

race that have been for thousands of years secluded from the influence of development and change—that are probably the same now as they were in the days of the patriarchs; that use the same rude flint axes as are now found buried deep in the drift in Europe, or covered up by the gradual growth of peat, by the changes of rivers, and the various agencies that have altered the aspect of Europe since the remote age when the races that used them existed. Simple in their ideas and unchanged in their habits, they have but few festivals, and the meaning of their religious rites is simple and apparent. Once identify one of their customs or festivals with the superstition of civilized nations, and what is inexplicable in the latter case, can be, with but little difficulty, investigated in the former case, and identified as a rude creation of a rude and simple faith. The conclusion thus arrived at receives a very significant confirmation, when we turn from one nation of savages to another in a different part of the world, and are led to precisely the same conclusion. Hence we establish, by a comparison of the customs of all nations, what are *universal customs*: and we arrive at their primeval meaning, by making the simple religious custom of the unchanged savage a clue to the otherwise inexplicable popular superstition of civilized nations.

It is hardly necessary to state that if it can be proved that there are relics of primitive society inherited by all nations, it is apparent that they constitute the most remarkable historical memorials in the world. While the researches of the Geologist have enabled him to discover with what extinct animals man has been coeval, and with what weapons he contended with his gigantic foes, and while the ancient homes of extinct races in Europe have disclosed to the eye of the enquirer the nature of the food that they ate, and the rude implements that they used, the study of universal customs, if my conclusions are correct, may do far more; it may open up to us the social and religious life of primitive man, his festivals of rejoicings and his days of mourning,—his vague belief in the existence of spiritual beings, and his dim glimmerings of a future existence.

Carrying us back to an anterior to the dispersion of man, it may give us a new ground upon which to investigate many questions as to the religions of civilized nations which have eluded the enquiry of the ingenious and the learned. It may give us a basis upon which we may assume that civilization and superstition, hand in hand, constructed the strange creeds and mythologies of ancient nations.

Conscious that the conclusions to which I had been led were of great importance, in throwing light on the history of our race, and on ancient history, I have avoided prematurely bringing them before the public. In 1859, although my name was put down by the Society of Antiquaries