THE DRUID'S

T. D. KENDRICK

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CHAPTER I

TRADITION

THERE is little need to remark upon the inextinguishable affection with which the druids are still regarded in the popular imagination. The antiquary in his travels, or for that matter any curious layman, must inevitably be aware of the renown they enjoy ; for the signs of it are constantly encountered in the narratives of guides and guide-books, and in the place-names of the country-side ; while it is not uncommon to hear that some of the supposed ceremonies of the druids have been re-enacted with appropriate pomp by societies professing to continue the ancient functions of the order. A visitor to the Chislehurst Caves in Kent—to take one example out of the many that offer themselves in this connection—will discover that there is attached to these artificial galleries, which are relatively of quite modern date, a complicated system of legend glorifying the druids not only as the singing priests of a subterranean chapel,[1] but also as the makers of the prehistoric flint implements found in the neighbourhood. In fact, it may truly be said that the unlettered public has accepted, as a simple solution of the mysteries of very remote antiquity, a primary division of nearly all our ancient remains earlier than Saxon times into " Roman " and " Druidic," so that the druids are rapidly becoming synonymous with the Ancient Britons, that is to say, the pre-Roman population of this country. As a counter to this, the learned from time

[1] Cf. the description of the caves in *Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc.*, IX (1903), 147.

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One reason why archæologists are not very successful in correcting the general opinion of the druids, or in showing that some of its more extravagant implications are ridiculous, is that it was they themselves, or rather their ancestors in archæology, who implanted the current notions. Doubtless the culprits did not anticipate the far-reaching results of the magnification of an obscure priesthood, but the fact remains that as the result of an archæological discourse the druids at one bound came not only into their own, but into a great deal more than their own ; and it looks as though they are likely to hold on to it.

Of course, it is not a very difficult thing to establish eccentric ideas concerning the distant past, but as a rule these find favour only in a strictly limited section of the community ; for a time they may be firmly believed, and they may even be persistent, but they are only current among a few dabblers in learning, and seldom attract any wide notice. It is obvious, therefore, that there must be some strong appeal to common sense, or the satisfaction of a solution to a definite puzzle, if an idea is to be popularly comprehended and accepted ; and it is because these advantages could be pleaded on behalf of the druids, that they hold their present high place in the general estimate of our ancient history and prehistory.

For there happened to be a focus upon which their claims could be centred, a reason for the revived memory of them, and this was provided by the mysterious but well-known rough stone monuments that are still plentiful throughout the land, chambers built of enormous slabs of stone, and circles and alignments of massive uprights or great recumbent boulders. Nothing was known as to the use of these or their origin, and when the druids were paraded as their probable builders the attraction of priests without temples to temples without priests proved irresistible.[1] And so it came about that all the protests of modern learning are

[1] Dr. Joseph Anderson noticed the significance of the entries for stone circles in the early indexes to Archæologia ; in 1809 it was simply *Stones, Circles of*, but in 1844 this was altered to *Stones, Circles of, v. Druids*.

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insufficient to re-name the Druids' Altars and Druids' Temples of our country-side; they are the names bestowed by the people at the bidding of earlier archæologists, and they are at once explanatory and satisfying; wherefore it is evident that *dolmen*, *cromlech*, *megalithic monument*, and the like, have small chance of becoming popular substitutes.

This widely held belief that it was the druids who built the stone monuments is the subject that it is convenient to discuss first of all; and to illustrate the genesis of the idea, that is to say, the manner of the druidic revival in its archæological sense, it is necessary to consider in some detail the historical aspect of a special problem of British archæology, that of the famous megalithic pile, Stonehenge. Nowadays there is nothing more druidic than Stonehenge; in fact, it is so signally and sacredly druidic that some modern druids think it proper that a portion of the ashes of their deceased brethren should be buried within its precincts. It is all the more interesting, therefore, to find that for a long while its druidic character was absolutely unsuspected, for this must surely rob the modern notion of all traditional value.

