

What's What the World Over

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adventurers, and on that basis to elaborate their culture and display their special genius.

Many of the most marked and the most discrepant traits of the Englishman are accounted for when we bear in mind that he is thus the outcome of a special, perhaps unique, process of selection. That process has made him adventurer and pirate, dreamer and poet, passionately devoted to freedom, independent to the verge of eccentricity, resourceful and versatile, not only a stern moralist peculiarly apt for piety but an aggressive colonizer and a hard-headed, practical man of business. It is necessary to emphasize this factor in the causation of the Englishman because it seems usually to be overlooked.

Roughly speaking, the earlier invasions were of dark peoples and the later invasions of fair peoples. The result has been that, notwithstanding the high degree of amalgamation which has been taking place from the first, the west side of Britain holds a population which is largely of dark pigmentation, while the population of the east side is almost throughout of light pigmentation. These external differences in appearance are associated with equally marked internal differences in temperament. Thus the whole country constitutes a kind of electric battery with an eastern pole and a western pole, whereby a continuous circulation of energy takes place, the two unlike elements forever stimulating, reinforcing, and moderating each other. So are formed vital currents which have often produced friction, and yet largely served to generate the vigour of the English people.

The well combined product of these early waves of invasion which we are pleased to call "Celtic" constitutes a permanent and clearly marked element in the collective whole of "England." These people possess a natural distinction, an inborn refinement, quite independent of material civilization which often stamped their features and is marked in their gracious carriage and courteous speech. This is found in every division of the Celtic race in Britain, however variously modified, alike in Ireland and the Scotch Highlands, in Wales and in Cornwall. It seems to testify to the undoubted fact that these people have behind them a much more ancient culture than the later English. They are of alert intelligence and quick wit, democratic in their instincts, ready of response to the appeal of the ideal, impassioned orators, imaginative in vision and impetuous in action, yet with a certain coolness, sometimes even hardness of temperament, which seems to preserve them from their own excessiveness, and enables them indeed to mock at the excessiveness of others, for they seem too emotional themselves to overrate the value of emotion. The vivacity of their nerves makes them not only dreamers and idealists but apt also for action, and even too readily fighters. In all these respects the Celtic side of Britain has an individuality of its own which distinguishes it from the Eastern side in which the elements brought by later waves of invasion remain predominant.

The "Anglo-Saxon" wave furnished what is usually considered to be the Germanic element in the English. Strictly speaking, this came, according to the best modern opinions, from the south of Denmark and the adjoining region still further south and to the west. It was made up of two

or three tribes, the Angles, who seem to have come from Angel in Schleswig, and the Jutes, probably from Jutland, and the Saxons, from the region immediately to the south of Denmark, not identical with modern Saxony, so that we must not too hastily assume that it is from a sense of blood-relationship that even in the Great War of to-day there has been more good feeling between the English and the Saxons than with any of the other German peoples to whom the English have been opposed. On the whole this invasion was that of a Low German population, with Scandinavian affinities.

The Anglo-Saxons extinguished civilization (Roman) in Britain, although they brought with them a culture of their own which has sometimes been underrated. They constituted, moreover, an element which was destined to be of high value in the final development of the English nation. All the Germanic tribes have possessed, as Ferrero has pointed out, the precious aptitude to act as a cement to other racial stocks, binding together elements which have sometimes been of higher qualities than themselves. Like all the Germans, they cultivated caste distinctions, the violation of which was punishable by death. This caste feeling still flourished even when the Anglo-Saxon was overlaid by new waves of invasion. It has so come about that the Anglo-Saxons constitute the solid, persistent plebian element of the English population; this



Another Bomb that Failed to Explode.
—Star, Montreal.

is expressed even in physical type, and the heavy peasant of a Saxon focus like Surrey and Sussex shows nothing of the distinction of the Highlander or the Cornishman, while these predominantly Saxon regions have produced the minimum proportion of English genius. The Anglo-Saxon has ever possessed a sturdy obstinacy, an independent commonsense, well typified by the South Saxon peasant, William Cobbett. Though "terrible for bravery and agility" the Saxons were fundamentally conservative from the first, the least apt to wander of all Germanic tribes, and in the great Germanic migrations of the early centuries after Christ, Saxons and Frisians and Angles still clung to their old ground on the bank of the Elbe. It is, perhaps, not an accident after all, that England has been named from the Anglo-Saxon. He has not been her brain, but he has perhaps been her backbone. Without the Anglo-Saxon England would be impotent; in every conflict of war, in every task of peace, he has been the weapon and the implement.

The last great invasion was that of

the Normans. It was the most fatefully decisive of all and set the final seal on the genius of England. The Norman was ultimately of the same stock as the North-men of the preceding wave of invasion. It was that fact which gave so much significance to the Norman Conquest of England. Of all the Norman conquests in Europe, as Freeman pointed out, that of England alone proved permanently effective, and the reason was that only in England were they on a soil over which their own seed had already been plentifully sprinkled. Here alone their potent genius could work on congenial elements and achieve permanent results. Yet the Normans' task of invasion was harder than any that went before, needing all the energies of the great general and consummate administrator who achieved it.

Every fresh invader of England had added to the strength of England. After the Norman Conquest, no further conquest seems to have been found possible. England had become what later the French Ambassador to Charles II. found it to be, "one vast citadel." The Normans, it must be remembered, were the most vigorous race of their time. They represented the finest flower of strong northern individuality developed in the favourable soil of the orderly Latin civilization of France. In all things excessive, as their own ancient chronicler noted, they infused something of that excessiveness into the composite English blood. Yet they were no longer pirates. They were trained in warfare and government; they knew how to found principalities and kingdoms even in the far Mediterranean. They cultivated the arts with daring and brilliant success, and they had a passion for law, even to the extent of contentiousness. Their primitive energy of ruthlessness had become transformed into a genius of organization and an instinct for just, if severe, administration.

The extent and the significance of the Norman invasion of England has sometimes been underestimated. It is, throughout, the Norman spirit which has dominated England and largely directed English policy in the world. It is the Norman aristocratic dominance, Norman orderliness, Norman administrative energy, which have formulated the English oligarchic constitution and controlled the growth of English dominion.

With the Norman invasion the elements of the English character were all brought together. Nothing further was needed but their permeation and elaboration, their slow development to self-consciousness. There have been minor infusions of new blood since, but these have merely served to reinforce elements already existing. Though small in amount, these later migrations have been precious in quality, for they have been attracted by that spirit of freedom and toleration in England which has offered a home to the finest-spirited refugees from neighbouring lands. Thus it was that England accepted the Germans and Dutch, liberated the Jews, admitted numerous groups of artisans from Flanders who brought both their skill in handicraft and their sturdy independence to enrich the land of their adoption, and welcomed the French Huguenots, who, in the congenial English soil, were free so to develop their high intelligence and lofty character as to take rank among the most typical representatives of the English genius.

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