Baal Durotrigensis. A dissertation on the antient colossal figure at Cerne, Dorsetshire; and an attempt to illustrate the distinction between the primal Celtae and the Celto-Belgae of Britain / with observations on the worship of the serpent and that of the sun.

BAAL
DUROTRIGENSIS

J. G. Ackerman, Esq.

with the Author's compts

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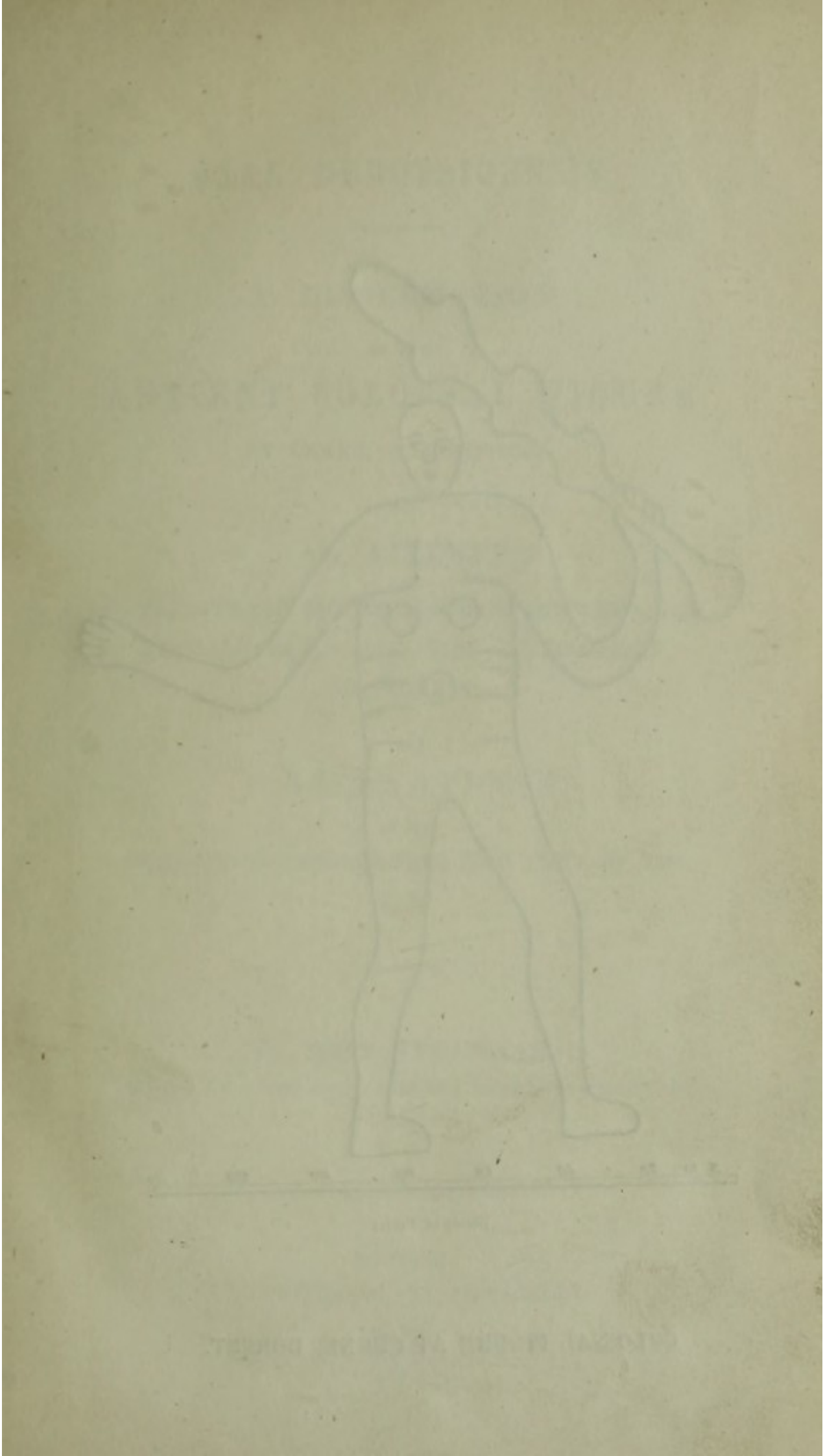

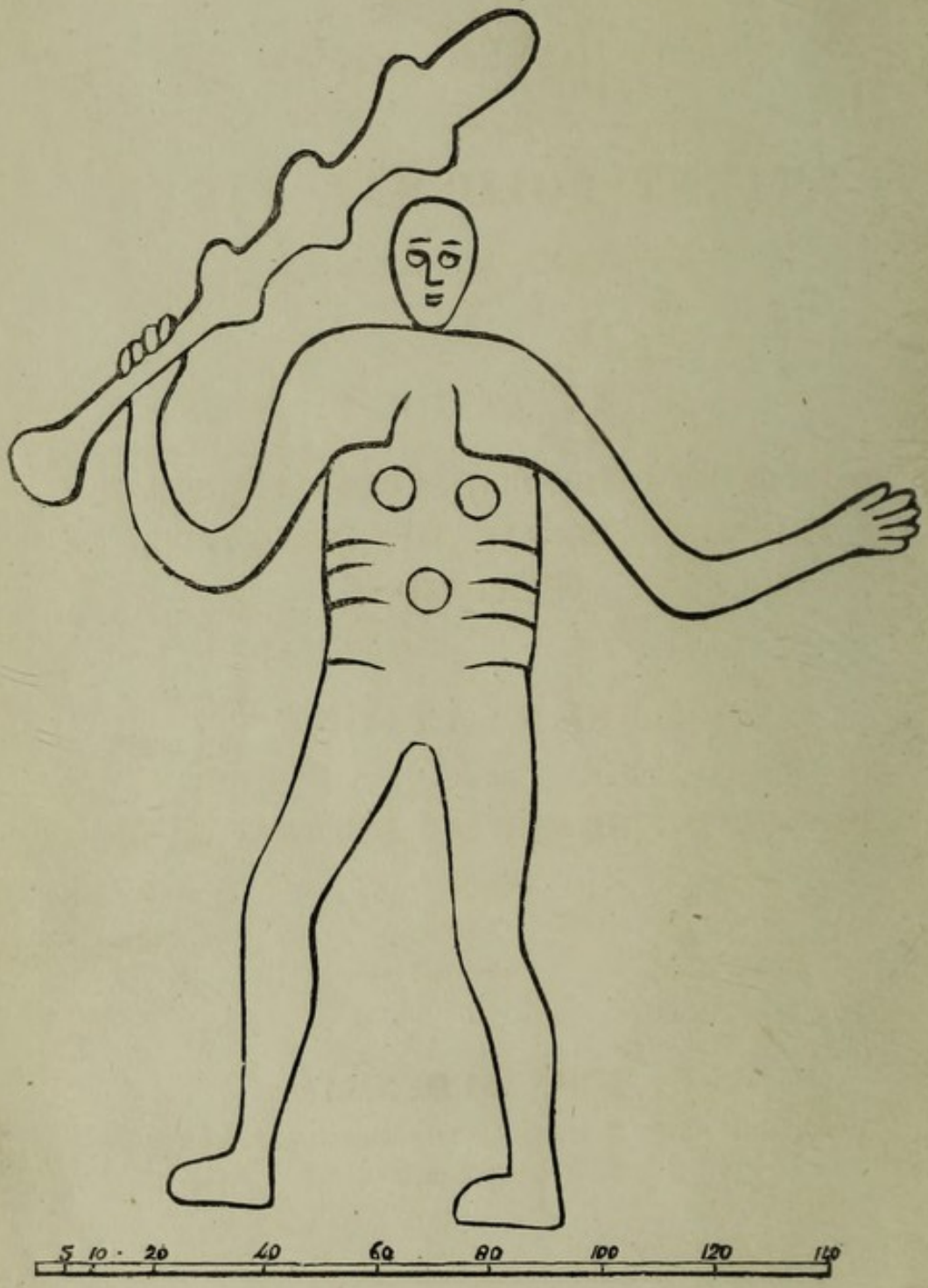

[Scale of Feet.]

COLOSSAL FIGURE AT CERNE, DORSET.

BAAL DUROTRIGENSIS.

A DISSERTATION

ON THE

ANTIENT COLOSSAL FIGURE

AT CERNE, DORSETSHIRE;

AND

AN ATTEMPT

TO ILLUSTRATE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE PRIMAL CELTÆ AND THE CELTO-BELGÆ OF BRITAIN:

WITH

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT AND THAT OF THE SUN.

By JOHN SYDENHAM:

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN AND COUNTY OF POOLE," &c.

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PREFACE.

One of the most healthy of the literary features of the present time consists in a growing desire on the part of the public to become acquainted with the things of other days, and in an increasing disinclination to pass, with incurious eye and uninquiring mind, those monuments of the antique past, which are frequently to be met with, fraught with historic associations of high interest and with much instruction, both pleasing and profitable. The following attempt to illustrate one of the most remarkable and antient of these monuments,—to gather round it some of its associations,—to trace out its origin and purpose,—and to re-invest it with some of the interest that properly belongs to it, will have in some measure attained the object for which it is put forth, if it have the effect of at all aiding in stimulating this increasing taste for such subjects, and in extending a venerating regard for the many antiquarian remains that especially adorn the county of Dorset.

It is not presumed that the conclusions to which the author has arrived in regard to the subject under consideration are unassailable by objection; but, satisfied that his views as to the solution of the antiquarian problem presented by the Cerne giant are founded on truth and strengthened by all the aids that can be brought to the elucidation of such questions, he confidently submits this dissertation to the test of public opinion; and should sufficient interest in the subject be manifested, he may, in future similar essays, endeavour to illustrate other of those highly interesting remains of long past ages which are so freely offered in his native county.

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BAAL DUROTRIGENSIS.

SECTION I.

Cerne and its Antiquities:—the Abbey;—the Well;—the Giant and its Traditions.

THE little town of Cerne Abbas, secluded in a quiet nook in the very heart of the county of Dorset, has little to attract the eye and excite the attention of the casual visitor. Remote from the bustle and confusion of manufacturing industry and commercial enterprise; with a population chiefly engaged in agricultural pursuits, or in the occupations thereto attached; it sees year after year pass by, unmarked by striking change in its external appearance or in the circumstances and manners of the society it comprises.

But, though the modern town has little worthy of notice, there are, in the remains of its antient and once celebrated abbey, associations well calculated to interest the historian and the antiquary.

An abbey, founded and endowed by the munificence of Ailmar, earl of Cornwall and Devon; presided over by the pious and erudite Ælfric, the distinguished promoter of Anglo-Saxon literature; and within whose cloisters a cardinal Morton was nurtured, possesses associations of some importance. But tradition, not satisfied with facts, has sought to obtain additional honour for this foundation, by alleging it to have been established by St. Augustin himself, who is reported, in a legend which will be found at length in a future page, to have converted the pagan inhabitants of this part to the Christian faith; to have miraculously caused the spring, known by his name, to bubble forth, in order that his neophytes might be baptized in the very hour of conversion; and to have founded the abbey here, in commemoration of the important advance thus made by Christianity. For all this, however, there is no sufficient foundation: and, indeed, it was frequently the case, as Augustin was a Benedictine monk, that the inmates of monasteries devoted to that order, and especially to the rule introduced by Augustin, would boldly resolve any uncertainty as to the date of the foundation of their houses, by attributing the establishment to that distinguished man himself.

Now St. Augustin arrived in the kingdom of Kent, A. D. 596 or 597, and he died, according to the most authentic accounts, about A. D. 604. He is described as travelling over all England, so far as king Ethelbert's dominions extended, converting the people to the Christian faith. But Ethelbert's

dominions did not extend so far westward as Cerne; and there is no good reason to believe that Augustin travelled at all into West Saxony. His nearest approach to that territory appears to have been when he held his celebrated conference with the Welch, which took place at Augustin's Oak, "being in Wiccia or Worcestershire, upon the confines of the country of the West Saxons[1]." Indeed, it is very doubtful whether the West Saxons themselves had established their power so far westward as Cerne, until the reign of Cynegils. The antient Britons, driven to the remote fastnesses of their land, when pressed towards the extremities of the isle, resisted the invaders with an increasing tenacity; and in the western confines to which the struggles were brought, the hostility arising from a diversity of religious belief burned with greater ardour and incited them to additional deeds of valour; for whilst the invading Saxon hosts were pagan polytheists, the inhabitants of the west of Britain had long been Christianized; and a remarkable stone recently brought to light in pulling down and rebuilding the church at Wareham, Dorset, bears an inscription, which, if read aright by Mr. Aneurin Owen, affords most important evidence of this fact, and proves the existence of a British Christian church at that place early in the fifth century. That gentleman, of acknowledged authority on such matters, interprets the inscription as commemorative of the dedication of a church by Cwatug, Catocus, or Cadoc, an Armorican Briton, deputed with Germanus, Lupus, and ano-

1 Godwin, 43.—Bede, l. ii c. 2.

ther of the Gaulish bishops, about the year 430, to visit the churches in Britain, to withstand the Pelagian heresy, then prevalent among them.