The first unmistakable reference to the monument occurs in the 11th century in the writings of Henry of Huntingdon, who was content simply to catalogue it as one of the marvels of this island, though he remarked at the same time that its origin was unknown. A century later, however, we come upon the account of the building of Stonehenge related by Geoffrey of Monmouth, an exciting legend about the transport of the stones from Ireland by Merlin to form the memorial erected by Aurelius Ambrosius to the victims of Hengist's treachery in A.D. 470. This story was current for about 500 years, and is repeated in the poetry of Alexander Neckham (1157-1217), in Langtoft's chronicles (*c.* 1300), and in the works of several much later writers. A slight variation in the legend was made by Polydore Vergil at the beginning of the 16th century, for this writer affirmed that the monument was simply the sepulchre of Ambrosius; but the first published theory running counter to Geoffrey's version is that of Edmund Bolton, who proposed in 1624

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that Stonehenge was the tomb of Boadicea.[1] And it is evident that the Merlin story was wellnigh forgotten about this time, because even such an inquisitive and diligent person as the antiquary Camden, who can be trusted to have ferreted out any surviving folklore, was quite at a loss to explain the monument, and had nothing better to repeat than a vague rumour that the stones themselves had been artificially composed of sand and glue.

Therefore, so far as tradition is concerned, all that there is to go upon is this 12th century story recounted by Geoffrey; and, accordingly, it becomes important to enquire whether Merlin was supposed by the mediæval historians to have been a druid. I am not disposed to shirk the issue by saying that Merlin was largely a creature of Geoffrey's imagination; but to maintain that this author's account of the origin of Stonehenge is evidence of its traditional association with the druids seems to me, even on the most charitable view of the tale that can be taken, to be absolutely beyond the warrant of the facts.

Actually, the Merlin stories form a group that originally concerned two distinct persons, one a 6th century Welsh prince, Myrddin ab Morfryn, and the other Vortigern's prophet, Ambrosius, who figures in the *Historia Britonum* of "Nennius." Geoffrey used the name Merlinus for both these persons, and then proceeded to combine the stories about them as though they referred to a single individual. The Welsh prince is certainly the hero of his later *Vita Merlini*, but in the earlier *Historia Regum Britanniæ* it is Ambrosius who is uppermost in his mind; in fact, in his first work he plainly says that Ambrosius was another name for Merlin.[2]

[1] The name is, I admit, indefensible, except on the grounds of euphony and popularity. But though I am prepared to champion most forlorn causes, I confess it seems hopeless now to substitute the appalling, yet more correct, Boudicca or Buddug.

[2] *Hist. Reg. Brit.*, VI, 19. On this subject see J. J. Parry, *The Vita Merlini*, Illinois, 1925, p. 113; Hans Matter, *Englische Gründungssagen von Geoffrey of Monmouth bis zur Renaissance* in *Anglistische Forschungen*, Hft. 58, Heidelberg, 1922, pp. 149 ff.; W. W. Newell, *Publications of the Modern Language Assoc. of America*, XX

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Now there is not one word about druidical training nor practice either in the *Historia* or in the *Vita*. In the last-named work it is said of Merlin *rex erat et vates*, he was a king and a prophet; while in the *Historia* he is simply a prophet, only distinguished by his strange birth and his superior utterances from the other magicians of Vortigern. And these, it should be noted, share the name *magi* with other wise men living outside the druidic lands, the sooth-sayers of the Trojan settlers in Italy, for example.

In order, therefore, to give a druidic flavour to this story about Stonehenge, we must say that the tale relates to the Ambrosius of "Nennius," and that the dual rôle of sorcerer and adviser played by this person at the court of Vortigern in the 5th century suggests the degraded duties that might have appertained to the surviving druids, if there were any in England, at so late a date. But in "Nennius," it must be remembered, the word *magi* is used for such seers, and not druids; so that even if it be granted that this Ambrosius was a druid in its ultimate sense of a simple magician, Geoffrey's tale is nevertheless separated by a period of about eight centuries from the last mention of the word druid in Gaul. And we are even further removed from the real and organised druidism that was flourishing in this country before the Roman occupation, of which it is very obvious neither Geoffrey nor "Nennius" knew anything at all.

But this is not everything. Geoffrey himself describes his Merlin-Ambrosius person as the son of a Christian princess [1] who had been visited by an incubus; [2] and if we go further back for information about his birth, and what manner of man he was, that is to say, if we enquire in the *Historia* of "Nennius," [3] we get still further away from the druids, for it is therein related that he was sprung from Roman parents of consular rank.

It is almost impossible, therefore, to see any trace in this story of Geoffrey's that can reasonably be held to reflect the

(N.S. XIII), Baltimore, 1905, No. 19—*Doubts Concerning the British History attributed to Nennius*, pp. 647 ff.

