

# Celt, DRUID and Culdee

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# **"Celt, Druid and Culdee" (1973)**

**by  
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## THE EARLY BRITONS

IT has been said that the only excuse for writing a book is that one has something to say which has not been said before. That this claim cannot be made on behalf of this little volume will be very evident to the reader as he proceeds, since it is a \*\*\*compilation from a variety of sources,\*\*\* from which evidence has been brought together, to support the belief that the civilization of the early Britons was of a high standard, and that they did not deserve that contempt with which they have been treated by many historians, nor the odious names of 'savages' and 'barbarians' by the supercilious literati of Greece and Rome.

When evidence, admittedly fragmentary, of the real conditions in these islands, from the earliest times, has been brought to light throughout the centuries, it seems, almost invariably, to have been rejected in favour of Roman teaching.

In his History of Scotland, the Rev. J. A. Wylie, LL.D., say:

'We have been taught to picture the earliest conditions of our country as one of unbroken darkness. A calm consideration of the time and circumstances of its first peopling warrants a more cheerful view.'

By examining the available evidence it may be possible to obtain this more cheerful view, and to show that in the darkest eras of our country the rites of public worship were publicly observed. It is ever true to say that, 'The history of a nation is the history of its religion, its attempts to seek after God.' Wilford states that the \*\*old Indians\*\* were acquainted with the \*\*British Islands,\*\* which their books described as the sacred islands of the west, and called one them Britashtan, or the seat or place of religious duty.

The popular idea that the ancestors of the British were painted savages has no foundation in fact. It was a custom of the Picts and other branches of the Celtic and Gothic nations to make themselves look terrible in war, from whence came the Roman term 'savage'. The 'painting' was in reality tattooing, a practice still cherished in all primitive crudities by the British sailor or and soldier.

Far from these ancestral Britons having been mere painted

savages, roaming wild in the woods as we are imaginatively told in most of the modern histories, they are now, on the contrary, as disclosed by newly found historical facts given by Professor Waddell, known to have been, from the very first grounding of their galley keels upon these shores, over a millennium and a half before the Christian era, a literate race, pioneers of civilization. The universally held belief that the mixed race has prevailed during many centuries; this belief, however, is now fading out of the scientific mind and giving place to the exact opposite. Britons, Celts, Gaels, Anglo-Saxons, Danes and Normans when warring with each other were kinsmen shedding kindred blood.

Professor Sayce, at a later date, in one of his lectures, observes that he misses no opportunity of uprooting the notion that the people who form the British nation are descended from various races, all the branches that flowed into Britain being branches of the selfsame stock. Not a single pure Saxon is to be found in any village, town or city of Germany. Our Saxon ancestors rested there for a time in their wandering to these islands.

Dr. Latham says, "Throughout the whole length and breadth of Germany there is not one village, hamlet or family which can show definite signs of descent from the Continental ancestors of the Angles of England."

It was against this, race, now in possession of the whole of Southern Britain, that Caesar led his legions. The Belgae, the Atrebatas, the Parisii and the Britanni were all British tribes, having kinsmen on the Continent, yet moving westward, who had fought against Caesar in the Gallic wars.

It is noteworthy that during the occupation of Britain by the Romans the inhabitants led a life as separate as possible from their invaders and, according to Professor Huxley, when the Romans withdrew from Britain in A.D.410 the population was as substantially Celtic as they found it.

Huxley in 1870, in the earlier years of the Irish agitation, applied the results of his studies to the political situation in Ireland in the following words in one of his lectures:

"If what I have to say in a matter of science weighs with any man who has political power I ask him to believe that the arguments made about the difference between Anglo Saxons and Celts are a mere sham and delusion."

The Welsh Triads and the 'Chronicum Regum Pictorum' as well as the 'Psalter of Cashel' give us the chief early information about the inhabitants of Scotland, and all agree as to the racial unity of the peoples, much, however, as they fought each other. This unity is recognized by Thierry Nicholas, Palgrave and Bruce

Hannay.

The Britons were renowned for their athletic form, for the great strength of their bodies, and for swiftness foot. Clean-shaven, save for long moustaches, with fair skins and fair hair, they were a fine, manly race of great height (Strabo tells us that British youths were six inches taller than the tallest man in Rome) and powerfully built. They excelled in running, swimming, wrestling, climbing and in all kinds of bodily exercise, were patient in pain, toil and suffering, accustomed to fatigue, to bearing hunger, cold and all manner of hardships. Bravery, fidelity to their word, manly independence, love of their national free institutions, and hatred of every pollution and meanness were their noble characteristics.

Tacitus (the Roman historian - Keith Hunt) tells us the northern Britons were well trained and armed for war. In the battlefield they formed themselves into battalions; the soldiers were armed with huge swords and small shields called 'short targets', they had chariots and cavalry, and carried darts which they hurled in showers on the enemy. Magnificent as horsemen, with their chargers gaily caparisoned, they presented a splendid spectacle when prepared for battle. The cumulative evidence is of a people numerous, brave and energetic. Even Agricola could say that it would be no disgrace to him, were he to fall in battle, to do so among so brave a people. Farther south similar conditions prevailed; the Romans, led by Plautius and Flavius Vespasian, the future Emperor and his brother, assailed the British, and were met with the British 'stupidity' knows when it is beaten.

The British have been from all time a people apart, characterized by justice and a love of religion. Boadicea, in her oration as queen by Dion Cassius, observes that though Britain had been for centuries open to the Continent, yet its language, philosophy and usages continued as great a mystery as ever to the Romans themselves.

The monuments of the ancient Britons have long since vanished (with the exception of Stonehenge and other places of Druidic worship), yet Nennius, the British historian who was Abbot of Bangor-on-Dee about A.D. 860, states that he drew the greater part of his information from writings and the monuments of the old British inhabitants. Our early historians were undoubtedly acquainted with a book of annals written in the vernacular tongue which was substantially the same as the Saxon Chronicle.

Nennius disclaims any special ability for the task of historian set him by his superiors, but is filled with a keen desire to see justice done to the memory of his countrymen, saying, 'I bore about with me an inward wound, and I was indignant that the name of my own people, formerly famous and distinguished, should sink into oblivion and like smoke be dissipated....It is better to drink a wholesome draught of truth from a humble vessel than

poison mixed with honey from a golden goblet.'

What were once considered exaggerated statements on the part of Nennius, Geoffrey of Monmouth and other early historians, are now discovered to be trust-worthy. In their day these writers were regarded as historians of repute. Many of the ancient British writers were professed genealogists, men appointed and patronized by the princes of the country, who were prohibited from following other professions. It was left a later age to throw doubt on their veracity. Since it is the nature of truth to establish itself it seems the reverse of scholarly to disregard the evidence of ancient reports as embodied in the Welsh Triads and the writings of early British historians.

Milton says, 'These old and inborn names of successive kings never to have been real persons, or done in their lives at least some part of what so long hath been remembered cannot be thought without too strict incredulity.'

A great deal of history, so-called has come down to us from Latin sources, whose one object was, from the very first to make us believe that we owe all to Rome, when, in fact, Rome owes a great deal to us: so much error has been taught in our schools concerning the ancient Britons that it is difficult for the average student to realize that the British, before the arrival of Julius Caesar, were, in all probability, among the most highly educated people on the earth at that time and, as regards scientific research, surpassed both the Greeks and the Romans - a fact testified to by both Greek and Roman writers themselves.

In all the solid essentials of humanity our British ancestors compare to great advantage with the best eras of Greece and Rome.

Lumisdén has shown in his treatise on the 'Antiquities of Rome' that many of the fine actions attributed by Roman historians to their own ancestors are mere copies from the early history of Greece.

It is unfortunate for posterity that the histories from which modern historians have drawn their information were written by hostile strangers. That they have been accepted all along the centuries as true is a striking tribute to a people who, valiant in war and fierce in the defence of their rights, think no evil of their enemies. Truly has it been said that an essentially British characteristic is the swift forgetfulness of injury.

(Source facts for this chapter by Isabel Hill Elder, were taken from the following- Keith Hunt)

1 History of Scotland, Vol.I, p.31.

2 Asiatic Researches, Vol.3

3 Origin of Britons, Scots and Anglo-Saxons, p.14.4 Hibbert Lectures (1887).

- 5 Ethnology of the British Islands, p.217.
- 6 Gilbert Stone, England, p.9.
- 7 Anthropol. Rev. 1870, Vol.8, p.197, Forefathers and Forerunners of the British People.
- 8 Norman Conquest, p.20.
- 9 Pedigree of the English People.
- 10 Palgrave, English Commonwealth, Ch.I, p.85.
- 11 Hannay, European and other Race Origins, pp.365,470,371.
- 12 Pezron, Antiquité de la Nation et de la Langue Gauloise.
- 13 Vita Agricolae, c.28.
- 14 Historiae Brittonum of Nennius, Harleian MS 3859 (British Museum).
- 15 Vide Geoffrey of Monmouth, I, 1. See Cave Hist.Lit. II,18.
- 16 Nennius, Hist. of the Britons, trans. J. A. Giles, Prol. p.2.
- 17 Gir. Camb. Cambriae Descript., Cap. XVIII. Anglica Hibernica, ed. Camden, p.890.
- 18 History of England, Vol. 8, p. i 1.
- 19 Strabo, I,IV, p.197. Mela Pom., III, 2,18. N.H., I, 30.
- 20 Antiquities of Rome, pp.6,7,8.

## **LAWS AND ROADS**

That Britain had an indigenous system of law centuries before the Christian era is abundantly clear from ancient histories of our islands.

The lawgiver, Molmutius, 450 B.C.(1) based his laws on the code of Brutus, 1100 B.C. He was the son of Cloton, Duke of Cornwall (which was and continued to be a royal dukedom) and is referred to in ancient documents as Dyfn-val-meol-meod, and because of his wisdom has been called the 'Solomon' of Britain. 'Centuries before the Romans gained a footing in this country the inhabitants were a polished and intellectual people, with a system of jurisprudence of their own, superior even to the laws of Rome, and the Romans acknowledged this.'(2)

We have it from the great law authorities and from the legal writers, Fortescue and Coke, that the Brutus and Molmutine laws have always been regarded as the foundation and bulwark of British liberties, and are distinguished for their clearness, brevity, justice and humanity.(3)

'The original laws of this land were composed of such elements as Brutus first selected from the ancient Greek and Trojan institutions.'(4)

A Trojan law mentioned by E.O.Gordon, decreed that the sceptre might pass to a queen as well as to a king; this law was embodied by King Molmutius in his code and remains an outstanding feature of the rulership of these islands.(5)

The liberty of the subject, so marked a feature of British government today, runs from those remote times like a gold thread through all the laws and institutions in this country.

King Alfred, it is recorded, employed his scribe, Asser, a learned Welsh monk from St. David's (whom he afterwards made abbot of Amesbury and Bishop of Sherborne), to translate the Molmutine laws from the Celtic tongue into Latin, in order that he might incorporate them into his own Anglo-Saxon code.(6)

'The Manorial system had its beginning in Celtic Britain and was so deeply rooted in the soil that when the Romans came they were wise enough in their experience as colonists not to attempt the redistribution of the old shires and hundreds.'(7)

King Alfred's ideas of rulership maintained the earlier and sometimes unwritten laws of Britain in these words: 'A king's raw material and instruments of rule are well-peopled land, and he must also have men of prayer, men of war and men of work.'

From the earliest Code of Laws known as the Molmutine, the following are appended as examples:

'There are three tests of civil liberty; equality of rights; equality of taxation; freedom to come and go.

'Three things are indispensable to a true union of nations; sameness of laws, rights and language.

'There are three things free to all Britons; the forest, the unworked mine, the right of hunting.

'There are three property birthrights of every Briton; five British acres of land for a home, the right of suffrage in the enacting of the laws, the male at twenty-one, the female on her marriage.

'There are three things which every Briton may legally be compelled to attend; the worship of God, military service, the courts of law.

'There are three things free to every man, Briton or foreigner, the refusal of which no law will justify; water from spring, river or well; firing from a decayed tree, a block of stone not in use.

'There are three classes which are exempt from bearing arms; bards, judges, graduates in law or religion. These represent God and His peace, and no weapon must ever be found in their hands.

'There are three persons who have a right of public maintenance; the old, the babe, the foreigner who can not speak the British tongue.'(8)

From time immemorial the laws and customs differed from those of other nations, and that the Romans effected no change in this respect is very plainly set forth by Henry de Bracton, a

thirteenth-century English judge of great experience. 'He was thoroughly acquainted with the practice of the law. His "Note-Book" is our earliest and most treasured of law reports.'<sup>(9)</sup> Judge de Bracton states, 'Whereas in almost all countries they use laws and written right, England alone uses within her boundaries unwritten right and custom. In England, indeed, right is derived from what is unwritten which usage has approved. There are also in England several and divers customs according to the diversity of places, for the English have many things by custom which they have not by written law, as in divers countries, cities, boroughs and vills where it will always have to be enquired what is the custom of the place and in what manner they who allege the custom observe the custom.'<sup>(10)</sup>

Another point on which Britain differs from other countries is that she has ever maintained the Common Law which holds a person under trial innocent until proved guilty, whereas the Continental nations maintain the Civil Law which holds him guilty until proved innocent.

Molmutius, the first king in these islands to wear a crown of gold,<sup>(11)</sup> is said to have founded the city of Bristol, which he called Caer Odor, 'the city of the Chasm'. His son Belinus, who succeeded him, built a city where London now stands which he called Caer Troia, and also the first Thames Embankment. He constructed a sort of quay or port made of poles and planks, and erected a water-gate. That age, the only gate admitting into London on the south side, became Belinus Gate or Belins Gate.  
(12)

Belinus lived to the age of eighty. When he died his body was burned (they did not call it cremation in those days) and his ashes were enclosed in a brazen urn, which was placed on top of the gate; henceforth it was Belin's Gate and it requires no undue stretch of imagination to see that Belin's Gate became Billingsgate.

Billingsgate enjoys the proud distinction of being the first Port of London, the only Port of London at that time, and thus the men of Billingsgate became the first Port of London Authority.

Cambria Formosa, daughter of Belinus, 373 B.C. greatly promoted the building of cities. She is said to have taught the women of Britain to sow flax and hemp and weave it into cloth. Her brother Gwrgan first built the city of Cambridge which he called Caer Gwrgan.<sup>(13)</sup>

In these early times Britain was a wealthy country, with fine cities, a well organized national life, and an educated and civilized people.

The so-called Roman roads in Britain were constructed centuries BEFORE the Romans came to these islands. The dover to Holyhead



causeway, called Sarn Wydellin or Irish Road, later became corrupted into Watling Street; the Sarn Ikin, later Icknield street, led from London northwards through the eastern district, and Sarn Achmaen from London to Menevia (St. David's).

These were causeways or raised roads (not mere trackways as sometimes erroneously stated), except where raised road were impossible, and this accounts for the term 'Holloway' in some parts of the country.

