

the dry heather under the shadow of these picturesque old stones, one can hardly realize what nameless horrors they may not have witnessed on the day when the neolithic dwellers in the Llanfair valley first raised them above the summit of Mynydd Mawr. We think of them only under the softening and romantic influence of time; we look upon their lichen-covered surface through the tinged halo of poetical imagination; they are to us the hoary remnants of our forefathers' world, the titanic, archaic, immemorial temples of a forgotten creed. We do not remember how terrible and sickening were the realities of which these grey and yellow-stained granite bosses are the sole remaining vouchers. Time has turned the relics of some Dahomey custom into a pretty antiquated landmark and a romantic spot for holding a picnic.

Since then the rain has washed down every particle of soil that formerly covered the dead chieftain's grave. But still the memory of what it all once meant has lived on uninterruptedly in the minds of the Ancient Britons around the spot. While the doctors of the eighteenth century were talking learned nonsense about Druidical temples and Arkite worship, the Welsh peasants of Mynydd Mawr were speaking correctly every day of the Fairy's Grave. For fairies and goblins and all such Keltic superstitions are mainly based upon stories about the ghosts of these neolithic people, whom the Keltic Welsh overcame and enslaved. But they would not touch the graves where lay the chieftains of the conquered folk, lest harm should come upon them for the desecration. Many of the neolithic people lived on as serfs under the Kelts, and much of their blood may be noted in the Llanfair villages at the present day. The Briton who told me the road here was himself, indeed, much more than an Ancient Briton; he was partly, at least, one of the Ancientest Britons, a dark-haired, squat, brown-skinned man, of the regular long-headed Euskarian type.

Professor Rhys has heard men taunted even now at Carnarvon with being the descendants of fairies; that is to say, I take it, with being members of the servile race; just as in America, supposing blacks and whites to have amalgamated for centuries, it might still be a term of insult to call a man a nigger. When we remember that in all popular tradition the fairies are said to live inside green grass-grown hills, and that their names are always connected with the prehistoric neolithic monuments of each particular district, a cromlech such as this, the Fairy's Grave, gains in our eyes a double interest. For while on the one-hand it is the undoubted burial place of a Euskarian chief, on the other hand it is the almost certain birth place of a Keltic fairy tradition.

## XXI.

### THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

ALREADY the trees on the hillside are beginning to assume their autumnal tints. Down in the valley, it is true, beside the artificial water in the park, the oaks, the willows, and the ash trees are still quite green; but higher up among the slopes, where the wind beats harder and the nights even now begin to grow chilly, the limes and chestnuts have put on their first pale streaks of yellow, the beeches have turned in places to a rich brown, and the mountain ashes are faintly purpling against the glowing bunches of their scarlet berries. On all the deciduous trees, indeed, one can see that the living protoplasm is just beginning to withdraw from the foliage into the permanent tissues, leaving only those beautiful minor principles whose deficient vitality produces the lovely colors of Autumn leaves. It is the fashion to say that our English woodlands cannot compare in this respect with American or Canadian forests; and, no doubt, if we look only at the general effect in the two hemispheres the trite remark is true enough. America has undeniably one tree—the maple—whose