[1] *Hist. Reg. Brit.*, VI, 17. [2] *Ibid.*, VI, 18.

[3] Nennius, *Hist. Brit.*, 42 (Stevenson, 1838).

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But Dr. Charleton never even bothered his head with a possible druidic origin ; he was only at pains to disprove the Roman theory of Inigo Jones, and quite clearly the druids were not reckoned in his day as serious candidates for the honour of having built Stonehenge. Nor are they as much as mentioned in the tremendously vigorous counterblast prepared by John Webb, a relation by marriage and former pupil of Inigo Jones, who undertook to restore Stonehenge to the Romans ; this, I think, is really significant, because he goes out of his way to quote Dr. Aylett Sammes as supporting the theory of a Phœnician origin, Bishop Nicholson as thinking the monument Saxon, Aubrey as believing it to be British, and Bolton's guess that it was the tomb of Boadicea. Aubrey, as we shall see, did believe that the druids built Stonehenge, but his views and arguments were unpublished, and Webb knew nothing of them ; consequently there is not a word for or against the druids in his long and involved work.

The first person, then, to claim Stonehenge for the druids was the excellent and entertaining antiquary, John Aubrey (1626-1697), the portrait of whom is reproduced as the frontispiece. A mere statement of his opinion was published in Gibson's edition of *Camden's Britannia* in 1695, but his celebrated disquisition upon Stonehenge and Avebury was never given to the world, apparently because he was not satisfied with his knowledge of the rough stone monuments in other districts. This is a great pity, since it must have been a refreshing and intelligent document, far pleasanter reading than the angry and laboured arguments of Jones, Charleton, and Webb. " I come in the rear of all," wrote Aubrey, " by comparative arguments to give clear evidence that these monuments (Avebury, Stonehenge, and the like) were Pagan temples ; which was not made out before ; and have also with humble submission to better judgment, offered a probability that they were Temples of the Druids. . . . This enquiry, I must confess, is a groping in the dark ; but although I have not brought it into clear light, yet can I affirm that I have brought it from an utter darkness to a thin mist, and have gone further in this essay than anyone

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If Aubrey was a somewhat diffident protagonist, Stukeley, at any rate, was headstrong and whole-hearted. The druids absorbed him. He even erected his own private druidic temple, a sylvan one, in his garden at Grantham; and his friends nicknamed him Chyndonax. With admirable ingenuity he mixed together a splendid hotch-potch of invention and surmise until he had brewed the legend of a community of all-powerful priests of an ultimate Phœnician origin, and professing the patriarchal religion of Abraham, who built stone temples in the form of sacred serpents; *Dracontia*, he said these serpent-fanes were called, though he had no authority at all in antiquity for the word in a

FIG. 2.—Medal with bust of Stukeley (obverse), and Stonehenge (reverse).

temple sense. And not only did he twist words, but he is also said to have twisted the very stones themselves to suit his theory, when he attempted the diagrammatic reconstruction of the remains; even Sir Richard Colt Hoare, who followed Stukeley and accepted most of his conclusions, was sometimes far from satisfied with the doctor's surveys and descriptions. But it is only fair to add that although he has been occasionally convicted of curling a tail out of a straight line of stones, or discovering the head of a snake where others have not been able to find anything at all, he has nevertheless won modern approval as a field-worker, for it is not very long ago that a particular series of measurements made by him had by chance to be repeated, whereupon

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the surveyors were able to record unequivocal testimony to the accuracy of the 18th century antiquary;[1] and there is certain positive achievement to his credit, in this respect, for it was he who first pointed out the existence of the avenue and the cursus at Stonehenge, and who first grappled with the problem of the relation between the monument and the adjacent barrows.

But even so, I imagine present-day enthusiasts for the druids are not likely to praise over loudly the man who so nobly furthered the renaissance of their cult, since the imaginative doctor-clergyman is an advocate of dubious repute, and I doubt if any modern druid would be wise to appeal to Stukeley's archæological authority in the matter of stone monuments; for it would not be difficult to compile an ugly little catalogue of his mistakes, and the outspoken aspersions of his contemporaries[2] and successors upon his over-confident method; and, although he must be freely pardoned for it, it is not easy to forget that it was he who stood sponsor for a document that later proved to be one of the most harmful forgeries that have ever been perpetrated, a none too happy augury for his pet theory.