Our roads were begun by Molmutius (c.450 B.C.) and completed by his son Belinus. On their completion a law was enacted throwing open these roads to all nations and foreigners: 'There are three things free to a country and its borders; the roads, the rivers and the places of worship. These are under the protection of God and His peace.' In this law originated the term 'The King's Highway.'(14)

Writers who maintain that the British roads were simply unmade trackways seem unaware of the fact that the British were skilled charioteer this fact, without other evidence, should go a long way to prove that the roads of ancient Britain were hard and well made. Charioteering is not brought to perfection on soft, boggy trackways, nor are chariots built without wheelwrights and other mechanics skilled in the working of iron and wood.

Only once before, in the war with Antiochus, 192 B.C., the Romans met with similar chariots, but never in any European country. The British chariot was built after the Eastern pattern, adorned with carved figures and armed with hooks and scythes. British chariots were prized possessions of the Romans.

Diodorus Siculus, 60 B.C., states, 'The Britons live in the same manner that the ancients did; they fight in chariots as the ancient heroes of Greece are said to have done in the Trojan wars.....They are plain and upright in their dealings, and far from the craft and subtlety of our countrymen.... The island is very populous.... The Celts never shut the doors of their houses; they invite strangers to their feasts, and when all is over ask who they are and what is their business.(15)

Britain, long before the Roman invasion, was famous for its breed of horses and the daring and accomplishment of its charioteers; and after the arrival of the Romans the large space given by their historians to the wars in Britain, demonstrate the interest felt in them by the whole empire. Juvenal could suggest no news which would have(16) been hailed by the Roman people with more satisfaction than the fall of the British king Arviragus (Caractacus), a direct descendant of King Molmutius.

'Hath our great enemy, Arviragus, the car-borne British king, Dropped from his battle-throne?'

1. Ancient Laws of Cambria (British Museum, 5805, A.A. 4). Myv. Arch., Vol. II, Brut Tysillo.
2. Yeatman, Early English History, p.9.
3. De Laudibus Legum Angliae. Coke Preface, third volume of Pleadings. Fortescue Brit. Laws, published with notes by Selden, Ch.17, pp.38,39.
4. Ibid.
5. Prehistoric London, p.115.
6. Summarized by Edmund Spenser, Faerie Queen, Bk.II, Stanza XXXIX (ed. Morris).
7. A Manor through four Centuries, by A.R.Cook.
8. Triads of Dynvall Moelmud, ap. Walter p. 315 Myv Arch., Vol. III. Ancient Laws of Cambria, ap. Palgrave and Lappenberg.
9. Gilbert Stone, England from Earliest Times, p.385.
10. Legibus et Consuet, pp.4,5.
11. Holinshed, Chronicles, Ch. XXII, p.117. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bk.II, Chap.XVII.
12. E. O. Gordon, Prehistoric London, p.146.
13. Lewis, Hist. of Britain, p.52. See Baker's MSS. in the University Library, Cambridge, XXIV, 249.
14. Ancient Laws of Cambriae (British Museum, A.A.4). Stukely, Abury, p.42.
15. Dio. Sic., Bk.V, Chap.X. Senchus Mor., IV, 237.
16. Juvenal lived through the reigns of Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Domitian and Trojan, in whose reign he died at the age of eighty.

## **COMMERCE AND DRESS**

Tacitus (the Roman Historian - Keith Hunt) and Strabo describe Londinium as famous for the vast number of merchants who resorted to it for its widely extended commerce, for the abundance of every species of commodity which it could supply, and they make note of British merchants bringing to the Seine and the Rhine shiploads of corn and cattle, iron and hides, and taking back iron, ivory and brass ornaments.(1)

That Londinium was considered by the Romans as the metropolis of Britain is further established by the fact that it was the residence of the Vicar of Britain!(2) The abode of such an office clearly marks London as having been a seat of justice, of government and of the administration of the finances which consequently contributed to its extent, its magnificence and its wealth.(3) Britain was, in fact, from at least 900 B.C. to the Roman invasion, the manufacturing centre of the world.

The Abbe de Fontenu proved that the Phoenicians, the name by which the tribe of Asher was known after the Conquest of the Phoenician territory, had an established trade with Britain before the Trojan war, 1190 B.C.(4) Admiral Himilco of Carthage, who visited Britain about the sixth century B.C. to explore 'the outer parts of Europe', records that the Britons were 'a powerful

race, proud-spirited, effectively skilful in art, and constantly busy with the cares of trade.(5)

Nor was Ireland less forward than Britain, for from the ancient Greek records it would appear that trade routes both by sea and land existed in these very early times, the latter route being across Europe through the territories of the Scythians. A most curious belief of the Greeks was that the inspiration which led to the institution of the Olympic Games was derived from the observance of ancient Irish festivities.(6)

The British farmer had a market for his produce beyond the shores of Britain. We learn from Zosimus that in the reign of Julian, A.D.363, eight hundred pinnaces were built in order to supply Germany with corn from Britain.(7)

When the Romans invaded Britain in A.D. 43 they found the inhabitants in possession of a gold coinage, wrought shields of bronze(8) and enamelled ornaments.(9) Fine specimens of richly enamelled horses' trappings may be seen in the British Museum, and the bronze shield found in the Thames, near Battersea, adorned with enamelled designs, Rice Holmes describes as 'the noblest creation of late Celtic art.'(10)

The beautiful brooches discovered in different parts of these islands clearly demonstrated that the Britons were skilful and artistic metal workers, and in the centuries of Roman domination(more like "occupation" than "domination" - Keith Hunt)

The Celtic patterns did not die out. A peculiarly Celtic type is the 'dragon' brooch 'representing a conventionalized writhing dragon often magnificently inlaid with enamel, and recalling in its vigorous design and curvilinear motives all the essential qualities of late Celtic art'. Thus the native tradition of metal work continued under Roman rule to flourish and to produce types which were not merely Roman but recognizably Celtic.(11) In a further description Mr. Collingwood says. 'In the true Celtic spirit the ornament on the trumpet head is often made with eyes and nostrils to resemble the head of an animal, but however the brooch is finished in detail it is always a masterpiece of both design and manufacture.'(12)

Enamelling was an art unknown to the Greeks until they were taught it by the Celts.(13)

Dr.Arthur Evans tells us that the Romans carried off some of the Britons to Rome to teach them the art of enamelling as well as that of glass-making.

Stukeley, giving an account of a glass urn discovered in the Isle of Ely in the year 1757, observes the Britons were famous for glass manufacture.(14)

The early Britons were workers in pottery, turnery, smeltings and

glasswork.(15) In the excavations at Glastonbury well-made instruments of agriculture were found such as tools, files, safety-pins and also the remains of wells and bridges.

The British tin mines were, from the earliest times, world renowned. Diodorus Siculus states, 'These people obtain the tin by skilfully working the soil which produces it.'(16)

Herodotus speaks of the British Isles under the general term 'Cassiterides or the Tin Islands.(17) Bede mentions copper, iron, lead and silver. 'Gold, too, was mined on a small scale in Wales, and on a large scale in Ireland where was situated in early times the centre of the goldmining industry.' Bede mentions also, as semi-precious, the jet for which Whitby is famous even now.(18)

The lead mines of Britain were worked long before the Roman occupation, and it is believed that during the partial domination by Rome, the mining continued to be carried out by Celtic workmen.(19)

Dr.John Phillips, the geologist, stated in 1855 that without due consideration being given to the lead-mining industry, our ideas 'of the ancient British people would be altogether conjectural, derogatory and erroneous'(20)

Derbyshire was the chief centre of lead-mining, and is so mentioned in Domesday Book.

Eumemus, A.D.266, private secretary to Constantius Chlores, states, Britain is full of skilled craftsmen.(21)

The coins of ancient Britain are worthy of more than passing notice. (Yes, I have a personal friend here in Calgary, Alberta, who is probably the world's foremost expert on Celtic coinage. His Website is world famous if you are in that line of study, or Celtic research in any way. His Website is: [writer2001.com](http://writer2001.com) and go to the link which he tells me you cannot miss - Keith Hunt). Numismatists tell us that our ancient British types cannot amount to many less than four hundred in number, of which possibly two hundred may have inscriptions,(22) this variety is to be accounted for by the fact that each tribe had its own stamped currency in gold silver and bronze.(my friend John who I have just talked to on the phone says the number 400 is now way out of date. He tells me there were at least 1,000 coins that were "struck" or "used" [some coming from the Europe Celts] in the Britain - Keith Hunt).

Canon Lysons state, 'It is to be remembered that the earliest British coins are not imitations of the Roman coinage, they much resemble the coinage of Philip of Macedon, Alexander the Great, and the Greek and Eastern mintage.(23)

Dr.Borlase in his Antiquities of Cornwall asserts that the wheel under the horse seen on Cornish coins intimated the making of a highway for carts, and that the wheel is common on the coins of Cunobelinus, 14 B.C., on those of Cassebelinus, 51 B.C., and also

on the Cornish coins which from their character appear to be older than the rest.

Sir John Evans devotes sixty-four pages of his standard work "Ancient British Coins" to the coins of Cunobelinus and the history of his reign.

That Cunobelinus, the Cymbeline of Shakespeare, was a man of education and refinement is well borne out by his coins, universally considered to be a true index and reflection of the mind. Numismatists tell us that the Cunobelinus types are by no means a Roman type and could hardly have been struck except by express command.(24)

The coins of Arviragus, son of Cunobelinus, are, where they are included, the gems of every collection. The horse, sometimes thought to have been introduced as a national emblem by the Saxons, is one of the most common types upon the coins of the ancient Britons.

M. de la Saussaye, in describing the old coin assigned to the British Druid Abaris, who visited Greece, mentioned by Hecataeus, states, 'I have been induced to modify my assertion on more than one point and I particularly recognize religious ideas peculiar to the Celts expressed on their monetary uninscribed types.(24)

The palm trees on the coins of the Southern Belgae, who settled in Kent, Sussex, Hants, Wits, Dorset and Devon proclaim the Eastern origin of these people.

From their modern pictorial representation of our ancestors we are expected to believe that their dress consisted of an animal skin fastened round the waist, and that they wandered, thus scantily clad, about their island home, living on nuts and berries.

Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni (the inhabitants of Norfolk and Suffolk), was described by Dion Cassius as a woman of commanding appearance. 'Her stature exceeded the ordinary height of women; her aspect was calm and collected, but her voice had become deep and pitiless. Her hair falling in long golden tresses as low as her hips was collected round her forehead by a golden coronet; she wore a "tartan" dress fitting closely to the bosom, but below the waist expanding in loose folds, as a gown; over it was a chlamys or military cloak. In her hand she bore a spear.'(26)

In these descriptions of native dress it is interesting to note the early use of the tartan. A British hooded cloak was evidently regarded by the Romans as a superior garment, for in Diocletian's Edict of Prices issued in A.D.301, the price of the British cloak was the highest on the list, with the exception of the Gallic. If the price was high on account of the quality of the wool, the statement of the epigrammatist, Martial, A.D.60, is given as substantiating that among other attractions, Britain was 'for wool past compare.'(27)

Ireland kept pace with Britain in the farming for wool, both for export and domestic use; the Irish cottiers were always warmly clad in their own home spun.(28)

The Briton in battledress was an impressive figure being clad precisely as were the men of Gaul; clean-shaven, save for long moustaches, with fair skins, fair hair, gorgeously clad in breeches, bright-colored tunics and woollen cloaks dyed crimson and often a chequered pattern with torques, armlets and bracelets of gold, shields of enamelled bronze, and swords of fine workmanship, they presented a splendid spectacle when prepared for battle.

The Britons appear to have been also importers of cloth. According to one authority, Phoenician cloths of Beyrout were largely worn by the inhabitants of ancient Britain. At Beyrout our Patron Saint George held for a time an important post under the Roman Government.(29)

A torque or gold collar was worn by the wealthier inhabitants and worn also as a distinguishing sign of eminence.(30) Specimens of these torques have been discovered from time to time, and may be seen in various museums, notably Dublin National Museum, and in private collections. A very good example acquired by the late Duke of Westminster and deposited at Eaton Hall was found at Bryn Sion Caerwys Mill; it is thirty-two inches long and weighs twenty-four ounces.

1. Strabo, Geogr. III,175; IV,199.
2. A Roman office.
3. Amm. Marcell, Lib.15, Chaps.8,9.
4. Mem. de Littirature, tome VII, p.126.
5. Fragment preserved by Festus Avienus, Ora Maritama, V, 98-100.
6. C. F. Parker, On the Trail of Irish Identity. National Message, March 8, 1939.
7. Zosimus, Lib. III, p.43 (Ed. Bas.).
8. Philostratus. A Greek sophist (third century) who resided at Court of Julia Domna, describes the British process.
9. Gilbert Stone, England from Earliest Times, p.9
10. Anc. Brit., p.244..
11. R.C Collingwood, Roman Britain, p. 76.
12. Archaeology of Roman Britain, p.253.
13. J. Romilly Allen, Celtic Art, p.136.
14. Minutes of Antiq. Soc., March 1762.
15. Gallic Antiq.,p.64 (J. Smith).
16. Bk. V, Chap. X
17. Thalia, Section C, XV (Bel.ed).
18. Gilbert Stone, England from Earliest Times, p.15.
19. Gordon Home, Roman York, p.27
20. YorkPhilos. Soc., Vol.1, p.92
21. Panegyric Constanteus, C, 111.
22. J.Evens, Coins of the Anc.Brit., O, 171.
23. Our British Ancestors, p.41.
24. Coins of Cunobelinus and of the Ancient Britons, p.26
25. La Revue Numismatique, for 1842, p.165
26. Dion Cassius (Xiphilinus Excerpta), p.176, See Strabo, Bk.1V, 3.

27. Martial, Lib, 1, ep. 2; and Lib.111, ep.20.  
 28. Stephen Gwynn, History of Ireland, p.330  
 29. Rev. Canon Parfitt, M.A., St. George of Merry England, 1917  
 30. Gibon's Camden, p.653. Hoare, Ancient Wilts, Vol. 1, p.202

## **THE ROMAN INVASION**

AT the time of the Roman invasion evidence of prosperity and culture existed in Britain to arouse the envy of the Romans, and it is a matter of history that the inhabitants led a life as separate as possible from them.

It was only after ten years incessant warfare that the Romans in A.D.43 succeeded in effecting a footing in Britain. This is not reconcilable with the view that the Romans were invading the territory of untrained, undisciplined savages. The resistance of Britain was, in reality, against the whole of the north of Europe, and was highly creditable to the brave defenders of their country. In the immortal words of SHAKESPEARE in his "Cymbeline," 'CAESAR MADE NOT HERE HIS BOAST OF CAME AND SAW AND OVERCAME.'(1)

To estimate aright the military abilities of the British general, Caswallon, and the resources of the people at the period of the first collision of our island with the Continent, it should be borne in mind that they were engaged against, perhaps, the ablest general of antiquity. The DOUBLE REPULSION of the JULIAN expedition, 55 and 54 B.C., remains UNPARALLELED in British history.