An extension of the power of the West Saxons in a westerly direction, took place under Cynegils, A. D. 612[2], and it seems most probable that it was on that occasion that Saxon paganism spread over this part of what is now the county of Dorset. This was after the death of Augustin; and it was certainly not until twenty years after his death, viz. about A. D. 625, that the West Saxons received the Christian faith, on the preaching of Birinus, who, having promised to travel as a missionary to the most savage and barbarous people in the farthermost part of the isle, and finding himself thus suited in the country of the Gewisses, as the West Saxons were then termed—they being altogether pagans of the most corrupt character—he resolved to go no farther; and, having commenced his pious labours, converted king Cynegils, and founded the first West Saxon bishopric at Dorchester[3]. Some contend that Birinus's see was the Dorchester in Oxfordshire; but the preponderating weight of testimony is conclusively in favour of the more western Dorchester of Dorsetshire. In either case the fact is decisive against the claim set up for Augustin.

The earliest distinct appearance of any religious foundation here occurs about A. D. 870, when Edwold or Eadwold, brother of St. Edmund the Martyr, king of the East Angles, struck with the

2 Will: Malmesb.
3 Bede, l. iii, c. 7.

unhappy fate of his brother who had been murdered by the Danes, declined the crown, retired from the world, and led a hermit's life near a spring called "Silver Well," at Cerne. He died A. D. 871, and was interred here, his remains being held in veneration for his reputed sanctity and miracles[4]. A hermitage was, doubtless, all that then existed here; for hermitages in time past, were places, not only of religious retirement, but of burial too, being venerated as the depositum of the remains of those who had distinguished the same localities by the austere sanctity of their lives.

It was more than a century later than this, that the abbey itself appears to have been founded. The monastic writers state that Ailmar, Ælward, or Ægelward, a rich man, built a monastery at Cernel, in honour of St. Peter, and endowed it with a plentiful revenue. Leland[5] calls this Ailmar earl of Cornwall and Devon, who, having a great veneration for the memory of St. Edwold, transferred his remains from the hermitage to the church, and built and endowed this abbey for Benedictine monks. He began it in the reign of king Edgar, and finished it A. D. 987. It was dedicated to St. Mary, St. Peter, and St. Benedict; and in later ages to St. Edwold or Athelwold[6]. Other antient earls of Cornwall were also great benefactors to this abbey, which experienced the usual vicissitudes of such religious establishments. During

4 Leland, Collect: i, 350; iii, 65.—Malmes: 144.—Brompton, 807.

5 Collect: iii, 65.

6 Walter Cov:—Malmes: 144.—Leland, Collect: i, 350; iii, 65.—Leland, Itin: viii, 71.—Rymer, Fœd: xiv, 637.—Tanner, Not: Mon., 104.

the invasions of the piratical Danes, it appears to have suffered severely. On one occasion Canute, the Danish leader, plundered and destroyed the abbey; but, after he became king of England, he was a great benefactor to it, endowing the same with many lands and privileges[7].

Owing to the pious zeal and munificence of its patrons, the possessions of this house were very extensive. No fewer than seventeen manors in the county of Dorset belonged to it on the compilation of Domesday book; and in after ages its property was greatly increased, so that at the time of its dissolution, it numbered twenty-nine manors, besides lands in seventeen others, and the advowsons of eight livings.

When the ruthless decrees of the despotic Henry VIII and his subservient parliament took effect, and the many splendid edifices that adorned the land, and were, in their earlier days, the nurseries and retreats of piety and learning and charity, were smitten to the dust, and the church of Christ was plundered to enrich the fawning votaries of a human court, the Benedictine abbey of Cerne bowed its head and yielded to the stern visitation with an enforced assent. The surrender of this abbey to the commissioners, was made by Thomas Corton, the last abbot, and sixteen monks, on March 15, 1539, when it was valued at £515 17s. 10½d., as by Dugdale, or as given by Speed, £623 13s. 2¾d.

On the dissolution of the abbey and the surrender of its possessions to the king's use, the

7 Dugdale, Monas: i, 254.

demolition of the antient and beautiful edifices of this foundation seems to have speedily followed; and desolate fragments only are now left to attest to the observer the piety, the munificence, and the architectural skill which were combined in building and adorning this monastic edifice. The extent of the abbey cannot now be distinctly traced. On the demolition of the antient buildings, the farm house, now standing on or near the site, appears to have been constructed of the materials—as is indicated by several ornamental stones, some groining, and a few handsome windows of an ecclesiastical character, which have been introduced. The most conspicuous and the best preserved remain of the old abbey is the handsome square gateway, which, after having been long left to endure the dilapidation of time and the weather, has lately been restored with much propriety, under the direction of lord Rivers, the owner of the property. This, which seems to have been the principal entrance to the abbey, is a large and stately structure, of three stories, fronting the west. The lower story comprises the arched gateway or passage, the cieling of which was elegantly groined and adorned; and the spandrils of the arches contained emblazonments of the armorial bearings of the abbey, and, as is supposed, of Richard, duke of Cornwall, one of the benefactors to the abbey. A handsome oriel runs through the front of the two upper stories; and beneath the string-course dividing the windows are a series of eight escutcheons in quatrefoils, and eight others are

below the lower window. These windows and the embattled summit of the gateway are the parts which have been very judiciously restored.

The other remains of the abbey occasionally brought to light are mere fragments, principally found in the churchyard, lying contiguous to the farm house mentioned, and to the gateway, and on a part of which the conventual church formerly stood; here, portions of monuments and the effigies of long deceased abbots and monks; stone coffins, richly carved groinings, encaustic tiles, sculptured stones,—here, perchance, some delicate corbel head—there a mutilated finial,—are sometimes exhumed. But even such discoveries are but few, and add little to the information already known regarding the abbey: and it is remarkable that very few undoubted remains of the structure are now to be found in the town.

The same unhappy tale may be related of too many of the once opulent and famed ecclesiastical foundations of this country,—of establishments reared for the nurture and promotion of piety and charity and hospitality, but which, having admitted abuses of no light character, were visited with an indiscriminate violence originating in lust and avarice, that could not, or would not, distinguish between the engrafted superstitious abuse and the original pious purpose.

The abbey barn still exists at some distance from the site of the other buildings, being on the south-west side of the town. It is a large and remarkable structure, and well worth the attention

of the visitor. It is built with alternate layers of stone and flints chipped square and disposed with amazing neatness and accuracy. The buttresses, window frames, and angles are of stone.

In the north-east corner of the churchyard is an object of considerable interest in a beautiful spring of water, traditionally said to have been raised by St. Augustin, by whose name it is still called. The remains of a wall surround it, said to be those of a chapel dedicated to that holy man. This well had a reputation, doubtless, more antient than that of the abbey; and it was formerly called Silver Well; a name, probably, corruptly derived from the Roman times, when it might have had a somewhat similar name from the grove (*silva*), in the shades of which its clear waters had their source, and the foliage of which, indeed, still overshadows it.

But beyond these Cerne has to boast of a relic of antiquity compared with which the abbey and its associations are but as things of yesterday. The colossal figure, which forms the subject of this dissertation, and which is carved on the steep acclivity of the hill to the north-east of the town, is an enduring record of far remote times,—a memorial of an age and a people full of deep interest, but of whom nothing remains but their stupendous works and fragments of their mystic traditions. This singular monument had excited the speculative wonder of generation after generation, and its origin and purpose had become the subject of fast-corrupting legend, even at the period of the foundation of the abbey.

This memorial is the outlined figure of a man of colossal dimensions (*vide* frontispiece), cut in the bold and precipitous escarpment of the lofty chalk hill that overlooks the town from the north-east. Though rude in its construction, it is not without indications of considerable attention to anatomical proportion, as appears more especially evident when viewed from an opposite hill. The figure is one hundred and eighty feet in height[8], and the outline two feet in width and the same in depth; and, being cut in the white chalk, the image is a conspicuous object for a considerable distance in the several directions from which its judicious location makes it visible; and it must have been particularly so whilst the trenches were

8 The dimensions of this gigantic figure are very minutely given by Hutchins, as under :—

Whole length,	180 feet.
Length of his foot,	18 ,,
Breadth of ditto,	8 ,,
,, of the small of the leg,	8 ,,
,, of the calf,	12 ,,
,, of the thigh,	18 ,,
Length of the leg and thigh,	85 ,,
From the top of the thigh to the top of the head,	95 ,,
Length of his ribs,	16 ,,
Breadth of the shoulders,	44 ,,
,, of the elbow,	19 ,,
Length of the fingers,	7 ,,
Breadth of the hand,	12 ,,
,, of the wrist,	7 ,,
From the wrist to the elbow,	30 ,,
,, elbow to the shoulder,	55 ,,
Length of the arm,	102 ,,
,, of the club,	120 ,,
Breadth of the knots of the club,	24 ,,
,, of the club at other places,	7 ,,
Length of the face,	23½ ,,
Breadth of ditto,	9 ,,
,, of the chin,	6 ,,
,, of the mouth,	3½ ,,
Length of the nose,	6 ,,
Breadth of ditto,	2½ ,,
Diameter of the eye,	2½ ,,
,, of the breasts,	7 ,,

kept cleared, as they were some years since, that operation being periodically performed on the lapse of a certain number of years; and the day selected for that purpose was observed as a high holiday in the town and neighbourhood. Let us hope that the custom may be revived.

This strange figure has, of course, excited curiosity in all ages since its object and purpose became obscure; and conjecture has, accordingly, been busy in dealing with it, and in setting on foot divers tales to account for its origin; some of them remarkable but for the puerile conceits they involve; some indicating much ingenuity, but wholly lacking in foundation; others, like that of Dr. Maton, solving the problem with a facility equal to that of Alexander at the Gordian knot, leaping over every difficulty without consideration, but with a determination to arrive at the easiest possible solution[9]. Dr. Stukeley was, perhaps, nearest

9 Dr. Maton says "There is a tradition among the vulgar, that this was to commemorate the destruction of a giant, who, having feasted on some sheep at Blackmore, and laid himself down to sleep, after his meal, on this hill, was bound and killed by the enraged peasants on the spot. Without recurring to any ridiculous story, or to any conceit of antiquaries for the origin of the figure, one may conclude that most works of this sort, especially when contiguous to encampments, were the amusement merely of idle people, and cut with as little meaning, perhaps, as shepherd boys strip off the turf on the Wiltshire plains."—[Maton: Observations on the Western Counties; ii, 17.]

Hutchins says—"Most antiquaries agree that it is a monument of high antiquity, and make little doubt but that it was a representation of the Saxon God, Heil; so that it must be more antient at least than A. D. 600, soon after which time the Saxons were converted to Christianity. Dr. Stukeley was of a singular opinion that it was the figure of Hercules, and that the Saxon God, Heil, was no other than the Phœnician Hercules or Melicartus, who brought hither the first colony, and this figure was not so much an object of religious worship as a memorial. The club in our giant's hand seems to have led him to imagine this. At a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, Feb. 16, 1764, Dr. Stukeley read his account of the giant of Cerne, in Dorsetshire, with a drawing of it. 'This is an immense figure of Hercules, with his club, cut out of the turf of a sloping chalk hill. It is 180 feet in height. The proper view of it is from the opposite hill; and it required a good deal of skill in optics to make it appear with any degree of symmetry in that situation. The inhabitants know nothing more of it than that

the truth in what Mr. Hutchins calls his "singular" opinion, though the erudite doctor could not divest himself of his Phœnician hypothesis. That it was, indeed, a memorial of the pagan divinity, El, the personified deity of the worship of the sun, is the opinion now hazarded: and that such opinion is well grounded will, it is trusted, be sufficiently evident from a consideration of many general and local circumstances;—that, in short, it is an enduring memorial of a triumph achieved here, long prior to Roman intercourse, by a tribe of worshippers of the sun over an earlier tribe of the worshippers of the diluvian serpent.

they fancy it to be a deity of the antient Britons. Unquestionably it means to represent the famous and first Hercules, the Phœnician leader of the first colony to Britain, when they came hither for the Cornish tin. It is not to be supposed that it was made in his time, but afterwards, and in memory of him, when the Britons had a notion of the latter Theban Hercules, the tamer of wild men and of wild beasts. But our Phœnician Hercules was a different person, and a different sort of a person, as coming from the politest part of the Asiatic world. Lucian gives us a just picture of him; "an old man, bald before, learned, and very eloquent;" and so one would think him to be, who could persuade his associates to venture into the great ocean, and fix an habitation in Britain. On the southern coast they first dwelt; and a great people we may well judge them to be, from the infinite number of barrows spread universally on the whole of these delightful downs of Dorset. Here they celebrated their religious panegyres, or public sacrifices, with public games of horse-racing and chariot-racing, whereat our British coins were the prizes of the victors. So grand and magnificent was the celebration of the games here, that one might imagine Homer hence took his notion of the gods going to visit the 'inculpabiles Ethiopes,' on the occasion. If Homer was not a Phœnician, of which we have suspicion, yet from them he learnt his great knowledge, and it is more likely he should know from them the solemnities we speak of in Britain than those of Ethiopia properly so called. By Ethiopia, we know well, the antients meant Arabia, and from Arabia our first Britons came, and were of the same patriarchal religion as those Arabian magi, properly Druids, who came to worship our infant Saviour. It is of small purpose to gather up these antiquities, unless we endeavour to give some rational and probable account of them. This the doctor proposes to the Society as a conjecture. The great British king Eli surnamed Maur and the just, father of Imanuence king of the Trinobantes, and of Casvelan, who fought Cæsar in his British expedition, is intimated in the name they give this figure, Helis. The doctor conjectures this enormous figure of Hercules might be cut by the Britons in compliment to king Eli, on his expelling the Belgæ from that country, and driving them into Ireland, where they took possession of the south part of it, under the name of Firbolgs. The figure might be cut on his being present at the anniversary Midsummer games, a name still remaining in Yorkshire, from oldest times.'"—[From Dr. Stukeley's MS.—Hutchins, iii, 321.]