But whether he was a good or a bad antiquary hardly matters; it is enough that he was in earnest and that he was successful in the propagation of his doctrine; more suddenly and completely successful than any other archæological teacher I can call to mind. No one seems to have disputed his main conclusion, although in the instance of Stonehenge an attempt was made to give it an astronomical flavour in 1771 by the Glasgow vaccinator, John Smith, the first of the exponents of the famous theory that the plan of the monument is in deliberate relation with the movements of heavenly bodies. This author dissented from Stukeley on certain minor points; for instance, he did not believe that the altar stone was used for human sacrifice, his reason being simply that the altar would not bear fire. He tried

[1] See Mr. O. G. S. Crawford's remarks in *The Observer*, Sept. 23, 1923.

[2] The poet Gray, for instance, more than once refers uncompromisingly to Stukeley's "nonsense."

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a fragment of it in a crucible and found that it first of all changed colour and then was reduced to a powder; "very unfit surely for burnt offerings!" he says.[1] And there were other variations of Stukeley's thesis, such as that of the Bath architect, John Wood, who hazarded that although Stonehenge was druidical, it was really a lunar temple with Diana as its goddess. In fact, the first directly opposed view was not put forward until almost exactly fifty years after Stukeley had published his book on Stonehenge; this was the theory of John Pinkerton, a Scottish historian, who argued that the monument was Gothic.[2]

It was not only in Great Britain that Stukeley's notion found favour. Toland tells us that in his time none of the French megalithic monuments were attributed to the druids, but in 1805, when Cambry published his famous *Monumens Celtiques*, we find that he advocates the druidic origin of all the continental rough stone monuments. It is true that he does not directly express his indebtedness to Stukeley, but the reverend doctor is mentioned in such a way that there is little doubt that his writings must have provided the mainspring of Cambry's arguments.

If we except Pinkerton's work, we may say that Stukeley's theory held the field without a rival. Certainly no one seriously attempted to challenge the druids as builders of Stonehenge and other monuments, and they continued in splendid possession for wellnigh a hundred years after Stukeley's time. And it was natural enough that during this length of time popular fancy should adopt them as obviously the ideal priests for the tenantless altars and temples; thus, with leisure to work its way unopposed throughout all the land, and with the argument of scholars in its support, the familiar fiction was formidable indeed;

[1] Poor Stonehenge! John Evelyn found the stone so hard that *all his strength with a hammer* could not detach a fragment.—*Diary*, July 22, 1654.

[2] Pinkerton was not really the first in the field with an alternative opinion, for John Bryant, in his *Analysis of Antient Mythology* (1776), suggests Stonehenge was much older than the druid theory implied; but he only devoted a line or two to the subject, and can hardly be called the champion of a rival theory.

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and there is nothing remarkable in its becoming at the beginning of the 19th century an article of general belief.

The moral of this story of the disputed origin of Stonehenge is very obviously that the now famous druidic theory, whether it be right or wrong, is not based on any sort of tradition, but is merely an invention of the late 17th century that was very successfully propagated during the next hundred years. In fact, before this period [1] the only person who seems to have considered it even as remotely likely was Inigo Jones, and he very summarily rejects it at the outset of his enquiry. It would be possible to cite other instances of what may be termed the pre-druidic notion of our megalithic monuments, such as that of the celebrated Kit's Coty House, near Maidstone in Kent. Quite recently I have seen this once more claimed for the druids, since it has the appearance of being the ruins of a small chamber (Fig. 38, p. 167), the kind of thing supposed by the modern friends of the order to have been either a sort of observatory or a cell of initiation. But I would point out that there is at least nothing traditional about this contention, for it differs *in toto* from the popular belief of other days; this is related to us by Camden and by Stow, and their version is to the effect that the Coty was erected to mark the burial-place of a British prince Catigern, who fell near the site when fighting against the Saxons in the 5th century A.D. The druid theory, therefore, is simply a rival and subsequent *guess*, and it will later be shown that there are excellent archæological reasons proving that both guesses are wrong.

It is hardly necessary to add that there is little or no corroborative evidence suggesting that a prolonged folk-memory actually existed.[2] Thus I have not been able to discover any antique place-names embodying the notion of

[1] Cf. the testimony of Schedius and of Pufendorf (p. 21) and my remark about de Brebeuf (p. 24).