In Britain there was one supreme Crown and three Coronets or Princes' Crowns; there were numerous other 'kings' who never wore crowns.

The sovereign who reigned in Britain at the time of the Claudian invasion was Cunobelinus, or King Belinus, the CYMBELINE of SHAKESPEARE. Cuno, Cun and Can have their equivalents in the Saxon Cynig; in modern German, Konig, and in English, King.

Cunobelinus and his ancestors had much intercourse with the Romans; he is said to have spent the greater part of his boyhood at the Court of the Romans.(2)

The Roman invasion of his reign was met by Cunobelinus and his sons with a stubbornness of defence and bravery which earned for them admiration of the enemy and aroused the wonder of all Europe.

Cunobelinus, after a reign of thirty years, abdicated in favour of his third son, Caradoc (Caractacus), who now became Arviragus or high king and by this title is most frequently referred to in the British Chronicles.

Tacitus (the Roman historian of the time - Keith Hunt)reluctantly tells us that: 'In Britain after the capture of Caractacus (Arviragus) the Romans were frequently defeated and put to rout by the single state of the Silures alone.'<sup>(3)</sup> The Silures, the inhabitants of south-west Britain were noted for their military prowess and culture.

It is evident from the partial story furnished by the invaders themselves that the resistance offered by the Britons to their invaders was a surprise for which they were ill-prepared, for this resistance came not from hordes of savages but from a nation whose leaders were well versed in military tactics. The Britons were determined to defend their ancient laws and institutions at all costs. They evinced profound homage for the memory of their forefathers, and from their inborn love of liberty sprang the undaunted energy with which they met the mercenary and implacable plunderers of the world. By no people was every inch of the country contested with more bravery and surrendered more stubbornly than by these Britons; on terms, indeed, which rendered every victory for the Romans little better than defeat.<sup>(4)</sup> It is absurd to suppose that such a nation could be barbarous.

If popular amusements are to be taken as the test the Romans were themselves the MOST BARBAROUS of the nations of Europe. When the brutal sports of the gladiators were proposed to be introduced at Athens even the cynics cried out, 'We must first pull down the statue to mercy which our forefathers erected fifteen hundred years ago.'

A similar gulf separated the British from the Roman temper, and the comparison of the latter people with regard to the former should be received with the caution which we would exercise today in receiving the accounts of hostile strangers.

All the evidence supplied by Caesar refutes the notion of material barbarism. Agriculture was universal, corn everywhere abundant, pasturage a distinct branch of national wealth, and the population so numerous as to excite his astonishment - 'hominum, multitudo infinito' - the surest and most satisfactory proof of and social state and ample means of sustenance.<sup>(5)</sup>

Having effected a landing (and the testimony of their own historians is that never was a country more dearly purchased nor held with greater difficulty) the Romans proceeded with their policy of destruction for which they had become notorious on the continent of Europe.

One notable instance has come down to us of the Roman spirit of cruel indifference to human feelings and sufferings. The immensely wealthy Prasutagus, King of the Iceni, apprehensive, in the event of his death, of the Roman brutality likely to be experienced by his queen, BOADICEA, and his two daughters, left



one half of his fortune to the Emperor Nero, endeavouring thus to secure for them a measure of protection. When, however, his death took place in A.D.60, the Roman 'praefect,' Caius Decius, seized the royal hoard on the pretext that it came under the denomination of public property. Resistance being made, the legionaries stormed the palace and carried the treasures off to the Castra.(6) The story of the barbarous treatment meted out to its inmates need not be repeated here, nor of Boadicea, stung to frenzy by these atrocities, bravely taking to the field in defence of her family and her people, the Roman 'praefect' having, in direct violation of the Claudian treaty, also confiscated the estates of the Icenic nobility.

Seneca, the usurious, millionaire philosopher, advanced to the Icenic, on the security of their public buildings, a sum of money - about two million pounds sterling in modern currency,(Elder was writing in 1973...so much more than 2 million in 2003 as I present to you this chapter - Keith Hunt)at ruinous rate,(7) this loan, suddenly and violently called in, was the indirect cause of the Boadicean war. It was a disgrace for a Roman to lend to a Roman for interest; they were permitted, however, to lend to a foreigner. (sound like the romans had an OT law that Israel was given by God through Moses - Keith Hunt).

The territories of the Icenic were rich in lead-mines, some of which were known to have been worked in times of even greater antiquity; the Romans seized these mines soon after their arrival in Britain, thus cutting off an important source of the wealth of the Icenic people and obliging them to borrow money from Seneca for the maintenance of their state.(8)

Boadicea, before leading her people and the tribe of the Trinobantes who joined them, to war, to redress her wrongs, ascended the 'generals' tribunal and addressed her army of 120,000 in these words:

"I rule not like Nitocris, over beasts of burden, as are the effeminate nations of the East, nor, like Semiramis, over tradesmen and traffickers, nor like the man-woman, Nero, over slaves and eunuchs - such is the precious knowledge such foreigners introduced amongst us - but I rule over Britons, little versed, indeed, in craft and diplomacy, but born and trained to the game of war; men who in the cause of liberty stake down their lives, the lives of their wives and children, their lands and property - Queen of such a race, I implore your aid for freedom, for victory over enemies infamous for the wantonness of the wrong they inflict, for their perversion of justice, for their insatiable greed; a people that revel in unmanly pleasures, whose affections are more to be dreaded and abhorred than their enmity. Never let a foreigner bear rule over me or over my countrymen; never let slavery reign in this island."(9)

(As I type and read these words, I have the hairs on the back of my head stand up. They are words like a "Drake" or a "Nelson" or a "Churchill" or even as George Bush the second, has used against

the Terrorists that took down the two Trade Towers in New York city on September 11th 2001. No wonder the British have a sculptured monument of Boadicea in her chariot to this very day in London - Keith Hunt).

Boadicea's many SUCCESSFUL engagements with the Roman armies are RECORDED in our histories, and when her DEATH took place in Flintshire, after her eventual defeat, the Romans were IMPRESSED with her EXTRAORDINARY MAGNIFICENCE of her obsequies. According to Tacitus,(10) Boadicea died by poison; in the course of nature according to the Greek historian Dion Cassius.

Boadicea's kinsman, Caradoc, on meeting the invading Romans, displayed a like spirit of bravery and courage; perhaps indeed no warrior of ancient times succeeded in WINNING so much ADMIRATION from the enemy as this king of the south-western Britons, better known by his Latinized name of CARACTACUS.

The Welsh or Cymry, as the eldest tribe, held three priorities. Priority as the first colonizers of Britain; priority of government and priority in matters of learning and culture.(11) From this premier tribe was to be elected the Pendragon, or military dictator with absolute power for the time being in the case of national danger or foreign invasion. Caractacus, third son of Cunobelinus, had now succeeded his father as Pendragon under the title Arviragus, or 'high king'. This Pendragon was proudly referred to by his fellow countrymen as 'The Praiseworthy Opposer'. Arviragus had yet another name, Gueirydd (Justiciary), from his office of administrator of justice, and by this name is mentioned in the Welsh Chronicles. These three titles by which this ancient king of renown was known have been a source of confusion in the minds of historical students and others, which would not exist if the custom of the ancient Britons, that of using titular designations, were better known. The case under consideration is a good example of this custom; in elucidation the following may be noted: in seven genealogical charts setting forth his pedigree, Arviragus is shown to be the son of Cunobelinus and grandsire of Lucius (in whose reign Christianity was established as the national religion); in the pedigree according to the classics, i.e. Julius Caesar, Tacitus, Suetonius, Dion Cassius and Orosius, Caractacus is shown to be the son of Cunobelinus; in Rome Caractacus was known also by his title, Arviragus, and is so referred to by the poet Juvenal. In the pedigree according to Tysilio and in the Welsh Chronicles, Caractacus appears under his title Gueirdd (Justiciary), son of Cunobelinus and grandsire of Lucius.

Further, in the Triads, and some of the Welsh genealogies, Caractacus appears as the son of Bran and grandsire of Lucius. Bran, a contraction of Brenhan, i.e. 'King', is mentioned in the Triads as 'Bran the Blessed' (the Blessed King). This was the designation of Cunobelinus following his acceptance of Christianity and his resignation of the crown in favour of his

third son, Caractacus. Bran the Blessed became Archdruid of Siluria in order to devote the remainder of his life to Christianity into which Druidism was beginning to merge.

Caradoc (Caractacus) was no rude savage fighting out of mere animal instinct or in ignorance of the might of his adversary. Familiar with the Latin language, this king was a true representative of the higher classes of the Britons, 'among whom a general taste for literature, a keen susceptibility to all intellectual gratifications, a minute acquaintance with all the principles and practice of their own national jurisprudence, and a careful training in the schools of the rhetoricians, was very generally diffused. Hence the rejoicing at Rome when this military leader was BETRAYED and subsequently conducted through the capital, amidst the excitement of three MILLION inhabitants who thronged the line of procession to obtain a view of the formidable captive.' The Senate was convened; the famous trial of Caradoc followed, in which before the tribunal of the Emperor he delivered himself thus :

"Had my government in Britain been directed solely with a view to the preservation my hereditary domains, or the aggrandizement of my own family, I might, long since, have entered this city an ally, not a prisoner; nor would you have disdained for a friend, a prince, descended from illustrious ancestors, and the dictator of many nations. My present condition, stripped of its former majesty, is as adverse to myself as it is a cause of triumph to you. What then? I was lord of men, arms, horses, wealth. What wonder if at your dictation I refuse to resign them! Does it follow that because the Romans aspire to universal dominion every nation is to accept the vassalage they would impose? I am now in your power, BETRAYED, NOT conquered. Had I, like others, yielded without resistance, where would have been the name of Caradoc [Caractacus]? Where your glory? Oblivion would have buried both in the same tomb. Bid me live. I shall survive for ever in history, one example at least of Roman clemency."

(Wow....I get goose-lumps reading this. So mighty a warrior was this man, so amazed were the Roman Empire generals, leaders, and people, by his many battle wins over the Roman armies, that INDEED the Roman senate granted him and his family their lives - Keith Hunt)

The preservation of Caradoc forms a solitary EXCEPTION in the long catalogue of victims merciless policy of Imperial Rome. His life was spared on condition that he never again bore arms against Rome. After a residence of SEVEN years in FREE custody in Rome he was permitted to return to Britain.

The British prince, Caradoc, in maintaining his descent from illustrious ancestors, could bring from the clan records evidence of his pedigree; in those remote times genealogies were guarded with extreme care and recorded with exactitude by the herald-bard

of each clan.(12)

On the public reception of a child, at the age of fifteen, into the clan, his genealogy was proclaimed and challengers of it commanded to come forward.

Pedigree and inheritance were so identified in the ancient British code that an heir even in the ninth descent could redeem at a valuation by jury any portion of an estate with which his forefathers had been compelled to part.(13)

All the family of Caradoc were attached to literary pursuits; copies of the best Greek and Roman authors were circulated in Siluria and deposited in the chief centres of druidic learning.(14)

Caradoc's daughter, Claudia, who with other members of her family remained in Rome as hostages during her father's captivity there, wrote several volumes of hymns and odes.(15) Her praises were sung by the poet Martial:

"Our Claudia named Rufina, sprung we know  
From blue-eyed Britons; yet behold, she vies  
In grace with all that Greece or Rome can show.  
As bred and born beneath their glowing skies."

In a later epigram Martial writes:

"For mountains, bridges, rivers, churches and fair women,  
Britain is past compare."(16)

Caradoc's sister, 'Pomponia Grecina', received her cognomen through her acquaintance with Greek literature, while her aunt, Blonwen, daughter of Cunobelinus, is believed to be the Imogen of Shakespeare in his "Cymbeline." The great poet immortalized this ancient British king in the lines:

"The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline personates thee."(17)

The state of the country of the northern Britons is indicated by the number of large cities beyond the Forth which Agricola explored with his fleet. This could not mean cities which he had erected, he having been only six years in the country, nor could cities have arisen in that period, 'amplas civitates', as we learn from his biographer, Tacitus.

In a general account of Britain, Ptolemy, in A.D. 110, enumerates fifty-six cities; later, Marcianus enumerated fifty-nine.

It was not until the reign of Hadrian A.D. 120, that Britain was INCORPORATED BY TREATY, NOT CONQUEST, with the Roman dominions,(18) the Britons retained their kings, land, laws and rights, and accepted a Roman nucleus of the army for the defence of the realm. These local kings and princes of Britain were obliged to become lieutenants of the Roman Emperor, just as the heads of our countries are now styled lieutenants of the

Sovereign. They were bound to permit the construction of a Roman 'castra' garrisoned by Roman legionaries, with their usual staff of engineers, in their chief city. On the ruins of British buildings and monuments rose the Roman 'castras' and villas, the remains of which are treasured by many in this country who appear to be quite unaware of the earlier civilization. The buildings erected by the Romans were foreign to British ideas and never became an integral part of British life.

When Alaric and his Goths were engaged in the sack of Rome, the Britons remembered their ancient independence and their brave ancestors; and having armed themselves, they threw off the Roman yoke, deposed the imperial magistrates and proclaimed their insular independence. The Emperor Honorius sent letters addressed to the civitates of Britain, clearing them from the responsibility of being any part of the Roman world.(19)

The Romans came to a country which was in all its essentials prosperous and free. They left it in many places devastated. Roman policy is tersely summed up in the words of the Pictish sovereign Galgacus, "To robbery, slaughter, plunder, the Romans give the lying name of Empire; they make a solitude and call it peace."(20)

The Roman imperial system had its strong points, but it had many weak ones - the two main weak points were WAR and SLAVERY. With the Romans war became the instrument of progress, but it was a system fatal to real progress and to the domestic virtues. To plough the soil and wait for the harvest seemed to them a spiritless method of acquiring that which might more easily be obtained, by conquest. Eloquence and the affairs of government as well as the exciting and barbarous sports of the arena, were esteemed and valued by Rome more than religion; hence her basilicas and her amphitheatres were far more spacious and magnificent than her temples.

(One may wonder how a relatively small in height people, as the Italians are, could conquer so much of the world. The answer is given by Tacitus, the Roman historian of the first century A.D. - the most part of the Roman army was made up of hired Germanic fighters, who were from ancient times well known for fierce fighting - Keith Hunt)

The temper of the Britons may be judged by the evidence of the important part a non-idolatrous religion exercised in their daily lives; it has been said that the history of Britain is written in her churches. This truism is applicable from the most remote times, and from the nature of ancient worship it is possible to discover the source of the uprightness, the independence and the tolerance which characterized the early Britons.

These characteristics were noted by the Romans without their effecting the least check on unprincipled avarice and ambition.

