The Celt in Ancient History.

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Chapter I.

The Celtic Warrior.

The Celtic domain has been called an Empire, but, strictly speaking, the term is a misnomer, except in the sense in which it applies to the German State which lasted from the tenth century to the eighteenth. For an empire presupposes not only a vast range and a variety of racial elements, but also a unity of governing power which the Celts did not attain. So far as we are acquainted with them, in an era scarcely historical, they occupied an area as large as the Russian dominions up to 1917, and formed a loose aggregate of communities framed in a large measure on the same model.

A branch of the Aryan or Indo-European family of races, which made their way from the plains of Asia in the dim distance of the earliest antiquity, probably by a circuitous route skirting the Caucasus and the northern coast of the Black Sea, they had migrated to Europe probably in the neolithic period; their original habitat and the sphere of their language in Europe lay on the borders of the Rhine, Main and Danube, and was almost coterminous with the modern Hesse Darmstadt, the Grand Duchy of Baden, Würtemberg and Northern Bavaria. They exhibited closer affinities with the Latins than with the Teutons. They became known to the Greeks as the Hyperboreans

(or extreme Northerners), and when noticed by classical authors they were steadily emerging from a tinselled barbarism.

The centuries rolled by, and the Celtic domain, "Celticum", or ἡ Κελτική, took into its compass immense tracts of territory and was bounded by the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Danube, Thrace, Scythia, the Balkans, Britain, Ireland, and Caledonia (or Scotland as we now call it) and for several centuries the Celts were paramount in most of these regions. Thus the Celtic dominion, by the imposing extent and duration of its power, fulfilled two conditions of Empire.

It is here proposed to choose a few salient features of the early history of the Celts—their conquests, culture and religion,—until they in their turn were eclipsed by races who came after them and entered into their labours.

First of all, let us take their military character. The Celts are justly regarded as a warrior people;[1] indeed, the profession of arms by its appeal to the imagination generally commands the almost undivided admiration of a rising but uncivilised people. Cæsar (no mean judge) pays an ungrudging tribute to the fighting qualities of the Celts and especially praises their dash; other writers could not withold their appreciation of Celtic prowess, but tempered their admiration with certain qualifications. Thus, for example, we are told that, impetuous at the first onset, they rapidly melted in the heat of the fray. The warriors were not of necessity numerous, nor did their warlike spirit desert them, even when faced by overwhelming odds and military methods to which they were strangers.

The dominant characteristic of the chiefs was their love of military renown, which they sought at all hazards. We shall have occasion to illustrate this traditional trait

[1] cf. Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. 11.

at a later stage. Again, the Celts, as a whole, whether chieftains or the rank and file, plumed themselves on their indifference to death.[1] They had a passion for duelling. Ajax-like, they defied the natural elements; convulsions of nature, inundations, earthquakes could not quell their spirit. They tore open wounds sustained in battle. They cheerfully bowed down before the eyes of a crowd and submitted to the executioner's axe without a murmur, while, in some cases, the priests and singers standing by held out hopes of their heads being restored to their bodies. They offered their throats to the knife in return for gifts of money or wine, which, with true Celtic hospitality and in the genuine spirit of comradeship, they distributed to their companions before meeting the fatal stroke.

There never was a lack of Celtic gladiators in the Coliseum at Rome or provincial amphitheatres. One of the favourite types of these swordsmen bore a Celtic name; while the *retiarius* pursued his adversary, the *murmillo*,[2] along the arena and tried to entangle him in the toils of his net, as a preliminary to spearing him with his trident, he chanted the couplet:—

> Non te peto, piscem peto;
> Quid me fugis, Galle?

Many thrilling episodes relating to the Celts' passion for single combat[3] are narrated by the Roman historians, for example, the impressive scene in Livy where two cousins, repudiating Scipio's offer of mediation, insisted on settling a family feud in the presence of the contending Roman and Spanish armies. We also recall the Celtic chief, hero of another episode, who hurled defiance at the opposing Roman army, and in a harangue to his men declared that

[1] Valerius Maximus, ii, 6, 11; Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, 2, 27.

[2] Also spelt *mirmillo*, a Gaulish gladiator. Festus, p. 285.

[3] cf. Livy, xxi, 42.

their antagonists were scarcely enough to furnish a dog's breakfast. Such are some of the features of Celtic valour recorded by Roman authors. There was, indeed, a darker side to the picture, if ancient authorities may be believed; the Celts were inconstant; they gave no quarter; they offered insult to a fallen foe; they expected the captives of their sword or spear to meet their fate with a stoicism equal to their own, and cheerfully to ascend the funeral pyre of a dead chief or take part in gladiatorial shows, to glut the eyes and ears of the populace at these orgies of blood. The underlying motive of this natural and cultivated fortitude was the thirst for fame, the confident belief that their names would live on, sung by the bardic fraternity, and "flit on men's lips" from generation to generation.

Antecedently, it might be supposed that the martial courage of the race would be mirrored in its mythology. So it proves; constant warfare, which was their very life, especially with the migratory Celts, demanded war divinities. Among them none was more prominent than the deity whom the Roman writers (according to a recognised principle in Comparative Religion, namely syncretism) identified with Mars, though the Celts themselves hardly differentiated him from their god Mercury. Thus Mars is adorned with various titles all denoting might. He is Armogius, Marmogius, Mogetius and Olludius, titles containing the elements *mogo*, *ollo*, meaning "great". He is "strong", Camulus; the "hero", Netos, Carrus; the "flesh-destroyer", Cicollius; "beautiful when he slays", Belatucadros; he is "leader of hosts", Budenicus, Dunatis. He is the "first", Leherenus; "the mighty", Segomon; the "king" and "lord", Barrex, Rigisamus. He is the "day bright god", Dinomogetimarus, Divanno, Leucetius, Leucimalakus. It is highly probable that these attributes

in the first instance attached to tribal-war-gods, such as Camulos, Teutates,[1] Albiorix, Caturix, who multiplied as the Celts developed into a conquering nation, and that in the Celtic imagination these lesser deities gradually grouped themselves around Mars or merged their personalities in his.

Nor was the prowess of the Celts confined to operations on land. Cæsar refers with admiration to the nautical skill of the Veneti, a tribe who occupied a district almost at the extreme point of Armorica (now Brittany). The author shall speak for himself :—

> "The Veneti exercise by far the most extensive authority over all the seacoast in those districts, for they have numerous ships, in which it is their custom to sail to Britain, and they excel the rest in the theory and practice of navigation. As the sea is very boisterous and open, with but a few harbours here and there, they have as tributaries almost all those whose custom is to sail the sea".

Our author describes the enemy's ships in detail, notices their strength and the use of iron chains instead of cables for securing the anchors, and proceeds :—

> "When our fleet encountered these ships, it proved its superiority only in speed and oarsmanship; in all other respects, having regard to the locality and the force of the tempests, the others were more suitable and adaptable."[2]

Here may be introduced another feature of Celtic warfare which at once reflects the character of the Celtic warriors, and calls for special mention, because in an altered guise it survived the adoption of Christianity well into the Middle Ages, namely, the cult of weapons. This was founded on a belief that weapons were endowed with life or tenanted by spirits, or, according to a Christian chronicler, by demons—a survival of a primitive animism

[1] From *teuta*, tribe.

[2] *De Bello Gallico*, iii, 8, 13. See the rest of 13.

in the Christian era. Similarly, at Athens sentence was passed on the axe or knife used by a murderer, together with the criminal. Magic powers were ascribed to the arms of gods and heroes. The hammer-god, Dispater, figures in the Celtic pantheon. He wields the hammer, that implement being probably symbolical of divine creative energy, and traces of the cult of the hammer are discernible in monuments, inscriptions and legend. Aesus, another Celtic deity, wields the axe. A dancing warrior with an axe or sword in his hand, performing a ritual act, figures on Gaulish coins. That the cult lived on appears from an observance mentioned in the 16th century in Spenser's *View of the State of Ireland*.[1] The poet describes a ritual act performed by Irish warriors in his day, reciting prayers or chanting incantations around a weapon planted in the ground.[2] A similar belief is embodied in the tale told of the hilted sword which Tethra, king of the Fomarians, lost in his hurried flight from the battlefield:—

> "It was in this battle that Ogma, the champion, obtained Ornai, the sword of Tethra the king. Ogma obtained the sword and cleaned it. Then the sword related all the deeds that had been performed by it; for it was the custom of swords at this time, when opened, to recount the deeds that had been performed by them. And it is therefore that swords are entitled to the tribute of cleaning them, whenever they are opened. It is on this account, too, that charms are preserved in swords, from that time down. Now, the reason why demons were accustomed to speak from weapons at that time was because arms were worshipped, and arms were among the protections (or sanctuaries) of those times".[3]

These are by no means isolated examples. In Breton songs warriors swear by swords, and in Irish lore songs are addressed to them. But what is of particular interest in

[1] Ed. 1809, pp. 97, 175, 275.

