia probably still form elements of the mixed Cossack populations, but the spreads of broad-heads both from the Carpathian forelands and from the Asiatic steppe have altered the average type a good deal. Asiatic broad-heads with the big cheek-bones and Tungus (often called Mongol) eyes have also long occupied the Arctic border of Russia, as Lapps, Samoyedes, &c., and, mixed with Nordics, they form the Finn populations. Their features have at times been said to be distinguishable right down the east side of the Baltic into East Prussia in individuals here and there; one certainly finds them now and again in Gothlanders and even in Swedes. The net result is that the long-headed type is not a dominant element in Russia, save perhaps in parts of the one time Baltic provinces, that is in the new Baltic States.

The line along which the hill masses of Central Europe grade down into the European plain that stretches from Ypres to the Urals is marked out in many ways in European life. Not far from it is the main line of European coalfields, a most momentous factor for modern times. It is a line of exchange towns of ancient renown. Near it is a belt of loess, that is of loose wind-blown material laid there in the interglacial phases of the Ice Age, so fine grained that it does not encourage and has never encouraged tree growth, though it is valuable for cultivation. The loess belt, because of its freedom from forest, was naturally of importance as a line of movement of early man as well as a line of early settlement, and it lay between the province of the long-heads (Nordics) and that of the broad-heads (Alpines). All along here are found and have long

been found breeds originating from intimate inter-mixture of Nordic and Alpine stocks.

The general fact seems to be that the head form is derived from the Alpine, and so is broad, but the colouring is more usually inherited from the other side, and so is generally fair. There are many varieties with distinctive facial and other features, but the broad fact is that the southern zone of the European plain, where the two stocks have had much fractionated contact (contacts of small groups) in little clearings of the forests that grew in Neolithic times, is a region of Alpine-Nordic stocks which have spread to Britain and through the Danube gaps towards the Balkans as well as in many other directions.

The amount of intermixture and intermediacy on the south side of the mountain axis is less marked, for here there were not the same occasions for mingling of small groups. The broad-headed stocks have, however, spread downhill, and occupy a great deal of North Italy. They are of less consequence in the Iberian Peninsula; the Balkan Peninsula is and probably has been their home from early times. A broad-headed stock with markedly dark colouring and frequently massive build is found on coastal patches here and there along the Mediterranean shores and on the coasts of Western Europe. It occurs as an important percentage in many coastal communities, and is almost certainly composed of survivors of prospectors and traders of the dawn of the Bronze Age and some later periods.

These few references must suffice to illustrate the kind of modification which the early and fundamental racial distribution has undergone; it may be condensed into the statement that broad-headedness has on the whole spread downhill, and has increasingly

limited long-headedness to the fringes of Europe. It has done this not so much by sheer replacement of population as through its biological advantage of dominance over long-headedness in many cases of mixture. There has, however, been a definite spread of people of broad-headed type into the Russian plain, as well as many movements of peoples, to some of which we get references in the early chapters of written history.



## 2

### *Language Families—Introductory*

The languages of the European peoples are to a large extent grouped into Celtic, Romance, Teutonic, and Slavonic families, all of which have sufficiently similar features to be classed together with Sanskrit as Indo-European or, to use a much-disputed term, Aryan. Asiatic immigrants into Europe both in Arctic regions and on the steppes of South Russia have brought in Asiatic languages which have managed to persist as far west as Lapland, Finland, Esthonia, and Hungary, but they are not sufficient to affect the general statement.

The prior home of the Indo-European languages has been discussed almost *ad nauseam*, and it is still so unsettled a question as to make it unprofitable to discuss afresh whether that home was on the Asiatic steppe, in the mountain and plateau country from Asia Minor to the Hindu Kush, on the grassland borders of South Russia, or somewhere near the Baltic.

It would at any rate seem that these languages did not originate in the Mediterranean, and that the languages of that region in pre-classical times were of other affinities. Minoan, Etruscan, &c., are still undeciphered. If then the classical languages came into that region from outside, the probabilities are that they came in from the north, where are found related languages which have certainly not come from the Mediterranean.

The only language which is of older date in Western Europe than those of the Indo-European family is Basque, still spoken in

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