Salvian, A.D.430, does not hesitate to say that the barbarians (so-called) led better lives than the Romans even of those who were orthodox. 'Their modesty,' he says. 'purifies the earth all stained by Roman debauchery.'(21) Amid the calamities and sufferings of the first invasion of Rome by our Gothic ancestors in A.D.402, St. Augustine of Hippo remarked upon the marvellous forbearance of the soldiers of Alaric before the tombs of the Christian martyrs; he even went so far as to speak of the mercy and humility of these terrible victors.

To British genius alone we owe the foundation of our modern civilization, including roads, laws, learning and a culture of world-wide fame for more than two thousand years. From a more accurate knowledge of British history we shall gain some notion of that primeval liberty and self-government, common at first to the early Britons and preserved today by the British people.

That the Britons adopted anything they thought good from the Romans is perfectly true; they did not, however, abandon any of their old essential laws and customs and still less their religion. (Actually, if the truth be known, Christianity entered Britain during the 30s A.D. not long after Jesus had died and rose again from the dead. This truth is attested to in the recorded history of the Roman Catholic Church. Such proof will need wait for another study on that matter specifically - hence Britain would indeed NOT give up its religion even when Rome occupied parts of the British soil in the first centuries of the present Christian age - Keith Hunt).

But it is untrue to say that the Britons had no previous civilization of their own as it is to pretend that Roman laws and customs permanently established themselves in Britain and remained AFTER the legions were withdrawn. there is sufficient EVIDENCE to PROVE that the ancestors of the British, centuries before the Romans gained a footing in these islands, were a POLISHED and INTELLECTUAL people, skilled in ARMS as well as LEARNING, with a system of JURISPRUDENCE of their own SUPERIOR even to the laws of Rome.(22)

To these early Britons we owe what we prize most - FREEDOM, KNOWLEDGE, and a HIGHER SENSE of RIGHT and WRONG. This goodly heritage comes to us NEITHER FROM the Roman conquest NOR through Roman influence.

MONTALEMBERT declares:

"It is in England that the nobility of man's nature has developed all its splendour and attained its highest level. It is there that the generous passion of INDEPENDENCE, united with the genius of ASSOCIATION and the constant practice of SELF-GOVERNMENT, have produced those MIRACLES of fierce energy, of dauntless COURAGE and obstinate HEROISM which have TRIUMPHED over seas and climate, time and distance, nature and tyranny, exciting the perpetual

envy of all nations, and among the English themselves a proud enthusiasm. It is not however, for the British to pride themselves as a SUPERIOR race, but rather that they are a MINISTERING people, and that through them should FLOW THE BLESSINGS OF PEACE AND GOODWILL TO ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD; LOVING FREEDOM FOR ITSELF, and loving nothing without FREEDOM.....Upon herself alone weighs the formidable responsibility of her history."(23)

"Love thou thy land with love far brought  
From out the storied Past, and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power and thought  
True love turned round on fix'd poles  
Love, that endures not sordid ends  
For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers, and immortal souls."  
Tennyson

1. Act. V, Sc. i.
2. Ibid.
3. Annals, XII, 38,39.
4. Beale Post, Britannic Researches, p.74.
5. Rev. R.W.Morgan, St.Paul in Britain, p.79.
6. Tacitus, Annals, XIV, 31.
7. Dion Cassius (Xiphilinus Excepta).
8. Beale Poste, Britannic Researches, P.411.
9. Dion Cassius (Xiphilinus Excepta).
10. Annals, XIV,37.
11. Triads of the Cymry.
12. Anglica Hibernia, ed. Camden, p.890.
13. Richard of Cirencester, Bk. I, Chap. III, note.
14. Rev. R.W.Morgan, St.Paul in Britain, p.104.
15. Collier's Eccl. History, Bk. I.
16. Martial, IV, 13; XI, 54.1
17. Cymbeline, Act 5, Sc. I.
18. Spartian's Vita Hadrian, Chap. I.
19. Zosimus VI, pp.376,381. Also du Bos, Gibbon, Procopius Gildas and Bede.
20. Tacitus, Vita Agricola, XXX.
21. On the government of God, Salvian.
22. John Pym Teatman, Early English History, p. 9.
23. Monks of the West, Vol.II, pp.366,367.

## **THE ANGLO-SAXON INVASION**

THE Anglo-Saxon invasion, which resulted in the most important and complete of all the tribal settlements in Britain, took place between A.D.446 and 501.

In these incursions the Jutes and Angles were the first to arrive, and the Angles being numerically the strongest constituent, gave their name in this country to the entire group.

which on the Continent were known as Saxons. Curiously enough a belief persists that the Anglo-Saxons on their first arrival in this country were entirely pagan and that their conception of the Deity was expressed in the worship of numerous gods of their own imaginative creation. The exponents of this belief urge, in support of it, that memorials of these gods still exist, as, for instance, in the names of the days of the week; they cite Odin in connection with Wednesday as an outstanding example. Belief supported on such ground does not hold a position that is uncontestable. Grimm says: 'Among old Saxon and all Teutonic nations Odin signifies Divinity'; Peterson likewise: 'Odin's name bears allusion to mind and thought and breathing; it is the quickening, creating Power; it denotes the all-pervading spiritual Godhead.'<sup>(1)</sup> Odin was, therefore, the Scandinavian name for the Infinite Being.<sup>(2)</sup>

Confusion on this point arose in the minds of historians, owing perhaps to the fact that Sigge, son of Fridulph, a pontiff prince of Azoff in the Crimea, 72 B.C., took the name of Odin when he assumed the leadership of the early Saxons, spiritually as well as temporally, and led them with magnetic instinct from Asgard to north-western Europe.<sup>(3)</sup> As the Giga-Saga says, 'Sometimes a chief's name referred to the Gos he especially worshipped.'<sup>(4)</sup>

Snorre, in his 'heimskringla' or 'Home Chronicles', tells how Odin was a heroic prince in the Black Sea region, with twelve peers and a great people straitened for room and how he led them across Europe. Odin and his peers became heroes to the descendants of these early Saxons and as such passed into legend and song,<sup>(5)</sup>

The modern Germans claim a share in the legends and traditions that have accumulated around the name of Odin; that illustrious individual, however, belonged exclusively to the Saxon (Saxon) race, and was in no way connected ethnically with the Germans.<sup>(6)</sup>

With the Anglo-Saxons as with the Britons, the king was the last resort of justice and the source of all honour and mercy; he was to be prayed for and revered of all men of their own will without command, and was the special protector of all churches, of widows and of foreigners.<sup>(7)</sup>

The Anglo-Saxon invasion had the effect of gradually pushing the Celts to the west of England and south-west Scotland. When this occurred and the Archbishop of Caerleon-on-Usk, London and York, saw all the churches in their jurisdiction lying level with the ground, they fled with all the clergy that remained after so great a destruction, to the coverts of the woods in Wales, and to Cornwall.<sup>(8)</sup> From this fact it is easily discernible how it came to pass that the Culdee or British Church has been associated to so great an extent with Wales and Southern Scotland.

It has been said of the British Church that it made no effort to convert the Saxons to Christianity. In connection several facts



stand out very clearly: Druidic religion had not yet died out in Britain and the Saxons found sufficient similarity between their own form of worship and that of ancient Britain to permit them to unite under the ministrations of a Druidic hierarchy,(9) deriving their religion, it may be concluded, from the same patriarchal source as the Druids.

The Druidic law of tithing was observed by the Anglo-Saxons, as by the Britons; the laws of Edward the Confessor speak of them as claimed by Augustine and conceded by the king, Ethelbert.

The Saxons looked with suspicion on efforts to convert them to Christianity by those whom they were endeavouring to subjugate, and who, though worshippers of the Infinite Being, were still non-Christian when, in 597, the Augustinian mission sent by Pope Gregory to introduce the Latin form of Christianity, reached these shores.

The British Church was not unaware of the errors of Rome, for we have Columbanus, a saint (whom the Roman Church has calmly annexed, as they have St.Patrick, St.Columba and other saints of the primitive Church), writing to Pope Boniface IV 'Your Chair, O Pope, is defiled with heresy. Deadly errors have crept into it; it harbours horrors and impieties. Catholic? The true Catholicism you have lost. The orthodox and the true Catholics are they who have always zealously persevered in the true faith.'

The civil power of Rome being dead, the ecclesiastical power began to rise on its ruins; and there may have been a connection between the two processes. The loss of one sphere of power may have helped to impel an ambitious people, accustomed to universal dominion, to seek after another sphere of power. The ambition of Pope Gregory became that also of the priest and delegate Augustine, to see the world brought under the sway of the fast-developing kingdom of Papal Rome, and when, in one day, Augustine baptized 10,000 Saxons the news of these 'conversions' created great joy in Rome.

The immediate success achieved by Augustine in Kent so impressed Pope Gregory that he dispatched more missionaries and with them Church ornaments and vestments. Among these was the famous 'pallium'. This cloak, of ancient origin, the Roman emperors had been accustomed to present to anyone whom they wished to mark with special honour. When the Popes began to assume imperial authority and to covet all the worldly splendour of the Caesars, they adopted the practice of bestowing the 'pallium' on those whom they wished to elevate.

The arrival of the 'pallium' in England for Augustine, was a significant event. By favour of the Saxon king, Ethelbert, the Roman Church was set up at Canterbury; it became the chief seat of episcopal authority and was the origin of the Church known today as the Church of England.

It will be observed that the origin of the British Church and that of the Church of England are quite distinct, with an interval of 560 years, and that the theory that Britain owes her Christianity to Augustine is without foundation in fact.

The majority of the Saxons converted to Christianity in 597 soon gave evidence that their hearts were unchanged; they quickly fell away to their old religion. By 635 the Latin Church in Kent had become reduced to inactivity through continual hostilities between the Britons and Saxons, to be revived thirty years later when Roman teaching and practices were imposed on the British Church of Northumbria and to spread rapidly over the whole country.

There was already at Canterbury the British church built by St. Martin (traditionally the brother of St. Patrick's mother, Conessa), who founded also various churches in Scotland, i.e. Kilmartin, and later that of Tours with which he has been historically associated. In passing it should be noted the British Church founded the churches of Gaul. The Archbishops of Treves were, according to the 'Tungrenian Chronicles,' always supplied from Britain and, coming nearer Rome itself, St. Cadval, a British missionary, founded in A.D.170 the Church at Tarentum, after whom the Church at Tarento is still named.

The year 597, memorable alike for the death of St. Columba and the arrival of Augustine, has other outstanding claims to notice. When Augustine came he found in the province of the Angles seven bishoprics and an archbishopric, all filled with most devout prelates, and a great number of abbeys."(10)  
The testimony of many writers that the intrusion of an emissary of the Pope was resented and resisted by the British Church, is supported by facts of history.

At a council held shortly after Augustine's arrival he was told that they 'knew no other Master than Christ', that 'they liked not his new-fangled customs', and that they refused subjection.(11) Augustine angrily replied, 'If we may not preach the way of life to you, you shall at the hands of your enemies, undergo their vengeance.' At the second conference with Augustine the British Church was represented by seven of her prelates, and although Baronius had the assurance to pronounce these bishops guilty of schism, he allows their governments to have been regular, and their faith orthodox. Both Augustine and his successors, by making the submission of the Britons to their authority, as metropolitans, the primary article of communion, leave it beyond doubt that they were fully satisfied with the purity of their doctrine, if not with the canonical succession of their bishops.

The British Christians scorned the idea that identity in certain tenets and practices with Papal Rome constituted even the shadow of title, on the part of Papal Rome, to their allegiance. It is

then no matter for surprise that on their first meeting with the delegate from Rome they should proclaim with one voice, 'We have nothing to do with Rome; we know nothing of the Bishop of Rome in his new character of the Pope; we are the British Church, the Archbishop of which is accountable to God alone, having no superior on earth.'

The Britons told Augustine they would not be subject to him, nor allow him to pervert the ancient laws of their Church. This was their resolution and they were as good as their word, for they maintained the liberty of their Church for five hundred years after his time, and were the last of all the Churches of Europe to give up their power to Rome.(12) This fact cannot be set aside in an unprejudiced study of British Church history: Rome found here a Church older than herself, ramifications of which struck into the very heart of the continent of Europe. The farther we go back into British history, the clearer shines forth in all our laws the fact that the British Crown, Church and people were entirely independent of all foreign authority.(13)

All our great legal writers concur on this point. 'The ancient British Church', writes Sir William Blackstone, 'by whomsoever planted was a stranger to the bishop of Rome and all his pretended authorities.'(14)

The Christians of Britain could never understand why the Church of Rome, because she professed certain truths, should arrogate spiritual despotism over all who held the same. When Augustine demanded of Dionoth, Abbot of Bangor Iscoed or Bangor-on-Dee, that he acknowledge the authority of the Bishop of Rome the reply of the Briton was a memorable one: 'We desire to love all-men, but he whom you call "Pope" is not entitled to style himself the "father of fathers" and the only submission we can render him is that which we owe to every Christian.'(15)

Cadvan, Prince of wales, A.D.610, expresses himself thus to Abbot of Banjor: 'All men may hold the same truth, yet no man can hereby be drawn into slavery to another. If the Cymry believed all that Rome believes, that would be as strong a reason for Rome obeying us, as for us to obey Rome. It suffices for us that we obey the Truth. If other men obey the Truth, are they therefore to become subject to us? Then were the Truth of Christ made slavery and not freedom.' (16),

Wilfrid, a clever young priest, who had been brought up in the school of Iona, but had afterwards travelled to Rome and had become fascinated by her customs and grandeur, threatened, in his long-drawn suit with the See of Canterbury, in 670, to appeal to Rome. The threat was received with laughter as a thing never before heard of in England.(17)

The British church recognized the Scriptures alone for its rule of faith,(18) was subject to no other Church on earth, and firmly

resisted the unwarranted intrusion of a Pope. For almost two centuries Britain had been free from the domination of Imperial Rome; this fact enabled the supporters of the British Church at this time to quote the second canon of the Council of Constantinople, held in A.D.381, which ordained that the Churches that are without the Roman Empire should be governed by their ancient customs.(19) But the canon was not held sufficient by Augustine and his successors to justify the British Church in its contention.

Though the doctrinal controversies which divided British and Roman Churches may seem unimportant to us, they plainly show our original ecclesiastical independence, and the stubborn resistance of our Church fathers to papal pretensions to supremacy.(20) Beyond all question, to the national Church of Britain belongs that pre-eminence which the old British Triads claimed for it of being 'primary in respect to Christianity'.