[2] cf. Blanchet *Traité de Monnaies*, I, 160-1.

[3] cf. O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the ancient Irish.* (1873) ii, 54.

this connection is to note that these usages are the originals of the legend of the Divine sword in mystic form, "the glaive of light" of the Arthurian romance and Celtic folk-tales, a conspicuous example of which is presented by King Arthur's trusty sword Excalibur.

Such were some of the features of Celtic warfare. The value of Celtic methods and weapons and the lessons learnt in campaigns against the Celts were not lost upon their rivals, the Romans, who, as the Latin language shows, were not slow to adopt certain Celtic military terms and tactics.

The profession of arms did not cease, with the downfall of Celtic dominion, to possess an attraction for the Celts who owned a foreign sway. For enlisting in the auxiliary forces of Rome they found scope for their superabundant energies in this new channel, fighting under the Roman Eagle in Europe or beyond the seas.

In this connection interest attaches to Britain, properly speaking, Caledonia, Scotland, and Ireland. As early as the second century of the Christian era, British youth flocked to the Roman standard and served in distant dependencies of the Empire. There was much point and truth in the British chief Calgacus's complaint, by which he fired the British to revolt:—

> "Liberos cuique ac propinquos suos natura carissimos esse voluit; hi per dilectus alibi servituri auferuntur".[1]

Traces of their presence in Italy, Asia Minor, Syria and North Africa are found in Latin and Greek inscriptions.

Their readiness to take up arms on behalf of Rome and fight shoulder to shoulder with blue-eyed Gaul, ebony-

[1] "Nature ordained that each man's children and relatives should be best beloved; these are carried away by levies, to serve in the ranks". Tacitus, *Agricola*, 31, cf. 29. British cohorts served under Vitellius in Italy, Id. *Histories*, i, 70.

faced African and swarthy Spaniard in defence of the tottering empire reacted prejudicially on Britain. It is probable that one of the causes why the Britons were exposed to incessant attacks from Pict and Scot was that the flower of British manhood were either carried away or volunteered to fight abroad in the Roman ranks. Maxim Wledig's aspirations after the Imperial purple forcibly appealed to the imagination of the British youth whom he had commanded in Britain. He was reported to belong to the British race, and his personality challenged their admiration ; so they promptly responded to his summons and girded on their armour to fight in his cause. Meanwhile, their own country became a prey to the onslaughts of marauders from the North.

No less enthusiastic in the cause of Rome were the Scots. From being the implacable and inveterate foes of the Empire, while its warlike energies flagged and vigorous life was fading at its extremities, the Hibernian Scots came to form a more favourable opinion of Rome. Again, the Emperor Theodosius, while suppressing the piratical attacks on the part of the Irish, had been struck by the warlike qualities of the enemy. Accordingly, instead of massacring his prisoners, the Attacots, who inhabited the South-West parts of Scotland and the Northern parts of Ireland, he organised them and incorporated them in his army. They made a distinguished figure in the *Notitia dignitatum*, and no wonder, for we learn on the authority of no less a person than St. Jerome, who saw them in garrison at Trèves, that these tribes, who hailed from the "abode of eternal snow", fed on human flesh.

The annals of Ireland speak of a certain Irish warrior named Altus in the Roman army, who was present at Our Lord's crucifixion, and was so profoundly impressed by what met his eye and ear that he returned to preach the

Faith to his countrymen. Sir Samuel Ferguson in his "Lays of the Western Gael" has embodied this Irish tradition in the following lines:—

"And they say Centurion Altus,
When he to Emania came,
And to Rome's subjection called us,
Urging Cæsar's tribute claim;
Told that half the world barbarian
Thrilled already with the faith
Taught them by the God-like Syrian,
Cæsar lately put to death".

This is legend, but, then, legends often enshrine valuable truths, and there is no wild improbability in the supposition that British troops who were sent to garrison Syria or Asia Minor may, in the course of military changes, have found their way to Jerusalem. At any rate, the thousands of Scots who placed their adventurous swords at the service of the French kings or buckled on their armour to wrest the Holy Sepulchre from the grasp of the Infidel were only following a tradition handed down from the first centuries of the Roman Empire.

Chapter II.

The Celt in Germany.

By an easy transition we pass from the subject of Celtic warfare to the era of Celtic conquests.

The history of the primitive populations whom the Celts overcame falls within the palæolithic or neolithic age. Of these, some belonged to pre-Aryan or (to use the German equivalent) Indo-European strata, and those went down before the flood of Celtic invaders. The struggle with the Aryan peoples was far sterner, far more protracted.

Let us glance at some of the powerful tribes with whom the Celts came into collision.

The conflict with the Germans was chequered by alternations of success and failure, for of the martial ardour of the German race at that early day there is abundant evidence. At first the Celts imposed their yoke on their German neighbours north of the River Elbe,[1] and for several centuries dominated them until the star of the Celts declined, about 300 B.C. Their right to supremacy was well won; Cæsar pronounced the Gauls "just and warlike" and declared that they surpassed the Germans in valour.[2] At that age, therefore, the Rhine flowed within the Celtic domain and "The watch on the Rhine" ("Die Wacht am Rhein") might at that early day have been sung in a Celtic version. But, further, the Celts crossed the Elbe, the line of demarcation between the Gaulish and German states, at various points, for example, in Silesia, and they probably kept in subjection the German tribes between the Elbe and the Vistula. Indeed, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing at the end of the first century B.C., regarded Germany as part of Celtic territory.

It is not our intention to enter into many particulars, but, as Germany, its aims and acts, are fresh within our recollection, a few details may be considered in point here. Language casts gleams of light on the relative position of the ancient Germans and Celts. The very name Rhine is of Celtic origin, being derived from the Celtic "*Renos*", which is akin to the Latin *riuos*, "*riuus*", "brook", and reappears in the Irish *rían*, with the still nobler connotation of "sea".[3] Again, on the left of the Main, a tributary of

[1] Cæsar (*De Bello Gallico* vi, 24) was probably mistaken in stating that the Celts first settled in Gaul and then worked their way eastward. On the contrary, it is now certain that the Celts were domiciled beyond the Rhine, and the Roman historian says of the Gaulish settlement in Germany, "the Gaulish inhabitants of that region were just and warlike". [2] cum Germanos Galli virtute superarent.

[3] See also Holder, *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz*, in verb.

the Rhine, runs the River Tauber; the Latin form of the Tauber is Dubra, a feminine name, which was originally the nominative plural of the neuter word *dubron*, "water".

Yet again, on the Main were situated three Celtic towns, Loco-ritum, now Lohr in North Bavaria; Segodunum, now Würzburg; and Deuona, Bamberg. The fact is, Celtic place-names occur in many parts of modern Germany, as in Holstein in the North, so in Westphalia and other places in the South.

The evidence bearing on relations between the Gaulish and German fighting men is suggestive. Germans were pressed into Gaulish armies, or, as is likely, volunteered for military service, but they were kept in the lower ranks. Celtic military terms found their way into the German language. One of these is *barditus* (lit. "song of the bards") which appears in the Welsh *barddaud*, *bardatos*, "science of the bards". Tacitus,[1] writing at the end of the first century of the Christian era, acquaints us that the Germans applied the word *barditus* to the poems which they sang before battle in honour of their dead heroes. But why, it may be asked, borrow a Celtic term? The inference is that at the time when they were Gaulish subjects they marched to battle chanting in chorus war songs composed by Gaulish bards in the Gaulish language.

