

nerally in gloomy groves, where fear creates spectres and apparitions. Only a few persons were initiated into these mysteries, and intrusted with the sacred doctrines; and even these were not allowed to commit any thing to writing upon this important subject, lest their secrets should fall into the hands of the profane vulgar. The altars of a formidable deity were stained with the blood of human victims, and enriched with the most precious spoils of war. Though the dread of the vengeance of heaven was the only guard of these treasures, they were always revered by avarice, which the druids had artfully repressed by the fundamental doctrine of the endless transmigration of the soul. The chief authority of government resided in the ministers of that terrible religion; because men are more powerfully and more lastingly swayed by opinion than by any other motive. The education of youth was in their hands; and the ascendancy they assumed at that period remained through the rest of life. They took cognizance of all civil and criminal causes, and were as absolute in their decisions on state affairs as on the private differences between man and man. Whoever dared to resist their decrees, was not only excluded from all participation in the divine mysteries, but even from the society of men. It was accounted a crime and a reproach to hold any converse