[2] This has, of course, been tested several times. In 1766 Professor Garden of Aberdeen, describing the stone circles of his district, treats the question of their origin in scientific fashion. He concludes: "I have found nothing hitherto, either in the names of these monuments or the tradition that goes about them, which doth particularly relate to the Druids or point them out."—*Archæologia*, I, 341.

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Stoke Druid in Gloucestershire as a place-name, where megalithic remains are to be found, and if it could be traced back beyond the period of the archæological advertisement of the druids we might see in it some evidence of folklore. But at the moment I have not succeeded in tracing it back at all, and I am rather impressed by the fact that it seems to have been quite unknown to Seyer, the historian of Bristol, who described this particular ruined structure in considerable detail in the year 1821.

Up to this point I have only attempted to show that in disputing the claim that the druids built the stone monuments one is not adventuring against a formidable display of folk-knowledge. There is, of course, a great deal more to be said on the archæological aspect of the subject, and it is possible that it may not be necessary to insist upon a complete divorce of the druids from all their " temples." But here I am concerned solely with the traditional value of the theory of druidic origin, and it will be convenient to postpone further discussion for a later chapter.

The next point I want to make is that the theories of Aubrey and Stukeley, however well they may explain many modern notions, are not wholly responsible for them. To discover the ultimate cause of the revival of interest in these priests, and the secret of the success of such theories, it is essential to search further than among the pronouncements of individuals and to take stock of the altering outlook of the times in which they were promulgated. This, I think, can best be appreciated after a short survey of the rôle played by the druids in literature.

At the end of the 4th century A.D. the word *druid* still survived in the general literature of Roman Gaul, for it occurs twice in the poems of Ausonius (see p. 97) in an adjectival form that must clearly have been intelligible at any rate to the professors to whom the poem is addressed. But after the decline of the Empire and the passing of

book dealing with the druids (see below, p. 18) was written by a priest of Dreux. It must also be remembered that this is the district wherein the ancient druids held their annual assemblies (Caesar, *B.G.*, VI, 13).

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at all in any of the Saxon or early mediæval chronicles and romances. In England and on the continent, in fact, the Teutonic invasions had effectively obliterated all common knowledge of the ancient priesthood, and it stood little chance of revival as long as the church, the official fount of historical information, ignored the one possible source of enlightenment, the early Roman historians. This state of affairs is plainly revealed in the grossly unhistorical treatment of the subject-matter of the Arthurian cycle, wherein the druids might reasonably have found mention had the mediæval authors consulted the classical material relating to the periods they were describing.

Thus, except for the occasional use of the name in a debased sense by the Irish schoolmen, and, more doubtfully, by the Welsh bards, it seems safe to say that throughout a long period from the 4th to the 16th century the original druids of antiquity had wellnigh passed from man's memory.

At length, however, the time came that the common classical sources of information were more frequently consulted, and as an inevitable consequence the knowledge that there had once been priests called druids gradually became general among educated folk. And if one watches for the early mentions of the druids in popular work, it can fairly easily be seen that their name creeps in rather as a morsel of this casual erudition than as a concession to vulgar predilection.

In England the period of oblivion from the 4th century onwards is not interrupted, to the best of my knowledge, until the year 1509, when the druids were included in the complement of Barclay's *Ship of Fools;* but they only get in at second-hand, and four lines is their portion :—

> Or as the Druydans rennyth in vayne about
> In theyr mad festes upon the hylle of yde
> Makynge theyr sacrafyce with furour noyse and shout
> Whan theyr madnes settyth theyr wyt asyde.

On the continent they were brought once more, after their long oblivion, to the notice of scholars by the *Annales Boiorum* of Aventinus (Johann Turmaier), who completed

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this celebrated work about the year 1521. The druids are described as Gaulish philosophers driven out of Gaul into Germany by the Emperor Tiberius, and this is really all that Aventinus has to say about them; but the *Annales* are so frequently quoted by later writers,[1] that the book may in justice be signalled as the starting-point[2] of the awakening interest in the druids that resulted from the renaissance of learning.

It would be difficult to imagine Rabelais omitting any discoverable name, so that it is not surprising that he should mention the ancient druids two or three times in *Pantagruel*, that was written about 1532. His source was obviously Cæsar, as can be seen from the passage, "If you fancy Mercury (*sic*) to be the first inventor of arts as our ancient Druids believed of old,"[3] for it is borrowed directly from the Sixth Book of the *Gallic War*.