The Celtic chiefs reaped the glory, the Germans of the rank and file were content with falling upon the spoils. The Celtic word for victory, "*bodi*" has lived on in German but has assumed a new meaning, "*beute*", "booty". Truly did the Roman poet say:—

Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.[2]

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[1] *Germania*, 3.

[2] "You may drive out Nature with a pitchfork; yet she will ever come running back again".

The Germans not only adopted military expressions current among their Celtic masters but also transmitted them to their northern neighbours. We find in old Scandinavia a reminiscence of the ascendancy of the Gaulish warriors over the German population. The Scandinavians called their goddess of war Hildr; Hildr is an adaptation of the Frankish name Childis, which appears in the proper name Brune-childis, and is simply the Germanised feminine of the masculine Celta. Again, the Finns received from the Germans certain names of Celtic origin. Such is the word *rikki*, "kingdom". Nor is this a solitary example of loanwords passed on by the Germans from the Celts to the races north of the Baltic.

Celtic loanwords embedded in the German vocabulary, like flies fixed in amber, are found not only in the terminology of war but also in the language of civil life and civil institutions. We all know the fondness of German magnates for official distinctions and for strutting about swathed in innumerable titles, or sweeping along with what Mark Twain called "titular avalanches". Here are a few specimens dating from the period of which we have been speaking. An old German word for king, now superseded by the term *könig*, was the original Celtic *rix*, and it formed an element in the Finnish word *rikki*, "kingdom", already mentioned. In like manner, the German word for empire, *reich*, is identical with the Celtic *rîgion*, a trace of which survives in the old Irish *ríge*. Those who live or travel in Germany frequently meet with the word *amt*, "function", "office"; it comes from an older form *ambahti*, and this in its turn is derived from the Celtic *ambactos*, "agent", "employé". This term also the Germans handed on to the Southern Finns, with whom it takes the form *ammatti*, "function", "office". The presence of such names common to the

German and Celtic languages but unknown elsewhere, remaining as fossilized history or silent records, testify to the prevalence of the Celtic tongue and the widespread range of Celtic dominion, even at the time of its decadence in the third century before the Christian era.

The Celts, then, compelled the German tribes to open a path for their valour; they profoundly influenced them in various departments of life, except in the province of religion; they moulded German institutions. But a day came when the votaries of Odin or Wotan, spirit of wind or storm, who revelled in orgies of blood, and of his son Donar or Thor, the god of thunder, who beguiled the tedium of leisure by wild revels and drinking bouts, and the worshippers of the beautiful Valkyries, battlemaidens who gloated over human suffering, burst their bonds asunder. War, glorious war, was the breath of their nostrils. Under such divine auspices the Germans poured into the Celtic territories; the inward impulse of gigantic energy and brutal cupidity urged them forward; ambition and love of destruction frenzied them, and they joyfully confronted every peril, every obstacle which lay in their course, on their errands of fire and carnage, to win immortal glory by inflicting untold pain. The hour of doom had struck for Celtic domination, and these German warriors, possessed of more staying power, more capable of enduring heat, sickness and hunger than Gauls,[1] dislodged their former masters from the greater part of the region between the Elbe and the Rhine.

Chapter III.

The Celt in Gaul.

The scene now changes to the country which the Romans named Gallia (Gaul) and we call France. This is

[1] Livy, v, 48.

in accordance with a law of human nature. The more favoured countries of the earth are the natural seats of civilization, and these are the very objects of the cupidity of northern races who are at once more warlike and less refined. Accordingly, the rude warrior quits his icebound crags, his desolate steppes, or his burning sands, for the sunny hills or the well-watered meadows of the temperate zone; and when he has made good his footing in his new abode, what was the incentive to his conquest becomes the instrument of his education. The remark applies both to the Celts and the Germans that crossed the Rhine and settled in France.

The Celts in the course of their multitudinous emigrations invaded Gaul on two separate occasions. One wave passed over between 700 and 500 B.C., probably about 600 B.C. These occupied the southern part of the Netherlands, Belgium, and two thirds of Gaul, which coincided with the Northern and Western departments of modern France. The second great invasion perhaps occurred towards 300 B.C. or not much later;[1] at any rate by 218 B.C. the Celts had spread across Gaul, for in that year the Carthaginian Hannibal, as he crossed the South of Gaul, in his march from Spain to Italy, only met with Gauls. Nature seems to have prescribed a route for the retiring Gauls, and for the Germans likewise who, following in their wake, settled in a region between the Rhine, Seine and Marne, and finally in the Rhone basin. For about five centuries the Gauls enjoyed an independence in their new abodes. But they were not destined to remain in undisturbed possession of the territory; in process of time they, in their turn, partly because of their internal dissensions,[2] succumbed to a race with which they had closer affinities than with any other

[1] Perhaps at the same time as the Gaulish expedition to Delphi, 279 B.C.

[2] Cf. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 12.

branch of the Aryan or Indo-European family, namely the races of Latin blood. Against Roman military science, engineering skill, military organisation, appliances, and experience gained in a hundred campaigns, they could not prevail. Ultimately, but sullenly, after a stubborn and prolonged contest, after rebellion upon rebellion had been quenched in blood, they surrendered, and Gaul became a Roman province. The evenhanded toleration that the conquerors extended to them went far towards mitigating the humiliation of defeat, towards reconciling the Gauls to their masters and blending conquerors and conquered into one nation.[1] They were allowed to retain their typical institutions, their system of road measurements, their cantonal organisation and, for the most part, their religion.

They adopted the Latin language in its debased form, namely, Low Latin; nay, more, they exerted a reciprocal influence on the language of Rome. Thus, for example, Irenæus, a Greek by birth, who, towards the end of the second century of our era, served the Church at Lyons, excuses the defects of his style on the ground that he lives among Celts and is constantly compelled to employ a "barbarian" language. A legal treatise on wills and testaments, which dates from the beginning of the third century, points in the same direction. The law prescribed the use of Latin or Greek, but Punic (*i.e.* Carthaginian) or Gallic was sometimes allowed. Indeed, Gaulish was spoken in Gaul even down towards the end of the era of Roman rule. Gaulish place-names and proper names in France abound even to the present hour, to attest the vitality of the Gaulish language.

Then came Rome's turn. The fourth century rang the

[1] cf. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 13 and 19, parum profici armis, si iniuriæ sequerentur.

knell of the age-long, all-powerful Empire. Civil disorder, internecine strife and moral relaxation had sapped its strength. Alike in the East and the West the hammer-strokes dealt by barbarian hordes with distracting alternation, or with devastating simultaneity, dismembered the Empire, dissolved the fabric of the old world, tore its civilization to fragments, and so Rome fell. The ensuing confusion flung open the sluices to a flood of northern invaders. More German hosts, whom neither Julius Cæsar nor Germanicus had ever succeeded in bringing under the Roman sway, so long as they were entrenched in their impenetrable forests and soaking swamps, now swept in, like a tempest let loose, across the Rhine; Burgundian, Visigoth, Frank followed one another and pushed still further the German arms.

The French are to-day a mosaic of elements, and not the least of them is the Germanic, but as a result of the play of forces intermingling and combining, intersecting and conflicting, Germany has come to regard France as its inveterate enemy. Singular revolution, that these near relatives, who so deeply influenced one another in a prehistoric past, should have been brought to view one another as irreconcilable foes!

Chapter IV.

The Celt in the Balkans and Italy.

The causes that impelled the Gauls south and west of the Rhine also drove them south of the Danube, where they continued to exhibit the same mental characteristics as in other regions where they had taken up their abode. Their progress can be traced in the Balkans. It would be idle to try and unravel here the threads of the tangled skein

and pick out the Celtic elements in that peninsula, so we content ourselves with one or two illustrations taken from the names of rivers. The Illyrian and Eastern name for the Danube was Istros or Ister; it was the Celts that gave it the name Danube, viz., Danuuios, which appears to be closely akin to the Irish adjective *dána*, "bold", "intrepid". Tributaries of the Danube probably derived their titles from the same source. Near Ratisbon the Danube is joined by three streams bearing the name Laber, which is no other than the Celtic *labara*, "prattling", "resounding". Another tributary is the Lauterach; *ach* is only a suffix; *lauter* (=lautron "bath") is identical with *lautro* of the Gaulish glossary, and Irish *lothur*, "canal". With this remark we leave the Balkans to follow the footprints of the Celts in a southerly direction.

