

CHAPTER XII.

THE NORDIC PEOPLES.

The North-west Racial Current—Extent of Celtica—Celtic Migrations—Invasions of Britain—Effect of Closing of Rhine-Frontier—Gauls and Germans racially identical—Ethnic Names no Guide—Political Identity of Gauls and Germans—‘Civitas’ and ‘Pagus’—‘Oppidum,’ ‘Castellum,’ and ‘Vicus’—The Representative System

¹ The ‘Pictish’ circles of Aberdeenshire are dealt with in ch. xiv.

—*Kingship—Government by the Moot—The Moot originally fixed by 'Time'—Form of the Moot—'Cives Tuibanti'—Later Forms of the Moot, German and Gallic—Sanxay—Consecration of the Moot: Dis and Consus—The Felderich of Corbey—Procedure in the Moot—'Concilia' in Gaul—The Grand Assize 'in finibus Carnutum'—Drynemetus of the Galatians—The Celts in Spain—The Celts in Italy: Campi Macri—The Modern Welsh 'Gorsedd'—Moots of various Grades—'Loca Designata'—German and Gallic Religion and Ritual—Human Sacrifices—Both Religions Aniconic—Celtic Divinities—Mercurius = Woden—No roofed Temples in Gaul or Germany—Sepulchral Ritual.*

As far back as history goes it bears witness to a racial current setting steadily from Central Europe towards the West and the British Isles. Swarm after swarm of invaders has

'The populous North
poured from her frozen loins'

towards and across the Rhine, each in its turn to give place to yet another. For the most part they have made their passage by way of the lower Rhine, where the force and depth of the river are lost in the flats of Belgium, always the Achilles' heel of France; and when the Germans of 1914 hacked their way through by this route they were but repeating the exploits of other predatory peoples, their forbears, from a date long centuries prior to any written history. Even when the Rhine-frontier itself was too strongly held to allow of a break-through, the invaders could yet turn it by water from the mouth of the Elbe and from the Baltic. History is familiar with the act as rehearsed by Northmen, Danes, Vikings, and Franks, and we have glimpses of it as far back as the days of Julius Caesar. Still further back, history keeps no record of individual peoples, but all are blurred into one continuous movement for which the evidence grows always vaguer, yet remains always convincing. It is the march of the Nordic men.

There was a remote period, it is supposed, when a totally different current had set to the same quarter from the Mediterranean, and a race known to English science as the Iberians had spread over all that is now called France

and as far as Ireland. To this race are attributed the long barrows and the long skulls mostly found therein. They were small of stature and of dark complexion. This is the sum of what is really known of them, though it is supposed they had no knowledge of bronze and iron.

The Nordic men were fair, tall, and well-built. They were also better armed, because more familiar with metals.¹ At a date unknown the vanguard of the race, crossing the Rhine, carved out for themselves a settlement in the Lowlands. A second horde of their kindred expropriated the first and pushed it farther south. A third swarm did the like by the second, and so the process went on, the prior occupants of the land falling back towards the Pyrenees and Spain. But inevitably there was some intermingling, and naturally, while the proportion of Nordic blood was always greater in the north, that of other blood was always greater in the south.² It is so at the present day: the Picard and the Fleming are types wholly unlike the Béarnais and the Gascon, and as the traveller crosses the intervening region he sees the one type merging imperceptibly into the other. It was so when Caesar wrote his *Commentaries*: the Aquitani of the south were a different race from the Belgae of the north, and between them he could—or fancied he could—discriminate the Celts, who were not quite like either of the others. His three-fold division of Gaul amongst these three peoples has led to the mistaken belief that the Celts were a third race in the same sense in which the Iberians and the Nordics were races. The Celt is merely the result of the mixture of the other two, and he is 'red' or 'black' according as there is more of Nordic or of Iberian blood in his veins.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Nordic race was its extraordinary fecundity. This com-

¹ But even in Tacitus' time the Germans had 'none too much iron' (*Germ.* 6), although the Achæans had known and used it a thousand years earlier. This helps to explain why the south-east of Britain with its iron ore had so great an attraction for invaders (*B.G.* v, 12, 5). Both the true Gauls and the Belgæ also made use of stone weapons (*B.G.* ii, 6, 2-3; iii, 4, 1) in Caesar's time, as Giraldus Cambrensis found the

Irish using their *lapides pugillares* (*Topog. Hiberniæ*, iii, x) ten centuries later.

² For the sake of brevity no mention is here made of the 'Alpine' race, which at the present day is predominant in southern and central France. In physical features, as in geography, it occupied a middle position between the Nordics and the Iberians, but superficially much more resembled the latter than the former.

pelled it incessantly to overflow towards the south. It passed beyond the Pyrenees as far as Cadiz,¹ but in Spain the earlier Iberian race so far held its own that the Romans knew part of the population by the general name of Celtiberi. At what date this thrust occurred is not known, but as early as 600 B.C. Gaul was already so choked by the steady influx of new peoples from the north that the tribe of the Senones, whose name remains in that of Sens, 60 miles south of Paris, threw off a swarm of its numbers, who crossed into northern Italy.² Other tribes followed suit, and within two centuries had filled the whole plain of Lombardy and the adjacent lands as far south as Sinigaglia. In 391 they sacked Rome, and continued to raid peninsular Italy for 50 years more. In 280 B.C. other tribes, migrating from localities as far apart as Trèves and the Pyrenees, fought their way into the Balkan peninsula, sacked Delphi in the ensuing year, and thence drifting always further east in search of loot and lands, finally formed in central Asia Minor a Celtic nation known to history as the Galatians. At the close of the fourth century A.D. St. Jerome, who spoke from personal knowledge, declared that they still kept their native tongue. Yet even in this far raid they were only repeating history : a thousand years before this (c. 1300 B.C.) their distant kinsmen, the Achæans, starting indeed from another point, had reached as far, making themselves famous for ever by the conquest of Argos, Mycenæ and Troy ; and yet others, before and after, had crossed swords with the Pharaohs and with the kings of Assyria.

The British Isles did not escape their all-searching wanderlust. Tribe after tribe had already crossed the Channel to escape the ceaseless pressure behind, and driving the Iberians before them, had occupied every inch of soil. The foreloopers were of the speech known as Goidelic. But others of the blood presently followed at an interval sufficient to allow of so much change of speech as distinguished the Brython from the Goidel. It is supposed that the Brythonic Celts began to arrive

in this island *circa* 400 B.C. ; the Goidel as early as 1000 B.C.¹

Naturally the majority of the newcomers would cross by the shortest sea-passage that was open, that is, to the southern and south-eastern coasts. Settling where they could first make a landing, they pressed the Goidels back to the north and the west. In the upshot the latter were pent up in the Scottish Highlands, the Isle of Man, and Ireland, where they still are, but for long centuries they kept a footing in South Wales and in Anglesey. Elsewhere the usurping Brythons overran Great Britain from sea to sea, to be in turn driven by later comers—Belgae, Romans, and Saxons—into the western fringes of the island, into Cornwall, Wales, and Strathclyde. But racially Goidels and Brythons were the same, except that the former had somewhat more of the Iberian blood in his veins, the latter somewhat more of the Nordic. The Belgæ, who began to intrude about 150 B.C., were in effect purely Nordic, for by that date the Gallic peoples had become too settled, too numerous, and too well organised to be readily absorbed. Yet the eternal westward thrust never ceased. It was to stem it that Julius Caesar conquered Gaul (58-52 B.C.), and closed the Rhine-frontier.² The fact was unfortunate for Britain because, so long as that frontier was closed, the current must flow westward direct by way of the sea, instead of filtering through the less barbaric medium of Gaul. When a century later the Romans occupied Britain itself they prevented any further landings in that quarter,³ and those who hazarded the sea-passage

¹ So *Brit. Museum Guide*, according to which authority the Brythons had reached Yorkshire by the fourth century B.C. But there is nothing to show by what route they got there. They may have crossed direct.

² When Caesar arrived in Gaul some of the Belgic Menapii were still living east of the Rhine. They were driven west of the river by the Suebi in 55 B.C. (*B.G.* iv, 4, 2). Tacitus mentions (*Germ.* 28) four tribes which had moved across the Rhine since Caesar's time, and Caesar (*B.G.* ii, 4, 10) names four others which, though members of the Belgic league, were still collectively styled *Germani*.

