

SCIENCE:

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Attention is called to the "Wants" column. All are invited to use it in soliciting information or seeking new positions. The name and address of applicants should be given in full, so that answers will go direct to them. The "Exchange" column is likewise open.

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M. DU CHAILLU ON THE VIKING AGE.

THE following from Mr. Du Chaillu, written to the editor of *The London Times*, appeared in that journal for Jan. 7:—

"As some misunderstanding has arisen in regard to the historical chapters of my book on 'The Viking Age,' will you allow me to give some fuller explanation of my views in regard to the earlier inhabitants and invaders of Britain?

"In studying the history and antiquities of any country which at some previous period has been overrun and occupied by a foreign power, we naturally expect to find some material traces of the invader, in the shape of monuments, inscriptions, graves, weapons, ornaments, etc. Thus Roman remains are plentiful in Germania, Gallia, and Britain, and in generations to come British remains will doubtless be found in India to tell the tale of England's dominion there. In like manner I argue that the archæological remains found in England form the strongest evidence as to who were the people who invaded Britain. The so-called Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Roman objects found in the British Isles correspond, down to the minutest detail, with objects found in Scandinavia and in the islands of the Baltic, and in no other place where Norsemen have not been.

"The majority of the criticisms which have come under my notice deal in sweeping statements concerning language, the views of historians, and so forth; a few have here and there ventured on the discussion of a point of detail; but none, so far as I am aware, have attempted to deal with one of my chief arguments, which is based upon the existence of the material remains to which I have referred above. The first of the maritime tribes of the north mentioned by Roman writers was the Suiones, the Sviar of the Sagas. Tacitus describes their ships, and his description exactly coincides with the vessel found at Nydam, of which an illustration is given at

p. 220 of my first volume. My hypothesis that the Veneti of Cæsar were probably the advanced guard of the north is based upon the evidence that their ships, as described by Cæsar, correspond in a remarkable manner with the ships of the Norsemen.

"It is reasonable to suppose, as Tacitus makes no mention of these Suiones having come into conflict with the Romans, and as he informs us that they 'honored wealth,' that those he saw came for the purpose of trading; and this is confirmed by the quantities of Roman objects, and especially of Roman coins, distributed in finds and hoards throughout Scandinavia. To take one example only: the hoards at Hagestaborg and Singdarfe include upward of 24,000 Roman coins, forming an almost unbroken series from the time of Nero (54 A.D.) to that of Septimus Severus (211 A.D.), and none of later date. Other finds throughout the country exhibit a succession of Roman and Byzantine coins, including many of gold and silver, from the time of Augustus down to the later days of the Eastern Empire.

"Now, the general distribution of the coins and manufactured articles, and the large number of them, show, I maintain, that not the Suiones, or any one tribe alone, but all these tribes, carried on an extensive warfare and continuous commercial intercourse with the Roman Empire. The Romans, on the other hand, never penetrated into their country, their knowledge of them was very vague, and Roman writers selected a tribe here and there (as, for example, these very Suiones), and attributed to them certain characteristics and customs which in fact prevailed throughout Scandinavia. This vagueness of nomenclature is exhibited in the fact that the name Suiones disappears from history for seven centuries, until we find it again in the pages of Eginhard, who writes, 'The Danes and Suiones, whom we call Northmen.' Meanwhile, other names, as Franks and Saxons, are given to hordes of invaders and warriors whose origin and home are wrapped in mystery.

"Another point of great importance in this discussion is the enormous number of graves scattered all over the country of the Norsemen, indicating a very dense population.

"Now, it is reasonable to draw three conclusions from this evidence, which I have merely sketched in outline: (1) that we find from the days of the earliest Roman historians continuous traces of a maritime people in the north whose country the Romans and their successors never were able to invade; (2) that the Roman and early mediæval nomenclature, as bearing on this people, is so vague as to be worthless for historical purposes; (3) that the country, when we gain access to it, is found to be full of material remains indicative of a dense and warlike population, of advanced civilization, and of continuous intercourse with the outer world.

"Turning to England, we find copious remains from a very early date which are not British nor Celtic nor Roman, which have been variously labelled as Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Roman, and so forth, but which correspond minutely with the remains which I have described in the north. Of every such object found in England I claim that I can produce the counterpart in Scandinavia, and I challenge the historians and archæologists to show me any place in the basins of the Elbe, the Weser, and the Rhine where corresponding objects have been discovered.

"I ask again, is it or is it not reasonable to infer that these remains found in England indicate that England was invaded from the north? Is it or is it not reasonable to hold that these invaders came, not from any one special spot in the north, but that their expeditions were made jointly by many tribes combining for the purpose, as we learn from the Sagas was their customary practice?

"I have taken pains to make no statement which cannot be supported by a quotation of some recognized authority, or by reference to some established fact, and these materially corroborate each other, yet I am accused of bringing forward crude and ignorant theories.

"In conclusion, I would ask my opponents to prove to me that their account of the origin of the English people is any thing more than a theory; and, if so, I challenge them to produce the facts on which it is based."