The testimony inducing and justifying this conclusion, and a summary of which will be found in the following pages, not only consists of circumstances and traditions altogether local in their character, but involves considerations of the very widest extent; inasmuch as it will be desirable in some measure to trace the course of some general principles of religious belief which spread a corrupted mythology over the face of the globe—with the exception of God's own chosen people—and of which we here find the long enduring local monument.

SECTION II.

Serpent Worship, the first deviation from the primæval religion:—its universality:—identity of the Serpent of Paradise with the Diluvian Serpent:—consequent combination of Dracontine and Diluvian rites.

In pursuing the object of this little treatise, it will be necessary to inquire into the nature and extent of the first deviations from that pure faith revealed in the earliest ages of the human race; for it is fully manifest from the erudite labours of those writers who have devoted their time and their learning to the examination of the origin and the principles of the mythological systems of antiquity, that all the varied rites and apparently irreconcilable combinations of antient paganism resolve themselves into corruptions of that primæval faith: and, in truth, it is most gratifying to arrive at the irresistible conviction that all

researches into the history, the customs, and more especially the religious rites of antient nations, however distant in geographical position, concur in giving confirmation to the truth of that theocratic history which has been handed down to us by the inspired pen of Moses, and in establishing that the religious creeds of all antient nations were of one brotherhood, that every mythological fable, every sacred system, eastern or western, are intimately connected in their origin, and that all are reducible to order and comparative symmetry by the application of one sole test—the primitive revelation as preserved in the Holy Scriptures. Thus in the customs, the traditions, and the religious rites of all people, up to the most remote period to which, in these days, we can revert, are ample indications of the once universal prevalence of a serpent worship, originally commemorative of the fall of man through the instrumentality of a dracontine seducer, of whom these rites were propitiatory, but which were subsequently blended with the ceremonies observed in regard to the destruction of the world by an overwhelming deluge; for, as will be shown, the serpent that was the destroyer of the primæval spiritual purity of man, was naturally regarded as an apt emblem of the subsequent destruction of the material world.

The worship of the serpent may be traced in the religion of almost every antient nation throughout Asia, Europe, Africa, and America. The progress of the sacred serpent from Paradise

to Peru (truly says Mr. Deane[1]) is one of the most remarkable phenomena in mythological history, and to be accounted for only on the supposition, that a corrupted tradition of the serpent in Paradise had been handed down from generation to generation.

That an object of abhorrence should have been exalted into an object of veneration is easily accounted for by the disposition of the mind of man to regard with deprecating awe a power of evil, and to endeavour by propitiatory offerings to avert his displeasure and its tremendous consequences: for fear engenders superstition much more readily than love does piety; and the effect has unhappily been that the instruments of evil have been worshipped as much as or more than the author of good. Hence it is that demons have, in all ages, had so large a share of religious rites.

It would extend the present inquiry to too great a length to enter here into any detail of the indicia which are afforded by monuments and records that have come down to our day of the universality of ophiolatry, and which have been so minutely described in the pages of Bryant, Holden, Faber, Deane, and others; and it may suffice to say that remains of its prevalence still exist in the north and in the south,—that, from India even to Mexico, no nation is free from its traces. In the great oriental fountains of mankind, the prolific sources of mythological fancies, in Hindostan, on the shores of the Caspian, in

1 Deane on the Worship of the Serpent, 32.

Persia and Syria; amid the gorgeous confusion of the Egyptian pantheon; in Grecian and in Roman fable; in the ruder but not less expressive myths of northern Europe; in the remote islands of Polynesia and New Zealand; in North America and in Peru, the evidences of an once universal addiction to the worship of the serpent exist in palpable reality.

That ophiolatry was practised in our own country,—that in the religious rites of the earliest fathers of our land the serpent was holden in peculiar veneration, is beyond the possibility of question. In that learned and elaborate work of Davies, his "Mythology of the British Druids," ample evidence of the fact will be found. There the serpent is described as one of the emblems of Hu the mighty; and we moreover read of "the serpent who pierces the sullen ones,"—"the dragon chief,"—"the gliding king,"—"the dragon,"—"the dragon ruler of the world," &c.[2]; and in that antient poem, "The Elegy of Uther Pendragon," we read, "the sanctuary is earnestly invoking the gliding king, before whom the fair one retreats[3],"—a beautiful allegorical memorial of the Paradisaical scene between the primal woman and the serpentine seducer. So also may be adduced the extraordinary regard paid to the serpent's egg,—to the "glain nadr[4],"—and that custom of extracting some substance of peculiar sanctity from the head of the charmed reptile;

2 Davies, Mythol. Brit. Druids, 116,-7,-8; 121,-2; et passim.
3 Ib. 562.
4 Ib. 208.

of which, indeed, a vague tradition came down to the days of Shakspere, who in his immortal verse has told us that

> "————the toad, ugly and venomous,
> "Wears yet a precious jewel in his head[5]."

So extensively indeed was the veneration of the serpent involved in the religious rites of the Celtæ, that Davies informs us that "the Druids themselves were called serpents—'*nadredd*,' adders,—by the Welch bards[6]." But further instances need hardly be adduced, when throughout the kingdom we have still the remains of so many serpent temples, and when, in this part of the country, we may point to the stupendous and well-known ophite sanctuaries of Abury, in Wiltshire, and Stanton Drew, in Somersetshire, and to others of less magnitude and celebrity[7].

5 A similar superstition prevails amongst the Cherokees of North America, who believe that the recesses of their mountains, overgrown with lofty pines and cedars, and covered with old mossy rocks, are inhabited by the kings or chiefs of rattlesnakes, whom they denominate "the bright old inhabitants." They represent them as snakes of an enormous size, and which possess the power of drawing to them every living creature that comes within reach of their eyes. Their heads are said to be crowned with a carbuncle of dazzling brightness.—Vide Notes to Leyden's Scenes of Infancy.

6 Mythol. Brit. Druids, 208.

7 Remains of two dracontia, hitherto unnoticed, yet exist within a few miles of Dorchester. One of these, at Little Mayne, about three miles from the town just named, comprises remains of an extensive and interesting character. The stones, which are scattered over several fields, have evidently, in many instances, been removed from their original situation; many have been used in building the farm house which stands in the midst of them; whilst others have, in all probability, fallen a sacrifice to the vandalism of road commissioners and contractors. These circumstances, together with the interposition of the farm house and contingent buildings, interrupt the design of the temple, but there are still sufficient manifestations amply to attest that here was the site of a magnificent dracontium. Many of the stones, of various sizes, lie immediately contiguous to the road from Dorchester to Wareham, and on the south side of it. A complete but small circle may still be found on this spot, composed of ten or eleven stones, all of which still remain, though some of the high ones have been thrown down with violence and fractured by falling on other stones. This circle, one side of which is somewhat encroached on by the roadside hedge, is about 30 feet in diameter: other stones lying around seem to indicate an exterior circle. These remains are in a

It is curious to trace the progress of religious corruption, the blending of system with system, as tradition became accumulated on tradition, and as events of signal moment in the history of man followed each other, the memorials and observances of each being clipped and squared to associate with those of the others. The antient worship of the serpent, doubtless one of those early deviations from the pure faith, which called down the divine judgment on the ante-diluvian world, became, subsequent to the Noachian deluge, blended with rites and ceremonies allusive to that stupendous event; and this intermixture commenced at a very early period. It was by

fosse, which extends considerably to the S. E., and is traceable for nearly a mile to the N. W., where it is lost in the plantations. It is in some parts about 20 feet deep, with a vallum on each side, and was widened considerably at the spot on which the circle stands. In a field on the other side of the road, to the N. E. of the circle, are many large stones, five of which assume a circular form, but with intervals in which other stones once stood. Round these are still larger stones, probably constituting part of an outer concentric circle; and at some distance to the S. E. are several large stones reared edgeways in a direct line, forming part of an avenue leading to the circles. Slight earthworks are visible in this field. Close to the circle last mentioned, on the N. E., stand the farmhouse and yard, beyond which is another close, containing a straight avenue pointing towards the circles, formed of a shallow fosse with a low vallum on either side, and a considerable number of stones placed on the summits of the valla. Here, also, are further earthworks, and a broad terrace lying on the S. E. of the avenue and of equal length with it.

The other ruined dracontium alluded to lies to the west of Blagdon hill, and to the north of the cromlech (Helston) near Portisham, about six miles south-west of Dorchester. Traces of avenues and circles are still plain; but the hostility which civilization and population wage against the remains of antiquity has been but too successfully carried on, a great number of the stones, some of them of vast size, having been, within the last few years, removed with great labour from the site they occupied, for the double purpose of being appropriated to the repairs of the roads, and of leaving the land free for the operations of the plough; so that the actual design and arrangement of the temple cannot be correctly ascertained: much, however, may yet be done by careful examination and patient investigation. Regarding four of these stones yet remaining, standing near each other, a traditionary stanza has been preserved amongst the country people from beyond the memory of man :—

"Jeffry and Joan,
And little dog Denty,
And Edy alone."

This dracontium was, probably, dilapidated to some extent when the more recent worshippers of the sun asserted the predominance of their rites, and erected their
x altar,—the cromlech,—on the adjoining hill.

no, Mr Sydenham; not an altar, but a tomb. If you had studied Anglo Saxon more & "Celtic" less the very word Helston would have told you that Helston is from hælan to cover & stan a stone.

the Cuthite descendants of Ham, more especially, that the worship of the serpent of the fall was renewed after the flood, and on its diffusion over the globe by those tribes in their migrations from the plains of the east, it was speedily intermixed with the traditions of the universally destructive deluge, an event that could not fail to be deeply impressed on the minds of the offspring of those who were preserved from its effects; and thus, Noah, raised by idolatrous descendants to the rank of the deity of the ark, became, by those strange but reconcilable circumstances which occur in all mythology, associated with the serpent of the fall. That this blending should have taken place may very readily be accounted for, inasmuch as the power that had wrought the decadence of the moral supremacy of man would naturally be regarded as connected with the destruction of his physical abode; and the serpent, moreover, by the undulating nature of his progressive action, would further constitute an apt emblem of the troubled waters of the deluge. Kircher, indeed, instructs us that when the antients wished to denote the element of water, they described a serpent moving in an undulating manner.

Evidence of this association of ophite and diluvian observances is everywhere to be traced; and the symbols of the deluge and those of the destroying serpent are frequently intermingled in extraordinary confusion.

In the mythological systems of Hindostan and

Egypt we find the serpent as the cause of the deluge by which the world was overwhelmed, moving in the waters and troubling the deep[8]; and a remarkable analogy to this belief is afforded by a tradition still extant amongst the peasantry of Ireland, which attributes any commotion of the waters of one of their lakes to the struggles of a serpent whom they represent as having been subdued by St. Patrick, locked in an iron chest, and thrown into the lake.

In Hindoo mythology, the king of the Assurs or demons was also the prince of the nagas or snakes, who reigned in Patala below the waters. The forms of both the fish and the serpent occur amongst the Hindoo idols. A figure of Buddha, given by Moor, terminates in the folds of a huge serpent; while Vishnu, in the Matsya Avatar, has the tail of a fish, and at another time is enveloped in serpent folds[9].

The Egyptian paintings and hieroglyphics are full of these associations. Montfaucon depicts two minor gods, who are represented, the one by a serpent with a bull's head, the other by a serpent with the radiated head of a lion,—manifest combinations of diluvian and dracontine symbols[10].

Pytho was the serpent bred out of the slime that remained after Deucalion's deluge; and it is evident that the Pythians worshipped the author of the deluge under the form of a serpent like the

8 Deane, 445.

9 Trans. Asiatic Soc., iii, 97.—Harcourt, Doctrine of the Deluge, i, 267.—Moor's Hindoo Panth., pl. 76, 48, 62, 75.

10 Deane, 125.

Egyptian Typhon[11], this Typhon being described by Apollodorus and Hyginus, as a monster with a human head and body and dracontine arms and legs. In an anaglyph, copied from a pillar formerly in the collection of the Duc de Choiseul Gouffier, a serpent is obviously the representation of the flood[12].

In China the genius of the watery element is denominated the black dragon; and the Chinese god Fohi, who is a diluvian deity, is said to have the form of a man terminating in that of a snake[13].

The Japanese, according to Kœmpfer, believe that the dragon dwells at the bottom of the sea, as its proper element[14], a belief that exactly accords with the far distant Scandinavian mythological fable of the great serpent Midgard, which encompasseth the earth, and lives underneath the waters[15].