³ Their occupation of Britain was certainly due as much to policy as to commercial interests. So it had been with Caesar,

whose aim was to put an end to the constant intercourse between the Britons and the continental Gauls, for the former 'abetted in every way Rome's enemies in Gaul' (*B.G.* iv, 20, 1); e.g. the Veneti summoned help from Britain (iii, 9, 10), and Britain harboured the refugee notables of the Bellovaci (ii, 14, 4). Caesar has little to say of any trade between Britain and the Continent, but half a century later Strabo (§§ 199-201) speaks of the Britons as exporting corn, cattle and hides, slaves, hunting-dogs, gold, silver and iron, in exchange for articles of luxury, such as jewellery and glass and ornaments of ivory. They had become rich. J. R. Green (*Making of England*, edit. 1881, pp. 6-8) very strongly insisted upon the purely military

¹ Ephorus *ap.* Strabo, § 199. The fact is confessed in the names of Galicia and the Gallegos of the present day. Neither the Rhine nor the Pyrenees formed an ethnic

frontier : cp. the relations of Aquitani with Cantabri and others, *B.G.* iii, 23, 3 ; 26, 6.

² Either this, or a yet earlier swarm, broke the power of the Etruscans.

had perforce to content themselves with Ireland and northern Scotland. Some certainly made the venture and succeeded, but generally speaking the Romans held up or diverted the westward current of migration for four centuries, and being so held up, it but gathered the greater head ; so that, when at last the Roman power collapsed, everything was swept away before the irresistible flood of Franks, Burgundians, West Goths, Vandals, Alemans, and the miscellaneous tribes whom history collectively knows as Saxons. But, though the Saxon would have been the last to admit it, he was after all the brother of the Belgian, the Brython and the Goidel, who had come hither before him. The lapse of some intervening centuries and their happenings had made superficial differences, but the greatest of these was in the matter of speech.¹ Speech changes with extraordinary rapidity amongst peoples in a savage state of culture ; and before they crossed the Rhine the Nordic men were for the most part savages. The Rhine was the dividing line between barbarism and something better.² Roaming east of it Nordic man was a savage ; settled west of it he began to become civilised. So long as he was a savage he was known to the generality as a German ; appreciably civilised he was known as a Celt or a Gaul.

There is indisputable evidence in the Classics to support this view. Caesar³ says that the Belgae were mostly German in blood. Strabo is insistent upon the point : Celts and Germans, he declares, were of the same blood,⁴ and elsewhere he says that in physical features and manner of life the two peoples were alike, save that the Germans were a little taller, a little fairer, a little more savage.⁵ In this affinity he found the explanation of the name of Germani, *scilicet* 'kinsmen' of the Celts who used it. To the

character of the Roman occupation of the island.

¹ cp. Prof. Sir A. Keith in *Observer*, Feb. 22, 1920 : 'What then is the relation of Celt and Saxon ? The Saxon is also from the north-west of Europe—the home-land of the Nordic stock. The only conclusion which can be drawn is that Celt and Saxon represent different waves of the same stock, but waves which came to England at different times and brought with them a different speech and a different set of customs

and manners. . . . British Saxon and Celt are of the same stock.'

² Caesar, *B.G.* iv, 3, 3. Tacitus and Strabo make the same remark. The latter further emphasises the relatively civilised character of southern as compared with northern Gaul, just as Caesar emphasises that of the *Ora Maritima* of Britain in comparison with its remoter parts.

³ *B.G.* ii, 4, 1.

⁴ § 196.

⁵ § 290.

Germans themselves the name was unknown, and they ignored also the name of Celtae, using instead thereof the term *Walab*, which on Anglo-Saxon lips became *Wealha*, and yet survives in our 'Wales' and 'Welsh.' According to Déchelette¹ *Walab* is merely Volcae, the name of one amongst the sixty-odd tribes of Gaul, and that one not of any great prominence in history.² There is nothing more seemingly irrational than the chance which selects this or that name for a mighty people, frequently without regard to geography, blood, or historical importance. 'Greeks,' 'Scots,' 'English' are familiar instances. The Germans' alternative name of 'Teutons' is another : originally meaning merely 'the tribes,' it was apparently a somewhat derogatory term for all and sundry of the lesser tribes who had followed the lead, and presumably acknowledged the superiority, of the Cimbri (ch. xiv). It is the Goidelic *tuatha*,³ the Brythonic *teuta*,⁴ and through the Anglo-Saxon *theotisc* it has returned to Germany in the form *Deutsch*.

For both peoples our earliest reliable authority is Caesar. Tacitus wrote his *Germania* nearly 150 years later, and if he represents the Germans as being still for the most part in a state of semi-nomadic savagery, we might safely assume that they were at least as little civilised in Caesar's time, before they had made acquaintance with either Gaul or Rome, even if we had not Caesar's own brief notes (*B.G.* vi, 21-24) to say so. The testimony of the two shews conclusively that both in polity and in religion the German and the Celt resembled one another as closely as in physical features.⁵ If the Celt was a little darker than the German, it was because of a certain admixture of Iberian blood. If he was more of a 'political animal,' if his religion was more systematised, these facts were the outcome of a more settled life and of Iberian influence respectively. Both had the same provision of 'kings' who did not govern, and of

¹ *Manuel d'Archéologie*, ii, 561.

² *B.G.* vi, 24, 3-4. In Caesar's time they had left Gaul, and settling in the Hercynia Silva had become entirely German.

³ As e.g. in *Tuatha DéDanann*, pp. 332 foll.

⁴ Seen in the name of the god Teutates and that of Teutomatus, king of the Nitobriges (*B.G.* vii, 31, 5). Diod. Siculus, who was born before Caesar died, calls

(v, 25 and 32) by the name of Gauls (*Γαλάται*) all the peoples dwelling east of the Rhine 'as far as Scythia.' On this matter of tribal and ethnic names, cf. *Early Age of Greece*, i, p. 351.

⁵ See Fustel de Coulanges, *La Gaule Romaine* (Paris, 1891); Stubbs' *Constitutional Hist.* vol. i; J. R. Green, *Making of England*, c. 5.

'war-lords.' Both shew in different stages of development the same 'elementary feudalism.' The government of both was essentially aristocratic. With both peoples the moot was all-important; its procedure and powers much the same. The religion of both was essentially identical: it was aniconic, it had no roofed temples, and its chief deity was the same. Both counted time by the moon instead of by the sun. The two seem to have spoken much the same language. The differences between them are to be explained as due merely to difference of degree of culture.

The majority of the German tribes, even in the time of Tacitus, were living much in the fashion of the Kalmuk Tartars of a century ago. The Kalmuks had no towns. Their only 'villages' were mere temporary encampments, whose duration depended upon the necessity of growing a little grain, or other questions of food-supply; for of horticulture they knew nothing, nor had any use for vegetables. The huts could be taken down and set up again within an hour. Each village had its own priests with their own place of worship, a circular group of huts rather larger and neater than the rest; but there was no set liturgy and no sort of religious instruction, and the people at large had no share in the ritual.¹

Each *civitas* or tribe, German or Gallic, comprised a number of sub-divisions varying with its size. In Caesar's time the German Suebi counted a hundred of these,² and in Tacitus' day the Semnones had as many.³ These sub-divisions, usually known by the Latin name of *pagi*, were in some loose way based upon the group of 100 families. Tacitus elsewhere⁴ alludes to the importance of this number in the German polity. Similarly Caesar⁵ tells us that the Belgic Bellovaci mustered 100,000 warriors, and as the levy of each *pagus* was nominally 1,000 men,⁶ this tribe also must have had 100 *pagi*. The Gallic *pagus* survives everywhere in modern France as the *pays*. In old Wales it reappears as the *cantref*, in Saxon England as the hundred; and just as in England one meets with half-

hundreds, so in Wales the *cantref* was commonly split into two halves called *commots*.

