

than the obscure earthwork, overgrown with trees and nettles, or the ring of weathered and half-buried stones lying far away from the homes of man on some hillside. Yet these relics of early races possess at least one element of interest in greater measure than their later rivals, that of mystery—mystery as to their builders, mystery as to their object, perhaps in some instances, most of all as to the manner of their erection. In the pages of this book it is intended to present briefly an account of the races which successively occupied this island in prehistoric and cohistoric times, and to point out the remains which still exist as evidences of their labours, so that the traveller when he meets with a tumulus, a dolmen, or a camp, may be able to form an idea, limited though it may be by the present imperfect state of our knowledge, as to the period, builders and significance of each. Topics related to objects of this kind belong to the domain of Archæology proper, and in dealing with them our greatest difficulty will be to make a selection from the crowd of interesting objects which present themselves for description.

Further, it has already been mentioned that besides the tangible and visible remains just alluded to, there are many other relics in tale, in custom, and even in law, which when properly examined turn out to be as much the property of bygone inhabitants of this country as the tombs and temples which they erected. In many cases, indeed, such tales are actually connected with the cromlechs and other remains of these prehistoric races, visible and legendary relics thus being closely linked one with the other. Viewed from this standpoint, the child's game and the legal custom assume a remarkable and at first unsuspected interest, and carry us back to an age when they possessed a significance, perhaps religious, perhaps ceremonial, long since forgotten and traceable, if traceable at all, only with great difficulty. Let us take as an example of a legal method the manners in which, under ancient tenures, property is still distributed in

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