The most famous of the British monasteries at the coming of Augustine was the monastery of Bangor-on-Dee, Wales. Bishop Dionoth presided over a flourishing body of Christians (numbering some thousands) whose headquarters were at this monastery.(21) The youths there educated were trained in Christian doctrine and sent forth as missionaries and teachers. Bangor, like Iona, was renowned for its zeal in propagating Christianity abroad. The refusal of its bishop, Dionoth, to acknowledge the authority of the Pope was the first of a long series of denials of the authority of the Pope in Britain.(22)

At the Synod of Chester held in 601, there were present, besides Augustine and some of his followers, seven British bishops and many men of great learning from the monastery of Bangor-on-Dee. Augustine, at this Synod, suffered a second defeat; the general assembly spoke out against the encroachments of Rome. 'The Britons', they exclaimed, 'cannot submit either to the haughtiness of the Romans, or the tyranny of the Saxons.'(23)

Augustine did not live to take vengeance on these early protestors; it was left to his successor to lead the Saxons against them, and in the massacre of Bangor, A.D.613, twelve hundred Christians perished.(24)

William of Malmesbury, A.D.1143, describes the ruins of Bangor Abbey in his day as those of a city - the most extensive he had seen in the kingdom.(25) Two other foundations in Britain retained their superiority over all others of a later date, under every change of ruler till the Reformation - St. Albans and Glastonbury.

The next, interference of papal Rome with British customs took place in A.D.664, the excuse for this attempt being the correct date for the observance of Easter. King Oswy of Northumbria, with his brother Okwald, was converted

by missionaries from Iona while in exile for seventeen years in Scotland, during the reign of the rival king, Edwin. Oswy adhered, naturally, to the usages of the Culdee Church, having been taught by the Scots. His queen, daughter of Ethelbert, King of Kent, had been brought up to observe the Latin way of reckoning, and each year the strange anomaly occurred of the king and his followers, observing one day and the queen observing another day for the Easter festival.

The queen's chaplain, Romanus, and Wilfrid, tutor to the princes, were priests of the Roman Church, and urged the acknowledgment of the Roman calculation for Easter as being correct. At last the king resolved that the whole question would be debated May and settled once and for all at the Synod of Whitby.(26)

Bishop Colman (Culdee Church of Northumbria) pleaded the British cause as having been derived from his forefathers and originating in the teaching of St. John. Wilfrid, a cleverer man, was on the papal side and ridiculed British custom as compared with that of the Apostle 'to whom Christ had given the keys of heaven'. The king, eager to learn the truth, inquired further into this statement. Colman, simpleminded and honest, admitted that these words applied to St. Peter. The king then asked Wilfrid whether Christ had really given the keys of authority to Peter. Wilfrid answered in the affirmative, whereupon the king decided in favour of the papal party. Colman resigned his bishopric, and with many of his clergy went back to Iona, from which monastery he had come to Northumbria, and where the ancient British Easter continued to be observed for many years.

From the day of the historic Synod of Whitby the province ruled to observe Easter the Latin way; the British Church, though proven to be the oldest national Church in the world, as confirmed by the Councils of Arles, Basle, Pisa, Constance and Sienna, was more and more coerced into conforming to papal customs and claims. For a time there were in Britain two Churches - the old British and the new Roman.

At the Council of Hertford, A.D.673, only nine years after the Synod of Whitby, presided over by Archbishop Theodore, the British Church was condemned as non-Catholic.(27)

Wilfrid, at an assembly at Nesterfield, near Ripon, A.D.705, declared, 'Was not I the first after the death of those great men sent by St. Gregory, to root out the poisonous seeds sown by Scottish missionaries? Was it not I who converted and brought the whole nation of the Northumbrians to the true Easter and an tonsure?'(28)

In A.D.705 Adelm wrote to the Britons as being outside the 'Catholic' Church. 'The precepts of your bishops', he says, 'are not in accord with Catholic faith.(29) . . . We adjure you not to persevere in your arrogant contempt of the decrees of St. Peter and the traditions of the Roman Church by a proud and tyrannical

attachment to the statutes of your ancestors.'(30)

The British Church, now openly declared heretical by Rome, struggled on for a time as a separate Church, and was known, particularly from this time, by the original title, 'The Culdee Church', as distinct from the Roman, and its ecclesiastics referred to by the Latin intruders as the 'British clergy'.

Adamnan, the first of the Ionian Culdees to swerve from the faith, strained every nerve to reduce the monks of Iona to Roman Catholic obedience. Bede says that Adamnan in A.D.679 visited the churches of Northumbria and Ireland and brought almost all of them that were not under the domination of Hii (Iona) to the 'Catholic' unity.

The resistance of the premier monastery (Iona), the abbot of which was viewed as the primate of all the Hibernian bishops, prevailed for a time to retain their liberties. By the eleventh century, however, the Iona Church had become thoroughly Romanized and had sunk into comparative unimportance.

Of Palladius, a Culdee of the fifth century who had visited Rome and had become a Romanizing bishop, Fordun says: 'Before whose coming the Scots had, as teachers of the faith and administrators of the Sacraments, presbyters only and monks, following the order of the primitive Church.'(31)

Kentigern (St.Mungo), A.D.514, is numbered among those who adorned the name of Culdee: for many years he was the disciple of St.Servan at Culross who taught and preached there as a Christian missionary, according to the system of the ancient British Church.

The Culdees or British clergy were, from Augustine's day, in constant collision with the, Raman clergy; the Culdees seem to have been too much in love with simple Bible truth to find favour with those who aimed at wealth and power. Even the Venerable Bede could not escape the prejudices of his 'modern' times, saying: 'The Culdees followed uncertain rules in the observance of the great festival (Easter) practising only such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the prophetic, evangelical and apostolical writings.'(32)

It is of consequence to note that in the early accounts which we have of the state of the Church, the final appeal in all doctrinal questions is to the Scriptures. It was remarked by Polydore Vergil that Gildas, in his long letter on the state of the Britons, quoted no book but the Bible,(33) and certainly his quotations from it show on the part of the British historian a very thorough acquaintance with the Word of God. At this period of

the Church (fifth century) the Scriptures were very generally disseminated,(34) and men used such translations of the sacred text as commended themselves to their own judgment. The withholding of the Bible from the people and the exclusion of every translation from use but the Latin translation, even among the ministers of the Church, belonged to the ecclesiastical legislation of a later and more corrupt age; an age when ecclesiastical power came to be based not on the intelligence but on the ignorance of the people.(35)

The Culdee or British Church had pervaded Britain with the knowledge of the Gospel, and for centuries after the domination of Rome the Culdees continued to hold services frequently in the same Church with Roman priests.

The catalogues of their books show beyond a doubt that the ancient British ecclesiastics were not destitute of literary culture.(36) Corruption was powerfully retarded by the firmness of the hierarchy of the Culdees; they were looked up to as the depositaries of the original national faith, and were most highly respected for sanctity and learning. They acquired great missionary zeal and great numbers of them went forth as missionaries and Christianized the whole of Europe from Iceland to the Danube.(37) This is a fact of history which has been diligently suppressed, but it is a fact which cannot be denied. It is remarkable that while the Church of Rome was sending her emissaries to "Christianize" the Saxons, the Celtic Church was sending her missionaries to convey the Gospel of salvation to France.(38)

Dr.Wylie says: 'It was the Culdee lamp that burned at Constance, at Basle, at Ypres, at Worms and Mainz. Boniface, the emissary of Rome, came afterwards to put out these lights. The real apostle of the provinces was the Culdee Church.'

A study of the history of the Culdee Church shows that wherever the influence of Rome prevailed its clergy were removed; not, however, without resistance. But the struggle was a hopeless one. The Charter of David of Scotland (1084-1155), who was an adherent

of the Latin Church, runs thus: 'David rex Scotorum, etc. Be it known, that we have granted to the Canons of St.Andrews the Canonical Order; and if the Culdees who shall be found there, remain with them, living according to rule, they may continue to do so in peace; but if any one of them resist, we order hereby that he be ejected from the island.'

In this high-handed manner was the property of the Church transferred to the Roman hierarchy. Only a century earlier Macbeth and his queen are recorded in the register of this same Priory of St.Andrews as the liberal benefactors of the Culdee monastery at Loch Leven.(39)

The property which the Culdees held in their own right was

gradually confiscated by the Latin hierarchy until the day came when they were dispossessed of everything, including their ancient privileges, and were absorbed into the Cathedral Chapters of the Roman Church.(40)

Ledwich, the Irish antiquarian, says: 'The Culdees did not adopt the corruptions and superstitions which had contaminated Christianity for centuries. They preserved their countrymen from the baleful contagion and, at length, fell a sacrifice in defence of the ancient faith. Superstition found in them her most determined foes. The Culdees continued until a new race of monks arose, as inferior to them in learning and piety as they surpassed them in wealth and ceremonies, by which they captivated the eyes and infatuated the hearts of men. The conduct of the Romanizers towards the Culdees was uniformly persecuting; and by force, cunning and seduction of every kind, by degrees bereft them of their privileges and institutions.'(41)

The monks of the papal Church were almost wholly employed in metaphysical or chronological disputes, legends, miracles and martyrologies - a sad contrast to the pure Scriptural teaching disseminated by the Culdees.

The history of the Culdee Church in Ireland is largely the history of that church in England, Scotland and Wales, except that in the case of Ireland she did not come, national, under the domination of Rome until 1172, five centuries later than in England.

From this fact may be accounted the theory held by many historians that the Culdee and Irish Church were synonymous terms, and that from it the Culdees spread to other parts of Britain and, further, it accounts for the strength of that Church in Ireland centuries after its submission to papal claims in England and elsewhere.

O'Driscoll, a noted Roman Catholic writer, states 'The ancient Order of the Culdees existed in Ireland previous to Patrick; and all their institutions proved that they were derived from a different origin from that of Rome.'(42) This celebrated Order gave many eminent men to the Irish Church, and to Scotland and to other parts of the world, among whom Columbkil has still a name in Ireland as venerable and revered as that of Patrick himself. The Church discipline of the Culdees seems to have afforded the model for the modern Presbyterian establishment of Scotland.'(43)

The mission of Palladius in A.D.421 signally failed. His effort to introduce papal Christianity in Wicklow met with firm resistance, and shortly afterwards he left the country.(44) The following year, St.Patrick, who belonged to the Culdee Church, began his work as a missionary revivalist. Christianity, according to Gildas, had been introduced to Ireland three and a half centuries earlier and, according to tradition, about the



same date by Caradoc, the Silurian king. Caradoc, is said, while a prisoner at Rome, was converted to Christianity by St. Paul, and it is to his children, Linus and Claudia, and his son-in-law Pudens that St. Paul sends a greetings in his second letter to Timothy.

From the days of St. Patrick to the reign of Henry II the Church in Ireland was renowned, not only for its learning but for its missionary zeal. Its evangelists spread the light of Truth wherever they travelled in Britain and to many places on the Continent, where the monasteries (afterwards Romanized) were set up on Culdee foundations. To these, many of the Culdee monks fled for refuge in the ninth and tenth centuries when Ireland was so sorely ravaged by the Danes. They took with them, for safety, many of their precious manuscripts, which may, in a future day, should they be discovered, throw valuable light on the early Christian Church in these Islands.

O'Driscoll presents a true picture of the early Irish Church when he says: 'The Christian Church of that country, as founded by St. Patrick, existed for many centuries free and unshackled. For about seven hundred years this Church maintained its independence. It had no connection with England, and differed on points of importance from Rome. The first work of Henry II was to reduce the Church of Ireland into obedience to the Roman Pontiff. Accordingly he procured a Council of Irish Clergy to be held in Cashel in 1172, and the combined influence and intrigues of Henry and the Pope prevailed. This Council put an end to the ancient Church of Ireland; she submitted to the yoke of Rome. This ominous apostasy has been followed by a series of calamities hardly to be equalled in the world. From the days of Patrick to the Council of Cashel was a bright and glorious career for Ireland. From the sitting of the Council to our own times the lot of Ireland has been unmixed evil and all her history a tale of woe.'(45)

The following letter tells a curious story. It is from the Bishop of Mentz to Shane O'Neill, the Irish chief and rebel, dated from Rome, April 28th, 1528, in the name of the Pope and Cardinals:

'My dear Son O'Neill - Thou and thy fathers are all along faithful to the Mother Church of Rome. His Holiness Paul III, now Pope, and the Council of the Holy Fathers there, have lately found a prophecy of one St. Lazerianus, an Irish Bishop of Cashel, wherein he saith that the Mother Church of Rome falleth, when in Ireland the Catholic faith is overcome. Therefore, for the glory of the Mother Church, the honour of St. Peter, and your own secureness, suppress heresy and His Holiness's enemies, for when the Roman faith there perisheth, the See of Rome falleth also. Therefore, the Council of Cardinals have thought fit to encourage your Country of Ireland as a Sacred Island; being certified, whilst the Mother Church hath a son of worth as yourself,

and those that shall succour you and join therein, that she will never fall, but have more or less hold in Britain, in spite of fate.'(46)

This letter was written in the reign of Henry VIII when the first indications were received with alarm by the Roman hierarchy, of the approaching end of papal domination and of the mighty change about to take place in these realms.

1. Oxford Icelandic Dictionary.
2. See Prelim. Dissert. Laing's 'Heimskrongla,' p.86.
3. See H. Munro Chadwick, 'The Origin of the English,' p.32
4. Oxford Icelandic Dictionary.
5. Rollaston, Mazzaroth, III, 23.
6. Bruce Hannay, 'European and Other Race Origins,' p.456.
7. 'Annals of England,' Vol. I, p.164.
8. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bk. XI, Chap. X.
9. Palgrave, 'History of the Anglo-Saxons,' p.44.
10. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bk. XI, Chap. XII.
11. Brit. MSS. quoted in the second volume of the *Horae Britannicae*, p.267. Spelman's 'Concilia,' p.108.
12. Bede, E. H., Chap. II, 2. Haddan and Stubbs, 'Councils,' III, 38 'Hist. of Wales' (1911), p.173.
13. Bacon, 'Government of England,' p.13.
14. 'Laws of England,' Vol.IV, p.105.
15. Hengwst MSS. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bk. XI, Chap. XII. Humphrey Lloyd, 'Sebright' MSS.
16. Caerwys, MSS.
17. Paton, 'Brit. History and Papal Claims,' p.4.
18. Bede, 'Eccles. History,' Bk. III, Chap. 4.
19. Paper in the 'Ecclesiastic' for April 1864 on Dr. Todd's 'St. Patrick.' Concilia Constantiano Theodore-Martin (Lovar), 1517.
20. McCallum, 'History of the Culdees,' pp.60,61.
21. Ban-gor, 'Magnus Circulus.'
22. MS. in the Mostyn Collection.
23. 'Annals Cambraiae,' CLVII.
24. D'Aubigne, 'History Reform,' Vol. V. Milman, 'History of Latin Christianity,' Vol. II, p.234. 'Annales Cambraiae,' VLXIX.
25. Malmes, 'History of the Kings,' p.308.
26. Malmes, 'History of the Kings,' p.308.
27. Haddon & Stubbs, III, pp.256 ff.
28. Montalembert, 'Monks of the West,' Vol. IV, p.79.
29. Adelmi opp., ed. Giles, pp.24 ff. Monumenta Germ. History Tom, III, pp.231 ff.
30. 'Monks of the West,' Vol. IV, p.233.
31. Scotichron, Lib. III, Chap. VIII.
32. 'Eccles. History,' III, Chap. IV.
33. 'De Excid. Britt.'
34. Williams, 'Early Christianity in Britain,' p.447. Ulphilos, Bishop of the Goths (A.D.38), MS. in the Library of Upsal Naseau, VIII, 40.
35. 'Vide' Ussher's 'Historia Dogmatica.'

