

ideals which men in all ages have held ; and thus it is that we read amid the rough stone menhirs and dolmens in Brittany, as amid the polished granite monoliths and magnificent temples in Egypt, the same silent message from the past to the present, from the dead to the living. This message, we think, is fundamentally important in understanding the Celtic Fairy-Faith ; for in our opinion the belief in fairies has the same origin as all religions and mythologies.

And there seems never to have been an uncivilized tribe, a race, or nation of civilized men who have not had some form of belief in an unseen world, peopled by unseen beings. In religions, mythologies, and the Fairy-Faith, too, we behold the attempts which have been made by different peoples in different ages to explain in terms of human experience this unseen world, its inhabitants, its laws, and man's relation to it. The Ancients called its inhabitants gods, genii, daemons, and shades ; Christianity knows them as angels, saints, demons, and souls of the dead ; to uncivilized tribes they are gods, demons, and spirits of ancestors ; and the Celts think of them as gods, and as fairies of many kinds.

II. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FAIRY-FAITH

By the Celtic Fairy-Faith we mean that specialized form of belief in a spiritual realm inhabited by spiritual beings which has existed from prehistoric times until now in Ireland, Scotland, Isle of Man, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, or other parts of the ancient empire of the Celts. In studying this belief, we are concerned directly with living Celtic folk-traditions, and with past Celtic folk-traditions as recorded in literature. And if fairies actually exist as invisible beings or intelligences, and our investigations lead us to the tentative hypothesis that they do, they are natural and not supernatural, for nothing which exists can be supernatural ; and, therefore, it is our duty to examine the Celtic Fairy Races just as we examine any fact in the visible realm

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