In Germany the majority of the people being still nomadic,¹ knowing little of agriculture,² and therefore building nothing which could be called a town,³ further sub-division of the *pagus* is hardly traceable there: but both Caesar⁴ and Tacitus⁵ speak as if it existed. In Gaul, on the other hand, where agricultural life and permanent settlements had become the general rule, there had grown up communes (*vici*). Each *civitas* had its own capital *oppidum*—in one or two cases it is called by the name of *urbs*⁶—and the various *pagi* had each its own *oppidum* or *castellum*; while the *pagus* again embraced a varying number of *vici*⁷; and just as each *civitas* and each *pagus* had its own moot, so had each *vici*, those who had a voice in the communal moot being the occupants of the farmsteads (*aedificia*) which dotted the communal territory. Even the savage Menapii of the fens of Flanders had their *vici*⁸. Again the parallelism with the Anglo-Saxon order is exact: that, too, had its several moots of the *folc*, hundred, *burh*, and *tun*, and the mootmen of the *tun* were those who farmed the *tun*-land.

Even in Germany the representative system was in active operation. The moot claimed sovereignty in all matters, but delegated minor business to certain *principes*, i.e. elders, of its own choice,⁹ who naturally came to be a quasi-permanent *senatus* or council, and as naturally tended always to usurp more authority. The same polity is recognisable in Caesar's Gaul, where, for example, the Nervii, with a muster of 60,000 warriors, i.e. 60 *pagi*, had 600 'senators,' or 10 for each *pagus* of 1,000 warriors, or one senator to each 100 warriors. It was much the same in Saxon England, and alike in Germany, in Gaul,¹⁰ and

¹ B.G. iv, 17, vi, 22, 1; Strabo, § 291.

² Tac. Germ. 26.

³ *op. cit.* 16: cp. Strabo, § 291.

⁴ B.G. vi, 23, 5.

⁵ Germ. 12.

⁶ Thus Caesar, though he elsewhere repeatedly terms it an *oppidum*, calls Avaricum (Bourges), the capital of the Bituriges, 'almost the fairest *urbs* in Gaul' (B.G. vii, 15, 4), and Strabo (§ 192) calls the Aeduan Cabullinum (the Cabillonum of Caesar—now Chalons-sur-Saône) a *πόλις*.

⁷ In Cicero (*de Repub.*) *viciulus*, *castellum*, and *urbs* are the three stages in the development of a 'city.' Bede (*H.E.* i, 1) uses *castellum* of the smaller fortified towns of Roman Britain. As early as Cicero's time it was used for 'village.'

⁸ B.G. iv, 4, 2 and 6.

⁹ Tac. Germ. 11: cp. *ibid.* 39, of the *legationes* of the *pagi* of the Semnones. Caesar (B.G. vi, 23, 5) says the same thing.

¹⁰ Strabo, § 197.

¹ Parrot, *Journey to Ararat*, Eng. Transl. (London, N.D.), pp. 14 sqq; cp. Strabo, § 291.

² B.G. iv, 1, 4.

³ Germ. 39.

⁴ Germ. 6 and 12.

⁵ B.G. ii, 4, 5.

⁶ B.G. iv, 1, 4. So in Rome the word *miles* (soldier) implies that the muster was originally by companies of 1,000 men; and Italy also had its *pagi*. The *pagus* was as jealous of its individuality as any modern regiment (B.G. i, 51, 2, *generatim*).

in England, the polity was in reality aristocratic. In each country individuals who, on whatever ground, took a prominent position in the tribe, drew to themselves numbers of retainers of lesser degree, who looked to their 'lord' for protection. The like was the case in Saxon England, and the *Sagas* shew that the same practice prevailed amongst the Scandinavian peoples generally. Caesar mentions¹ that the Gallic name for such retainers was the German *ambacti*. This is one of many hints that even in speech the Germans and the Gauls were much the same. Caesar nowhere speaks of any great difference in their languages.²

Principes were elected in the tribal moot to act as presidents of the moots of *pagi* and *vici*, assisted by a court of 100,³ presumably freeholders of the *pagus* and the *vicus*, who acted both as jurors and as interpreters of the law.

Kingship in Gaul, says Fustel de Coulanges,⁴ was a form of democracy. In Germany, says Stubbs, the king 'reigned, but did not govern.'⁵ In both lands he was commonly an annual magistrate appointed to do the behest of the tribe. He was the choice of his people assembled in their tribal moot, and the sovereignty lay not with him, but with the moot. The same word for 'king' appears both in Celtic and in German: it is the word which in Latin appears as *rex*, 'director,' and the old Roman king was in the main an Italian equivalent of the German or Celtic *dux*, *princeps*, or *rix*. The 'king' of the Gallic Eburones told Caesar that he had less control of his tribe than his tribe had of its king.⁶ But inevitably the 'king's' position would vary with the circumstances of the tribe. It might even become permanent, but it seems rarely to have become hereditary.⁷ When the Saxons invaded England their 'kings' appear to have been in exactly the same position as those of Tacitus' Germans.

The real government of the German tribe was vested in the assembly of the free tribesmen assembled in the tribal moot. With these lay the decision upon any question

of policy, the making of any of those precedents which in due course would pass into law, the election of all needful persons to put policy or precedent into effect. They elected the war lord, and appointed those who should act as justices in the *pagi* and *vici*. The primary function, therefore, of these inferior moots, as of that of the little *πῶλις* figured on the shield of Achilles, was judicial.

The moots of the nomadic Germans would of necessity change with each movement of the tribe. As the Gauls were in the main a settled people, their moots were as naturally at fixed spots. Those of the *vicus*, *castellum* and *oppidum* would be immediately beside the communities which they represented: that of the tribe at large would tend to become associated with the tribal capital; that of the *pagus* would similarly tend to be associated with the *oppidum* or *castellum* of the *pagus*; but so long as there was no settled community, the moot of *pagus* and of *civitas* would, of necessity, remain unfixed.

Tacitus,¹ in speaking of the summoning of the German moot, uses the legal Latin term *condicere*. In Caesar the usual expression is (*concilium*) *indicere*. Tacitus tells us² also that the German moots were convened at stated phases of the moon, at the new and the full; and amongst a nomad people as yet possessing no structural *places* of assembly, one would expect the summons to be expressed in terms of *time* rather than of *place*.

What was the form of the place of meeting? In Achean Greece, in Latin Italy, amongst the Danish peoples, and in Britain, it was a circular place demarcated either by a circle of standing stones or by a circular bank of earth. In all these cases it was a *locus consecratus* and a *locus publicus*, as it was also in Gaul. Analogy would suggest that in Germany, too, it was sacred, public, and circular; but, the German being for the most part still nomadic, it would not present the same permanent form as is found amongst more settled peoples.³

¹ *B.G.* vi, 15, 2; i, 47, 4.

² Tacitus (*Germ.* 45) remarks that the dialect of the Aestii of the Lithuanian region more nearly resembled that of Britain than did the Suebic speech.

³ *Germ.* 12; *B.G.* vi, 23, 5.

⁴ *La Gaule Romaine* (Paris, 1891), p. 13.

⁵ *Const. Hist. England*, 1, 38.

⁶ *B.G.* v, 27, 3.

⁷ As a matter of policy the Romans set up 'kings' amongst the tribes which fell under their influence, it being easier to deal with one submissive tool than with the multitude.

¹ *Germ.* 11.

² *ibid.*

³ A picture of the moot in a yet earlier stage of evolution is to be found so late as 1878 in St. Kilda. 'The men of St. Kilda are in the habit of congregating in front of one of the houses every morning for the

discussion of business. . . . When the subject is exciting the members talk with loud voices and all at one time. You may hear them half a mile off. . . . Shall we go to catch solan geese, or ling, or mend the boat, or hunt sheep? are examples of the subjects that occupy the "house." Although

Tacitus says as little about the shape of the moot in Germany as Caesar says about its shape in Gaul; yet as both writers make repeated allusions to its existence, one naturally wonders why it is not described. The reason is probably that it was so very like the moots familiar to every Roman in every provincial town and village of Italy, so like the Celtic moots to be seen anywhere in Cisalpine, that there was nothing in it to call for remark. It was just like any other moot, that is, circular.

