



MYSTERIES OF THE DRUIDS

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However orthodox the Irish of the present day may be esteemed, there must have been a fair amount of mysticism in the past amongst so imaginative a race. Perhaps this quality brought them into some disrepute with the Church, down to the time when the Pope gave their country to the Norman King of England, in order to bring the people into more consistent faith. Even St. Bernard, in his Life of Malachy, referred to the Irish as "Pagans, while calling themselves Christians." Who were the Druids? This question has agitated the minds of the learned for a long period; and various, as well as contradictory, have been the replies. Tradition preserves their memory as of a pious and superior race, prominently associated with the British Isles and France, and, in a lesser degree, with Belgium, Holland, Germany, and the lands of Scandinavia. Much romance has been long attached to them. We hear their chants in the Stone Circles. We listen to the heaven-inspired utterances of the Archdruid, as be stands on the capstone of a cromlech, in the eye of the sun, surrounded by the white-robed throng, with the bowed worshippers afar. We see the golden sickle reverently cutting off the sacred mistletoe. We follow, in imagination, the solemn procession, headed by the cross-bearer. We look under the old oak at the aged Druid, instructing disciples in mystic lore, in verses never to be committed to writing. We gaze upon the assembly of kings and chieftains, before whom the wise men debate upon some points of legislation.



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