The Alps, as we have seen, offered no insurmountable barrier to the progress of the Celts. As with other barbarians who swooped down from the *officina gentium*, as the Roman antiquary calls the North—viz., the factory of nations—so with the Celts the compelling motive was the search for more favourable conditions of existence. But in one respect at least the Celts appear to advantage, they refrained from such crimes against civilisation as marked the path of Vandal and Hun.

There was one country which was well calculated to excite the cupidity of a race accustomed only to the rigours of a northern climate; it was a country recommended by richness of soil, fabulous fertility, perfection of cultivation, exquisiteness of produce and amenity of climate[1]—a country which was from time immemorial

[1] Cf. Livy v, 33.

invested with a fascination, and its spell remains undissipated to this day. That country was Italy, and its capital Rome,

Qua nihil in terris complectitur amplius æther.
("Than which heaven embraces nothing nobler on earth".)

At this point we step down from the barbarian twilight and the misty region of legendary lore to the firmer ground of historic evidence; now Pliny, Livy, and other authors come to our aid. Ultimately the Celts arrived in Northern Italy. The prominent figures in this drama are Ambigatus ("He who gives battle on every side") king of the Celts in Gaul, and his two nephews, Bellouesus ("He who knows how to slay") and Sigouesus ("He who knows how to conquer"). Ambigatus belonged to the powerful tribe of Bituriges. Tarquinius Priscus, father of the tyrant of execrable memory, then sat on the throne of Romulus. The motive of the Celtic migration here as elsewhere was a redundancy of population and a lack of sustenance. Ambigatus was now advanced in years; accordingly he sent forth his nephews with large swarms of his people to seek new settlements in other climes. Bellouesus and Sigouesus drew lots; the latter betook himself to the Hercynian forest (Bohemia), the former to Italy. The classical authors furnish the names of the Gaulish tribes whom he led, and place-names bear out their statements.[1]

The Gauls had thus carried the war into the inner lines (to adopt a modern military term), into the heart of the Roman Empire, into the Italian peninsula, and constituted a standing menace to the Roman dominion. But a formidable power barred the way to the walls of Rome. The Etruscans were established in the basin of the River Po, and had repressed an earlier, apparently a Ligurian,

[1] Livy, v, 33, 34.

stratum of population. The oppressed people hailed the Celts as their deliverers. To their attitude in some measure must be ascribed the rapid advance of the Gauls towards the Roman capital. In 390 they penetrated into Etruria, the modern Tuscany, crossed the Arno and reached Clusium, now Chiusi.[1] They were now on the floodtide of victory, and the very name of Gaul struck consternation even into the hearts of the Roman Senate. After repeated efforts to back the invaders in full career, the Romans tried to achieve by diplomacy what they failed to accomplish by force of arms; and in 389 B.C. they indulged the hope of engaging the Gauls in an alliance against the Etruscans and stay their course. Vain illusion! The Gauls resumed their march.

It is an old story and familiar, how the Gauls carried dismay into the utmost borders of Italy,[2] how, viewed through the distorting medium of hate and fear, they were transfigured into phantoms, how the Romans sustained a severe defeat at the Allia, how "Dies Alliensis" ("the day of the battle of Allia") ever after denoted an ominous day in the Roman calendar and passed into a proverb for a day of sinister import and disastrous augury.[3] The Gauls did not draw rein until they reached the gates of Rome, and finally—unthinkable outrage!—they held the Roman people to ransom. It is to the vivid pages of the imaginative and picturesque writer, Livy, that we turn for a narrative of these irruptions. The historian probably based some of his accounts on family records and the traditions handed down by courtly chroniclers, who, we may be sure, were not likely to minimise the exploits of their patrons' ancestors, a Camillus or a Manlius Torquatus. But after making allowance for the

[1] Livy, v, 35.

[2] Cf. Livy, v, 32-37.

[3] Cf. Livy, v, 48.

historian's personal predilections and his wish to ingratiate himself with the descendants of his heroes or to glorify the name of Rome, the fact remains that the Celts at this period made Rome tremble and that for centuries the name Gaul was a nightmare.

Chapter V.

The Celt in Asia Minor.

The Ægean Sea set no limit to the migrations of the Celts. A host of them had swept over Macedonia and Thessaly. Unwearied still, three tribes, the Trocmi, the Tolistobogii, and the Tectosages pressed on and sought fresh homes beyond the Hellespont. The adventurers were not, this time, plunging into the unknown or embarking on an enterprise of incalculable issue. For Nicomedes, king of Bithynia in Asia Minor, desired their aid in his struggle against his brother Zipoetes, nor did he appeal to them in vain. To the number of 20,000—half of whom were fighting men, the rest women and children—they responded to the call, under the leadership of the chiefs Leonorios and Lutarios, and turned the scale in Nicomedes's favour. His success in enlisting their support, however, cost him dear.[1] His new allies, having secured a firm footing in the heart of Asia Minor, the fertile valleys of which held out a rich promise of booty, were not disposed lightly to relinquish their gains.

Like the Franks in the East during the Middle Ages, they consolidated themselves on either side of the River Halys into a firmly-knit soldier community, exacting tribute from all rulers west of Mount Taurus, some of whom were fain to purchase exemption from their degradation by employing the Gauls as mercenary soldiers. The newly-constituted robber-state bore the name of

[1] Livy, xxxviii, 16.

Galatia.[1] Cut off from the main masses of Celts in Central and Western Europe, they were obliged to shift for themselves; but, though isolated, their self-confidence did not desert them. Alternately the scourge and the upholders of the Asiatic princes, as passion or interest dictated, they ruled unchecked. Often their neighbours, groaning under the yoke, tried conclusions with them and were worsted in the encounter. At last vengeance overtook the Celtic invaders. Attalus I of Pergamos (241—197 B.C.) inflicted on them a crushing defeat[2] and confined them to a district 200 miles long by 100 wide. There they remained distinguished by language and manners from the encompassing populations, and, as in Gaul, so in Asia, they retained their own internal organization even under the Roman Empire. For two centuries the haughty conquerors formed a Celtic island, a ruling caste, like the Normans among the Saxons of England, a military autocracy who lived for war. Agriculture, commerce, and the peaceful crafts they delegated to their Phrygian subjects, who in course of time were rewarded by inclusion under the term Galatians. Fretting at the life of towns and cities, the Celtic chieftains fixed their habitations in hillforts, where they kept up a barbaric pomp, surrounded by retainers who shared with them the vast wealth that they won by the sword.[3]

[1] Roman "Gallogræcia", Ἑλληνογαλάται (Diodorus v, 32, 5) in contradistinction to the Galli of the West.

[2] Commemorated in the Sculptures of Pergamos.

[3] A writer of the second century A.D. casts light on their military methods:—

"These people were good fighters, and on this occasion in great force; they were drawn up in a serried phalanx, the first rank, which consisted of steel-clad warriors, being supported by men of the ordinary heavy-armed type, to the depth of four and twenty: twenty thousand cavalry held the flanks; and there were eighty scythed and twice that number of ordinary war-chariots ready to burst forth from the centre". Lucian, *Zeuxis and Antiochus*, (fin.)

The later history of the Gauls belongs to that of the Roman Empire. Mithridates the Great (120—63 B.C.) a potentate in Asia Minor, doubting their loyalty, ordered a massacre of all their chiefs,—a savage and fatal expedient which threw the Celtic race into the arms of Rome, and from this time forward Galatia becomes a client state of that power.

