

as I conceive, to be displaced in central Europe, by the movements of the Germanic nations from beyond the Baltic into their later home in the Rhine valley.

In the time of Herodotus, the Greeks knew vaguely of a people called Κέλται, occupying the remotest regions of Europe, bordering on the Atlantic. At later dates allusions are made to them by Xenophon and Aristotle; and the latter indicates an increasing knowledge of them in his day, by the references to their customs and most characteristic traits which occur in his philosophical works. But the very imperfect knowledge of this ancient people manifested by the most observant Greek writers, suffices to illustrate the extreme isolation of the nations within the period of authentic history. Transalpine Europe was still a *terra incognita*; and the Κέλται, whose language is the key to much of the earliest topographical nomenclature of Central Europe, from the Atlantic to the head of the Adriatic Gulf; and who must have been a numerous and powerful people long before they made their hostile incursions into Italy: were, nevertheless, known only to the Greeks through some obscure rumours, probably of Phœnician voyagers. Slight, however, as are the early notices of the Keltai, they reveal to us the presence at the dawn of authentic history of that remarkable people who seem to constitute a link between the prehistoric and the historic nations of Europe. If we do indeed look upon them for the first time in the beginning of their decline, when younger nations were already intruding on the ancient Celtic area, and effecting the first encroachments which finally resulted in their dismemberment and denationalisation: it suffices to illustrate the great age of nations. Upwards of two thousand years have since elapsed; and still the fragments of that once powerful branch of the European family of nations preserve their ancient tongue, and struggle to assert for themselves an independent nationality. To the Romans they had made themselves known as haughty conquerors, while yet the imperial city on the Tiber was but the nucleus of an infantile state; but the earliest authentic details regarding them, as the occupants of what is regarded as their native territory, are derived from the narrative of Cæsar's conquests; and the subsequent reduction of the tribes of Gaul and Britain by the Legionaries of Rome.

Unfortunately the ethnologist has at every step in his researches, to deplore the indefiniteness of nearly all the notices of the barbarian races with which the Greeks or Romans were brought into contact;