This view is confirmed by language. The name of the Germanic moot was the 'ring,' that is, the circular place. This is sufficiently proved by the simple fact that into all the principal languages of western Europe, into French, Spanish, Italian, and English, has passed the same word, *arrangare*, *arringar*, *haranguer*, 'to harangue,' in the same sense—'to deliver a public speech,' that is, 'to address the ring or moot.'¹ Etymologically indeed *ring*, Low Dutch *krink*, is the same word as the Latin *circus*, and cognate with the Greek κύκλος, which are the respective terms in those languages for the place of meeting.

Another Teutonic term for the 'moot' was *thing*, which came to be the usual name amongst the Danes and the associated peoples. But the name of *thing* is older than any documentary mention of the Danes, for it was in use amongst the *cives Tuibanti* who formed the garrison, or part of the garrison, of the Roman fortress of Borcovicium (Housesteads) on the Northumbrian Wall in the third century. In the ruins of the Mithraeum, beside that fortress, have been found two altars dedicated by the *cives Tuibanti* to Mars Thingsus, 'Mars who presides over the moot'²; which proves again that the *thing* was sacred. The *Tuibanti* came from Over Yssel in Holland, where their name yet remains in that of the district of Twente (or Twente). They are called *cives*, which means they were a *civitas*; and being a *civitas* they must have had a *circus*. They had, but they did not

call it by that Roman name; which again means that they had their moot, and their Teutonic name for it, before they came under Roman influence. Had they borrowed the institution from Rome, they would have borrowed also its Roman name.

Such details of the form of the Germanic moot as it is possible to recover belong to later times, but there is no reason to think them other than legitimate survivals from earlier days. Some of these moots were circular mounds; the name of Malberg, 'Council Hill,' is of frequent occurrence in Germany¹; and in Holland the moot-hills still exist at Heldermaalenfeld and at Spoolderberg near Zwolle.² At other times it was a flat circular area: the men of the Helvetic canton of Uri met in a circle in a green meadow at Bözlingen.³ The common feature of all these moots is the circular plan.

Under Roman domination every tribe of Gaul retained its identity and its native organisation. It retained, therefore, its moot or moots. In the so-called 'theatre' at Herbord,⁴ in the commune of Sanxay in Vienne, anciently the territory of the Pictavi whose name remains in Poitiers, Camille de la Croix believed that he had found an example of the tribal moot of the Gallo-Roman era. Here is a perfectly circular arena (diam. 38 m.) excavated in the rocky slope of a hill facing to the north-west, and enveloped by a broad horse-shoe *cavea* 27 m. in width. The *cavea* was carried on six concentric lines of stone footings, but the seating, if any, must have been of wood. At the north-west of the arena—and therefore at the lowest point of the circular area—was a small rectangular platform and the vomitories were arranged in unusual fashion (fig. 32). Its construction resembling that of a true Greek theatre, its plan recalling rather a Roman amphitheatre or a *circus*, the excavator was driven to describe it as a combination of all three, though unable to offer any explanation for such

exceedingly disputatious, they work in perfect harmony when once the question is settled.—J. Sands, *Out of the World, or Life in St. Kilda* (1878). Similarly the people of Elgol, in Skye, meet in a natural hollow of an adjacent hill, so Dr. Eliot Curwen tells me.

¹ See *N.E.D.*

² *Arch. Aeliana*, x, 148-172. Now in the Museum at Chesters. The wording of the inscription is proof that further the moot-system was at that early date already highly formalised.

¹ Grimm, *Deutsche Reichsaltertümer*.

² Gomme, *Primitive Folkmoors*, p. 12. *Mal* being an alternative Germanic name for the moot, Malberg is in formation and in meaning identical with the familiar English 'moothill.'

³ Freeman, *Growth of Eng. Const.* pp. 3-7.

⁴ Herbord is compared with *berberg*, which, according to Le Gonidec and De la Villemarqué (*Dictionnaire Breton*), signifies a 'place of meeting.' It is possibly to be seen in some of the many English earthworks called Arbury, Harborough (Banks), etc. and even in Arbor (earlier Harbor) Low.

a combination.¹ In the preceding chapters some light has been thrown upon this seeming eccentricity, and it would appear that the 'theatre' at Sanxay is the normal Gallic moot-circle improved under influences Roman and Graeco-Roman. It is only one of many still to be seen in France.²

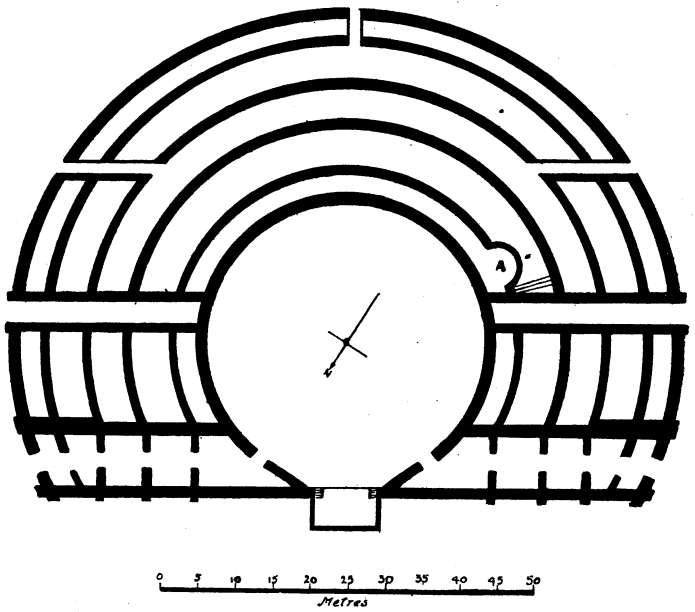


FIG. 32. GALLO-ROMAN MOOT-THEATRE OF SANXAY.
Ground plan. A = Tribunal.
(After Camille de la Croix.)

Moots of this fashion belong to a Gaul which had been effectively Romanised. Analogy and language provide evidence enough that the circular plan was traditional. Analogy tells us further that as a *locus consecratus* every moot required its consecration-grave, actual or symbolical.

¹ C. de la Croix, *Mémoire Archéologique sur les découvertes d'Herbord* (Niort, 1883). Excavation failing to bring to light anything which could be regarded as the remains of a town, he concluded that this was the traditional tribal meeting-place when the Pictavi were a free people, that it had been retained as such under Roman

domination, and that Roman influence had brought to the spot its curious structural temple, the inevitable *thermae*, and the needful *hospitia* for those who attended the moot. He estimated the 'theatre' to have held at least 8,000 persons.
² There are others of similar design at Valognes, Lillebonne, and Vieux.

There are hints both in Tacitus and in Caesar to bear this out. The Semnones, says Tacitus,¹ the paramount tribe of the Suebic League of his time, sacrificed a human victim at their yearly assembly; but the *Semnones*, he adds, affected to maintain a certain archaism in such matters. The presiding god they regarded *tanquam initia gentis*, i.e. as the *conditor* of their race. His name is not mentioned, but obviously he was a *deus inferum*. Similarly, Caesar² tells us that all the Gauls claimed to be the children of Dis, that is, of their *deus inferum*, adding that such was the druidical doctrine. As he is speaking more particularly of the Belgic Gauls, who were not only the most enthusiastic supporters of Druidism, but also the most nearly related to the undiluted Germans, his evidence corroborates the view that the god of the primitive moot was simply 'the Ancestor.'³ Elsewhere he says⁴ that it was the universal Gallic custom to sacrifice the last comer at any *armatum concilium*. Whether or no this drastic rule was the origin of the familiar adage 'the Devil take the hindmost,' it guaranteed a victim whose blood should consecrate the moot, while relieving those in authority from any invidious choice. Tacitus mentions⁵ the presence of priests at every Germanic folk-moot, and presumably it was their business to perform the needful sacrifices. If more precise evidence is lacking for the same usage in Gaul, it is doubtless only because it has not yet been sought. In Germany, says Tacitus,⁶ there was little cost or labour spent on the graves of the dead. Therefore there would be little expended on the moot. It was the other way about in Gaul, says Caesar⁷: graves were elaborate; *ergo* the moot would be elaborate too. And it would necessarily be like the grave, i.e. circular. The moots of Old Greece, of Old Italy, of the Danes, of the Goidels and the Brythons in Britain, of the pagan Saxons, and of the Saxons when converted to Christianity, were one and all graves, or modelled upon graves. There are traces of the same fact in Germany. The form of the name of *Malberg* suggests it.