In the half-century after the appearance of *Pantagruel*, there were published several learned treatises of antiquarian interest in which reference was made to the druids. The first of which I have record was a book in French verse by Jean Le Febure of Dreux, called *Les Fleurs et Antiquités des Gaules*, published in 1532; this must have been a very interesting book, and a very important one in the druidical bibliography, since it is said to have been principally devoted to a description of the druids, or ancient philosophers of Gaul; but, unfortunately, there does not seem to be any copy still existing.[4] The next important book appeared over forty years later;[5] this was the *Historiæ Brytannicæ Defensio*

[1] It seems to have been Aventinus who started the curious legend about the druid's shoe. See *Annales*, ed. Cisner, Frankfurt, 1627, p. 68; and, in the same work, *Nomenclatura*, *s.v. Druides*.

[2] There was nothing about the druids in the *Germaniæ Exegeseos* (Hagenoae, 1518) of Franciscus Irenicus.

[3] Rabelais, *Oeuvres*, ed. Moland, Paris, 1884, p. 454. Cf. *B.G.*, VI, 17, "Minervam operum atque artificiorum initia tradere."

[4] See *Bibliotheque de la Croix du Maine* (ed. de Juvigny, Paris, 1772, I, 495). Le Febure was a priest and a native of Dreux. The work was apparently unknown to Cochin, who wrote an article on the antiquities of Dreux (*Mem. de l'Acad. celtique*, IV (1809), 453).

[5] In the meantime Leland had compiled an excellent summary of the classical references to druids and druidism, but this remained

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(1573), by Sir John Price, who suggested that as *pryduides* (*prydydd*, a poet) was an alternative name for the Welsh bards, these must be the same folk as those called druids by the ancients. This volume was accompanied by the *De Mona Druidum Insula* of Humphrey Llwyd, in which one or two of the classical references to druidism were repeated. Four years afterwards, in 1577, Holinshed offered some fanciful remarks about what he termed the *Druyish* religion, but he was evidently aware that ordinary people knew nothing whatever about the priests themselves; and the same may be said of that careful antiquary Camden (1586), who can be trusted to have recorded any folklore that came to his ears.

In the meantime Étienne Forcadel had published his *De Gallorum Imperio* (1579), a book that set forth much of the classical information about the druids; and this was followed in France by the *Histoire de l'Estat et Republique des Druides* (1585) of Noel Taillepied, an amusing book that describes the druids as an aristocracy ruling Gaul from about the year 2800 after the creation of the world (i.e. roughly 1200 B.C.) to the year A.D. 16.

But all these works were heavy antiquarian treatises and the next popular reference to the druids after their mention in the works of Rabelais seems to be that in the *Felicitie of Man* (1598), by Barckley, who speaks of a woman "that was a Soothsayer of them which were called Druides," an explanatory remark that illustrates tolerably well my contention that the word druid reappears in literature as the result of the increased attention given by scholars to the classical historians, and not as a contribution from popular traditional knowledge.

in MS. until the 18th cent. (*Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis*, Oxford, 1709, Chaps. I-III). Leland assumed that druidism flourished in England until the conversion of Lucius Magnus to Christianity (see Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Hist. Reg. Brit.*, IV, 19-VI, 1); Merlin he classed as a bard, or possibly (he suggests) a *vates*. Another work that appeared in this interval was the *De Prisca Celtopædia* of Picard de Tontry (1556); it is cited by Jullian, *Hist. de la Gaule*, II, p. 86, n. 2 (5th ed.), but I have not seen it myself.

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As a matter of fact, at this period the only practical interest taken in the druids seems to have been aroused by the French antiquary Guenebauld, who claimed that he had found the tomb of an archdruid called Chyndonax. This discovery was a very exciting affair that attracted considerable attention; it took place in 1598 on Guenebauld's vineyard near a Roman road in the vicinity of Dijon, and consisted of a cylindrical stone coffer, about a foot in height, that contained a glass cinerary urn. On the base of the coffer was a Greek inscription mentioning Mithras and also a name interpreted by Guenebauld as Chyndonax, who, because he was described as a chief priest, was assumed to have been necessarily an important druid. Guenebauld himself published this find some years later in a delightful little book, complete with illustrations, which seems, since it is of earlier date than Sir Thomas Browne's *Hydrotaphia*, to be one of the first treatises in the history of transalpine archæology that dealt with the problems of a single excavation. The authenticity of the inscription has been questioned, although it is rather difficult to understand why, and, needless to say, the coffer itself is now lost; but as a Roman cemetery, whose existence was unknown to Guenebauld, was discovered over 200 years later on the site, the funeral apparatus must have been genuine enough. However this may be, Chyndonax the Druid became a real person to a great many people at the end of the 16th century and at the beginning of the 17th; and on more than one occasion he was saluted in verse:—