Even so the Celtic community were allowed to retain their native language and their national identity; each tribe was governed by its own hereditary prince, and the federal assembly, consisting of deputies from all three tribes, met at a place called Drunemeton,[1] to deliberate in the Sacred Grove and exercised supreme authority over Galatian affairs. Nor were their annals uneventful. Two of the Galatian kings live in Roman history; Deiotarus ("divine bull"), Tetrarch of Galatia, was one. For adhering to the Roman cause in their wars against the Parthians he was rewarded with the title of King and accessions to his dominion. The other was Amyntas, a brave and sagacious Gaul, whose career was in many points parallel to that of Herod of Palestine, and who was instrumental in establishing the Pax Romana ("Roman Peace") in Southern Asia.[2]

There was one department of life which betrayed the effect of their new environment. The Galatians fell under the spell of the cult of Cybele, the Phrygian goddess, with its wild ceremonial, passionate orgies and hideous mutilations. The presumption is that such observances were congenial to the Gauls' belief and practice; perhaps, too,

[1] *Dru*, from the same root as Druid and *nemeton* "consecrated place". Cf. Cæsar, B.G. vi, 13.

[2] Cf. Von Soden, "Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt", p. 80.

Manlius (Livy xxxviii, 17) affected to despise the Galatians. "Hi iam degeneres sunt, mixti, et Gallogræci vere, quod appellantur".

the mystic element in the strange religion attracted them. At all events, they yielded to the fatal fascination; thus, not for the first time

> "Victi victoribus leges dederunt", ("The conquered gave laws to their conquerors").

or, in the words of the Roman poet,

> "Græcia capta ferum captorem vicit et artes
> Intulit".
>
> ("Captive Greece overcame her captor and introduced her arts").

Change but the name; for Greece substitute Phrygia and the principle applies to the Gauls of Asia Minor.

But if the old warlike spirit of the Gauls languished and their star sank, there was one direction in which they never gave way; they retained hold of their language. St. Jerome[1] vouches from personal experience for the fact that six centuries after their migration into Asia Minor these settlers on the Sangarius and Halys spoke a language which, though slightly corrupted, was essentially identical with that spoken on the Moselle and the Rhine.

The unrelaxing tenacity of the Celtic race is evinced by the fact that after the lapse of several hundred years a deep gulf still separated these Occidental Celts from the Asiatics that surrounded them. The term Galatians, as we have seen, gradually came to embrace a heterogeneous population; still, the clear-cut traditional traits of the Celt lived on, and amid all the foreign elements and influences brought to bear on them, remained unchanged, or but slightly modified. If we may judge by the internal evidence of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, that people retained the impressionableness, brightness, vivacity, quickness of apprehension, inquisitive temper, thirst for

[1] *Ep. ad Galatas*, Book ii, preface. Cf. his commentary, vii p. 430. He had lived in Gaul and Galatia; *Epist.*, III, i, pp. 10, 12; V, i, p. 15; *Adv. Jovin* ii, 7, ii, p. 335.

knowledge and fickleness of mind which marked their ancestors who roamed over Europe or dwelt in the gloomy forests of Germany and Gaul.

Chapter VI.

The Celts in Spain and Britain.

Hitherto we have dealt with the expansion of the Celtic race in an Easterly or Southerly direction. But equally strong was the call of the West, in obedience to a mysterious instinct, vast in its antiquity and visible in its continuity, which has guided the course of Empire.

The bulk of the race in Gaul were gradually settling down to agricultural pursuits. Their development in that country was probably typical of the changes that took place in other Celtic communities under Roman rule; they turned their swords into ploughshares.[1] "The Belgæ", says Cæsar,[2] "having waged war, began to cultivate the lands". Divinities of agriculture rose in public estimation and the prestige of war gods and goddesses proportionately declined. According to a phenomenon familiar to students of Comparative Religion, the conquered and their conquerors agreed in identifying native and immigrant deities.

The Celts bequeathed yet another legacy to the conquerors; they imprinted on them their facial type and character, just as at a later day and on a smaller scale the Welsh in Strathclyde (Cumberland and South-West Scotland) or Wessex, on surrendering their language and merging themselves in the population that overlaid them, imparted a colouring to its physiognomy, literature and habits of thought. But if the Gauls of middle Europe were content to settle down in their tranquil avocations,

[1] Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. 2. [2] *De Bello Gallico*, v, 12. Cf. vi, 15.

such a life failed to commend itself to fiercer and more enterprising souls.

The Spirit of adventure still beckoned on. Accordingly, turning their backs on their countrymen in Gaul, who had stooped to husbandry and were acquiring the arts of life, a wave of Celtic warriors before the fifth century B.C. set their faces westward and sought fresh fields in the region of the setting sun. They undoubtedly entered the Spanish peninsula from France, where Celts are still firmly entrenched among the mountains of Auvergne. They were soon to discover that they were not destined to enter into undisputed possession of the land beyond the Pyrenees. A pre-Aryan race, the Iberians, and an Aryan stratum, the Ligurians,[1] were already there. Phœnician settlers, who had explored the country in search of ore, had seized coigns of vantage for the pursuit of commerce, for example, at Cadiz, Calpe (Gibraltar) and Malaga.

The stages by which the Celts advanced are merged in obscurity, but that the races that had forestalled them on Spanish soil, fought every inch of the ground, appears from local nomenclature, which presents a striking contrast to the place-names in Gaul. There the occupations of the Celts are reflected in the names of their settlements; these end in *-ialos* ("uncovered space"), which in Modern French assumes the form *-euil* (as in Mareuil) and *-magos* ("plain", "field");[2] this appears in Arganto-magus now Argenton-sur-Creuse (Department of the Indre); Caranto-magus, now Charenton-sur-Cher (Cher); Roto-magus, now Rouen (Seine Inférieure); Linto-magus now Brimeux (Pas de Calais). The prevalence of *-ialos* and *-magos* in Gaul points to the peaceful possession of the country.

[1] Barros Sivelo believed that even the Iberians were not the earliest inhabitants of Spain.

[2] Akin to the Irish *magh*, Welsh *maes* and Breton *maez*.

Not so in Spain. In this peninsula, as at the outset the Celts hewed their way with sword and battleaxe, so they must maintain hold on the country by sheer force, and military colonies became necessary to keep the conquered races in subjection. It is significant that in what is now Spanish and Portugese territory, the termination *-magos* is exchanged for others, like *-briga*, which denote a fortified position. Further, it is a striking fact that the ending *-briga* is almost entirely confined to the two countries where the Celts were obliged to forge their way in the face of stubborn opposition, namely, in Rhenish Prussia and in Spain. The following occur in Germany, Eburo-briga now Avrolles (Yonne); Baudo-briga now Bupprich (near Coblentz), but in the Spanish peninsula there are as many as eighty.

The evidence of place-names, if limited to isolated examples, may not carry conviction, but it is difficult to shut our eyes to the cumulative effect of such concordant testimony.

The Celts had now reached their utmost bounds and found a congenial home among the hills of the Asturias and Galicia, and in what is now Portugal. Further they could not penetrate, unless, indeed, they essayed the Atlantic in their frail river-craft and forestalled Columbus in the discovery of a continent beyond the ocean.

The influence of the Celts on Spanish character would be difficult to determine. Along the northern heights Celts and Iberians coalesced at a very early period, forming the vigorous and obstinate Celtiberian race. In Galicia the Celts kept distinct from the Iberians; when the Romans, under Decimus Brutus, conquered that province in 136 B.C., they were still Celts pure and simple; they revealed an aptitude for manual labour, and to this day

the Galegos, like the Celtic Auvergnats in France, are known throughout Spain as labourers and servants.

The Celts may not have made positive contributions to the formation of Spanish character, but they doubtless heightened its tenacity. On Portugal, which in soil and climate, race and language, bears a closer affinity to Galicia, they left a deeper impress. At any rate Celtic monuments—Druidical stones, cairns, "rocking boulders", and other megalithic remains—abound, to attest the presence of Celtic cults in the wild mountainous regions of the North West. That Celtic characteristics lived on is evidenced by the circumstance that Spain's proudest families sprung from Galician soil; they won their title to nobility for valour in the field, in stemming the advance of the Moors or hurling them out of the peninsula at their final overthrow.

In tracing the progress of the Celts towards the setting sun, we have been anticipating and have passed over two other incursions, namely those into Britain and Ireland, which preceded the irruptions into Gaul and Italy. These have been omitted, partly because they are better known than the Celtic expeditions into Germany, Italy, Asia Minor, and Spain, partly because Britain, Scotland and Ireland will soon monopolize our attention.