¹ *Germ.* 39.
² *B.G.* vi, 18, 1.
³ *cp. Germ.* 2, where Tacitus says that all the German peoples worshipped *Tuis-tonem deum terra editum et filium Mannum, originem gentis conditoresque*.
⁴ *B.G.* vi, 56, 2.
⁵ *Germ.* 11.
⁶ *Germ.* 27.
⁷ *B.G.* vi, 19, 4.

That some, at any rate, of the Germanic *loca consecrata* were originally hallowed by the burial of a human victim is proved by the symbolical survivals of the ritual in Old Saxony, where the open-air tribunal of the Felderich of Corbey was consecrated by digging a pit into which were thrown ashes, a coal, and a tile. The tile symbolised the urn, the coal a funeral fire, and the ashes represented those of a human body. On the presence of these symbols depended the validity of all proceedings in the moot, and if they were found not to have been duly deposited, its proceedings were null and void.¹ In all likelihood the more civilised Gaul had abandoned the human sacrifice for some less savage symbolical act of ritual, maintaining the older barbarous way only in the case of armed musters, where its merits were sufficiently obvious. Even amongst the Germans generally the language of Tacitus suggests the like change; for the Semnones were exceptional, and even they, as a rule, practised human sacrifice only once a year.

Similarly the procedure in the moot varied with each people's degree of culture. In Achean Greece it had already developed a rigid formalism. In Gaul also it had its rules, some of them stringent. Strabo mentions² that any one making a disturbance at the moot was punishable by having his cloak (*sagum*) publicly torn by the ὑπηρετής, a form of indignity whereof the memory seems to linger in the Irishman's familiar challenge to all and sundry to 'tread upon the tail of his coat.' If, as was the case in Greece,³ it was customary to attend the moot in one's best, the punishment was costly to the victim. Tacitus, Caesar and Strabo all testify that the mootmen, German or Gallic, were invariably seated⁴; and all are witness that the moot-men went by some name equivalent to the Greek γέροντες and the Latin *senatores*, i.e. elders, as they did in Saxon times, and as they still do in modern England (aldermen). In Germany, as in Homeric Greece, the

dignity of a moot-man was acquired by various qualifications of age, birth, prowess, and eloquence.¹ In Germany, as in Greece and in Rome, no resolution could be adopted save by daylight,² and Caesar implies the same of the Gallic moots.³ Order was kept in the latter by the ὑπηρετής,⁴ who answers to the Roman *lictor* and the Homeric κῆρυξ. In Germany, so far as it was kept at all, it was kept by the priests⁵; for in the moot, and apparently not elsewhere, the priests had to be obeyed. This was consistent with the fact that every German moot was an *armatum concilium*, and in matters of war the powers of their priests were least trammelled. Tacitus more than once⁶ comments upon the fact that all came armed to the German moot, a practice which in Italy had long passed out of memory; but unquestionably the folk-moot of all peoples was originally the muster of the tribe in arms.⁷ Clearly the pure Germans were far behind the Gauls in political development. Another proof thereof is to be seen in Tacitus' remark that a day or two might elapse before the muster was complete,⁸ probably because of the great distances to be covered, and that the moot-men sat down 'as they pleased.'⁹ Formality was notably absent here.

Caesar makes repeated reference¹⁰ to the *concilia* of the Gauls, both tribal and national, and to the *senatores* or *principes* who participated; and his narrative makes it certain that rarely or never was any important step taken without the co-operation of the moot. It was a Gallic law that no man who had any news of public interest should bruit it abroad before reporting it to the moot¹¹; which implies that every community possessed its own moot, and *ergo* its own accustomed place of meeting. If he definitely avers that the lower classes 'had no share whatever in any

¹ Germ. 11.

² *ibid.* 22.

³ B.G. vi, 53, 4.

⁴ The term used by Strabo, § 197.

⁵ Germ. 11.

⁶ Germ. 11 and 37.

⁷ Stubbs, *Const. Hist.* i, 33; Green, *Making of England*, p. 172.

⁸ Germ. 11.

⁹ *ibid.* *ut turbæ placuit*. It is not clear whether the conjunction means 'when,' 'where,' or 'in what order.'

¹⁰ *Commune Belgarum concilium*: B.G. 11,

4, 4; of the Suebi, *more suo*, iv, 19, 2, customary spring (*primo vere*) meetings of the *concilia Gallica*, vi, 3, 4; *concilium totius Galliae (liberae)*, i, 30, 4.

¹¹ *De republica nisi per concilium loqui non conceditur*, B.G. vi, 20, 3. Whether he has anything of public moment (δημόσιον τι) to report is the question asked by Aegyptius when Telemachus after long disuse summons a moot in Ithaca (*Odys.* ii, 32, 44). An anecdote in Cicero, *de Nat. Deorum*, ii, 2, 6, suggests that until 168 B.C. exactly the same rule prevailed in Rome as in Gaul.

¹ Grimm, *ut supra*; Palgrave, *Hist. Eng. Commonwealth*; Gomme, *Primitive Folk-moots*, pp. 36-7.

² § 197.

³ *Od.* vi, 60-1. In *Iliad*, ii, 265, Ulysses strikes the brawler Thersites with the

σκήπτρον, threatening to strip him if the offence is repeated.

⁴ Caesar (B.G. vi, 13, 10) and Tacitus (Germ. 11) both use the verb *considunt*, which implies a formal assembly. Strabo (§ 197) calls the Gallic moots συνέδρια 'sessions.'

debate',¹ this merely means that the privilege of speaking in the more important moots had been wholly usurped by the upper classes, as it had in Homeric Greece, while the rest were still compelled to 'assist' by their presence. For there are hints that any omission to attend the moot when summoned was sternly punished.

Once a year the Gauls held a Grand Assize. It was, it is clear, a very formal and solemn assembly indeed. There was no appeal from the verdict of the court, which was held in a *locus consecratus* in the territories of the Carnutes,² but seemingly not at a town. It was constituted, thinks Quicherat, by the chosen delegates from each tribe, elected in the tribal moot.³ As all primitive peoples, and many peoples who have advanced far beyond the primitive stage, have held their assemblies *sub divo*, the *locus consecratus* can have been nothing but an open-air precinct, a *templum*⁴ in the original sense of that word. It must have been equally a *focus religionis*,⁵ and the solemnity of the meeting, its rarity, the number and dignity of those attending it, the presence of the Archdruid in person and in effect the full 'chapter' of the druidical hierarchy, all point to its being a most emphatically 'holy' place.⁶ We must suppose the proceedings to have been marked by an elaborate ceremonial and ritual, and the place would show whatever were the external tokens of sanctity, but there would be none of those accessories of ornament which the word 'temple' suggests to modern minds. The altar would probably be a *bothros*. The moot-men were seated.⁷

Strabo says⁸ that the Celtic tribes of the Italian Cisalpina, mostly immigrants from Gaul, held an annual

panegyris at Campi Macri between Rhegium Lepidi and Claterna, some six miles west of Mutina in the territories of the Boii. Again the scene of the 'gathering is not a town. The Gallo-Greeks, i.e. the Asiatic Celts of Galatia, held annual synods at a particular spot. This was so far fixed as to have its own name, Drynemetus, but was apparently not a town.¹ The synod was what modern Welshmen would call an *Eisteddfod*. Here 'in ancient times' assembled the council of the twelve tetrarchies of Galatia.² As we do not hear of Druidism in Galatia,³ we must conclude that the habit of holding such meetings was independent of Druidism, which elsewhere seized upon the habit to its own profit. In later times the great gathering of the Galatians was held at Ancyra, where were reproduced all the features of an Irish 'fair'—spectacles, athletic contests, religious ceremonies, feasting, all mixed up together.⁴ Of these Irish 'fairs' more will be said presently.⁵ In Gaul itself occurred a change exactly parallel to that in Galatia: the great gathering was transferred to Lugdunum (Lyons), and, its administrative functions largely or wholly lost, the lighter side of the proceedings took the greater prominence. There were few ordeals more severe to be faced by an aspirant to honours in literature or rhetoric than that of competing before this ancient *Eisteddfod*.⁶

The centrality of these three places of national assembly is very remarkable. That of the Gauls in the territory of the Carnutes, says Caesar,⁷ 'was accounted the centre of

¹ B.G. vi, 13, 1.