> Felicem Druydam, qui tot post saecula vivit,
> Quemque per ora virum fata volare jubent!

But this, as I have said, is the only instance at so early a date where any sort of popular attention seems to have been devoted to the druids; and even after this discovery I daresay that outside Burgundy no one bothered about Chyndonax except a few scholars and theological disputants.

By this time, however, the learned world was beginning to occupy itself seriously in the problems of druidism, and throughout the 17th century, just as in the later half

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of the 16th, a number of works appeared that dealt with the priesthood. But books of this kind are evidence of nothing more than an academic study of the classical historians ; and the manner in which the subject is approached, at any rate in the first half of the century, makes it tolerably clear that it was deemed to be one not as yet generally familiar.

The first work in the new century that treated of the druids was an oration of Francois Meinard, the Frisian, that was printed in 1615,[1] and set forth the claims of the druidic mistletoe to be henceforth regarded as the emblem of jurisprudence. But much more important was the great work *De Dis Germanis*,[2] by the German youth Elias Schedius (1615-1641), in which as many as twenty-six chapters were devoted to a study of druidism ; for Schedius believed that the Germans had had their druids just like the Kelts. Two chapters deal with the probable kind of altar used by the druids, and it is important to remark, in view of the modern superstition on this subject, that in the 17th century *turf*, and not *stone*, was thought to be the chosen material. This notion of a turf altar in the middle of a grove is re-stated in an engaging pamphlet on the druids by the diplomat Esaias Pufendorf of Chemnitz, a work written as a university thesis, and first printed in 1650.[3] Pufendorf's charming study had the luck to be brilliantly translated in the last century by Edmund Goldschmid,[4] and in its English form his little book deserves to be better known.

The next work of interest here was the *Originum Gallicarum Liber* of the Dutchman, Marcus Boxhorn, that was published at Amsterdam in 1654 ; the greater part of it is philological and not directly concerned with the druids, but it contains an appendix in the form of a long Latin poem

[1] *Orationes Legitimae : I. Oratio solemnis de visco Druidarum iurisprudentiae symbolo.* Poitiers, 1615.

[2] Amsterdam, 1648. The earlier and gloriously illustrated book by Cluverius, *Germania Antiqua* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1616), contains only two or three brief references to the druids.

[3] It was later included in the *Opuscula a iuvene lucubrata*, Halae Hermundurorum, 1699.

[4] Privately printed. Edinburgh, 1886.

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that purports to set forth a system of druidic philosophy. A continental work of greater significance appeared two years later; this was written by Jean Picard of Tours,[1] who treated the problem of the druids in a severely historical fashion, transcribing in full many of the classical references to them. In the meantime, a short article, *De Origine Druidum*, by Henry Jacob, a Fellow of Merton College, had been published in England in the *Delphi Phœnicizantes* (Oxford, 1655), a work of which Edmund Dickinson claimed to be the author; and a few years later another little book on druidism, also in Latin, came from Oxford; it was written by Thomas Smith of Magdalen,[2] and its principal interest is that it names Camden, the 16th century antiquary, as the pioneer in the revival of the study of the druids. There is yet a third Oxford book to be mentioned, namely, *The Court of the Gentiles*,[3] by Theophilus Gale, for it contained a short section on the druids, and, since it was written in English, may well have given them some publicity.

But at this period the druids were no longer in need of such advertisement—at any rate in this country. For the 17th century had witnessed, as well as the continued interest of scholars, the gradual spreading in England of a vague popular notion of the druids as the ancient poet-priests of Britain. This recognition was not directly due to any one scholar's work, and I am inclined to think it must be almost wholly ascribed to the choice by Beaumont and Fletcher of an Early British theme for a tragedy. The performance in 1618 of *Bonduca* must have presented a picture of the druids in a form that could not fail to win for them a considerable

[1] *De Prisca Celtopaedia*, Paris, 1556.