To proceed from the east to the west; Mr. Bullock brought home from Mexico a monstrous idol, which he calls "the goddess of war," and says of it, "its form is partly human, and the rest composed of rattlesnakes and the tiger," the latter animal being a diluvian type[16]. A rainbow, with a serpent attached to each end of it, was a striking symbol in Mexican mythology[17]. Here is a beautiful and most manifest memorial, not

11 Harcourt, i, 366.
12 Ib., i, 259.
13 Davies' Chinese, i, 397.
14 Kœmpfer, Japan., 124.
15 Edda.
16 Deane, 297.
17 Purchas, Pilgrim., b. ix, c. 12.

only of the Noachian deluge, but also of the bow of the covenant, each end of which rests upon the undulating serpent, the apt emblem of the destructive waters. Amongst the Indian tribes of North America, the Nibanaba, half human, half fish, are described as dwelling in Lake Superior.

The first inhabitants of Europe after the subsidence of the deluge, are said to be the offspring of a woman, partly of the human and partly of the dracontine figure[18].

The river Rhyndacus, flowing from Olympus, and the site of diluvian ceremonies, is famous for its association with traditional serpents. Cecrops is said to have been of a two-fold form, human and dracontine, as are also Erectheus and Ericthonius.

The deity, in the composition of whose body the diluvian serpent formed the lower extremities, was represented in a bas-relief on a sarcophagus, supposed to be Athenian[19]; and this is in perfect conformity with the description of Claudian, [Gigant., 80.] that the Titanian giants had human heads and bodies, but their lower extremities consisted of a double serpent:—

"————Femorum qua parte volutus
"Duplex semiferis connectitur ilibus anguis."

And Ovid also says of these Titanian giants, that their mother earth gave them a thousand hands and serpents for legs:—

"Mille manus illis dedit, et pro cruribus angues[20]."

18 Deane, 183.
19 Museum Clementinum, tom. iv.
20 Fasti, l. v, 37.

That this intermixture of ophite and diluvian worship prevailed in Britain, we have the accumulated evidence of Bryant, and Faber, and Davies. The tradition of the deluge existed amongst the antient British tribes as a leading feature of their mythology, developed throughout the whole of their ritual. Almost every monument that has come down to our times, every historical fragment that bears upon the subject of their religious creed, and all analogy combine in leading to the conclusion that the early Celtic tribes of Britain associated diluvian rites with their prior worship of the serpent. In how many religious systems, indeed, is the tradition of the deluge perpetuated;—frequently perverted and localised, but still speaking in a language that cannot be misunderstood, and pointing with an intelligible finger to the dread event recorded in the Mosaic writings! Dionysius informs us that the rites of Bacchus were duly celebrated in the British Islands; and Strabo cites the authority of Artemidorus, that "in an island close to Britain, Ceres and Proserpine are venerated with rites similar to the orgies at Samothrace[21]." These rites were commemorative of the deluge; and the serpent was a prominent emblem in the ceremonies. The antient Welch Triads clearly preserve the memorial of the deluge in "the bursting forth of the lake of Llion," and the overwhelming the face of all lands, so that all mankind were destroyed except one man and one woman[22], and we

21 Davies, Myth. Brit. Druids, 89.
22 Ib., 95.

have already seen that the serpent was one of the emblems of Hu the mighty, the diluvian deity of the Britons; as, also, that in the myths of Ireland the serpent and the deluge were closely allied.

In all these fables, traditions, and symbolic representations,—and instances might be almost indefinitely extended,—we have clear and manifest allusions to diluvian and ophite associations. An interchange of figure is observed, which can only have resulted from an identity of attribute: the fish and the serpent are convertible emblems; and so intimate is this alliance that we find the mythological dragon to be an animal of the sea as well as of the land; whilst whales and serpents bear the same name in Hebrew: Thannin is used to denote both in that language, and in Chaldee, and in Syriac, and in Arabic. So familiar to the antients was this impression of the dragon's equivocal character, that the Prophet Isaiah blends both the forms in one description, as if they were but one animal:—"In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea[23]."

Oceanus and Tethys, the mermaids, and other oceanic deities, the Syrian Oannes, the Phœnician Atergatis, and Dagon, the idol that fell down before the ark of God at Ashdod, and who was half human and half a fish or serpent, are also of

23 Isaiah xxvii, 1.

this extensive class of compound deities in whom the ophite and diluvian attributes are combined[24].

24 The form attributed to the syrens of the antient poets, a human body with a fish's or serpent's tail,—the "desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne" of Horace, was of most extensive adoption in the mythological systems of antiquity. In the antient zodiac of Egypt, in the Barberini museum, among the capitals of the pillars in the church of Montivilliers in Normandy, Mr. Knight [Tour in Normandy, 184,] discovered the figure of a mermaid, of which he doubts whether it was a northern divinity or an ornament copied from the syrens of classical celebrity. Mr. Harcourt [Doctrine of the Deluge, i, 132,] asserts that it was a sacred form both in the north and in the south, in the east and in the west, barbarian and classic. Mr. Knight himself attests that he observed it more than once in the Lombard churches of Italy, and often in France. In the Indian zodiac the sign to which the festival of Doorga (a diluvian deity) belongs is called Min or Meen, and was originally represented by a figure half human and half fish. Oannes is described by Polyhistor, [Syncelli Chronographia] as having the body of a fish, but with a human head under his fish's head and human legs under his tail: he was the first instructor of mankind, the teacher of every art; and at the setting of the sun he descended beneath the ocean and remained there all night. Hyginus, corrupting the name still further, makes him the teacher of astrology to the Chaldees. It is stated by Berosus that Oannes appeared from the Erythræan sea; and no fewer than five visitations of this half fish half human creature are recorded by the same author, the last of which obtained the name of Odacon [Berosus in Apollodorus; Cory's Fragments, 20]; that is to say, writes Mr. Harcourt, [i, 414] five different princes were promoted to diluvian honours, the last under the name of Dagon, which long continued to be the appellation of an idol shaped according to the description of Berosus, and worshipped by the Philistines. From 1 Sam. v, 4, (see marginal reading) it seems that this idol, Dagon, resembled a fish in the lower part, with a human head and hands; and it appears plain from the prohibitions, Exod. xx, 4, and Deut. iv, 18, and from a place being called Beth-Dagon,—the temple of Dagon,—[Josh. xv, 41] that the oriental idolators had diluvian deities at a very remote period. The Syrian and Phœnician idol, Atergatis, by the Greeks corruptly called Derceto [Pliny, Nat. Hist., l. v, c. 23] is described by Lucian [De Dea Syr.] as having the half of a woman, but from the thighs downward a fish's tail. And Diodorus Siculus [lib. ii] describing the same idol as represented at Ascalon, says it had the face of a woman, but all the rest of the body a fish's. Dagon, or Dag-Oannes, was obviously the Dag-daa of the Irish, brought to them, with other oriental words and customs, from the east.

SECTION III.

Hostilities between the worshippers of the Sun and those of the Diluvian Serpent, ending every where in the overthrow of the latter:—British memorials thereof.

It has now been shown that the worship of the serpent and the celebration of diluvian rites were co-extensive in their universality, and intimately blended the one with the other; but widely as this combination—this diluvian-ophite worship prevailed, it was doomed not to be permanent. Another false creed engendered by the ingenuity of man, a further rejection of the pure religion revealed to Adam and preserved through Noah, arose amongst mankind. The truths of revelation were cast aside for the speculations of a natural theology; and the worship of the sun, the moon, and all the host of heaven—the adoration of the creature instead of the Creator,—

sprung into existence. This deviation from the primal faith differed, however, so far from those corrupt superstitions to which attention has been yet directed, that whilst its followers regarded the objects of their adoration as the benign sources of good, the votaries of the other creeds sought but to deprecate the powers of evil; and hence we may trace the parentage of that Manichean doctrine which at one time so widely prevailed. It naturally followed that principles so widely different should come into a state of conflict with each other; and we consequently find that continued hostilities prevailed between the followers of the diluvian ophite worship and the votaries of the sun and the host of heaven; and the contests which ensued terminated in the general overthrow of the former. The constant hostility, says Mr. Deane, in every country of the world between the worship of the sun and the worship of the serpent, would be the natural result of the position which they occupied as the two earliest of superstitions. True religion being obscured, (as we have every reason to believe it was,) the worshippers of the sun would naturally arrogate to themselves the privileges of the truth, and the fall of man being remembered as the work of the serpent, and the destructive deluge being also attributed to his agency, they would naturally regard the ophites as worshippers of the devil, and feel themselves under a bond of eternal hatred against them. Hence the whole struggle, originating in the aggressions of the worshippers

of the sun and carried on by the retaliation of the worshippers of the diluvian serpent. Tradition is full of their perpetual feuds. They enter into almost every leading fable, are depicted upon some of the most antient works of art, and are recorded in some of the oldest histories of man.

In Hindostan, fable and history alike teem with the perpetual conflicts of the sun and serpent. Surya is ever the enemy of Buddha, and Chrishna fights with the great diluvian monster[1].

1 In Hindoo mythology, the Kalinaga, or black dragon, is said to have been slain by Chrishna and by Heri in the waters of Yamuna or of Hani. [Trans. As: Soc: ii, 311.] Among the sculptures in the excavated temple of Keylas, in the mountains of Ellora, is a figure of Chrishna trampling on the black snake, or Kalinaga. He is triumphant over the serpent. [Seeley's Temples of Ellora, 177.—Moor's Hind: Pan: 199, pl. 62.] And in some of the sculptures in the same temple Rama and Ravan are depicted in dreadful combat; and Mr. Seeley thus evidently associates these delineations with the dracontine seduction of the first woman:—"The conflict was respecting the supposed frailty of Sita, wife of Rama, who was forcibly carried off to Ceylon, and afterwards rescued by Hanuman." [Ib., 132.] The Indian Deo Calyun, or, as the Greeks called him, Deucalion, was, doubtless, a diluvian deity. When Chrishna began to be worshipped as the sun, or god of fire, his votaries made repeated attempts to supplant the antient rites; in which they were invariably defeated until some Brahmin or Rajah of greater power succeeded in suppressing them, and substituted the fire of the Mithratic cave, which is, therefore, said to have slain Deo Calyun. The other exploit of Chrishna, mentioned above, confirms this interpretation. In the same mythology, the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month Aswini is peculiarly sacred to Yama, who judges the dead; bathing and libations are auspicious on that day, and on the following torches and flaming brands are kindled and consecrated to burn the bodies of kinsmen who may be dead in battle or in a foreign country, and to light them through the shades of death to the mansions of Yama. [Moor's Hind: Pan: 305.] This is a remarkable illustration of the manner in which the diluvian rites came at length to be superseded by those of fire-worship. In a Hindoo tradition of the deluge it is stated that Vishna plunged into the ocean and attacked and slew the monster Hayagriva, who was the cause of the deluge. The Hindoos have, also, traditions of contests between the Soors and Assoors, and other conflicts, all, doubtless, memorials of victories achieved at divers times and in various places, and in which religious worship was at issue. Arrian, in his Indian history, (c. xxxi) has a remarkable confirmation of this substitution of sun-worship for the diluvian rites. On the authority of Nearchus he speaks of an island called Nosala, sacred to the sun, and of which he relates that one of the Nereids had formerly chosen it for her place of residence, and, on men visiting the island, she was wont to change them into fish and send them into the sea; whereupon the sun, being enraged against her, commanded her to depart out of the island. Arrian, being too intelligent to receive this story literally; and, not looking on it as a mythic tradition, sneers at the credulity of Nearchus in receiving and recording the story, and regarding "the fables and fictions of antient times so sacred as not to be contradicted."

Serpent worship was prohibited in Babylon by a royal decree in the time of Daniel; and it is probable that the same decree suppressed it also in Persia; but the rise of Zoroaster and the decisive success of his doctrines unquestionably overthrew every other false religion in the Persian empire[2]. Xerxes, moreover, in his military expedition, as the chief (archimagus) of the Magian worship, destroyed all the temples he met with devoted to other rites[3].

This mythological contest and its result are also depicted on some Samaritan coins, on which the Assyrian Astarte, who is a Sabian deity, is represented as treading a river under foot. !!!

In Arabia the worship of the serpent was very early overthrown and gave way to the adoration of the host of heaven.

The Egyptian paintings and hieroglpyhics are full of allusions to these contests, in all of which the diluvian serpent is vanquished. In the tombs whole series of chambers are occupied by pictorial delineations of this subjugation of the great serpent Aphophis[4].

2 The Hindoos have a tradition that Zeratoosht (Zoroaster), during the time of Hystaspes, visited the Brahmins in the caves or temples at Garri-pourri (Elephanta island, sometimes called Selen Devi, or island of the gods); and while residing there he was initiated in different learning and sciences, with which he returned and enriched Persia. Porphyry mentions Zeratoosht retiring to a cave in Media with the instruments and knowledge he had obtained from the Brahmins. At that early period the Brahmins were in a high state of civilization and refinement. (Seeley, 339.)