² Caesar, B.G. vi, 13, 5. The Carnutes significantly led the last grand native revolt of the Gauls in 52 B.C. (B.G. vii, 3).

³ *Bulletin Antiquaire de France*, 1882, p. 172. Caesar says simply that it was composed of Druids.

⁴ This fact has no more recondite origin than that such assemblies antedate the construction of any building large enough to hold them. The Greeks and the Romans followed the same rule to the end. So with religious matters: *ναός* and *templum* were merely the depositories of the ornaments and treasures of the particular divinity; the ritual went on always in the *τέμενος* and in the open air.

⁵ 'There can be little doubt that the church and temple of primitive society was the selfsame spot as the assembly-place of the people and the court of justice. The whole history of ancient law and early institutions tells us that this must be so.'—Gomme, *Primitive Folkmoors*, p. 59.

⁶ We are not explicitly told that the spot was each year the same, but such is the commonsense supposition. It was a characteristic of all paganism strictly to localize its religious sentiment; and this tendency is by no means confined to paganism.

⁷ B.G. vi, 13, 10, *considunt*.

⁸ § 216.

¹ Strabo, § 567, *συνήγοντο δὲ εἰς τὸν καλούμενον Δρυνέμετον*. The latter part of the name is the Celtic *nemet*, *nemidb*, cognate with Latin *nemus* and meaning 'forest' in the sense in which the Normans used that word, 'unclosed land not under cultivation,' 'pasture' (cf. *νομεύς*, *νέμειν*). Labbé has (anno 743) an edict *De sacris silvarum quas nimidas vocant*, and the form *nemet* occurs in a Breton charter as late as 1031. It enters into place-names in Britain, Gaul, Spain and Germany (Borlase, *Age of the Saints*, p. 76). The prefix *Dry-* has usually been connected with Gk. *δρῦς*, Welsh *derw*, 'oak,' but others interpret it as intensive, so that the name would denote 'moot of moots.'

² Its number was 300, i.e. 24 representatives of each tetrarchy, and the 12 tetrarchs in addition.

³ But the Celtic tendency to religious fanaticism was recalled in the name of *Galli* applied to the priests of Cybele: cf. Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, i, 386.

⁴ Boeckh, *Corpus Insc. Graec.*, no. 4039: Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Ch.* pp. 62-4.

⁵ Below, ch. xvii.

⁶ Juvenal, *Sat.* i, 43. *Palleat . . . ut Lugdunensem rhetor dicturus ad aram*: cf. Strabo, § 192. Here, too, was the characteristic admixture of religious with secular matters. The old Provençal 'Courts of Love' and contests of the Troubadours were the yet later representatives of this great annual meeting at Lyons; and these in turn have their representatives in the gatherings of the Félibrige and the 'Gay Company of Toulouse.'

⁷ B.G. vi, 13, 5.

Gaul.¹ It was at or near Chartres,¹ and if the Roman *provincia* be excluded, Chartres is in effect as central as the conditions admit. It is a probable inference that the practice of holding the moot at that spot arose at a date subsequent to the conquest of the *provincia* by Rome (c. 118 B.C.).² If, as Professor Lloyd remarks,³ the choice of the spot seems to have been made in the interests of some political object, this can scarcely have been other than the supremacy of the Belgae, who were at the time the paramount people of Gaul.

Similarly Campi Macri is to all intents central to Cisalpine Gaul, being almost equidistant from Turin, from Ancona, and from the Carnic Alps; and Drynemetus was in all likelihood similarly situated in regard to the three constituent tribes of the Galatae.⁴ A like centrality is still more remarkable in Stonehenge, of which the site, all but exactly equidistant from Land's End, from Holyhead, and from the north-east extremity of the Norfolk coast, can hardly be altogether a matter of accident.⁵ The greatest of the Irish stone circles, that of Mons Killaraus, 8 miles west of Mullingar, was likewise reputed to be *umbilicus Hiberniae, quasi in medio et meditullio terrae positus*.⁶

Strabo mentions⁷ precisely similar meetings amongst the half-Celtic peoples of Spain, in particular the Lusitani. He mentions⁸ also the all-night festivals of the Celtiberi and others at full moon.

To this day the Celts of Wales retain their annual *Eisteddfod*, with all the pomp and circumstance of Bards, Druids and Archdruids, and much ceremony which, if not

actually descended from ancient times, at any rate claims to be so. The *Eisteddfod* is the session¹ of the assembly for whatever purpose; the place of assembly is *Eisteddfa*; and no such assembly is strictly in order without its *Gorsedd*. Modern Druidism and the modern *gorsedd* may be artificial resuscitations, but that they reflect to some extent and in some of their details the immemorial customs of the Celts is beyond all doubt.

In the early laws and other writings of Wales, the *gorsedd* was a level space of *strictly circular plan*—the *Cylch Cyngbrair*, 'Circle of Federation'—demarcated by a ring of standing-stones. It must be in an entirely public situation, 'in the face of the sun and in the eye of light.' There was a 'throne' for the president, and the lesser members were seated in a circle around the *gorsedd*. At the present day there is constructed for each occasion a new and temporary *gorsedd* which has no seats,² the ceremony performed in it being but a brief and formal preliminary to the real business of the meeting, which is conducted in some convenient building near by; for the business of the modern *eisteddfod* being no longer that of government, it is not tied to one particular spot, while many considerations commend a constant change of *rendezvous*.³ But in earlier times, the ceremonial and the business would be transacted at one or other of certain accustomed *loca consecrata*, and these would be no make-shifts, but permanent constructions. There is nothing to suggest that these were not prepared in much the same way.⁴ The plan would certainly be circular, but the construction being permanent, we should expect it to be somewhat more impressive in the details. There would be provision for seating the elders. The stones of its

¹ So Kiepert. Others would place it at or near Dreux, 35 kil. to the north, where it is said, 'traces of these assemblies may still be found.'

² If the *Provincia* is included, the approximate centre of Gaul must be sought for more than 120 miles S. by E. from Chartres.

³ *Hist. Wales*, i, 44.

⁴ It is generally believed that Drynemetus was in the near vicinity of Ancyra, which lay in the *finis* of the Tectosages, equidistant from the furthest borders of the Trocmi, and of the Tolistoboi. Prof. Ramsay has now abandoned the view that the name survived in that of the monastery called (in

Acta S. Theodori) Μονὴ τῶν Δρυμένων, a few miles S. of Ancyra. See *Hist. Geog. of Asia Minor*, p. 245; Pauly-Wissowa, V^a, 1746. According to Appian and Diod. Siculus, the three Galatian tribes were Cimbric.

⁵ Recent excavation in the 'Aubrey Holes' has proved that there once stood there a stone circle, seemingly of normal plan, but of exceptional size and regularity—precisely what was to be expected if it was the national moot of the Belgic Britons.

⁶ Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topog. Hiberniae*, iii, 4. See above, ch. x.

⁷ § 155.

⁸ § 164.

¹ 'Session-ring' is the literal meaning of *eisteddfod*.

² The Archdruid stands in the centre, beside the *maen-llŷg* ('altar-stone'), theoretically a solid block, but actually in many cases built up. The lesser druids stand each beside one of the stones forming the circle. The *maen-llŷg* represents a stone altar, itself again replacing the still earlier *βωθρός*. Where suitable stones are not available, the meeting may be held upon a circular mound or in a circular depression.

³ In modern times the scene of the next year's *Eisteddfod* must be announced at the last preceding *Gorsedd*. There is but one *Eisteddfod* in the year, just as Gallic Druidism held but one Grand Assize, and the Cisalpini but one *parhyphus*.

⁴ Gomme, *Primitive Folkmoths*, p. 98, transcribes from Owen Pugh's translation of *Heroic Elegies and Other Pieces of Llywarch Hên* a detailed account of the correct construction of a *gorsedd* and the procedure thereat.

peristalith, if it had one, would be large. Fosse or vallum there would be none, for it was of the essence of the primitive court that it should be open to all. To this day a court of justice is a public place, and so it has always been save where abuse has made it a court of injustice. Quite consistently, therefore, the *gorsedd* must be situated in open ground, and in earlier times commonly stood on a site sufficiently raised to afford an outlook over the surrounding land.¹ A precinct so situated and so demarcated would be equally suited for the purposes of ritual and of justice, for the promulgation of laws, for debate, for every kind of public business ; and it would not be surprising if the scene of the Grand Assize of Druidism amongst the Carnutes should turn out to have been just such a construction.

