

Take the single kingdom of Scotland alone. Englishmen are carelessly wont to suppose there is such a thing as a Scotch temperament. Scotchmen know better. Even if we omit from the reckoning such remoter and more doubtful elements as Black Celts, and so forth, we may say, roughly speaking, that Scotland consists of six distinct nationalities—the English of the Lothians, the Welsh of Strathclyde, the Irish Scots of Argyllshire, the true Gaels of the Highlands, the Picts of the east coast, and the Scandinavians of Orkney, Caithness, and Sutherland. All these, of course, though in some places tolerably pure, are in others inextricably intermingled; while outlying islands of each, such as the Picts of Galloway, are universally recognized. The “Little England beyond Wales” in Pembrokeshire, mainly peopled by Flemings, who are English in speech among a Welsh-speaking population, forms a similar example in the southern half of our island; while, conversely, little outlaw communities of Welsh-speaking Britons are known to have held out in the eyots of the Fens for many generations against the conquering English of East Anglia and Mercia.

Take a linguistic case again. How strange it would seem to us to-day if there existed, say in Newfoundland, a colony of Anglo-Saxons, sent there by King Alfred, and speaking still the pure old Saxon tongue of King Alfred's Wessex! Yet this would exactly parallel the case of Iceland. While Danes and Swedes have modernized the ancient Scandinavian of the Sagas into the Danish and Swedish of the present day, the Icelanders still go on speaking the tongue of their forefathers pretty much as it was spoken by Rolph the Granger and Harold Hardrada; they read the Sagas in the tongue of the old singers as easily as our children can read Shakespeare and the old English Bible. Mr. Steffanson, the learned Icelandic, tells me another interesting fact of the same sort. It seems the women in certain parts of Normandy still wear a peasant cap with silver ornaments identical to this day with the cap commonly worn by Icelandic women. I need hardly add that the names of Norman villages are but Frenchified corruptions of the old pirate nomenclature—“Ivo's toft” has been shortened to Ivetot, while “Hacon's home” has declined into Haconville.

On the other hand, nothing is more fallacious than the old-fashioned argument from language to kinship. It used once to be thought there was a “great Aryan race” because there were many peoples who spoke the Aryan languages. I doubt whether even Professor Max Muller him-