3 Prideaux, Conn: i, 295.—Herodotus.—Arrian.

4 On the sculpture that adorns the tomb of Pharaoh Rhamses, the serpent Aphophis, the emblem of the deluge, is described (at least so Champollion says) as the brother and enemy of the sun; and part of the design represents how the gods dragged him out of the water and strangled him. [Harcourt, i, 432.] Lord Lindsay, describing some of the Egyptian tombs, says that one subject, frequently repeated, forcibly struck him,—the eventual conquest of the great serpent Aphophis

This is as unsound as most of the conclusions of the writer. Astarte appears merely as the tutelar Divinity of the City, & the figure below personifies the river on which the city is seated! This must be known to very young antiquaries, & its not being known by the writer shews that he has employed his time to the best purpose with which his knowledge does not fit him to grapple.

Among the Greeks the unremitting hostility of the children of the sun to the worshippers of the diluvian serpent is indelibly stamped upon every portion of mythological fable,—it enters into all their poetry, and is strikingly depicted upon their works of art. The overthrow of the Titans, the exploits of Hercules, the contest of Apollo and Python, the expedition of the Argonauts, the fable of Prometheus, and numberless other subjects of poetical and mythological speculation, are readily resolvable on this principle[5].

by the gods, who transfix him with daggers and bind him head and foot with ropes. [Lord Lindsay, Letters from Egypt, etc., 145]. And Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, whose exertions and learning have done so much for the elucidation of Egyptian antiquities, thus writes:—"The Egyptian Horus, son of Osiris, is supposed, on the death of the latter, to have stood forth as his avenger, defeating Typho in several battles and enabling Isis to thwart his evil intentions. It was, probably, in consequence of his victories over the enemy of mankind, that he was so often identified with Apollo, the story of whose combat with the serpent Pytho is evidently derived from the Egyptian mythology; and, indeed, the evil genius of his adversary is frequently figured under the form of a snake, whose head Horus is seen piercing with a spear." [Wilkinson, Manners and Customs of the Antient Egyptians, iv. 395.] And the same acute and intelligent writer further observes—"It may not be out of place to introduce another character of the evil being, in which we cannot fail to recognise the serpent, the enemy of mankind, and from which the Pytho of Greek mythology was evidently derived. Aphôphis or Apôp, which, in Egyptian, signifies a 'giant,' was the name given to the serpent of which Horus is represented as the destroyer. From this the Greeks borrowed the story of Apollo's destruction of the serpent Pytho. * * The destruction of the serpent by Horus, who, standing in a boat, pierces his head with a spear, as he rises above the water, frequently occurs in the sculptures; and, whether it has the head of a man or assumes the entire human form, it appears to be the same monster." (Ib., iv, 436.)

5 The conquest of the Titans manifestly indicates a religious conflict, which resulted in the subjection of the votaries of the diluvian serpent to the worshippers of the sun. In the bas-relief on the Athenian sarcophagus spoken of ante (p. 23), Jupiter is represented demolishing the arkite giants by the flames of his lightning. In one of the baths at Pompeii was a large bas-relief in stucco, of which the subject was the destruction of the Titans, who were represented with human bodies and arms and dracontine extremities. [Gell's Pompeiana, i, 100.] Hercules, in the wars of the giants against Jupiter, is represented as slaying a monster whose human body terminated in serpentine extremities. [Montfaucon, i, pl. 64.]

In speaking of Hercules, Mr. Harcourt [ii, 3] distinctly affirms that the conclusion to which his researches led him is that the "exploits of that personage exhibit a view of the conflict between rival sects: they were the victories obtained by the worshippers of the sun over their adversaries, and the monsters subdued were arkite priests. Some of them, no doubt, were the invention of a subsequent

And as in Hindostan Chrishna vanquishes the

age, when the name of Hercules had been assumed by ambitious warriors and given to fictitious heroes. But in many the connection with arkite mysteries may be easily discerned; and in all those cases where the literal sense is quite absurd, and in which an intelligent writer would be made to talk downright nonsense by admitting it, it is almost beyond a question that there is some latent mystery."

The contest of Apollo and Python for the temple of Delphi was a struggle of the sun worshippers for an ophite sanctuary. [Deane, 428.] The Pythian games are a memorial of such struggle. These were first instituted in celebration of the diluvian serpent. It is evident that the Pythians worshipped the author of the deluge under the form of a serpent like the Egyptian Typhon; but when the votaries of the sun became lords of the ascendant, and, suppressing the rival faction, succeeded in introducing the solar rites, Apollo was said to have slain the serpent, and the honour of the games was transferred to him. Homer's Hymn to Hermes relates a contest between that deity, who was clearly of diluvian origin, and Apollo, for certain privileges and honours. And an account of a similar conflict, accompanied by success on the part of the priests of Apollo, is given by Euripides in a chorus in Iphigenia in Tauris. [Harcourt, ii, 39.] A similar contention is evident in the struggles between Orpheus and the worshippers of the serpent, for Orpheus was a priest of the sun who introduced innovations into the religion of Thrace.

The constant animosity of the rival religions of the sun and the serpent is strikingly illustrated by the Etruscan vases which have been lately found at Canino, on the supposed site of the antient Vitulonia. [Deane, 431.] And another remarkable confirmation is afforded by discoveries made still more recently in the same region by Mrs. Hamilton Gray, who [Tour to the Sepulchres of Etruria, in 1839, p. 309,] when speaking of the church of Tuscanella, the antient Tuscania, expresses herself as particularly struck with a large carved group, being a distinct representation of a trinity of colossal size, having three monstrous faces growing together, one full face in the middle and a profile on each side, and the arms of the figure in the act of squeezing and destroying a writhing serpent.

It has been doubted by learned men whether the antient story of the siege of Troy be not resolvable into a myth denotive of the successive subjection of Troy to the domination of rival priests, and that the worship of the sun at length obtained the predominance. On this subject Mr. Deane [p. 432] says, "It is certainly strange that in all these historic pictures the Grecian warriors are denoted by the emblem of the sun, and the Trojan by the mystic serpent. The very cause of the quarrel assigned by tradition remarkably coincides with the Indian story of the wars of Surya and Buddha. The abduction of a woman is stated to have been the origin of both the Indian and the Trojan feuds."

The Argonautic expedition had avowedly a religious object; and the storming of the dracontium of Colchis cannot be mistaken. [Deane, 432.]

The fable of Orion, who was, it seems, a priest of the sun, is also a manifest memorial of the subversion of the diluvian ophite worship. On his apotheosis and elevation to the dignity of a constellation he was represented in one arrangement as emerging from the diluvian Eridanus [Harcourt, i, 184], and in another arrangement as treading upon Scorpio, a recognised diluvian and ophite emblem [Ib., i, 252]; and, in perfect consistence with similar myths, he bears the symbol of power and conquest in his club, since converted into a sword.

Argus is described as destroying a serpent engendered of the earth by Tartarus, that seized wayfaring men, i. e. the ophite worship,—the adoration of the serpent, the seducer of mankind, [Apollodorus, l. ii.]

Of the river Rhyndacus, which was famous for serpents, Pomponius Mela [c. 19] says that the serpents took refuge from the sun in its stream.

The fable of Prometheus is thus interpreted by Mr. Harcourt [ii, 113]:—"Certain persons who are designated by the name of Prometheus, attempted to introduce the worship of fire, for which they were punished and kept in confinement by the arkites, then in power, and continued in that state till the priests of Hercules obtained the ascendancy."

great diluvian monster, and in Egypt Horus slays Aphophis, so in the Edda of the Scandinavian nations we find a fable of the great deity Thor fishing for the great diluvian serpent of Midgard, the head of which he bruises with his mace[6].

Amongst the Danes a further memorial of the overthrow of the worship of the diluvian serpent by the votaries of the sun is preserved in the antient remarkable poem of Beowulf. This hero is represented as a mailed chieftain of the Western Danes, who, with his gilded ensign gleaming like a meteor in the air, landed on the shores of the sovereign of the Eastern Danes, to relieve the land of the presence of a mysterious being, a foul and solitary creature of the morass and the fen, the offspring of a sea wolf, with whom for many years the thanes of the country had vainly struggled, perishing in the conflict. Beowulf succeeds in his enterprise, and destroys this dracontine fiend of the marsh; and he boasts that he has formerly been successfully engaged in similar exploits in the seas, "when the waves were boiling with the

6 The twenty-seventh fable of the Edda relates that Thor having seized an ox's head for bait went to fish for the great serpent of Midgard, which, having greedily devoured the bait, was violently drawn up by Thor to the side of the vessel. The Edda says it is impossible to describe the dreadful looks that the god darted at the serpent, whilst the monster, raising his head, spouted out venom upon him. A giant, however, who had reluctantly accompanied Thor, cut the line just as Thor was about to strike the serpent with his mace, on which the monster fell down again to the bottom of the sea: nevertheless, some add that Thor darted his mace after him, and bruised his head in the midst of the waves; after which he slew the giant, and then waded on foot through the ocean to land. [Mallet, Northern Antiquities, ii, 134.] That the great serpent of Midgard, of the Scandinavian mythology, was a type of the evil principle, and worshipped as an object of fear rather than of veneration, is manifest from the parentage ascribed to that monster, who is represented to have been the offspring of the giantess Anger- bode (messenger of evil) by the pernicious deity Loke, the great adversary of gods and men, the prince of fraud and perjury, a perfect master of all the arts of dissimulation, and addicted solely to the practice of evil.

fury of winter," during seven days and nights combating with the creatures of the deep; and that "the mighty sea-beast received the war-rush through his hand." The achievements of this hero-god are altogether of a supernatural cast, and the poem is manifestly a myth resolving itself into the facts that a prolonged contest took place in East Denmark between the followers of the rival worships, and that the rites of the diluvian serpent were only finally extinguished through the aid afforded by some leader or warrior-priest of the antagonist worship from West Denmark, where the predominance of Sabianism had been previously established.

So also was Regner Lodbroc one of the hero-priests of the worship that in Northern Europe superseded the rites of the diluvian serpent, as is manifest from the first stanza of his celebrated "Death-Song," thus translated by the Rev. J. Johnstone in his version:—"When first we landed on the Gothic shore, vengeance soon o'ertook the wily dragon miner of the ground—'twas then I won my Thora. Men called me Lodbroc, from what time I slew the snaky dweller of the heath. At that assault, my point, inlaid with burnished gold, transfixed the circling monster of the earth."

In the western hemisphere, we learn that in Peru the worship of the diluvian serpent was eventually superseded by the solar superstition[7]. Manco Capac, according to Robertson[8], was the

7 Deane, 302.

8 Hist: America, ii, 293.

first successful missionary of the sun, and he suppressed, in a great measure, the ophiolatreia of the people of Peru. In the Mexican mythology, the renovation of the world was ascribed to Vitzliputzli, whose name was deemed ineffable, and referred to the principal luminary—the sun. He is represented seated on a globe, the symbol of his universal power, with his right hand grasping a snake, indicative of the subjection of the dracontine worship; which event is also involved in another Mexican myth representing the serpent of Cihuacohuatl, the great mother of mankind, crushed by the mighty spirit Teotl, the invisible and supreme being[9].

To return nearer home, Mr. Harcourt[10] says that the aboriginal inhabitants of Ireland were arkites; but that the Phœnicians introduced the worship of Baal; and that the votaries of each worship regarded those of the other with mutual hatred: and the existing tradition to which reference has already been made, has popularly preserved in Ireland, not only the association of the serpent and the deluge, but the utter overthrow of that combined worship by an invading priesthood, who, since the days of monkish adaptation, have been personified as St. Patrick[11].

9 Clavigero, Mexico.—Humboldt, Res: i, 195.

10 Harcourt, i, 486.

11 The popular legend of "The Last of the Serpents" is thus characteristically and amusingly given by Mr. Croker in his "Legends of Killarney:"—"Sure everybody has heard of the blessed St. Patrick, and how he druve the sarpints and all manner of venomous things out of Ireland—how he bothered all the varmint entirely; but for all that, there was one ould sarpint left, who was too cunning to be talked out of the country, and made to drown himself. Saint Patrick didn't well know how to manage this fellow, who was doing great havoc; till at long

In our own country we have in every direction throughout the length and breadth of the land, evidence of this contest and of its issue. To nothing else can we attribute the numerous stories of wonderful serpents and dragons or other diluvian types attacked and vanquished by some hero or some religious dignitary,—stories that everywhere meet us, embalmed in tradition, and escaping the toils of historic research, by taking refuge in the obscurity of unapproachable antiquity. Where is the county without such legend?

last he bethought himself, and got a strong iron chest made with nine iron boults upon it. So, one fine morning, he takes a walk to where the sarpint used to keep; and the sarpint, who didn't like the Saint in the least, and small blame to him for that, began to hiss and show his teeth at him like any thing.—'Oh,' says Saint Patrick, says he, 'where's the use of making such a piece of work about a gentleman like myself coming to see you—'tis a nice house I have got made for you agin the winter, for I am going to civilize the whole country, man and beast,' says he, 'and you can come and look at it whenever you please, and 'tis myself will be glad to see you.' The sarpint, hearing such smooth words, thought, that though Saint Patrick had druve all the rest of the sarpints into the sea, he meant no harm to himself; so the sarpint walks fair and easy up to see him and the house he was speaking about. But when the sarpint saw the nine great boults upon the chest he thought he was sould (betrayed),and was making off with himself as fast as ever he could. ''Tis a nice warm house you see,' says Saint Patrick, 'and 'tis a good friend I am to you.' 'I thank you kindly, Saint Patrick, for your civility,' says the sarpint, 'but I think it's too small it is for me,'—meaning it for an excuse—and away he was going. 'Too small!' says St. Patrick, 'stop, if you please,' says he, 'you're out in that, my boy, any how—I am sure 'twill fit you completely; and, I'll tell you what,' says he, 'I'll bet yon a gallon of porter,' says he, 'that, if you'll only try and get in, there'll be plenty of room for you.' The sarpint was as thirsty as could be with his walk, and 'twas a great joy to him the thoughts of doing Saint Patrick out of the gallon of porter; so, swelling himself up as big as he could, in he got to the chest, all but a little bit of his tail. 'There now,' says he, 'I've won the gallon, for you see the house is too small for me, for I can't get in my tail.' When, what does Saint Patrick do, but he comes behind the great heavy lid of the chest, and, putting his two hands to it, down he slaps it with a bang like thunder. When the rogue of a sarpint saw the lid coming down, in went his tail like a shot, for fear of being whipped off him, and Saint Patrick began at once to boult the nine iron boults. 'Oh! murder! Wont you let me out, Saint Patrick?' says the sarpint, 'I've lost the bet fairly, and I'll pay you the gallon like a man.' 'Let you out, my darling?' says Saint Patrick, 'to be sure I will, by all manner of means; but, you see, I haven't time now, so you must wait till to-morrow.' And so he took the iron chest, with the sarpint in it, and pitches it into the lake here, where it is to this hour, for certain; and 'TIS THE SARPINT STRUGGLING DOWN AT THE BOTTOM THAT MAKES THE WAVES UPON IT. Many is the living man, continued Picket, besides myself, has hard the sarpint crying out from within the chest under the water, 'Is it to-morrow yet?—Is it to-morrow yet?' which, to be sure, it never can be; and that's the way Saint Patrick settled the last of the sarpints, sir."