If there remains to-day no known trace of any such monument at or near Chartres,² that again is not surprising. Chartres is the capital of La Beauce, the widest and most fertile of all the 'cornfields green' of the 'pleasant land of France,' and cultivation may long ago have completed there such damage as is still going on upon Salisbury Plain. The Chartrois maintain that their superb cathedral stands upon the site of a Celtic temple, where was worshipped 'a maiden goddess who should bear a child,' the Black Virgin of Chartres, a figure of whom, now in the crypt, is still the most venerated object in the church.³ This figure is a modern substitute for an original which was destroyed by iconoclasts of the Revolution, itself quite possibly a veritable relic of the later days of Celtic paganism, when Roman example had introduced *signa* in lieu of *simulacra*. It may have represented some tutelary of the spot, whom Christianity adopted and christened by another name.

No man summoned before the Grand Assize might

Gorseddau), 328 ('a raised elliptical earth-work').

² At Chartres, wrote Fergusson (*Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 5), 'megalithic remains are few and far between.' The fact that he was not aware of anything there which answers to the requirements of the case is not proof that it does not exist, and still less is it proof that nothing of the sort ever existed.

³ Baedeker's *Northern France*.

disobey the summons. As no single court could well deal with the mass of cases arising in the course of twelve months in a country so extensive as was Gaul, the court can have concerned itself only with cases of certain kinds and of a certain dignity. The bulk of minor cases must have been dealt with locally by the Druids of the particular district ; and if so, there must have been provision for such minor courts all over the country.

An edict of the Council of Tours (567) mentions the *loca designata gentilium*, which so long ago as 1769 Dr. Borlase interpreted to mean 'ancient accustomed places where the remains of Druidism were practised for many years after Christianity had become the national religion of Gaul.'¹ The phrase certainly denotes definite places of a definite purpose, and that purpose in part religious.

The religion and ritual of the Gauls and of the Germans were much the same.² Neither people built roofed temples, until led to do so by foreign (Roman) influence, yet both had definite holy places. Neither made statues of its deities, and both employed symbols such as trees and stones. The holy places of the Gauls, and the symbols of their favourite divinity, were to be seen everywhere, says Caesar. As in Germany the priests seem to have exercised in the moot an authority which they did not elsewhere enjoy, one infers that the moot was in a special sense a *locus consecratus*. So it certainly was with the Carnutes,³ and one is reminded of the position of the *gode* in the Icelandic *ting* (ch. vii). Tacitus says little of any priests in Germany. They existed, but were of small importance.⁴ Caesar has even less to say of any priests in Gaul, although the Gauls in general were 'given over to superstitious observances.'⁵ In Germany the women-folk acted as diviners,⁶ and Gaul also had its women-priests in the Isle of Sena (p. 306). Under druidical

¹ See the *Story of Pwyll Prince of Dyfed* (one of the oldest in the collection called the *Mabinogion*) and what befell him at the Gorsedd yn Arberth (Narberth in Pembroke-shire). It is described as 'a mound above the palace.' The term *gorsedd* occurs in the *Cyddelw* of Aneurin, commonly attributed to the sixth century. The word is common in Welsh place-names, and usually attaches to a mound, whether artificial or natural. See *Inventory, Flintshire*, nos. 40, 182, 269 (two tumuli called

¹ *Antiquities of Cornwall* (2nd ed.), p. 121. Tours is not remote from Chartres. Borlase cites also a similar edict of the Council of Nantes (Labbe, ix, 474, and other references).

² Prof. Rhys was led towards the same conclusion in his *Lectures* (1888), though hesitating to grasp its significance. After contrasting the systematised Celtic Druidism with the unorganised religion of the Germans, he remarks (p. 226) that 'this

manner of reasoning would presuppose the Celts and Teutons to be of the same race.' Borlase (*Antiqs. of Cornwall*) had, a century earlier, surmised the religions of the two peoples to be essentially the same.

³ *B.G.* vi, 13, 10.

⁴ *Germ.* 10, 11, 40, 43.

⁵ *B.G.* vi, 16, 1.

⁶ *B.G.* i, 50, 4 ; Strabo, § 294 ; Tacitus, *Germ.* 8.

control ritual in Gaul had become elaborate. In the Britain of his time, says Tacitus,¹ the religion and the ritual of the people at large were so much like those of the Gauls as to bear out the view that the Britons were themselves immigrant from Gaul. Human sacrifice was part of the recognized order of things in Germany. The Gauls also practised it, but they so far tempered religion with justice as preferably to sacrifice the undesirables of the community, thieves and others, but failing these they would make shift with innocent lives.² Some of the tribes caged their human victims within huge figures of wattle and burnt the whole.³ Such ritual was probably reserved for exceptional occasions and grave crises, though the practice would vary with the different tribes. In any case it is a proof of cruelty only, not of savagery, and it had nothing whatever to do with Druidism as such. Druidism indeed, with the amplest opportunities to indulge in bloodshed, preferably contented itself with outlawry.⁴

The favourite Gallic divinities were 'Mercury' and 'Mars,'⁵ and representations (*simulacra*) of Mercury were very common.⁶ The names here used by Caesar are, of course, those of the Roman divinities most nearly corresponding. The resemblance, which need not have been very exact, must have been found either in the iconic representations of these deities, or in their attributes. Caesar says the Gauls had many representations of their favourite god, using for these the same word (*simulacra*) as he used for the wattled figures in which were sacrificed the holocausts previously described. Such wattled figures could scarcely be portrait-statues (*signa*⁷); they must have been 'something representing' one or other of the gods; and the word presumably has the same force when used of those representations of Mercury. In this sense the *simulacrum* might be anything from a tree-trunk to a stone.⁸

¹ *Agricola*, 11.

² *B.G.* vi, 16, 4.

³ *B.G.* vi, 16, 4; Strabo (§ 198) calls the figure 'a colossus of timber and grass.' It has been argued that the reference cannot be to wattled figures because it was impossible to make them large enough. The Gauls, familiar with wicker huts, would have no difficulty in making a wicker cage big enough to hold a large number of victims.

⁴ *B.G.* vi, 13, 6. This so-called 'excommunication' survived long in the ceremonial cursing of the Irish Druids. There was something similar in Germany; see Tacitus, *Germ.* 6, *ad fin.*

⁵ *B.G.* vi, 17, 1.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ This is the word used by Caesar's purist contemporary Cicero for a portrait-statue.

⁸ The chief deity of the Boeotian Chaeroneans was simply a spear (Paus. ix, iv, 11-12)

Celtic paganism was in its native form aniconic, representing its divinities not in the shape of statues but symbolically only, as, we are told, the Celts saw in the oak-tree the greatest of all their deities.¹ When Cormac MacArt, king of all Ireland, died in 254, an apostate from Druidism, he desired his people not to bury him in the accustomed cemetery of his line at Brugh na Boinne, for 'he did not adore stones and trees, and did not worship the same god' as did his forbears.² As the line of Cormac is believed to have been Belgic, the inference is that the Belgic Gauls, in Caesar's time the foremost exponents of Druidism, still represented their gods by the *simulacra* of stocks and stones at a date three centuries later. Any fancied resemblance between the Gaulish and the Roman divinities must therefore have been found in their respective attributes. There is a general agreement that the Gaulish 'Mercury' was identical with the Germanic Othin (Odin, Woden, Wotan). Tacitus³ equates with Mercury the great god of the trans-Rhenish Germans; and Paulus Diaconus some eight centuries later says that the Teutonic Wotan was the same as the Roman Mercury.⁴ It is clear that the great god of the Gauls and the great god of the Germans were very much alike. As Tacitus explicitly says that the German tribes made no images of their gods, and as no such thing is known as a possible German idol of that date, there is the more reason to believe that the resemblance to Mercurius must have been found in their several attributes alone, and that the Celt, like the German, saw his divinity in symbols only. Woden was the Germanic god of boundaries, as Mercurius was the Roman god thereof; and as Mercurius' presentment might be a herm, or a mere unhewn stone, the *plurima simulacra* of the Gaulish god may have been nothing but so many stones, *menhirs* for example, and exactly parallel with the Greek *hermae*,

and the Three Graces at Orchomenus were represented by three shapeless stones (*ibid.* ix, 38, 1).

