

may be, it is certain that before the landing of Julius Cæsar, more than 1,900 years ago, both sides of the English Channel were inhabited by people speaking a Celtic tongue, mingled, in the south-east of England, with fair-haired and blue-eyed Belgæ, who in time had been absorbed among the Celtic population, and spoke their language. The modern descendants of these people are the Welsh (Cymry) and Cornish men; but I consider that at that period distinct tribes of Celts, the Gael, inhabited the greater part of what is now termed Scotland, the Isle of Man, and Ireland, and at least all the western, and part of the southern, coasts of Wales.

Analyses of modern Welsh and Gaelic prove that these Celtic branches, now so distinct, yet sprung from the same original stock. Nevertheless, I believe that the Gael, as a people, are more ancient in our islands than the Cymry; and I think there is strong presumptive evidence that the ancestors of the Pictish Gael (who, however, afterwards became so largely intermixed with Scandinavian blood) once spread, not only much further south than the borders of the Highlands, but that before the Roman invasion they occupied the Lowlands of Great Britain generally, excepting what are now the more southern countries, where the Cymry had obtained a firm footing, and were steadily pressing northward and westward.

From intimate personal knowledge of Wales, its topography and people, I for long held the opinion that the Gwyddel (Irish Gael) were the earliest Celtic inhabitants of Wales. This is not the popular view, and it was with much satisfaction that I lately found, that twelve years before the first edition of this book was published, the subject had been ably discussed by the