Where is the neighbourhood, the old inhabitants of which will not point to some dim recess as the cave of the charmed serpent? Mr. Faber instances the cave of the dragon of Wharncliff, in Yorkshire, as precisely similar in legendary description to the cave of Cadmus's dragon; and he remarks that "the manor of Sockbourne is still held by the tenure of exhibiting to the bishop of Durham, a sword with which a monstrous serpent is said to have been slain. This was, doubtless, the destruction of an ophite temple; for in most countries the overthrow of the sacred serpent was allegorized into a victory over some monstrous dragon who infested the neighbourhood." At Aller, near Langport, in Somersetshire, a tradition exists, that a terrible dragon once infested that place, his cave being in a nook still pointed out in the range of hills there, and that he was accustomed to destroy the inhabitants, until he was, at length, vanquished by some holy hermit. So is a similar event involved in the legend of the dragon of Wantley, slain by Moor of Moor Hall; and of that, likewise, vanquished by Sir Bevis. And the various traditional myths associated with the conquest of some dreadful cow are precisely analagous. The cow is universally admitted to have been a diluvian emblem; and we find that as Greece had its fable of Io, so had less classic lands similar myths pointing to like events, and plainly relating to the same subject. Among the Celts of Wales, the oxen of Hu were twins from a sacred cow which filled all the vessels in the

neighbourhood with milk; but an old sorceress, who could not get some from her, made her mad; and she ran wild over the mountains till she was slain by Hu or Guy, earl of Warwick; but it should be noted that in some antient metrical legends, the monster slain by this doughty earl was a "fowle dragon." The scene of this transaction is laid in so many places in Wales that it should seem there was a sacred cow wherever there was a Druidical temple. The epithet "dun," given to this cow, seems more properly to be referred to the place than to her colour, and to signify the same as it does in Dunstable, Dunchurch, &c.; she was the cow of the hill, and worshipped as symbolic of the ark[12]. Whether, or not, as Mr. Faber suggests, the stories of the destruction of huge serpents relate ultimately to the destruction of the living serpents worshipped by the Druids, it is incontestible that they resolve themselves into traditionary memorials of a conflict which terminated in the overthrow of the worship of the diluvian serpent.

The many dedications of elevated sites—conical hills—more especially when seated by the seaside, to St. Michael, are amongst the most striking instances, not only of this overthrow of the diluvian ophite rites, but also of the readiness with which the Romanists adopted pagan localities and associations into the very bosom of Christianity. All these spots were, originally, arkite dedications; for in the diluvian system such localities were

12 Harcourt, ii, 58.

peculiarly affected; and on these elevated summits the votaries of the diluvian serpent established their worship. When that worship was overthrown by the rival sect of the votaries of the sun, these spots, sacred to the more antient rites, were naturally and readily adopted by the innovators, and hence became solar mounts; the victory over the diluvian serpent being celebrated on the very site of its achievement, and commemorated by the consecration of the same sites to the Baalite worship. So, also, after the mists of paganism had faded before the effulgence of the Christian faith, the politic monks, when they formed their muster-roll of saints, carefully preserved the antient associations of these spots; and, as they had been appropriated to the sun as the conqueror of the diluvian serpent, so were they then dedicated to the archangel Michael, who, in that mysterious book, of which an adequate exposition and illustration is yet to be desired, is described as the vanquisher of "the great dragon" that "was cast out[13]." The indications of this triple appropriation are too remarkable and occur too frequently to escape notice, or to be looked on as mere casual coincidences. Thus, near the stupendous dracontium at Carnac, in Brittany, is a natural conical hillock, but which has been artificially raised to such a height as to be visible from a distance of many miles in every direction, and from every part of the dracontine temple; and this elevated mound has been consecrated to

13 Revelations, xii, 7, 8, 9.

St. Michael; to whom, also, is dedicated almost every natural or artificial cone throughout Brittany, one of the most remarkable of which is the St. Michael's mount, at Avranches, near the northern boundary of Brittany, and which is quite insulated and is distinguished for its excavations, with which the performances of antient religious rites are still traditionally connected. There is a similar St. Michael's mount on the opposite coast of Cornwall, and with which, also, like traditions are associated. St. Michael's mount, near Abergavenny, is an isolated mountain, with a chapel on its top; and popular legends connect it with St. Patrick, who, they say, brought the hill from Ireland[14]—the same St. Patrick on whom, as we have seen, descended the honours of the conqueror of the diluvian serpent. One of the most lofty of the Azores, and, therefore, well adapted for diluvian rites, is known as the island of St. Michael. And the tutelary saint of England, long looked upon as a sacred island, is St. George, who is also a celebrated conqueror of the eastern dragon. An intimate and remarkable connection, indeed, exists between the archangel Michael and the renowned St. George. Their achievements are similar, with the distinction that St. Michael is described as vanquishing the spiritual serpent, whilst St. George is spoken of as destroying the more material dragon. But they are frequently blended in a way that may be easily accounted for only when both are considered as well adapted

14 Archæologia, v. 35.

representatives of the power that overthrew the worship of the great enemy of mankind, the embodied evil principle,—the diluvian serpent. Nearly all the early Christian churches in this country, dedicated to one or other of these saints, are situated on elevated spots, the probable sites of earlier worship; and a remarkable instance of the manner in which the attributes of these saints are blended together is found in the church of Fordington, in Dorsetshire. This church, which stands on a commanding summit, and, as has been proved by recent discoveries, on a site consecrated to religious purposes prior to the introduction of Christianity, has been dedicated to St. George, whilst over the inner doorway of the south porch is a rude antient sculpture representing—not St. George destroying the dragon, but—the archangel Michael thrusting the rebellious angels from heaven. Our coinage even shows a similar blending of these two personages. The "angel," first struck by Edward IV, gives a representation of the archangel Michael, with his attributes, standing on the dragon, and piercing him with a spear; but on the "George noble," first struck by Henry VIII, of "the old value of the angel," the archangel becomes metamorphosed into the mounted and armed champion, St. George, galloping over the dragon, and still killing him with a spear.

We have thus abundant evidence of a state of hostility, in this country as well as in all other realms, waged by the worshippers of the sun against the votaries of the diluvian serpent, and

which terminated in the subjection of the latter. The period at which this conflict took place in Britain, and the national distinctions that may be drawn between the rival systems, will form the subject of consideration for another section.

SECTION IV.

The Cerne Giant shewn by etymology, tradition, and attributes, to be constructed by the conquering sun-worshippers as an illustrative memorial of a victory over the diluvian-ophite worship.

Having thus traced the progress of those grand deviations from the primæval religion, the diluvian and dracontine systems, their association, and their subjection to the more recent worship of the sun and the host of heaven, we proceed to investigate the evidence that may be adduced in support of the position that the stupendous engraving at Cerne is a memorial of a conflict between the hostile systems, and of the success which here attended the exertions of the Helian and Sabian priests.

In researches of this kind, etymology, though ofttimes a fanciful and dubious guide, is, nevertheless, a valuable and even indispensable accessary.

The most antient modes of spelling the name of the place are Kern, Kernel, Kernele. Now the Hebrew word "k*er*en" [קרן], the Arabic "kern," and the Celtic "carn"—which language has so many remarkable analogies with the oriental tongues as to indicate a close affinity—all denote a hill; and this generic term was frequently individually appropriated to elevated sites of peculiar sanctity. It was a name mystically applied to islands[1]; and the Kerne of the antients, recorded by Lycophron, was certainly our present Cornwall, the only portion then known of the "sacred island" of Britain. Carnion, in the land of Gilead, is mentioned as the site of a temple of Atergatis, the celebrated compound diluvian-ophite deity of the Philistines[2]. In Isaiah, v, 1, the words "k*er*en b*e*n s*e*m*e*n" [קרן בן שמן] are translated "a fruitful hill." They are literally "a hill, or horn, the son of fruitfulness." Vitringa, after mentioning the expositions of this passage, given by other commentators, and particularly that of the Chaldee Targum, gives it as his own opinion that by "k*er*en" [קרן] the prophet here intended "angulum terræ incurvum eminentiorem et in longum protensum"—a crooked nook of land, much elevated and stretched out in length. No phrase could possibly more accurately describe the locality under consideration, the site of the colossal figure, the subject of this inquiry; and the conclusion is therefore well warranted that "kern," in this

1 Harcourt, ii, 159.

2 2 Maccab: xii, 26.

instance, as in others, denoted "the sacred hill[3]."

3 Sacred mountains are everywhere to be met with; elevated sites having been almost universally selected for religious rites. M. de Gebelin says "The Celts, that is the inhabitants of the British isles and the western coasts of France, loved the locality of mountains for their worship, no less than lakes and rivers. The Pelasgi consecrated to Jupiter, in lieu of images, the summits of high mountains, and there they erected altars; for which reason he was called Jupiter Epacrius, the god of high summits. The Spaniards had a sacred mountain, the soil of which was not to be disturbed. The Gauls had a sanctuary consecrated to Jupiter, upon the highest of the Alps and Apennines. The Peligni did the same at Pallene, and the aborigines of Italy at Soracte and Algidium. The Getæ had their sacred mountain, where their sovereign sacrificer resided. The Thracians, likewise, had one, of which they were deprived by Philip: and Strabo believed that all the sacred mountains of Greece were consecrated by the Thracians. Nothing was more famous among the Phrygians than their mountains consecrated to Cybele. The Persians and Canaanites had the same customs: and even the Hebrews worshipped on high places, till they got possession of the Holy Mount, on which they built their temple." [Monde Primitif, i. 128]. It is, however, worthy of particular observation that to sacrifice upon mountains did not of necessity imply anything idolatrous; on the contrary, from the earliest even down to the latest periods of sacred history, mountains were not only permitted but approved and selected places of religious worship. The first altar of which we hear in scripture was that which Noah built upon Ararat [Gen: viii, 20]. The second was that of Abraham at Sichem, because it was the scene of a divine revelation [Ib. xii, 6]. But it seems that he was not satisfied with its position, for he immediately removed from thence to a mountain between Bethel and Hai: and there he built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord [Ib. xii, 8]. He seems to have considered the latter a place of more holiness than the other; for that was the altar which he especially sought for his fixed place of worship, when he returned out of Egypt afterwards [Ib. xiii, 3]. When he removed his tent to Hebron, he built another altar there [Ib. xiii, 18]. Now Hebron was a hill either in or adjacent to the plain of Mamre: for in the division of the land, Caleb, speaking of Hebron, said to Joshua, "Give me this mountain" [Josh: xiv, 12]. The sacrifice of Isaac was ordered to be offered on one of the mountains in the land of Moriah, which was afterwards called the Mount of the Lord [Gen: xxii, 14]. When Jacob parted from Laban, he offered sacrifice upon Mount Gilead [Ib. xxxi, 23, 54]; and Bethel, where God appeared to him, and he was commanded to make an altar, must have been on a hill: for Deborah is said to have been buried beneath it [Ib. xxxv, 8]. Horeb was called the Mountain of God [Exod: iii, 1, 12; xix, 12], and the Israelites were commanded to serve God upon that mountain; and upon the other horn of the same range, Sinai, God revealed himself most signally to Moses, and displayed his awful presence to the people whom he led. In the time of the Judges, Gideon was ordered to build an altar to the Lord on the top of the rock at Ophrah [Judges vi, 26]. Samuel went up to a high place to bless the sacrifice of the people [1 Sam: ix, 13]; and in the directions which he gave to Saul, when he was chosen to be king of Israel, he mentioned a hill of God, where there was a garrison of the Philistines [Ib. x, 5]. In the reign of David, Mount Zion became the mountain of God's holiness; and He is said by the Psalmist to have brought his people to the border of his sanctuary, even to the mountain which his right hand had purchased [Ps. xlviii, 1; lxxviii, 54]. When Solomon had built upon that mount his magnificent temple, it would naturally be regarded with extraordinary reverence; and we cannot be surprised to find the prophets representing the future church of Christ as founded on a mountain. But when Ezekiel speaks of the highest branch of the high cedar being planted in a high mountain, and eminent on the mountain of the height of Israel (Ezek: xvii, 22), the sacred mountain which he seems to have had more immediately in his view is Lebanon, the mountain of the moon—the mountain so much celebrated for the magnitude and height of its cedars. The same prophet must have been impressed with the idea that a certain religious

Such a situation would be peculiarly selected as the site of diluvian rites; and here, accordingly, we may trace, on the summit of the promontory, the evidence of a religious sanctuary, amidst the manifest remains of an extensive settlement of the diluvian-ophite Celtæ[4]; whilst at the bottom of the hill is a well, doubtless the antient scene of some mysterious rites, and regarded, even to this day, as of peculiar sanctity and virtue. Such sacred fountains are to be met with in all countries, and may all be considered as memorials of the universal regenerating deluge[5].