¹ Maximus Tyrius, *Dissert.* xxxviii, ἀγαλμα δὲ Διὸς Κελευκὸν ἐψηλὴ δρῦς.

² *Leabbar na Uíðibre*; see Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 74. There is not sufficient evidence to justify the assertion that Cormac had become a Christian, and such a thing is unlikely. He had, perhaps, adopted an iconic form of

religion picked up from his considerable acquaintance with Roman Britain, where he is said to have spent three years of his life (*Annals of Ulster*, anno 222).

³ *Germ.* 9.

⁴ *de Gestis Langobardorum*, i, 9: Wotan . . . ipse est qui apud Romanos Mercurius dicitur. So Geoffrey of Monmouth (vi, 10) makes Hengist speak of 'Mercury, whom in our language we call Woden.'

which, according to Herodotus, were a 'Pelagian' (i.e. non-Greek) invention, and in Arcadia represented not Hermes, but Zeus, who was a Celtic divinity.¹

Caesar, who knew Gaul from end to end, makes no mention of any temples whatever. Strabo twice speaks of them (ἱερά). He says² that the Gauls habitually crucified human victims 'in their temples.' There is little to go upon, but one would suppose the victims to be exposed to the public view, and that, therefore, a *temenos* is here meant rather than a roofed building; and the Greek word (ἱερόν) means no more than a 'holy place,' not necessarily a building. In the same passage he speaks of a 'temple' in the Isle of the Women-Priests off the mouth of the Loire, which was once a year ceremonially unroofed and again roofed within the same day before sundown. In this case he is repeating a traveller's tale, which he did not himself believe³; but if the facts were as told him, they suggest only a very small building, or perhaps rather a βοθρός, and a ceremony analogous to the solemn opening and closing of the *Mundus* and of the *Ara Consi* in Rome. The Germanic tribes in general, Tacitus says, 'build no temples, nor make any idols in human form. They consecrate certain clearings amid their pasture-grounds to this or that divinity, whose presence they see with the eye of faith only.'⁴ Elsewhere he specifies

¹ § 198.

² For he goes on to tell another story with the remark that it is 'still more like a fairy-tale (ἐν μυθώδεσσιν).' The tale about the Isle of the Women-Priests comes also in Pomponius Mela (iii, 6). The island was that of Sena (Sein), off the Point du Raz in Lower Brittany, which is in reality 140 m. distant from the outfall of the Loire. Sir John Rhys (*Lectures*, pp. 1967) wrote that this annual unroofing of the sanctuary 'clearly implies that originally it had no roof but the sky.' There is no analogy with the fact that many Greek temples remained closed the year through, excepting upon the single feast-day of the patronal divinity, as e.g. the Thesmophorion, Eleusinion and Lenaion in Athens, and the Theban temples of Dionysus the Deliverer (Pausanias, ix, 16, 6) and Mother Dindymene (ibid. ix, 25, 3).

³ *Germ.* 9. The word here translated 'clearing' is *lucus*, that rendered 'pasture-grounds' is *nemus*, for which cp. *nemed*, p. 299, n. 1, above. It follows that such *lota*

a *silva Herculi sacra*¹ near the Weser, a *lucus quem Baduhennae vocant*² among the Frisians, a sacred *silva* of the Semnones,³ and a *castum nemus* consecrated to Nerthus.⁴ To the *silva* of the Semnones he refers again in the same passage as *templum*, and elsewhere, in speaking of the Marsi, he talks of a *templum quod Tanfanae vocabant*,⁵ which Germanicus 'levelled with the ground.' If he used the word *templum* here in the common acceptation of that term, we must suppose that the Marsi had 'copied from Roman models during a familiarity of 80 years'⁶; but it is quite as likely that he used it in its proper sense of 'precinct.' The scene of the massacre of Varus' legions⁷ was in the immediate neighbourhood of a *locus consecratus*: near by were *luci et barbarae arae*, 'altars of these barbarians set up in clearings,' and all about them were to be seen the bones of the legionaries who had been crucified or buried alive, while the heads of others had been nailed to the trunks of the trees. Nothing is said of any *templum* here, yet the spot was indubitably such to the Germans.⁸ The Hermunduri, he says,⁹ having conquered the Chatti in battle, sacrificed their entire army—horses and men and all—to the gods Mars and Mercury, precisely as Cæsar tells us was the custom¹⁰ of the Gauls; and Arminius would seem to have dealt in the same way with Varus' men. When Tacitus wrote that 'the temple of Tanfana was levelled to the ground,' he probably meant that the trees of the *lucus*, and the *barbarae arae* therein, were destroyed. That some at least of these *luci ac nemora* were such in the literal sense, is proved by his assertion that studs of white horses which were never broken to harness were kept there¹¹; and this further suggests that some sort of fence surrounded the place.

The Germans, says Tacitus, went into battle with certain *effigies et signa*¹² brought from their holy places

consecrated were not to be looked for in the towns.

¹ *Annales*, ii, 12.

² *Ann.* iv, 73. Grimm connects with *Badu*, 'battle.'

³ *Germ.* 39.

⁴ *Germ.* 40.

⁵ *Ann.* i, 50-51. It was somewhere near Dortmund, says Furneaux *ad loc.*

⁶ Keyser, *Northern Antiquities*, p. 80.

⁷ *Ann.* i, 61.

⁸ Of the use of masonry of any kind, or even of tiles, in their domestic buildings the Germans knew nothing (*Germ.* 16). So far as these were buildings at all they were of timber, but often they were mere *souterrains* heaped over with a roof of litter (*ibid.*).

⁹ *Ann.* xiii, 57.

¹⁰ *B.G.* vi, 17, 3-4.

¹¹ *Germ.* 10.

¹² *Germ.* 7.

¹ Under Roman influence the Celt, both in Gaul and in Britain, speedily came to make images of his deities, and there seems to have been an intermediate stage in which the gods were represented in the forms of animals such as the bear, the horse, and particularly the boar. Moccus, a title of the Gaulish Mercury, is the Welsh *mochyn*, 'pig'; and that animal, says Prof. Anwyl (*Celtic Religion*, p. 31), holds a place of honour in Celtic legend even in historical times: St. Cadoc is guided to the site of his monastery by a wild boar (*Vita S. Cadoci*, 5), and Walafrid Strabo (*Vita S. Galli*) relates how St. Gall made alliance with a bear for the protection of his oratory near Bregenz. Other seemingly sacred creatures were the mule, the raven, and possibly the horned serpent. Such facts lend point to the remark of Gildas (*Hist. Brit.* § 4) that the gods of the British Celts were 'almost more numerous than those of Egypt.' Figures of some of them, he says, were still to be seen in his own time (sixth century), mouldering in their forsaken temples.

(*luci*). As he had previously said that they had no anthropomorphic idols, these must have been symbols only.

To the various divinities were offered *animalia concessa*, that is, the kind of animal appointed for each, while to Wotan were sacrificed human victims also.¹ H. M. Chadwick (*Religion of Odin*) shews that the sacrifice of human victims by hanging was the principal feature in Wotan's worship. So one understands why trees were desirable adjuncts to the 'temple,' and why the Saxon saw in Stonehenge nothing more romantic than 'Stone Gallows,' for such appears to be the meaning of the name.

The most remarkable difference between the two peoples was in their attitude towards death : to waste wealth and labour upon 'monuments,' i.e. barrows and their accessories, the Germans regarded as derogatory to the dead,² whereas the Gauls took precisely the opposite view.³ With the Gauls cremation was the general practice ; among the Germans, as in Scandinavia, it was mainly reserved for the upper classes.⁴ The German grave was merely a mound of turf⁵ ; the barrows of the Celts, as has been shewn,⁶ tended always to become more and more imposing. This 'luxury of grief' was probably Iberian, for it is not discoverable east of the Rhine. The fact helps to explain the difference between the moots of the Germans and those of the Gauls, for the moot was modelled upon the grave.