36. Keith Bish. App., p.5871. 'Regist Priorat,' St.Andree, p. 17.
37. Dasent, Introduction to 'Burnt-Nyal,' p. vii. 'De Mensura Orbis,' written by Dicuil an Irish monk, in the year A.D.835.
38. D'Aubigne, 'Hist. of the Reformation,' Vol. IV. McLauchlan 'The Early Scottish Church,' p.216: 'There was a Continental mission scheme in Scotland as early at 588.'
39. Registrum Prioratus St. Andree, p.188, Keith Catalogue of Scottish Bishops, p.9.
40. Alexander, 'Ter-Centenary of the Scottish Reformation' (Edin. 860), pp.13,17.
41. Ledwich's 'Antiquities.'
42. 'Vide' Reeve's 'Culdees,' p.25.
43. 'Hist. of Ireland,' pp.26,27.
44. Bury, 'Life of St. Patrick,' pp.44,45.
45. 'Views of Ireland,' Vol. II, p.84.
46. Mant's, 'History of the Irish Church,' p.140.

## **DRUIDISM**

THE popular belief that Druidism was the religion of ancient Britain and nothing more is entirely erroneous. Duidism was, in fact, the centre and source from which radiated the whole system of organized civil and ecclesiastical knowledge and practice of the country.(1)

The Order constituted its church and parliament; its courts of law, its colleges of physicians and surgeons, its magistracy and clergy. The members of the Order were its statesmen, legislators, priests, physicians, lawyers, teachers and poets.

The truth about the Druids, to be found amongst fragments of literature and in folk-memory, is that they were men of culture, well-educated, equitable and impartial in the administration of justice. These ancient leaders of thought and instruction in our islands had lofty beliefs as to the character of the one God, Creator and Preserver, and of man's high origin and destiny. There is reason to believe that this doctrine included the need for atonement or sin and the resurrection of the body. To reverence the Deity, abstain from evil and behave valiantly were, according to Laertius, the three grand articles enjoined by the Druids,(2)

In Druidism the British nation had a high standard of religion, justice and patriotism presented to it, and a code of moral teaching that has never ceased to influence national character.

It has been frequently stated that the name 'Druid' is derived from Drus, an oak; the oak was held by the Druids to symbolize

and eternal. The idea arose from the apparent similarity of the two words, Drus and Druid, and was merely incidental. A much more likely derivation is from Druthin, a 'servant of Truth.'<sup>(3)</sup>

The motto of the Druidic Order, "The Truth Against the World" was the principle on which Druidism was based and by which it offered itself to be judged.

"It, may be asked," says the Venerable Archdeacon Williams, "how has it come to pass, if great events marked the epoch between the departure of the Romans and the death of Bede, that the whole history is so obscure, and that no literary documents remain to prove the wisdom of the teachers and the docility of the people? The answer is very plain. Such documents do exist; they have been published, for more than half a century but have hitherto wanted an equate interpreter."<sup>(4)</sup>

The published compositions of the Druids and remains of their works. The Myvyrian MSS. a alone, now in the British Museum, amount to 47 volumes of poetry, containing about 4,700 pieces of poetry, in 1,600 pages, besides about 2,000 epigrammatic stanzas. Also in the same collection a 52 volumes of prose, in about 15,300 pages, containing many curious documents on various subjects, being 17th or 18th compilations embodying early writings.

Besides there are a vast number of collections of Welsh MSS in London and in private libraries in the Principality.<sup>(5)</sup>

In A.D. 383 Druidism, while accepting Christianity, submitted to the judgment and verdict of country and nation the ancient privileges and usages; the ancient learning, science and memorials were confirmed, lest they should fail, become lost and forgotten - this was done without contradiction or opposition.<sup>(6)</sup>

The education system adopted by the druids is traced to about 1800 B.C., when Hu Gadarn Hysicion (Isaacson),<sup>(7)</sup> or Hu the Mighty, led the first colony of Cymri into Britain from Defrobane, where Constantinople now stands.<sup>(8)</sup>

In the justly celebrated Welsh Triads, Hu Gadarn is said to have mnemonically systematized the wisdom of the ancients of these people whom he led west from the Summerland. He was regarded as the personification of intellectual culture and is commemorated in Welsh archaeology for having made poetry the vehicle of memory, and to have been the inventor of the Triads. To him is attributed the founding of Stonehenge and the introduction of several arts including glass-making and writing in Ogham characters. On Hu Gadarn's standard was depicted the Ox; in this possibly may be discovered the origin of the sobriquet, 'John Bull.' Hu established, among other regulations, that a Gorsedd or Assembly of Druids and Bards must be held on an open, uncovered grass space, in a conspicuous place, in full view and hearing of all the people.

Concerning the educational facilities available to the so-called barbarous people of these islands, there were at the time of the

Roman invasion forty Druidic centres of learning which were also the capitals of the forty tribes; of these forty known centres nine have entirely disappeared. These forty colleges were each presided over by a Chief Druid (9) There were also in Britain three Archdruids, whose seats were at York, London and Caerleon-on-Usk.

The territories of the forty tribes (the original of our modern counties) preserve for the most part the ancient tribal limits. Yorkshire, for instance, retains the same disproportionate magnitude to our other counties - the territory of the large and powerful tribe, the Brigantes.

The students at these colleges numbered at times sixty thousand of the youth and young nobility of Britain and Gaul. Caesar comments on the fact that the Gauls sent their youth to Britain to be educated. One notable instance has been mentioned by J. O. Kinnaman, D.D., in his work on Archaeology: "Pilate was not a Roman by nationality, but by citizenship. He was born a Spaniard and educated in Spain as far as the schools of that country could take him. Then he went to Britain to study in the universities of that country under the administration of the Druids. How long he studied in England is not now known; it was Pilate's ambition to become a Roman lawyer and the future governor of Palestine studied long enough in Britain to achieve not only this ambition but to absorb the Druidic philosophy rather than the Greek and Roman. 'Vide' Pilate's question to our Lord as they were walking out of the Praetorium, 'What is Truth?'(10) This was a question which the Druids were accustomed to debate."(11)

It required twenty years to master the complete circle of Druidic knowledge. Natural philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, geometry, medicine, jurisprudence, poetry and oratory were all proposed and taught - natural philosophy and astronomy with severe exactitude. (12)

Caesar says of the Druids:

"They hold aloof from war and do not pay war taxes; they are excused from military service and exempt from all liabilities. Tempted by these great advantages, many young men assemble of their own motion to receive their training, many are sent by parents and relatives. Report says that in the schools of the Druids they learn by heart a great number of verses, and therefore some persons remain twenty years under training. They do not think it proper to commit these utterances to writing, although in almost all other matters, and in their public and private accounts they make use of Greek characters. I believe that they have adopted the practice for two reasons - that they do not wish the rule to become common property, nor those who learn the rule to rely on writing, and so neglect the cultivation of the memory; and, in fact, it does usually happen that the assistance of writing tends to relax the diligence of the student and the action of memory.... They also lecture on the stars in

their motion, the magnitude of the earth and its divisions, on natural history, on the power and government of God; and instruct the youth on these subjects."(14)

While the Druids used writing for all other subjects taught in their colleges, they never used this in connection with the subject of religion To the spread of Christianity we owe most of the information we possess of the Druidic religion; their secret laws gradually relaxed as they became Christian, and some of heir theology was then committed to writing.

Dr. Henry, in his 'Histor of England,' has observed that collegiate or monastic institutions existed among the Druids.(15) Caesar several times calls the Druidic institution a 'disciplina,'(16) a term that implies a corporate life organization as well as the possession of learning. Mela speaks of the Druids as 'teachers of wisdom,'(17) The affirmation of Diodorus that 'some whom they call Druids, are very highly honoured as philosophers and theologians' is repeated by Hippolytus. (18)

Not only the supreme king, but every other king had his Druid and Bard attached to his court. This Druidic chaplain had charge of the education of the youthful members of the house, but was also allowed to have other pupils. He taught and lectured on all appropriate occasions, often out-of-doors, and when travelling through the territory of his chief, or from one territory to another, his pupils accompanied him, still receiving instruction; when, however, the pupils exceeded in number that which he was entitled by law on such occasions to have accommodated as his own company at a house, those in excess were almost always freely entertained by neighbours in the locality.

The chief poet seems to have been always accompanied by a number of assistants of various degrees, who had not yet arrived at the highest attainment of their profession.(19)

The theological students were given a particularly long course of training, and no Druidic priest could be ordained until he had passed three examinations in three successive years before the Druidic college of his tribe. The head of the clan possessed a veto on every ordination.(20)

By very stringent laws the number of priests was regulated in proportion to the population; and none could be a candidate for the priesthood who could not in the previous May Congress of the tribe prove his descent from nine successive generations of free forefathers. Genealogies, therefore were guarded with the greatest care. This barrier to promiscuous admission had the effect of closing the Order almost entirely to all but the Blaenorion or aristocracy, making it literally a 'Royal Priesthood'.

Degrees were conferred after three, six and nine years training. The highest degree, that of Pencerdd or Athro (Doctor of Learning), was conferred after nine years. All degrees were given by the king or in his presence, or by his license before a deputy, at the end of every three years.(21)

Druidic physicians were skilled in the treatment of the sick; their practice was far removed from the medicine-man cult, so unfairly ascribed to them by their contemporary enemies, and lightly followed ever since. They prayed to God to grant a blessing on His gifts, conscious that it should always be remembered that no medicine could be effective nor any physician successful without Divine help. The chief care of the physicians was to prevent rather than to cure disease. Their recipe for health was cheerfulness, temperance and exercise.(22) Certainly the power of physical endurance displayed by the early Britons was a strong testimony to the salutary laws of hygiene enforced and the general mode of life encouraged by the Druids. Human bones which had been fractured and re-set by art have been found in Druidic tumuli.(23)

Astronomers were deeply versed in every detail of their profession; such classic judges of eminence as Cicero and Caesar, Pliny and Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, speak in high terms of the Druid astronomers.

Strabo has left us a vivid description of the dress of the Britons of his day. On the visit to Athens of the British Druid astronomer Abaris (Hebrew Rabbi) the Greek geographer writes:

"He came not clad in skins like a Scythian, but with a bow in his hand, a quiver hanging on his shoulders, a plaid wrapped about his body, a gilded belt encircling his loins, and trousers reaching down from the waist to the soles of his feet. He was easy in his address; agreeable in his conversation; active in his dispatch and secret in his management of great affairs; quick in judging of present accuracies, and ready to take his part in any sudden emergency; provident withal in guarding against futurity; diligent in the quest of wisdom; fond of friendship; trusting very little to fortune, yet having the entire confidence of others, and trusted with everything for his prudence. He spoke Greek with a fluency that you would have thought that he had been bred up in the Lyceum; and conversed all his life with the academy of Athens. This visit oft was long remembered at Athens."

This visit of the British Druid was long remembered at Athens. Abaris travelled extensively in Greece; Greek fancy transformed the magnetic needle by which he guided his travels into an arrow of Apollo which would transport him at wish whithersoever he pleased.(24)

Ammianus Marcellus, A.D. 350, says, "The Druids are men of penetrating and subtle spirit, and acquired the highest renown by their speculations, which were at once subtle and profound.(25)

Pomponius Mela(26) plainly intimates that the Druids were conversant with the most sublime speculations in geometry and in measuring the magnitude of the earth

Stonehenge, 'the Greenwich Observatory' and great solar clock of ancient times, was pre-eminently an astronomical circle.

Heliograph and beacon were both used by the ancient British astronomer in signalling the time and the seasons, the result of observations, for the daily direction of the agriculturist and the trader.

The unit of measure employed in the erection of Stonehenge, and all other works of this nature in our islands was the cubit, the same as used in the Great Pyramid.(27)

The supposed magic of the Druids consisted in a more thorough knowledge of some of the sciences than was common. - astronomy, for instance. Diodorus Siculus states that the Druids used telescopes (28) - this evidently is the origin of the story that the Druids could by magic bring the moon down to the earth.

Many of the wells on Druidic sites, known today as holy wells, were the old telescope wells of the Druids, connected with their astronomical observations.(29) The old saying, 'Truth lies at the bottom of a well', comes down to us from those ancient times.

British architects trained in Druidic colleges were in great demand on the Continent. In this country the profession of architect was legally recognized. There were three offices of chief Architect,(30) the holders of which were privileged to go anywhere without restriction throughout the country, provided they did not go unlawfully.

James Ferguson, the writer of one of our best histories of architecture, says: "The true glory of the Celt in Europe is his artistic eminence, and it is not too much to assert that without his intervention we should not have possessed in modern times a church worthy of admiration, or a picture, or a statue we could look at without shame, and, had the Celts not had their arts nipped in the bud by circumstances over which they had no control, we might have seen something that would have shamed even Greece and wholly eclipsed the arts of Rome. . . . The Celts never lived sufficiently long apart from other races to develop a distinct form of nationality, or to create either a literature or a policy by which they could be certainly recognized; they mixed freely with the people among whom they settled and adopted their manners and customs ."(31)

C.J.Solinus, the Roman geographer, in his description of Britain, mentions the hot springs of Bath, and the magnificence with which the baths at that place had already been decorated by the use of bathers.(32)



The primitive religion of Britain associated in so many minds with the worship of the heavenly bodies, was the worship of the 'Lord of Hosts,' the Creator of the Great Lights, the sun and moon, not the worship of the heavenly bodies themselves. The Universe was the Bible of the ancients, the only revelation of the Deity vouchsafed them. The wonders of nature were to them as the voice of the All-Father, and by the movement of the heavenly bodies they ordered their lives, fixed religious festivals and all agricultural proceedings.

The way to Christianity for the early inhabitants of Britain was traced by Nature herself, and from Nature to Nature's God. St. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, writes, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."

Strabo observes that the care of worshipping the Supreme Being is great among the British nation; and the history of Hume records that no religion ever swayed the minds of men like the Druidic.(33)

It has been said that the Druidic Circles cannot, in strictness, be termed temples, for the Druids taught that there were but two habitations of the Deity - the soul, the invisible - the universe, the visible. The word 'temple,' in its primitive meaning, is simply a place cut off, enclosed, dedicated to sacred use, whether a circle of stones, a field or a building. In the old British language a temple or sanctuary was called a 'caer', a sacred fenced enclosure. The stone circles or caers of Britain were therefore, essentially temples and held so sacred by the people that reverent behaviour in their vicinity was universal. Joshua, it will be remembered, by God's command, erected a circle at Gilgal (circle) immediately upon the arrival of the chosen People in the Promised Land.

The British 'caer' has no connection with 'castra.'

There seems, however, to be no doubt that generally the chambered barrows and cairns of Britain were used as temples; several points in their construction lead to this assumption.