Of the Celtic occupation of the British Isles it is unnecessary to speak at length. It will suffice to mention that two waves of Celtic invaders crossed over into the two islands; that when the Celts were settled in North Germany (as we now call it) they turned wistful looks towards the two islands in the northern Ocean; that about 800 B.C., or at any rate by the 9th century, the Goidels probably reached Britain. Like the Phoenicians, and also the Romans of a later day, the Celts coveted the tin ore, which, mixed with copper, was necessary to give their metal the

required strength for the manufacture of bronze weapons. They arrived, perhaps, to find that in some parts the Phoenicians were already on the scene and were exploiting the mines; for it appears that Great Britain was the source from which was derived a great part of the tin used on the seaboard of the Mediterranean.

The second invasion of Britain falls within a much later period, probably as late as the second century before the Christian era. The immigrants hailed, this time, from Gaul, or, in other words, belonged to the Belgian Branch. Ptolemy, writing in the second century A.D., refers to a Gaulish people established in Scotland, north of the Vallum Antonini, the Ἐπίδιοι, Epidii, which seems to mean "cavaliers" (knights) and to be derived from the Gaulish *epos* "horse" (Latin *ecus* and Old Irish *ech*). These immigrants appear to have occupied the peninsula of Cantyre in Argyleshire. The rest who took part in the invasion occupied Britain proper, and the South West, probably also the North West, of Ireland. The linguistic results of this invasion are well known. The Gaulish or Belgian dialect supplanted the Goidelic in Britain; of the Goidel groups some crossed the Irish Channel and joined the Goidels settled long previously on the Emerald Isle; others remained in Britain and adopted the dialect of their conquerors, the Brythonic tribes.

From the above outline of Celtic expansion it will be seen that the Celtic domain embraced a vast range, in fact, the middle and the three peninsulas of Europe, though we may not assume that this implies complete possession. Roughly speaking, it occupied a square, from the Northern border of Scotland and the Northern

frontiers of Germany to the South coast of Portugal. In the East the Celtic dominion was bounded by the Black Sea, in the West by the Atlantic.

The third century A.D. saw the sun of the Celts pass its meridian, and the glory of the Celtic arms depart. The causes of the decline are not obscure. For one thing, the machinery of government was dislocated. Younger assailants were appearing on the horizon, destined eventually to subjugate or oust the Celt. In the North the Germans thrust them forward. In North Italy and afterwards in Gaul the Romans brought them under their sway. In Asia Minor likewise they were subdued by the all-conquering Roman. In the extreme West, the Gauls were confronted by a combination of enemies, by the Carthaginians, who had supplanted Tyre as the Phoenician metropolis in the leadership of the Phoenician race, and by the Roman power which completed their discomfiture. There may have been more deep-seated causes to account for their downfall. It has been often assumed on slender evidence that the Celts at that time lived too much in a mystical dream-world; certainly their looser social divisions rendered them a prey to a neighbour possessed of a higher organisation, better arms, political unity, and centralised forces. This may have been a contributory cause during their struggle against Rome in the zenith of its power. A further circumstance may have co-operated to their decline; they surrendered the more willingly because of their close connection with their conquerors in blood, language and customs. Whatever the reasons may have been, it is only in outlying regions, protected by natural bulwarks, only in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and

Brittany, that the Celts have been able to preserve their national individuality and intellectual independence up to the present day.

Chapter VII.

Promotion of Learning.

The Continental Celts, as we have seen, had been submerged amid the throng of invaders, yielding submission to the Roman sway, then losing their nationality and their language. But in their fall they conferred a bequest on the Roman conqueror and laid Roman culture under a deep obligation.

This brings me to a third movement in which the Celts bore a prominent part, namely the promotion and preservation of learning.

A passion for knowledge appears at that early period to have marked the Celts, especially those in Britain.[1] In the populace this trait revealed itself by a thirst for news. Caesar[2] relates how the Gauls would surround a merchant or traveller, detaining him even against his will and eagerly pressing him for the latest intelligence. But in Gauls of higher mental calibre or equipment the inspiration assumed a nobler form. A late Greek rhetorican commends the Galatians of Asia Minor for their acuteness and quickness of apprehension, in which they surpassed the genuine Greeks. As a proof of their intellectual ardour, he mentions that the moment they catch sight of a philosopher they cling to the skirts of his cloak as the steel adheres to the magnet.[3]

It is a striking circumstance that some of the famous authors who adorned the annals of Roman literature hailed

[1] "To give preference to the native talents of the Briton as against the plodding Gaul." Tacitus, *Agricola* c. 21.

[2] B.G., IV, 5.

[3] Themistius, *Or.* XXIII, p. 299 A.

from Celtic districts. Virgil was a native of Andes, a small village near Mantua[1] in Cisalpine[2] Gaul. Catullus was born at Verona or near there; his name is derived from *catu* "battle", akin to the old Irish *cath*, old Welsh *cat*, modern Welsh *cad* and *cadarn*, "strong". Statius, Ausonius, and other poets of eminence at a later age, hailed from Gaul.

Nor were the Celtic historians and antiquaries behindhand. Varro was of Celtic descent. Trogus, the historian, belonged to the tribe of the Vocontii, as he himself avows. A still more famous name was Livius (Livy). He was a native of Patavium, and even his matchless style occasionally betrayed his provincial origin. Asinius Pollio, a contemporary critic, twitted him with his *patauinitas*. Perhaps Livy spoke with a Scotch, Irish, or Welsh accent. At any rate the name Livius[3] is probably to be equated with the Welsh "lliw", colour. Thus, e.g., the word Vindo-livo-s (from livos) corresponds to the Welsh Gwyn-lliw. Verona produced a galaxy of luminaries; Cornelius Nepos, as well as Catullus, was one of her famous Celtic sons. Pliny was another name honoured in the literary world of Rome and the republic of letters throughout the Empire. Pliny the Elder, as he is now called, or Caius Plinius Secundus (to adopt the full Latin name) the natural historian, hailed from Verona or Novum Comum (the modern Como), and, either way, was of Celtic descent. Pliny the younger, his nephew, author of the famous collection of epistles, was born at Como. Plinius is identical with Mag-plinus and

[1] "Mantua dives avis, sed non genus omnibus unum; gens illi triplex, populi sub gente quaterni." Virgil, *Aen.* IX, 201. The Mantuan territory contained three races, each a master of four cities. Cf Livy V. 33.

[2] Gaul on the Italian side of the Alps.[2]

[3] cf *liveo, livor, lividus.*

the Breton Plinis. This list of poets and historians forms in itself a goodly array and reveals a capacity for literature, history and science inherent in the Celtic strain; it might be further extended.

The Celtic youth were the object of the Druids' solicitude. Men and lads, mostly drawn from the ranks of the Gaulish nobility, flocked to them to learn wisdom, and it argues well for the attractiveness of the teaching and the devotion of the disciples that, in spite of the exacting nature of the studies, many, caught by the spell, remained at their teachers' feet as long as twenty years (so runs the tradition), if not to the end of their days. The number of students is indirectly attested by an incident that occurred in the course of a revolt of the Gauls during the reign of Tiberius. Upon that occasion the insurgents concentrated their efforts on securing Augustodonum (now Autun), in order to seize as hostages the persons of noble youths who were studying there, and thus to conciliate or intimidate their kinsfolk, who were the most distinguished families of the land. In short, Gaul proper was the Promised Land of teaching and learning, and there is a strong presumption in favour of connecting its pre-eminence with the powerful influence of the Druidical national priest-hood, who endeavoured to control all spheres of thought and action.

