

countries in which it has been employed for tools and weapons means have been found by the primitive workers to harden it through an admixture of other metals, such as zinc and tin. Last of all, the comparatively occult art of smelting iron is discovered, and the further art of converting it into steel; and such is its superiority in this form to every other metal employed in the fabrication of implements, that it supplants every other; and the battle-axe and chisel of hardened copper (bronze) are as certainly superseded by it as the chisel and the battle-axe of stone had at an earlier period been superseded by the bronze.¹ Now, it is truly wonderful how thoroughly, for all general purposes, this scheme of classification, which we owe to the Danish antiquary Thomsen, arranges into corresponding sections and groups the antiquities of a country, and gives to it a legible history in ages unrecorded by the chronicler. With the stone tools or weapons there are found associated in our own country, for instance, a certain style of sepulture, a certain type of cranium, a certain form of human dwellings, a certain class of personal ornaments, certain rude log-hollowed canoes, undressed standing stones, and curiously-poised cromlechs. The bronze tool or weapon has also its associated class of antiquities,—massive ornaments of gold,

¹ In an interesting article on Ireland which lately appeared in the *Scotsman* newspaper, I find it stated that for a very considerable distance, 'between Lough Rea and Lough Derg, the river Shannon was fordable at only one point, which of course formed the only medium of communication between the natives of the two banks. They seem, however,' it is added, 'to have met oftener for war than peace; and from this ford a whole series of ancient warlike weapons was dug out. These weapons are now preserved in the fine collection of antiquities in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, and are partly bronze and partly stone. Their position in the river bed told a curious tale, both historically and geologically. The weapons of bronze were all found in the upper stratum, and below them those of stone; showing, as antiquaries well know, that an age of bronze followed not an age of gold, but an age of stone.'