Mr. MacRitchie, in his "Testimony of Tradition," mentions several of these points, among them fireplaces and flues for carrying away smoke.

Sir Norman Lockyer (34) states: "Mr. Spence has pointed out the extreme improbability of Maeshowe (Orkney) being anything but a temple and, I may now add, on the Semitic model. There was a large central hall and side-rooms for sleeping, a stone door which could have been opened or shut from the inside, and a niche for a guard, janitor or hall porter.(35)

The great circle and temple known as Avebury ('Ambresbiri, the Holy Anointed Ones') is of special interest as the Westminster

abbey of ancient times,(36) the last resting place of princes, priests and statesmen, warriors, poets and musicians. One of the old Druids alluding to Avebury calls it 'The Great Sanctuary the Dominion'"(37)

The Circles or temples were composed of monoliths upon which the employment of metal for any purpose was not permitted. Druidic worship was without figure or sculpture of any kind.(38)

The monolithic avenues, symbolic of the sun's path through the Zodiac, were in some instances seven miles long. The national religious procession moved through these to the circle on the three great festivals of the year. In several of our own cathedrals we have the signs of the Zodiac, represented as sacred emblems on the tiles of the sanctuary floor, for instance at Canterbury and Rochester.

In his description of the temple at Jerusalem, Josephus states: "The loaves on the table, twelve in number, symbolized the circle of the Zodiac."(39)

Druidic services were held while the sun was above the horizon; the performing of ceremonies at any other time was forbidden by law.(40) The Chief Druid, or the Archdruid when he was present, occupied a position by a large central stone, approaching it with

a sword carried by its point to signify his own readiness to suffer in the cause of truth.(41) This central stone called 'Maen Llog,' or the Stone of the Covenant, and now distinguished by the name of Cromlech, was in Ireland called 'Bethel.'(42) or the house of God. Near to it was another, which received in a cavit water direct from the clouds. This water, and the waters the river Dee (called Drydwy, the Divine water), the Jordan of ancient Britain, were the only waters permitted to be used in Druidic sacrifices.

In the 'Faerie Queen' Spenser speaks of the:

' . . Dee which Britons long ygone  
Did call divine, that doth by Chester tend.'

For centuries after Druidism had merged into Christianity the Dee continued to be regarded as a sacred river. A striking instance of folk-memory is recorded in connection with the Battle of Britain, A.D.613, when Dionoth, Abbot of Bangor, delivered an oration to the defeated Britons (who had retreated along the banks of the river), and concluded by ordering the soldiers to kiss the ground in commemoration of the body of Christ, and to take up the water in their hands out of the river Dee and drink it in remembrance of His sacred blood. This act gave the men fresh courage; they met the Saxons bravely, and Ethelfrid, the Northumbrian invader, was defeated.(43)

The Bards of Britain, whose office it was to cultivate the

art of music and poetry as well as literature are referred to by Strabo as hymn-makers,(44) they were responsible for the temple music and for the conduct of the musical part of the temple services. On these occasions they wore white robes - from this custom has descended our English Church custom of clothing the choristers in white surplices.(45)

It was not until the first century A.D. that the Jews introduced the wearing of surplices into their services.

Josephus states: "Now as many of the Levites as were singers of hymns persuaded the king (Agrippa) to assemble a Sanhedrin and to give them leave to wear linen garments as well as the priests; for, they said, this would be a work worthy of the times of his government, that he might have a memorial of such a novelty as being his doing; nor did they fail of obtaining their desire."(46)

Referring to Stonehenge, Hecataeus, a Greek writer, 320 B .C., says that the people living these islands worshipped in a beautiful temple, whose minstrels hymned with their golden harps,(47) the praise of the god they adored, and whose priesthood was a regular descent from father to son.

While every British subject was entitled at birth to five British(ten English) acres of land for a home in the hereditary county of his clan, priests were entitled to ten acres (twenty English),(48) exemption from combative military service, permission to pass unmolested from one district to another in time of war, maintenance when absent on duty from their home, and contribution from every plough in their district.

The ceremonial dress of the Archdruid was extremely gorgeous, no metal but gold being used on any part of it. The Cymric Cross was wrought in gold down the length of the back of the robe; he wore a gold tiara and a breastplate of the same precious metal.(49) A breastplate was found in an excavated cist at Stonehenge, on the skeleton of an important Briton,(50) Five similar breastplates have been found in Britain and Ireland.

The Chevron Bead, a bead encased in gold was worn by the Archdruid as a symbol of the Deity(51) and designated by the Roman historians the 'Druid's Egg', around which so much legend has been woven by the imaginative uninformed, who saw in the symbol only a talisman endowed with most magical powers.

The stories that are told and believed of human sacrifice by the Druids are pure inventions of the Romans to cover their own cruelty and to excuse it. The Druids sacrificed sheep, oxen, deer and goats; charred remains of these have been found at Avebury, Stonehenge and in the vicinity of St.Paul's Cathedral. NO TRACE OF HUMAN SACRIFICE HAS EVER BEEN DISCOVERED IN BRITAIN(52)

(The modern authority on the Druids, Peter Ellis, upholds Isabel

Elder's words that human sacrifice by the Druids was an invention of the beastly Roman mind - who were indeed far more to be involved in human sacrifice via their blood-thirsty games and gladiator spectacles, and later Christians thrown to the lions etc. than anything near this ever taking place where the Druid order prevailed - Keith Hunt).

It is very generally believed that the Celts were nature worshippers, that they gave Divine honours to rivers, mountains and woods. It is entirely a mistake to believe that they did so. They were nature love - never nature worshippers; neither had they a multitude of gods and goddesses, as is often affirmed. The gods and goddesses were mere mascots, and even their descendants(53) 53 mascots and charms have lost none of their popularity.

Other nations never obtained a proper comprehension of Druidism; they corrupted what they had learned of the Druidism of Britain, blending with it religions less pure. It is recorded by Caesar that those in Gaul who wished to be perfectly instructed in Druidism crossed the sea to what they believed to be its birth-place.

In the Christian era St. Patrick used the shamrock to instruct the people in the doctrine of the Trinity, and in earlier days the Druids used the oak for same the same purpose. They sought a tree having two principal arms springing laterally from the upright stem, roughly in the form of a cross. Upon the right branch they cut the name Hesus; upon the middle or upright stem Taranis; upon the left branch Belenis; over this they cut the name of God - Thau.(54) The Hebrew prophets, it will be noted, referred to their expected Messiah as 'The Branch.'

The mistletoe was another form of representation to them of their Hesus, to whose coming they looked forward with as great expectancy as did the Jews in the East to their Messiah - the Britons were actually in advance of the Jews, for while the Britons believed in the resurrection of the body, many of the Jews did not. (It is indeed remarkable that one branch of God was called "Hesus" - it is only a very small step to the word "Jesus." And maybe when we understand all that Isabel Elder writes about here, we can gain a better insight into how and why we had "wise men" coming from the East, to worship Jesus the baby who was born to be King Messiah. These wise men of the East (and the Druids we have seen came originally from the "east") knew a whole lot more than most of the rest of the world about the things of God and His word and His prophecies of the one who was "the Branch."

"The Druids," writes Caesar, 54 B.C. "make the immortality of the soul the basis of all their teaching, holding it to be the principal incentive and reason for virtuous life."(55)

(Yes the Druids like many religious orders from the East, held the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul. I do not want

you to think the Druids had some "perfect" religion and understanding of the full truths of God, they did not! I just want you to realize the Druids were not in many respects the way many have assumed they were or have been misled to believe they were by the scanty writings of some, who really had never studied in any detail, the FULL historical facts on what the Druids were all about - Keith Hunt).

The similarity of the Semitic and British forms of worship has been commented upon by archaeologists and others who have explored megalithic remains in this country.

Sir Norman Lockyer states:

"I confess, I am amazed at the similarities we have come across,"(56)

and Edward Davies:

"I confess that I have not been the first in representing the Druidical as having had some connection with the patriarchal religion.(57)

William Stukeley, from a close study of the evidence affirms:

"I plainly discerned the religion professed by the ancient Britons was the simple patriarchal religion"(58) an opinion which every critical and candid student of Druid ritual, customs, and teaching must endorse.

The unity of the Godhead was the very soul and centre of Druidism, and this unity was a Trinity.  
Procoius of Caesarea, A.D. 530, states :

"Jesus, Taran, Bel - One only God. All Druids acknowledge one Lord God alone."(59)

The indisputable fact is that the Druids proclaimed to the universe, 'The Lord our God is One!' WHEN CHRISTIANITY PREACHED JESUS AS GOD, DRUIDISM HAD THE MOST FAMILIAR NAME OF ITS OWN DEITY PRESENTED TO IT!!

In the ancient British tongue Jesus had never assumed its Greek, Latin or Hebrew form, but remains the pure Druidic Yesu. It is singular that the ancient Briton never changed the name of the God he and his forefathers worshipped, nor has he ever worshipped but one God.(60)

In the Cornish folk-lore whole sentences were treasured up (without being understood), and when written down were found to be pure Hebrew, Three of these rendered into English are:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in"; "Who is this King of Glory?"; "The Lord Yesu, He is the King of Glory."(61)

(Wow....to hear all this makes my heart take a leap....God KNEW that His people Israel, the House of Israel, would one day be centred in the British Isles, that NT Christianity would FLOURISH in Britain, that the Kingdom would be taken away from the Jews, and given to a people to protect and proclaim....yes not only the spiritual Israel, but spiritual Israel centred in the British Isles, and from there Christianity would be preached, published, and proclaimed around the world. The English speaking people have done MORE to teach and proclaim God's Holy Word and the New Testament, than any other peoples in the last 2,000 years. We shall see in further studies the truth that Christianity came to the British Isles not many years after Jesus had died and was resurrected again. God was already in ancient Britain preparing a people, parts of his people Israel who had broken away from the main trunk centuries before, to receive Christianity and the New Testament Word of God - Keith Hunt).

Druidism with its self-evident Old Covenant origin, which latter was, indeed, the great 'oral secret' transmitted by Druid sages from generation to generation, its doctrine of the Trinity, worship entirely free from idolatry, furtherance of peace and contribution to the settling of disputes among the laity, high moral tone, and insistence on the liberty and rights of the subject, was a perfect (the word "perfect" maybe an over-statement, but how Britain received and welcomed Christianity, and the news of Hesus or Jesus, cannot be over-stated, for all historical writings and facts, only prove it to be so - Keith Hunt) preparation for the reception of Christianity.

Upon the introduction of Christianity the Druids were called upon, not so much to reverse their ancient faith, as to "lay it down for a fuller and more perfect revelation." No country can show a more rapid, and natural merging of a native religion into Christianity, than that which was witnessed in Britain in the first century A.D. The readiness with which the Druids accepted Christianity, the facilities with which their places of worship and colleges were turned to Christian uses, the willingness of the people to accept the new religion are facts which the modern historian has either overlooked or ignored.(62)

1. Ed.Davies, "Celtic Researches," pp.171,182.
2. Diogenes Laertius in proem., p.5. In proem., p.6.
3. Macpherson, "Dissertations," p.341.
4. Gomer.A Brief Analysis of the Language and Knowledge of Ancient Cymry. London,1854.
5. Matthew Arnold, "Celtic Literature," p.254.
6. Triodd Braint a Defod, Walter, op. cit. p.33. Lloyds "History of Cambria," ed. Powell, praef. p.9.
7. Myvy Arch., II, 57.

8. "Traditional Annals of the Cymry," p.27. Triad H. Sharon Turner,"History Anglo Saxon," Vol.1.
9. Gildas, MS. (Julius, D.XI), Cottonian Library. Morgan's "British Cymry."
10. John 18:38.
11. "Diggers for Facts," pp.226-229.
12. Strabo, I, IV, p.197. Caesars Comm. Lib. V. Suetonius, V. Calegula. E. Campion, "Account of Ireland," p.18.
13. See Toland's "History of the Druids," p.50.
14. De Bell Gall. VII, 15, x6.
15. Vol. I, Chap. II, p.142, Amm. Marcel, "History," IV,9.
16. De Bell Gall, VI, 13,14.
17. Pompon Mela, III, 2,
18. Philosoph, I.
19. O'Curry's "Manners and Customs of Anc. Irish," Vol. II. School of Simon Druid on O'Mulconry's Glossary: M.S.H. 2, 16 (Coll. 116), in Trinity College Library, Dublin. See also Reeve's "Adamnan," p.48.
20. Stanihurst, "De Rebus in Hibernia," p.37.
21. "Book of Lecain," folio 168. Toland, "History Druids," p.223.
22. J.Smith, "Gal. Antiq," p.80.
23. S.Lysons, "Our British Ancestors," p.44.
24. Hecat. ab. Diod. Sicul, Lib. III. Avienus, "The Britannia." Smith, "History of the Druids," pp.69,70, Cartes, "History England," Vol.I, p.52.
25. See note 3, p.35.
26. Lib. III.
27. Vide Sir Norman Lockyer, "Stonehenge," 1906.
28. Wm. Stukeley, "Stonehenge," p.11.
29. Strabo, Bk. XVII Chap. I, Sir G. Cornwall. Lewis "Ast. of the Ancients," p.198.
30. Triad, 32.
31. "History of Architecture," p.73.
32. "Momumenta Historica Britanica," p.12
33. "History of England," Vol.1. p,6
34. "Stonehenge," p.254.
35. "Standing stones and Maeshowe of Stennes," 1894.
36. Stukley, "Abury," p.40.
37. P.Llyod, "Island of Mona," p.41.
38. Origen on "Ezekiel," Homily 1V.
39. Josephus, "Jewish Wars," Bk.V, p.132.
40. Myo.Arch., Vol.III (laws of dynwal Moelmud).
41. Ibid.
42. Vallancy, "Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicus," p.211. Lysons, "Our British Ancestors," p.196.
43. King's "Vale Royal," p.2. Annales Cambriae, CLXIX.
44. Strobo, "Geogr," 1V, 4,5; XV, 1,5.M.F. Cusack, "History of Ireland," p.116, note.
45. E.Wilson, "Light and Shadows," p.262. Triad 233.
46. Josephus, Antiq., Bk.XX, p.9.
47. Dio.Sic.Tom.I, p.158. Taliesen, "Bards and Druids of Britain," Nash, p.15.
48. "Ancient Laws of Cambria" (British Museum).

49. *Crania Britannicaw*, Vol.I, p.78.
50. *Ibid.*
51. See E. Wilson's "Lights and Shadows," pp.6,7.
52. Hulbert's "Religions of Britain," p.37. Hen. Huntingdon History, Lib.III, apud res Anglia Script, p.322, ed. Saville.
53. See Stukley, "Abury," pp.2,38,49,76.
54. Schedius, "Treatise de Mor. Germ," XXIV. Thomas Maurice, "Indian Antiquities," Vol.VI, p.49.
55. De Bell. Gall.Lib., VI, chap.XIII.
56. "Stonehenge and other British Monuments," p.252.
57. "Mythology and Rites of the British druids as ascertained from National Documents," Pref. p.vii.
58. "Abury," Pref. p.i. G. Smith, "Religion of Ancient Britain," p.43.
59. Origen on "Ezekile." (Richardson's "Godwin de Presulibis.")
60. Dr. Henry, "History of Great Britain," I, 2.
61. Rev. Dr. Margoliouth, "Jews in Britain," Vol.1, p.23; Vol III, p.198.
62. Rolleston, Mazzaroth, 113.