[2] *Syntagma de Druidum moribus ac institutis*, London, 1664.

[3] Oxford, 1669 and 1671. See Pt. II, Bk. I, Ch. V, 78-82. There were one or two other works on the druids published in the closing years of the century. Of these the *De Philosophia Celtica* of J. C. Kuhn (1676) is a dull tract of fourteen pages; there was also the *Disputatio de Gallorum veterum Druidibus* (Upsala, 1689), by Peter Lägerlof (a work I have not seen). More interesting than Kuhn's book, though not much longer, was the *Veterum Instituta Druidum*, by Elias Eyring (1697); this includes a reading of the suspected inscription (Orelli, 2200) from the Moselle (p. 100).

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amount of popular attention, and from that date onwards it is idle to pretend that their name could not have been generally familiar. Thus it is possible that when Henry Jacob wrote in the middle of the 17th century that there was no one in whose ears their fame had not resounded,[1] he may well have been referring to something more than their repute in the world of scholars.

Bonduca, then, is certainly a landmark in the story of the revival of popular interest in the druids. Of course, the part played in it by the druids is indirectly a result of the labours of scholars, because these had enabled Fletcher to use the works of the classical writers, especially Tacitus, as sources for his story; whereas Shakespeare, because he had taken the story of his *Cymbeline* largely from mediæval romances, consequently did not bring the druids at all into his play dealing with the same period.

The first scene of the third act of *Bonduca* is laid in a *Temple of the Druids*, and begins with a solemn entry of the druids singing; and it will be noticed that song seems to be their principal function. "Now sing, ye Druides!" commands Caratach; and in another place Bonduca exclaims—

> Rise from the dust, ye relics of the dead,
> Whose noble deeds our holy druids sing.

And in the first act Caratach refers to

> The holy Druides composing songs,
> Of everlasting life to victory.

This notion of the druids as being primarily bards gained further currency in Milton's *Lycidas* (1637):—

> Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
> Clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd Lycidas?
> For neither were ye playing on the steep,
> Where your old Bards, the famous druids, ly—

and in England it remained firmly established for close upon a hundred years.

In France, on the other hand, it is likely that a popular knowledge of the druids was achieved more slowly, and, when

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 33.

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established, it was probably a more precise notion of them than that obtaining in this country. The principal factor must have been the translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia* by de Brebeuf (1656), for this would render the well-known passage describing the druids (p. 88) familiar in substance to a good many Frenchmen. And it is interesting to note, as an appendix to a subject already mentioned, that at this period in the 17th century the current idea in France must still have been that groves, and not stone temples, were the places of worship of these priests.[1]

> Au milieu du silence et des bois solitaires
> La Nature en secret leur ouvre ses mystères.

As a reinforcement of this view (which was already clearly established in Pufendorf's *Dissertatio*, and in the earlier work of Schedius), the same poem contains the famous and magnificent description of the horrible druidic forest at Marseilles, so fearsome a place that—

> Les voisins de ce bois si sauvage et si sombre
> Laissent à ses Démons son horreur et son ombre,
> Et le Druide craint en abordant ces lieux
> D'y voir ce qu'il adore et d'y trouver ses Dieux.

But in England, as I say, the idea of the druids as a kind of prophetic bard prevailed for a hundred years after Milton wrote *Lycidas*. It is true that at the beginning of the 18th century Addison refers once in the *Tatler* [2] to the " Druid of the family " in a context that shows he was using the word in the sense of a priest; but William Diaper, in 1713, returned to the more popular notion—

> With sacred miselto the Druids crown'd
> Sung with the Nymphs, and danced the pleasing Round.[3]

[1] The grove-idea was always more popular in France than in England. Courier, for instance, in one of the *Censeur* letters of 1819, mentions a " M. Marcellus," who regarded his native forests as a memorial of the druids, and would not allow a single tree to be cut. P.-L. Courier, *Lettres au redacteur du Censeur*, V, Nov. 1819. For that matter, it is still current in France and in the wooded districts of Northern Spain (especially in Galicia, so my friend Dr. Pericot tells me).

[2] *Tatler*, No. 255 (1710).

[3] *Dryades : or the Nymphs' Prophecy*, London, 1713, p. 15.

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