The second branch of the word Kern-El is neither more nor less than the name of EL, the

respect was due to all the mountains of his native land, when he thus delivers to them a message from the Lord; "Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord: because the enemy hath said against you, Aha! even the antient high places are ours in possession" (Ib. xxxvi, 1, 2; xxxix, 17);—and, also, when by a bold figure he paints the destruction of God's enemies as a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel. But Obadiah extends the same notion beyond the borders of his own country, when he declares that Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau (Obad; 21). Each mount is invested with an opinion of divinity, although the true God—the God that dwelt upon Mount Zion—would triumph over the Idumean superstition and punish its adherents. The latent impression, which fastened upon every mountain an idea of sacredness, may be detected in Ezekiel's figurative description of the Christian church. (Ezek: xlvii, 2—12.—Vide Harcourt, ii, 226; also Oliver, Hist: Init: 147).

4 These remains are of very interesting character and of considerable extent. They consist of circular and other earthworks, lines of defensive ramparts, an avenue, shallow excavations, and other indications of a British settlement. The circles are constructed, each with a low vallum, but no exterior fosse, and are, evidently, not associated with any military purpose. Of the two principal works, one, of a somewhat oblong form, is placed on the escarpment of the hill, immediately above the head of the giant. It is about 100 feet in its longest diameter, has a low vallum, slight exterior fosse, and a slightly elevated mound in the centre. The other is an irregular circle, 166 feet in diameter, with an opening to the south. Within it are two small circles similarly placed to the interior circles of the Abury dracontium. Each of these works is separately protected by a steep, defensive rampart, with exterior fosse, running athwart the ridge of the hill. The more northerly rampart has been strengthened by the overlapping of its ends; and beyond this are the traces of an avenue leading to the principal works; also two very distinct small circles, each 34 feet in diameter, and having an opening to the east. The shallow excavations, supposed to denote the sites of the residences of the British population, are thickly scattered over the whole summit of the hill.

5 Mr. Fraser mentions the existence of miraculous fountains in Koordistan, possessing the alleged virtue of curing all diseases. (Mesopotamia, &c., 165).

hero-god of the innovating Magians; the Baal of the idolatrous nations mentioned in Scripture; the Belus of the banks of the Euphrates; the Mithras of Persia; the Apollo of Delphi; the Bacchus and Osiris of the mysteries; the Jupiter, Hercules, Janus, Adonis, Helius, and Esculapius of the Greek and Roman pantheons; the Thammuz of the Phœnicians; the Thor of the Edda; the El, Hel, Hegle, Heil, Helith of the northern nations.

Now all the most received traditions, and the most antient notices of this monument, associate it with this god El; and the tradition, previously alluded to as still prevailing at Cerne, describes some severe contest for divine honours having taken place there, in which victory declared on the side of the more modern hierophants.

Tradition, though never a test of dates, is, nevertheless, frequently the best—sometimes the only—authority that can be resorted to as to the outline of long past events, and which are more often post-dated than ante-dated: and, when we find tradition confirming, and in its turn supported by, the general course of events, and consistent with existing monuments, we cannot but regard it as entitled to much consideration, and worthy of an effort to separate the sterling material of truth from the dross of fiction, with which time, ignorance, and ingenuity may have combined to alloy it. Such is the case with the tradition in question, and which we find preserved in a monkish legend founded on it; for the monks were most apt adapters of every local tale which they

could convert to their own purposes; and herein, too, they acted with policy; for that religious regard for hallowed spots, which is so observable in all ages and amongst all people, is paralleled by a kindred veneration for old traditions and time honoured national legends; and the introduction of a new faith would be more easily effected by the retention of the accustomed sites of antient ceremonies, and the adaptation of established myths.

William of Malmesbury informs us that St. Augustin, after his arrival in Britain, having converted the kingdom of Kent to the Christian faith, travelled over the rest of the English provinces as far as king Ethelbert's dominions extended; that upon his arrival at Cernel the inhabitants treated him and his companions with much rudeness, fastened the tails of fishes to their garments, and drove them out of the place for a distance of three miles. There, the holy man, recollecting himself, foresaw the change that was soon to happen in their minds, and, in a transport of joy, cried out to his companions,—"Cerno Deum, qui et nobis retribuet gratiam et furentibus illis emendatiorem infundet animam." The people soon repented of what they had done, came and asked pardon, and desired him to return. He, imputing this change to the hand of God, gave to this place the name of Cernel, compounded of a Hebrew word Hel or El (God), and the Latin Cerno, (I see); being, as will be seen, the commencement of his prior exclamation. The conversion of the people followed;

and, when water was wanting to baptize them, a spring broke forth at his command[6].

A like version of the tradition is preserved by the author of the Flores Sanctorum, who, in the Life of St. Augustin, tells us that A. D. 603, Augustin destroyed, at Cerne, the idol Heil or Hegle, which was worshipped there at that time; and he adds that the inhabitants fastened fishes' tails to the backs of Augustin and his followers, in punishment whereof all that generation had that given them by nature which they in contempt fastened on these holy men.

The Golden Legend, also, thus records the same story:—"St. Augustine came to a certeyn towne inhabited by wicked people, who refused hys doctryne and prechyng uterly, and drof hym out of the towne, castyng on hym the tayles of thornback, or lyke fysshes; wherfore he besought Almighty God to shewe hys jugement on them; and God sent to them a shamefull token, for the chyldren that were born after in the place had tayles, as it is sayd, tyll they had repented them." This tradition has descended, even to the present day, amongst the inhabitants of Cerne and the neighbourhood; and it is still devoutly believed by the common people there, that the descendants of the tailed race yet exist, bearing the remarkable distinction attributed to them in the legend.

Perhaps every one of the miraculous legends with which the lives of the saints in the Romish calendar so abundantly teem, is resolvable into

6 Malmesbury, De Gest. Pontif. & Hist., 144.—Dugdale, Monast, i, 253.

some historic incident, the leading features of which might be easily traced, if the elucidatory clue were obtained; for the monkish writers were rather adapters than inventors;—like the playwrights of our own days, they required a well designed foundation on which to rear their own fantastic superstructure. Ingenious in their anxiety to appropriate to their own saints the honours which they found paid to the hero-god of some former age, they distorted names and facts, corrupted traditions, adopted achievements, multiplied mysteries, and mixed their own figments with the disguised facts of history. Truth, thus torn to pieces, has been covered with a thick veil of obscurity, and perverted with the glaring and false colours of rank fiction[7].

7 The traces of pagan rites and ceremonies left, even in the bosom of the Christian church, are innumerable, and shew with what extreme tenacity religious impressions, when once made, are retained in the mind. A nation, when converted from the more gross errors of pagan idolatry, still clung, with a fond devotion, to such of their ceremonial usages as could be accommodated to the purer religion of their adoption. These traces are to be found both in the eastern and western churches; but it was reserved for the peculiar policy of the Roman hierarchy to carry this system to an extent that almost overwhelmed the essential doctrines of Christian revelation beneath the accumulated mass of mythologic rites. Sir Walter Scott, who, with a labour of love, industriously sought amongst the customs and traditions of his country for the relics of former times, truly says, "Though the thrones of Jupiter and the superior deities of the heathen pantheon were overthrown and broken to pieces, fragments of their worship, and many of their rites, survived the conversion to Christianity—nay, are in existence even at this late and enlightened period, although those by whom they are practised have not preserved the least memory of their original purpose." [Demonology and Witchcraft: Fam. Lib., xvi, 95.] It may be well to note a few of the more remarkable of these engrafted practices, to shew the extent to which this course has been followed. Mr. Galt, in his Life of Lord Byron [p. 122], describes the following practice still prevailing among the Athenian maidens when they become anxious to get husbands: "On the first evening of the new moon they put a little honey, a little salt, and a piece of bread on a plate, which they leave at a particular spot on the east bank of the Ilyssus, near the stadium, and muttering some antient words, to the effect that fate may send them a handsome young man, return home and long for the fulfilment of the charm." However little the Athenian maidens of the present day may be conscious of what they are doing, these offerings were antiently a sacrifice to Venus; for it is added, that "above the spot where these offerings are made, a statue of Venus, according to Pausanias, formerly stood."—Again, on Mount Hymettus, where there was once a temple of Venus, and a fountain supposed to

It is no difficult task in the present instance to strip off this false colouring, to tear down the

facilitate parturition, there is now a monastery, to which the Greek women still repair at particular seasons. At Eleusis, in Greece, which was so long her most favourite abode, the statue of Ceres is still regarded with a high degree of superstitious veneration. The inhabitants of the small village, situated among its ruins, attribute to its presence the fertility of their land. [Clarke's Travels.] In Sicily, at Enna, now Castrogiovanni, a temple of Proserpine formerly stood, and was regarded with especial reverence; and Ceres came here, from her temple on the opposite side of the city, to pay an annual visit to her daughter. This custom has been authoritatively engrafted on the church of Rome, and still constitutes one of its ceremonies; for the Madonna is removed from the Chiesa della Madre to that of the Padre Reformati every year, and makes an annual stay of fifteen days, during which time a great concourse of people assembles, and continual feastings are held on the plain. [Sir R. C. Hoare, Travels in Sicily, ii, 248.] Here the Virgin Mary has succeeded—not only to the honours, but—even to the name of Ceres, for the Greeks called her Demeter. And in like manner she succeeded, very extensively, to the idolatrous sacrifices offered to Astarte, the great lunar deity—"the queen of heaven" of antient worship. The practice of offering to this celebrated goddess cakes made of particular ingredients, shaped in a peculiar form, and consecrated by certain ceremonies, prevailed from the most remote ages. It was of a corrupt participation in such rites that the idolatrous Israelites were guilty, when the fury of the Lord was ready to be poured upon them, and the denunciation was declared by the prophet Jeremiah:—"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to other gods." [Jerem: vii, 18; xliv, 19.] These also were the offerings of which the Psalmist speaks when he charges on the rebellious Israelites that "They joined themselves also unto Baal-Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead." [Ps. cvi, 28.—Numb; xxv, 2.] Yet so extensively, especially in the east, did this very practice prevail under the Christian dispensation, "the queen of heaven" being replaced by the Virgin Mary, that by the canons of the synod of Trullus, A.D. 683, it was expressly forbidden to bake and eat a cake in honour of the Virgin. [Trullan Canons, 79.] And a trace of this custom is still to be observed in the "twelfth-cake" eaten on Old Christmas Day; and in the "hot cross bun" of Good Friday we have the remnant of a similar rite; whilst other ceremonies performed in the Romish church on this solemn anniversary, and which are detailed by Barnaby Googe, in the English version of Naogeorgus [fo. 51, b], are manifestly adapted from the antient pagan mysteries. In Rome itself, indeed, the accommodation to heathen idolatry has been so palpable that even the names of the idols have been retained. Thus Middleton affirms that he saw in that city an altar erected to St. Baccho [Letters from Rome, 354]; and other pagan-like saints, whom he enumerates, are Quirinus, Romula, Concordia, Nympha, and Mercurius. The burning of candles at these altars, and the votive offerings after recovery in the shape of the cured limbs, are customs imported from Egypt. The former is mentioned by Herodotus [Euterpe, 62], and it prevailed, in truth, among all the idolatrous nations of the east; and of the latter, specimens may be seen among the antiquities at the British Museum. In London, down to the time of the Reformation, the worship of Diana was performed, not avowedly, but substantially, with all its antient rites. From the evidence of Erasmus, it appears that it was the custom at that time, upon a certain day, to introduce into the great church of St. Paul the head of a wild beast fixed upon the point of a long spear, accompanied by a disagreeable noise of hunters' horns. [Eras. Op., v, 701] Now St. Paul's was originally built by Ethelbert, king of Kent, upon the site of a temple of Diana the huntress. But even under the sway of a reformed faith many customs still keep their ground, which derive their unsuspected origin from pagan rites. Thus the popular ceremonies of the boar's head at Christmas are deduced from the same worship as that just noted. The practice of perambulating the

obscuring veil, and to discover the original outlines of the long-retained oral tradition which the monks took as the ground-work of their legend, adapting it to their own miracle-mongering purposes; and we shall then find their fable resolving itself into an historic myth perfectly consistent with those already so numerously instanced, and preserving a manifest memorial of the overthrow of a sanctuary of the diluvian ophites by the followers of a more modern system of religion.