To trace the history of the Culdees from the days of St. Columba is a comparatively easy task; to find their origin is more difficult. In the minute examination which such an investigation involves the name Culdee is discovered to have quite a different origin from that usually assigned to it.

The obscurity of the origin of the Culdich (Anglicized Culdees) has led many writers to assume that their name was derived from their life and work. The interpretations 'Cultores Dei' (Worshippers of God) and 'Gille De' (Servants of God) are ingenious but do not go far to solve the problem. Culdich is still in use among some of the Gael, of Cultores Dei and Gille De they know nothing.(1)

John Calgan, the celebrated hagiologist and topographer, translates Culdich 'quidam advanae' - certain strangers(2) - particularly strangers from a distance; this would seem an unaccountable interpretation of the name for these early Christians were it not for the statement of Freculphus(3) that certain friends and disciples of our Lord, in the persecution that followed His Ascension, found refuge in Britain in A.D. 37.(4) Further, here is the strong, unvarying tradition in the West of England of the arrival in this country in the early days A.D. of certain 'Judean refugees'. It seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that Colgan's Culdich, 'certain strangers', were one and the same with these refugees who found asylum in Britain and were hospitably received by Arviragus (Caractacus), king of the West Britons or Silures and temporarily settled in a Druidic college. Land to the extent of twelve hides or ploughs, on which they built the first Christian church, was made over to them in free gift by Arviragus. This land has never been taxed.



Of the twelve hides of land conferred by Arviragus on this church, the Domesday Survey, A.D. 1088, supplies confirmation. 'The Domus Dei, in the great monastery in Glastonbury. This Glastonbury Church possesses in its own villa XII hides of land which have never paid tax.(5)

In Spelman's 'Concilia'(6) is an engraving of a brass plate which was formerly affixed to a column to mark the exact site of the church in Glastonbury.(7) 'The first ground of God, the first ground of the Saints in Britain, the rise and foundation of all religion in Britain, the burial place of the Saints.'(8) This plate was dug up at Glastonbury and came into Spelman's possession.

From a 'mass of evidence' to which William of Malmesbury gave careful study, the antiquity of the Church of Glastonbury was unquestionable. He says:

'From its antiquity called, by way of distinction, "Ealde Chirche", that is the Old Church of wattlework at first, savoured somewhat of heavenly sanctity, even from its very foundation, and exhaled it all over the country, claiming superior reverence, though the structure was mean. Hence, here assembled whole tribes of the lower orders, thronging every path; hence assembled the opulent, divested of their pomp; hence it became the crowded residence of the religious and the literary. For, as we have heard from men of elder times, here Gildas, an historian, neither unlearned nor inelegant, captivated by the sanctity of the place, took up his abode for a series of years. This Church, then, is certainly the oldest I am acquainted with in England, and from this circumstance derives its name. Moreover there are documents of no small credit, which have been discovered in certain places, to the following effect: No other hands than those of the disciples of Christ erected the Church at Glastonbury .... for if Phillip the Apostle reached to the Gauls, as Freculphus relates in the fourth chapter of his second book, it may be believed that he also planted the word on the hither side of the channel.'(19)

The first converts of the Culdees were Druids. The Druids of Britain, in embracing Christianity, found no difficulty in reconciling the teaching of the Culdees, or 'Judean refugees', with their own teaching of the resurrection and inheritance of eternal life.

Numerous writers have commented upon the remarkable coincidence which existed between the two systems - Druidism and Christianity. (Amongst the Druidic names for the Supreme God which they had in use before the introduction of Christianity were the terms: 'Distributor', 'Governor', 'The Mysterious One', 'The Wonderful', 'The Ancient of Days', terms strictly of Old Testament origin.(10)

Taliesen, a bard of the sixth century, declares :

'Christ, the Word from the beginning, was from the beginning our teacher, and we never lost His teaching. Christianity was a new thing in Asia, but there never was a time when the Druids of Britain held not its doctrines.'(11)

From 'Ecclesiastical Antiquities' of the Cymry we learn that the Silurian Druids embraced Christianity on its first promulgation in these islands, and that in right of their office they were exclusively elected as Christian ministers, though their claims to national privileges as such were not finally sanctioned until the reign of Lles ap Coel (Lucius), A.D. 156. Even so all the bardic privileges and immunities were recognized by law before the reign of this king.

'And those Druids that formerly had dominion of the Britons' faith become now to be helpers of their joy and are become the leaders of the blind, which through God's mercy hath continued in this Island ever since through many storms and dark mists of time until the present day.'(12)

A Welsh Triad mentions Amesbury (Avebury) in Wiltshire as one of the three great Druidic 'Cors' or colleges of Britain, and one of the earliest to be converted to Christian uses. In the church attached to this college there were two thousand four hundred 'saints', that is, there were a hundred for every hour of the day and night in rotation, perpetuating the praise of God without intermission. This mode of worship was very usual in the early Church.(13)

The Christian king Lucius, third in descent from Winchester, and grandson of Pudens and Claudia(14) built the first minister on the site of a Druidic Cor at Winchester, and at a National Council held there in A.D.156 established Christianity the national religion as the natural successor to Druidism, when the Christian ministry was inducted into all the rights of the Druidic hierarchy, tithes included.(15)

The change over from Druidism was not a mere arbitrary act of the king, for, according to the Druidic law, there were three things that required the unanimous vote of the nation:

deposition of the Sovereign, suspension of law, introduction of novelties in religion.(16)

Archbishop Usher quotes twenty-three authors, including Bede and Nennius, on this point and also brings in proof from ancient British coinage.(17) So uncontested was the point that at the Council of Constance it was pleaded as an argument for British precedence.

'There are many circumstances', writes Lewis Spence,

'connected with the Culdees to show that if they practised a species of Christianity their doctrine still retained a large measure of the Druidic philosophy, and that indeed they were the direct descendants of the Druidic caste.... The Culdees who dwelt on Iona and professed the rule of Columba, were Christianized Druids, mingling with their faith a large element of the ancient Druidic cultus. . . . But all their power they ascribed to Christ - Christ is my Druid, said Columba.'(18)

Toland says that:

'...the Druidical college of Derry was converted into a Culdee monastery. In Wales Druidism ceased to be practised by the end of the FIRST century, but long after the advent of St.Patrick the chief monarchs of Ireland adhered to Druidism... Laegaire and all the provincial kings of Ireland, however, granted to every man free liberty of preaching and professing the Christian religion if he wished to do so.'(19)

The cumulative evidence of early historians leaves no shadow of doubt that Britain was one of the first, if not THE FIRST country to receive the Gospel, and that the apostolic missionaries were instrumental in influencing the change whereby the native religion of Druidism merged into Christianity.(20)

It is a remarkable circumstance that while statues of gods and goddesses prevail throughout the heathen sites of Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Hindu and other idolatrous nations, NOT A VESTIGE of an IDOL or IMAGE has been found in Britain.

If Mithraism is argued to contest this statement it should be observed that invaders were not free from idolatry. Mithra worship was a Roman importation. The British were entirely free from all forms of idolatry; they never adopted Mithraism. The Druids' invocation was to ONE all-healing and all-saving power. Can we be surprised that they so readily embraced the gospel of Christ?

Further support for the early introduction of Christianity to Britain is gathered from the following widely diverse sources:

EUSEBIUS of Caesarea speaks of apostolic missions to Britain as matters of notoriety. 'The Apostles passed beyond the ocean to the isles called the Brittanic Isles.'(21)

TERTULLIUS of Carthage, A.D.208, the embodiment of the highest learning of that age, tells us that the Christian Church in the second century extended to 'all the boundaries of Spain, and the different nations of Gaul and parts of Britain inaccessible to the Romans but subject to Christ.'(22)

ORIGEN, in the third century states: 'The power of Lord is with those who in Britain are separated from our coasts.'(23)

'From India to Britain', writes St.JEROME, A.D.378, 'all nations resound with the death and resurrection of Christ.'(24)

ARNOBIUS, on the same subject, writes: 'So swiftly runs the word of God that within the space of a few years His word is concealed neither from the Indians in the East nor from the Britons in the West.'(25)

CHRYSOSTOM, Patriarch of Constantinople, A.D.402, supplies evidence in these words: 'The British Isles which lie beyond the sea, and which lie in the ocean, have received the virtue of the Word. Churches are there found and altars erected. Though thou should'st go to the ocean, to the British Isles, there thou should'st hear all men everywhere discussing matters out of the Scriptures.'(26)

GILDS, the British historian, writing in A.D.542, states: 'We certainly know that Christ, the True Sun, afforded His light, the knowledge of His precepts, to our Island in the last year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar, A.D.37.'(27)

Sir HENRY SPELMAN states: 'We have abundant evidence that this Britain of ours received the Faith, and that from the disciples of Christ Himself soon after the Crucifixion',(28)

POLYDORE VERGIL observes: 'that Britain was of all kingdoms the first that received the Gospel'.(29)

The fact that Lucius established Christianity as the State religion excludes the claim of the Latin Church to that eminence. That this early establishment was acknowledged beyond the confines of Britain is well expressed by Sabellius, A.D.250. 'Christianity was privately expressed elsewhere, but the first nation that proclaimed it as their religion, and called itself Christian, after the name of Christ, was Britain';(30) and Ebrard remarks, 'The glory of Britain consists not only in this, that she was the first country which in a national capacity publicly professed herself Christian, but that she made this confession when the Roman Empire itself was pagan and a cruel persecutor of Christianity.'

The writer of 'Vale Royal' states: 'The Christian faith and baptism came into Chester in the reign of Lucius, king of the Britons, probably from Cambria, circa A.D.140.'(31)

Missionaries are said to have come from Glastonbury, only thirty miles distant, to instruct the Druids of Amesbury in the Christian faith. When the Druids adopted and preached Christianity, their universities were turned into Christian

colleges and the Druid priests became Christian ministers; the transition was to them a natural one.

In the days of Giraldus Cambrensis (twelfth century), as a result of Roman Catholic doctrine, martyrdom and celibacy were much overrated, and it was thought a reproach to the Druids that none of their saints had 'cemented' the foundation of the Church with their blood, all of them being confessors, and not one gaining the crown of martyrdom.(32)

An absurd charge, blaming the people for their reasonableness, moderation and humanity, and taxing the new converts for not provoking persecution in order to gain martyrdom.

It is not contended that every individual Druid and bard accepted Christianity on its first promulgation in Britain Even after Christianity had become a national religion, petty kings, princes and the nobility retained, in many instances, Druids and bards. Druidism did not entirely cease until almost a thousand years after Christ.

Had the large collection of British archives and MSS deposited at Verulum as late as A.D.860 descended to our time, invaluable light would have been thrown on this as on many other subjects of native interest.

We read in an historical essay, 'The Ancient British Church', by the Rev.John Pryce, which was awarded the prize at the National Eisteddfod of 1876, these words:

'In this distant corner of the earth (Britain), cut off from the rest of the world, unfrequented except by merchants from the opposite coast of Gaul, a people who only conveyed to the Roman mind the idea of untamed fierceness was being prepared for the Lord. Forecasting the whole from the beginning and at length bringing the work to a head, the Divine Logos unveiled Himself to them in the person of Christ, as the realization of their searching instincts and the fulfilment of their highest hopes. It would be difficult to conceive of Christianity being preached to any people for the first time under more favourable conditions. There was hardly a feature in their national character in which it would not find a chord answering and vibrating to its touch. Theirs was not the sceptical mind of the Greek, nor the worn-out civilization of the Roman, which even Christianity failed to quicken into life, but a religious, impulsive imagination - children in feeling and knowledge, and therefore meet recipients of the good news of the kingdom of heaven.

To a people whose sense of future existence was so absorbing that its presentiment was almost too deeply felt by them, the preaching of Jesus and the Resurrection would appeal with irresistible force.

There was no violent divorce between the new teaching and that of their own Druids, nor were they called upon so much to reverse their ancient faith to lay it down for a fuller and more perfect revelation.

Well has the Swedish poet, Tegner, in 'Frithiofs Saga', pictured the glimmerings of the dawn of Gospel day, when he described the old priest as prophesying

'All hail, ye generations yet unborn  
Than us far happier; ye shall one day drink  
That cup of consolation, and behold  
The torch of Truth illuminate the world,  
Yet do not us despise; for we have sought  
With earnest zeal and unaverted eye,  
To catch one ray of that ethereal light,  
Alfader still is one, and still the same;  
But many are his messengers Divine.'

1. Rev. T. McLauchlan, 'The Early Scottish Church,' p.431.
2. Trias Thaumaturga, p.156b.
3. Freculphus apud Godwin, p.10. See Hist. Lit.,II,18.
4. Baronius add. ann. 306. Vatican MSS. Nova Legenda.
5. Domesday Survey Fol., p.449.
6. See Epistolae ad Gregorium Papam.
7. See Joseph of Arimathea, by Rev.L.Smithett Lewis.
8. Concilia, Vol.I, p.9.
9. Malmes., 'History of the Kings,' pp.19,20.
- 10.G.Smith, 'Religion of Ancient Britain,' Chap. II, p.37.
- 11.Morgan, 'St.Paul in Britain,' p.73.
- 12.Nath. Bacon, 'Laws and Government of England,' p.3.
- 13.Baronius ad Ann 459, ex. Actis Marcelli.
- 14.Moncaeus Atrebas, 'In Syntagma,' p.38.
- 15.Nennius(ed.Giles), p.164. Book of Llandau, pp.26,68,289.
- 16.Morgan's 'British Cymry.'
- 17.Ussher (ed.1639), pp.5,7,20.
- 18.'The Mysteries of Britain,' pp.62,64,65.
- 19.Dudley Wright, 'Druidism,' p.12.
- 20.Holinshed, 'Chronicles,' p.23.
- 21.'De Demonstratione Evangelii,' Lib. III.
- 22.'Adv.Judaeos,' Chap. VII. Def. Fidei, p.179.
- 23.Origen, 'Hom. VI in Lucae.'
- 24.'Hom. in Isaiah,' Chap. LIV and Epist. XIII ad Paulinum.
- 25.'Ad Psalm,' CXLV, III.
- 26.Chrysostom, 'Orat O Theo Xristos.'
- 27.'De Excidio Britanniae,' Sect. 8, p.25.
- 28.'Concilia,' fol., p.1.
- 29.Lib. II.
- 30.Sabell. Enno, Lib. VII, Chap. V.
- 31.King's 'Vale Royal,' Bk. II, p.25.
- 32.Topograph. Hibern Distinct. III, Cap. XXIX.

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