

EARLY BRITAIN.

 CELTIC BRITAIN.

BY

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WITH TWO MAPS, AND WOODCUTS OF COINS.

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P R E F A C E.



THESE are the days of little books, and when the author was asked to add one to their number, he accepted the invitation with the jaunty simplicity of an inexperienced hand, thinking that it could not give him much trouble to expand or otherwise modify the account given of early Britain in larger works; but closer acquaintance with them soon convinced him of the folly of such a plan—he had to study the subject for himself or leave it alone. In trying to do the former he probably read enough to have enabled him to write a larger work than this; but he would be ashamed to confess how long it has occupied him.

As a student of language, he is well aware that no severer judgment could be passed on his essay in writing history than that it should be found to be as bad as the etymologies made by historians are wont to be; but so essential is the study of Celtic names to the elucidation of the early history of Britain that the risk is thought worth incurring. The difficulty of writing anything intelligible on the subject arises not only from the scarcity of the data

handed down by ancient authors, but also in a great measure from the absence of the information necessary to enable one rightly to connect those data with one another. Take, for instance, the allusion by Ammianus Marcellinus to the *Verturiones* as one of the nations of the north of Britain: one cannot be said to be much the wiser for it, until one happens to recognize the regular Goidelic form of their name re-emerging as that of the Men of *Fortrenn*, who play an important part in the history of Alban. Identifications of this kind will, it is hoped, do something to bring the history of early Britain out of the quicksands into which historians' etymologizing has helped to steer it, and to make up for the shortcomings of the work. These will probably be found to be of two kinds: the errors into which one unaccustomed to write on historical subjects can hardly avoid falling; and the crudities of certain theories which further research may show to be untenable. For it is unavoidable that much of the reasoning should be of a highly hypothetical nature, of which the reader will in due time be reminded by the changes rung on such hard-driven words as *appears* and *seems*, as *probably*, *possibly*, and *perhaps*.

Two or three words may here be appended as to some of the authorities cited, with which the general reader may not be very familiar. For the writings of