The subjects taught must have been congenial, at least if the fondness for them in the twentieth century of the Christian era be any criterion of the tastes of that early generation. The ancient Celts "loved beautiful speeches". It is not surprising therefore that Grammar and Rhetoric formed the staple of the instruction imparted in the Druidical schools. Their symbol of the power of speech takes the form of a bald-headed, wrinkled, sun-burnt old man, equipped with club and bow. From his perforated

tongue hang fine chains which are linked to the ears of a person following behind. The divinity here represented is Ogmius, the god of eloquence, and the symbolism portrays the art of persuasion—the flying arrows indicating dialectical dexterity and the club the crushing arguments of the old man mighty in speech, to whom the multitude (represented by the captive behind) are enchained.[1]

It is worthy of note that the first founder of a Latin school for rhetoricians was a native of Cisalpine Gaul and bore a Celtic name; his name was Plotius Gallus. He established a school for Latin and Rhetoric at Rome about 88 B.C., and came to be styled the Father of Roman rhetoric. Forensic orators from Trans-Alpine Gaul likewise shed lustre on their race. Such were Votienus Montanus (27 A.D.) who hailed from Narbo in the South and earned the title of the Ovid of the rhetorical Schools. Such was Gnaeus Domitius Afer, consul in 39 A.D., a native of Nemausus in the same province. Quintilian, the trainer of budding orators for the Forum (or, as we should say, the Bar) makes favourable mention of several speakers from Gaul, and it is significant that Tacitus, in his fine Dialogue on oratory,[2] puts forward the Gaulish advocate, Marcus Aper, to champion the eloquence of his own day against the worshippers of those paragons of the older school, Cicero and Caesar.[3]

[1] For the idea compare Lucian, *Zeus Tragoedus*. "Don't you see how many are listening, and how they have already been persuaded against us and he is leading them after him tethered by the ears?" Cf. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 21. "ut qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent."

[2] Cf. Lucian, *Dis kategor*, § 27.; *Apologia*, § 15.

[3] These historical instances lend point to Juvenal's assertion (*Satire*, XV, 3):—"Gallia causidicos duxit facunda Britannos; de conducendo loquitur iam rhetore Thyle." ("Eloquent Gaul has trained the pleaders of Britain, and distant Thule [probably the Orkneys and Shetlands] talks of hiring a rhetorician").

Under the same category falls Ausonius, the Roman poet of the fourth century. A native of Bordeaux and a Celt by descent, he was trained as a rhetorician, and rhetoric left an impress deep and durable on his literary lucubrations. The artificial atmosphere of the age, his social environment, and the literary methods of his time, were not favourable to intellectual freshness and a broad human outlook; still Ausonius reveals touches of the genius that distinguished the Celtic race. He shows a distinct appreciation for the beauties of nature without reference to the comfort and gratification which they may afford to mankind—a quality which has been described as a characteristically Celtic gift.

The love of poetry also seems to have marked the Celt at that early period, and the disciples of the Druids were put to learn a mass of verses. To keep their doctrines secret, and at the same time to strengthen their pupils' memory, the Druids, like the Pythagorean philosophers in the Greek colonies of Southern Italy, forbade them to commit their tenets to writing, but allowed artificial aids to memory by couching their wisdom in the form of Triads. A fondness for music was another feature of the Celtic mind, and musical accomplishments were carefully imparted in the Druidical seminaries.

The Druids' attention was not confined to an inner circle of disciples; at least those in Britain kept an outer school for the instruction of those who did not contemplate joining the fraternity; in this respect they resembled the mediæval monkish schools with their separate provision for those who were destined for the Church, and those whose vocation lay in the "World" without.

The Druids, then, fulfilled an important function in the educational evolution of Gaul. With the Roman conquest, some Druidical institutions received their death-

blow. The victors put down with a heavy hand the custom of human sacrifice, a variety of worship not unknown to their own ancestors before they had far advanced in the path of civilization, and they viewed askance the Druidical usages as incompatible with the spread of Romano-Hellenic culture, which gradually captured the Celtic imagination. But the time for a complete abolition of the system only arrived in the first century of the Christian era. It was in the reign of Tiberius and his successors, when the national trainers of youth were brought face to face with the Romano-Greek culture that the Druids were finally suppressed. Their schools, which probably formed a leaven of Gallic nationality, were the first to feel the effect of the edict. It is not without significance that the most important of these centres lay in the capital of the Aedui, the chief among the Gallic cantons. Afterwards, the first place among the Universities of Gaul was taken by Burdigala ;[1] indeed, in point of culture, Aquitania as a whole far outstripped the Middle and Northern parts of Gaul. The Druids' occupation was gone. But while many of them sank to the level of mere wizards, soothsayers and magic-mongers (and the Druidesses to that of sorceresses[2]), the prominent Druidical families accommodated themselves to changed conditions, and placed their services at the disposal of the Roman Minister of Education.

Chapter VIII.

British Schools a refuge for learning.

The enthusiasm in the cause of knowledge that characterised the Celt was not stifled by the suppression of

[1] Bordeaux.

[2] Tacitus, *Annals* xiv, 30 ; *Life of Alexander Severus*, 60 ; Aurelius, xliv ; Nennius, xl.

the Druids nor by the ensuing world-wide calamities. While Goths, Vandals and Huns, swept down in torrents from the North, Britain, Caledonia and Ireland fulfilled a providential mission in the preservation of learning. Their geographical situation co-operated to this end. Lying in a comparatively quiet back-water, immune from peril and sheltered from the restless ebb and flow of the "Wanderlust" on the Continent, Britain and Ireland were the two lights of Christendom which in a dark and dreary period kept the torch of enlightenment aflame. There Learning trimmed her lamp; there Contemplation preened her wings; there the traditions of Art were preserved from age to age.

Intellectual zeal had carried many of the sons of Britain, Scotland and Ireland across the English Channel. It is stated on the authority of St. Patrick that, in the obscure interval between his landing from the ship with a cargo of wolfhounds (in which he escaped from slavery in Ireland to the West of France) and his disappearance from view, the Saint in the course of his wanderings visited Lerins, now Les Marguerites, in the South of Gaul. There he found Irish Celts sitting at the feet of the teachers who presided over that famous foundation. When he betook himself to Autissiodurum (Auxerre) to prosecute his studies at this other celebrated nursery of learning and hive of missionary activity, there also he found Celts gratifying their thirst for knowledge and preparing for the work of evangelising their native Britain and Ireland; for literature and knowledge were at that distant day pursued not only for their own sake but also as a means of converting the heathen.

It was not long, however, before Britain, Ireland, Caledonia, and, in the course of time, Brittany, acquired schools of their own which survived, rivalled and eclipsed

the above-mentioned seminaries on the Continent. Organised chiefly for the study of Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church—namely, the writers of the Post-Apostolic age—but also for the acquisition of secular accomplishments, they were enabled, according to the needs of the hour, to requite each other's charitable toil. The Welsh schools of Glamorganshire sheltered learning in turbulent times and furnished Brittany with teachers. Breton students came to sit at the feet of St. Cadog the Wise. At Bangor in North Wales, Deiniol and his successors attracted pupils from Wales and England. Ireland became at an early period an object of their solicitude and was soon in a position to make return for their beneficence, for no schools became more famous, nowhere was learning more assiduously and successfully cultivated than in the sister island. Moville and Clonard (which perhaps occupied former Druidic sites) Clonmacnois, Bangor (County Down) were centres of intellectual illumination, from which knowledge and culture radiated. It was from Clonard that St. Columba started on his memorable mission to Pictland, to settle finally on the Island of Iona. Iona in its turn, not content with acting as an instrument for the conversion of Caledonia, extended its operations to the North of Britain, where daughter houses arose, garrisons of pious and learned men amid the prevailing moral and spiritual darkness.

Thus the early British and Irish schools vied with each other in the interchange of kind offices and were rivals only in charitable endeavour.

To illustrate the standard of culture in the Celtic schools and their boundless enthusiasm for advancing the frontiers of human knowledge one example only need be cited. When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, French savants followed in the wake of his army and received no

little stimulus from the commander. Among them was a famous engineer, named Letronne, the author of a valuable work on Greek and Latin inscriptions in Egypt, who communicated a powerful impetus to Egyptology. In the course of his researches at the Royal (now the National) Library of Paris, Letronne lighted upon two Irish manuscripts, copies of a work evidently composed about the year 825 A.D. in one of the celebrated cloister schools of Ireland. He ascribed them to the *scriptorium* or writing-school of Clonard or Armagh. There are reasons, however, for tracing them to Clonmacnois, the famous religious house on the Shannon, for the author of the original, Dicuil by name, speaks of himself as a disciple of Suibhneus or Sweeney,[1] a teacher who shed lustre on that institution.

One of these manuscripts, entitled *Liber de mensura orbis terrae*, furnished an interesting and accurate description of the Faroe Islands, where, as is known from other sources, Irish anchorites had settled as early as the ninth century. Before the Danes came there, the Irish hermits had sought refuge from the world in its caves, and the Norsemen, on their arrival in 874, found missals, bells and croziers imported from Ireland. But Dicuil's investigations had embraced a wider range. To his delight, Letronne discovered that the volume contained singularly accurate descriptions of Egypt, and correct measurements of the Pyramids. The explanation is not obscure. Dicuil had based his work on the treatises of the ancient Latin and Greek geographers. He had also laid under contribution the travels of Fidelis. The latter had gone with a band of his fellow-countrymen on pilgrimage to the hermits of the Thebaid, whose fame had

[1] Many scholars of the name were associated with Clonmacnois and the name "Sweeney" is still common in the neighbourhood.

possessed an irresistible attraction for Celtic Churchmen. Thence the party had proceeded to the Holy Land. Among other things Dicuil describes the freshwater canal which, constructed, in the first instance, by a Pharaoh in 500 B.C., to connect the Nile with Suez, was repaired by the Roman Emperor Hadrian.[1] This geographical treatise affords a proof of the inquisitive temper of Irish scholars, and shows that their attainments were of no mean order; nor is there any reason to suppose that the intellectual enthusiasm of the British and Scottish Schools was much less marked.

There came a time when British and Irish scholars were able to recompense the colleges and cloisters of the Continent. Goth, Lombard, Vandal and Hun poured down from the "Beehive of the North," so called because of the successive swarms of barbarians which issued from that quarter and spread devastation, leaving behind them a scorched and blackened path of misery and ruin. The blood-stained Fathers, St. Gregory in particular, waxed eloquent over these tornadoes of death and desolation which, aggravated by pestilence and earthquake, plunged the world in chaos and calamity. No sooner had one wave swept over Europe than another visitation succeeded; like a wave of locusts they found Europe a Paradise and left it a desert; and wildly exulting in the work of destruction they stamped out, so far as in them lay, every element of revival. While Europe was passing through this Medea's cauldron of desolating catastrophes, the very mention of education was a mockery; the very aim and effort to exist was occupation enough for mind and body. The fabric of the old world was battered down. Stunned by this series of disasters, men asked "What is to be the end? What could save art, science, philosophy? Whither

[1] The canal continued to be used until the sixth century.

were they to turn, when chased away by the barbarian invader?"

The anxious question was answered by Britain and Ireland; they came to the rescue of a crumbling civilization, and offered an asylum to learning and science. Ireland the barbarians had never reached, and though a solitary wave of the invasion had passed over Britain (the right wing of the barbaric host which was over-running Europe), it was not followed by another. Britain, at least in its Southern half, had formed part of the Roman Empire, had partaken both of its civilization and its Christianity, and was comparatively secure. The opportunity for repaying their debt had come, and well did the Sister Isles fulfil the obligation. Monks in cloister cells saved the remnants of learning, and the elements of art and culture which haughty Alaric or fierce Attila had spared or disdained, Irish and British scholars collected, housed and made to live again. Strangers took refuge there, not only from the neighbouring shores, but also from remote nations of the Continent, and received gratuitous entertainment, free instruction, and even books for the prosecution of their studies.

But the future held evil days for Britain and Ireland. A new enemy appeared off their own coasts, sweeping the seas, the dark pirates of the North, comprehensively called Danes, and, in Welsh, the Black men. To them the sea, instead of being a barrier, was the very element and condition of their victories. To them nothing was sacred, and wherever they went they always left a trail of blood and charred ruins behind. So passed away from Britain and Ireland in their turn the ancient Voices of science and literature, but they were silenced there only to revive elsewhere, and in due time to be restored to the two islands which had fostered them in a dark hour.

Chapter IX.

Celts at Charlemagne's Court.

The catastrophe was not destined to set a period to the services of Britain and Ireland in the march of mind, and their scholars were not doomed to quit the earth before they had written their immortal names in one and the self-same page of history. These two conservators of knowledge, sacred and profane, transmitted their literary treasures and traditions, their special schools, religious and secular, to a glorious luminary who was appearing in the horizon, none other than Charlemagne, whose victories kindled a romantic enthusiasm in men's minds and who (as we cannot but think) was raised up to be the founder of modern civilization. It is at least a striking coincidence that the appearance of Ragnor Lodbrog off the shores of Britain and Ireland synchronised with the rise of Charlemagne. The Emperor was now on the full tide of his brilliant victories and the arrival of the Irish teachers was opportune. Just at that epoch he was contemplating schemes for the regeneration of society and the betterment of the condition of his subjects. A story is extant which shows how the new arrivals were brought to his notice. Two strolling students from Ireland, Clemens and Debinus, had accompanied British traders to the coast of France. There observing the eagerness with which the vendors of perishable merchandise were surrounded by the inhabitants, the two travellers began to cry out "Who wants wisdom? Here is wisdom for sale. This is the store for wisdom!" The Emperor sent for them to his Court.[1]

The constellation of Celtic genius, which gathered

[1] Doubt has been thrown on the story, but it is accepted by Muratori, Haddan, Lanigan and others.

around Charlemagne, included some of the most notable names of that fertile epoch. Dungal, a contemporary of Dicuil at the Carolingian Court, was a leader of thought. When the heretical Claudius of Turin exulted over the ignorance of the desolated churches on the Continent and dubbed the synod of bishops a "congregation of asses", it was no other than Dungal, now a monk at St. Denis, that accepted the challenge and overthrew the presumptuous railer. His dialectical skill and erudition excited the hostility of Charlemagne's other educational advisers. Theodulf called him "a wild man of the woods, a plaguy litigious fellow, who thinks he knows everything and especially the things of which he knows nothing". The Anglo-Saxon Alcuin accused him of Alexandrian Gnosticism. The truth, however, appears to be that he inherited the mystic teaching of his native country. The Irish Clement succeeded Alcuin, the first Rector of the Studium of Paris. John, a fellow-countryman of Clement, was commissioned to found the schools of Pavia. Such are some of the names of the intellectual circle of the Carolingian Court, the "greges philosophorum",[1] as they were styled, who hailed from Ireland. The name "Irishman" had become synonymous with "philosopher".

These emissaries, half theologians, half tramps, were the forerunners of the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages. Of these wandering philosophers, who bore the palm for subtle speculation in the Universities of Europe, some earned an unenviable notoriety. At the time racial feeling ran high and this accounts for some of the slanders with which they were assailed. But this will not fully explain the deep suspicion with which their opinions were viewed. Pelagius of heretical memory and his turbulent career had

[1] "Herds of philosophers."

excited a prejudice against Celtic thinkers.[1] Celestius, his strenuous lieutenant, outdid his master in the work of propaganda. St. Jerome, with characteristic vehemence, pours upon him a Niagara of scorn and vituperation, calling him, among other things, a "cur brought up on Scotch porridge". St. Virgil, Bishop of Salzburg, also an Irishman, aired ideas on geography which created alarm among his contemporaries. Pelagius, Celestius, and Virgil were the precursors of the subtle, audacious, speculative thinkers, of the Titans in scholastic theology in a later era, a Scotus Erigena, a Duns Scotus and an Abelard. But, whatever their errors, it must be admitted that their very aberrations afford a proof at least of mental culture, for heresies do not usually arise among the ignorant, and they were often united with austerity of morals.

The death of Charlemagne, in 814, checked educational reform and retarded the intellectual advance of the age; thus matters remained at a standstill until the year 825. Lothair, true to his illustrious ancestor's ideal, instituted further reform; he re-established a central seat of learning at Pavia. His choice of an instrument to further his designs fell on John, another Irishman. And who better fitted to further Lothair's projects at a later day than Edward Evans, who figures as the president of that seat of learning?

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[1] Among the Welsh he has been traditionally called Morgan and his theories *Morganiaeth*. There are, however, weighty reasons for relinquishing our claim to him; he is now known to have been an Irishman by descent.