In the first place, as we have seen (p. 3), there is no sufficient evidence that Augustin ever visited this part of the country, but careful inquiry into the point establishes a conclusion to the contrary; so that the share in this tale, claimed on behalf of that enterprising missionary, is easily and speedily disposed of.

It was an obvious and necessary transposition to make the victory concurrent with the destruction of "the idol Hel," in order to answer the

boundaries of parishes in Rogation week is derived from the procession in honour of Terminus, the god of boundaries. The pan-cake of Shrove-Tuesday is said to have succeeded to a feast in the Fornicalia, appointed to commemorate the manner in which bread was baked before the invention of the oven by the deified Fornax. The festivities of May-day are probably with us but a continuation of the Floralia, which were in themselves but the corrupted and perverted observances descended from a far more antient mythology than that pagan pantheism into which they had been introduced: and the Christmas holidays are a substitute for the license of the Saturnalia. But the observances of nearly all our religious and popular festivals bear traces of pagan impression; many of them being manifestly derived from the ceremonies practised by the rude Celtic tribes who first peopled the land. An attempt to point out all these engrafted customs, and to trace them to their origin, would occupy a volume of no ordinary dimensions. But enough has been already stated to shew that nothing is so indelibly impressed upon the human mind as are the observances connected with religious faith. To these, generation after generation cling with a rare tenacity,—with an incurious and blind fidelity equalled in nothing else. Circumstances may change: a new worship may take the place of the old: but when customs, consecrated by religious belief, have been once inscribed upon the tablet of the human heart, they are not readily to be erased. The doctrines of the new faith may be written over the more antient lines, but the latter will still be traceable more or less obscurely: here some quaint hieroglyphic will present an anomalous compound, speaking a double language; there some more complying figure will merge freely into the newer form.

purpose of the piratical monks, by associating it with the period at which the rites of British paganism yielded to the extending and benign influences of Christianity.

The placing of fishes' tails rather than serpents' tails is one of those ordinary conversions of which so many instances have been adduced in the foregoing pages, and which are indicative of the intimate and general combination of ophite and diluvian attributes and emblems. The whole history of the two religions remarkably abounds with instances of such confusion.

Stripped, therefore, of its monkish bedizening, we find in this legend the traditionary memorial of an attempt to introduce amongst the inhabitants a new form of worship, and which attempt led to a protracted contest, of which the issue was for some time doubtful. The conflict was not determined without a severe struggle,—the people were not willing to abandon their antient customs, to forsake their long-cherished faith, or to admit at once the usurpation of the Magians. These, however, at length succeeded, and the struggle terminated in the prevalence of the new worship. But, though the great bulk of the people adopted the customs and rites of the innovators, a remnant was still left attached to the antient faith. These became subject to the hatred and contempt of the victors, who not only despised them but opprobriously taunted them with their religion, confounding its worshippers with its symbol as delineated on the bas-relief of the sarcophagus

already spoken of (p. 23), and described by Claudian,—the deity compounded of a human head and body, with serpentine or fish-like extremities,—the "desinit in piscem" of Horace. This was in accordance with established usage, for it was the general practice to denote the priests or the worshippers of any system by the deity whom they adored; just as the priestess of Delphi was called "Pythia" from her deity Python, and as the Celtic priest was called "an adder," because adders were symbolic of the god whom he served. After this conquest, as we gather from Walter of Coventry, El became the provincial deity of this part of the kingdom[8]. ×

Here, therefore, was a contest for religious supremacy between the adorers of the diluvian serpent, and those worshippers of the sun and the host of heaven, whose hero-god was El. The latter succeeded in establishing their rites; and in commemoration of their triumph, and as an act of gratitude to their deity, they carved that colossal symbolic memorial, which has called forth this dissertation, on the very summit that had been dedicated to the prior worship, and which thence became Kern-El,—the hill of El. There the monumental figure of that deity still stands, traced in the enduring lines of that antique people, holding aloft his especial attribute—the symbol of power and of conquest,—the cypress sceptre of Jupiter,—the club of Hercules and of

8 "In Dorsetensi pago olim colebatur deus Helith."—Walt: Cov: MS. in Benet Col: Lib: 1, xi.

× There is no need of such a recondite interpretation. The writer in his zeal for his theory, seems to forget that the Britons had become Romanized. The divinity called Hil or Heath was most probably Esculapius or Hygeia, a Roman Idol.

Orion,—the thyrsus of Bacchus,—the staff of Esculapius,—the mace of Thor,—the Druid's wand, and the Persian crosier. The observant visitor to this memorial will also discover indications of the phallic corruptions to which the worship of the all-vivifying sun invariably led; for those corruptions unquestionably extended to this island; though, to the honour of the northern nations, the introduction of phallic rites in the north of Europe certainly did not lead to those fearful and scandalous excesses with which those rites were accompanied in the warmer south[9].

This monument was no idol: the people who formed it as a religious memorial, bowed not down to graven images; and here, indeed, they did not worship; but their altar was established on a hill about a mile and a half distant, where probably stood a cromlech, and which to this day retains the name of El-stone hill; whilst at its foot was the attached and consecrated grove, yet known as El-wood.

9 So chaste were the inhabitants of Northern Europe that their continence and absolute deference to the weaker sex gained the applause of all polished nations. Even Tacitus could say that amongst these people the females were safe from personal insult; and the sanctity of the matrimonial bond was so devotedly venerated as to merit the most unqualified applause. [Germ: c. 18.] And Salvian of Marseilles says that these barbarians were worthy of admiration on account of their continence, and that they were literally the reformers of the Roman manners. [De Gub. Dei., l. 8.]

SECTION V.

The Celtæ the serpent-worshippers of Britain;—the Celto-Belgæ the invading sun-worshippers:—the Giant carved by the latter:—era of its execution.

The reader having been directed to the foregoing conclusions by the aid of etymology, consistent local tradition, historic and mythologic analogy, and the symbolic language of monumental representation; the question next arises,—who were the votaries of this innovating religion, these sun-worshippers, whose hands traced this gigantic memorial of their victory; and at what far-distant period was that victory achieved and its enduring record engraven? The inquiry necessary to give a solution to this question will lead into that dubious era of British history of which we have the record of no native writer, and when the casual notices of our isle, gleaned

from the pages of the historians of other nations are fragmental, vague, and unsatisfactory. Enough may, however, be gathered to lead to an approximation to the truth sufficiently near for the present purpose.

Britain was peopled at an early period by a portion of the great Celtic race, who were forced hither on those great tides of migration propelled from the east by the expansion of a rapidly increasing and redundant population[1]. These were a pastoral and a peaceful people. Living under a patriarchal form of government; the leaders of the tribes being at once their lawgivers and their priests; subsisting on their flocks and herds and the produce of the chase; wandering over the fertile land, which they occupied, not by the title of the sword, but by the far juster tenure of original settlement; they cultivated some of the ruder arts of peace and early civilization, and had little to do with warlike occupation, until national interests and pious duty compelled the assumption of the sword, the spear, and the shield, in resistance to aggressive invasion. It has been already shown (in sec. ii), that the religion of these aboriginal Celtæ was that earliest of corruptions, the worship of the diluvian serpent.

1 A Welch tradition of the early peopling of Britain, and of the disposition of the first settlers, is thus preserved in the fifth triad:—"The three peaceful people of the isle of Britain. The first were the nation of the Kymry, who came with Hu Cadarn to the island of Britain. He obtained not the country nor the lands by slaughter or contest, but with justice and peace. The other was the race of the Loegrwys, who came from the land of Gwas-gwyn; and they were of the first race of the Kymry. The third were the Brython, and from the land of Llydaw they came; and they were of the first race of the Kymry. And these were called the three peaceful nations, because they came one to the other with peace and tranquillity; and these three nations were of the first race of the Kymry, and they were of the same language."—Trioedd ynys Prydain. 2 Archaiol: p. 58.—Turner, i, 48.

But they were not left in the undisturbed possession of their country, or in the uninterrupted performance of their religious rites: for both were hazarded on the issue of mighty struggles between them and a warlike invading foe. It would not avail, in the present inquiry, to enter on the much debated question of Phœnician and Grecian intercourse with Britain: for such intercourse could hardly have extended beyond the carrying on of commercial operations on the maritime coasts, and would not have been enforced by a course of military invasion altogether foreign to the policy and national economy of the merchant princes of Tyre; whilst we have to deal with a people who formed an adverse and a permanent settlement, and who carried their purposes on the point of the sword. Of the progress of such a people there is ample evidence. The existing features of the southwestern part of the island show that here was the settlement of a hostile invading people, who, having acquired a footing, not only maintained their ground, but succeeded, notwithstanding powerful opposition on the part of the aboriginal race, in advancing the boundaries of their acquisitions, as new spaces of country gradually fell a prey to the progress of their victorious arms. The rev. Thomas Warton, an attentive observer of such matters, states, in his History of Kiddington, that "a straight line drawn northward from the southern coast of England, about Dorsetshire and Hampshire, only thirty miles into land, would cut through the

curve of no fewer than seven of these boundaries, successively circulating one beyond the other," erected by these invaders, "as they gradually extended their victories, and propagated their acquisitions over Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, and Hampshire. All these seven valla describe the most desultory track, but proceed in windings nearly parallel,—a proof of their reference to each other, and that the aboriginal Britons did not suffer the invaders to advance with any degree of precipitation." The general direction of these boundaries is from north-west to south-east: they consist each of a vallum and a fosse, of varying height and depth; and as the fosse is almost invariably on the north-east side of the vallum, it is manifest that these defences were erected by the invaders. Of these valla with their accompanying fossæ four at least are still visible in the county of Dorset. The last erected of these seven ramparts—the stupendous record of the final advanced post of these invaders until the almost entire subjugation of the country by their victorious arms, is the well-known Wansdyke,—Gwhahandyke,—the line of division. Beyond this line their conquests then extended not. The Celtic ophites rallied with determined energy around the national altar of Abury; and, incited by that religious zeal which has, in all ages, been found the most powerful stimulant to devoted courage, firmly resisted the further inroads of their Baalite opponents. Here for a while was made a successful stand; and, as the Celtic hierarchy maintained

the inviolability of their ophite sanctuary at Abury, so, in their last acquired territory, did the invading sun-worshippers erect the enduring record of their faith in the mighty temple of Stonehenge.

These people were the Belgæ of the historians,—descendants from the same stock as the British Celtæ, of the same great family, speaking the like language, and differing but in the adoption of the Magian or Baalite superstition: and even their very name seems to bear confirmatory testimony to this religious distinction.

That the Belgic clans were worshippers of the sun, is, indeed, obvious from every consideration. The numerous Baalite temples and other analogous remains, that bestud the country, especially from the Lands-end to the north of Wiltshire,—of which we have still existing memorials in Dorsetshire, as at Winterbourne Abbas, and Gorwell, and Pokeswell, bear ample evidence of this fact, even were it not established by such testimony as may be gathered from antient historians. Hecatæus of Abdera is the authority who affords us the earliest distinct information on this subject; and he thus indicates the existence and the dedication of Stonehenge. As quoted by Diodorus Siculus, he says that "there is an island in the ocean, over against Gaul, where the Hyperboreans inhabit. Solina was born there; and, therefore, *they worship Apollo above all other gods*, daily singing praises to his honour; and hence the inhabitants so demean themselves as if they were

Apollo's priests. They have a stately grove, and *a renowned temple of a circular form*, beautified with many rich gifts. They have also a city consecrated to this god, whose citizens are, most of them, harpers, who chaunt the sacred hymns of Apollo in the temple."—"There are likewise amongst them philosophers and divines, whom they call Saronides, who are held in great veneration and esteem, through whom they present their offerings to the deity." Such is the remarkable passage in Diodorus, as declared to be taken from not only Hecatæus but others; and it will hardly be questioned that the island spoken of is Britain, and that the circular temple and neighbouring city are to be found at Stonehenge and Old Sarum.

The invading clans, therefore, were sun-worshippers. They differed not in language or in origin from the earliest occupiers of the land. They were a proximate branch of the same mighty family of nations, descending by the same blood from the same oriental ancestry, and distinguished from them solely in the adoption of a newer and more warlike faith; adoring no longer the diluvian serpent, but that fire-deity, whom they worshipped under the designation of El, and who was more generally known by the synonymes Baal or Bel. And it may be regarded as a not improbable etymology, that these people were hence styled, distinctively amongst the Celtic tribes, as the Bel-worshippers,—the "Bel-gæ" the people of Bel, the final "gæ" being derivable from the

same oriental root as the Greek "γονε," the Latin "gens," and other synonymous derivatives. And it is somewhat confirmatory of this position that the Belgic tribes of the Celtæ differed from the other tribes in being worshippers of El,—the sun,—that in some of our bardic songs, the antient inhabitants of the country now called Germany, were styled Ellmyn,—El-men,—which name subsequently became affixed to the country itself as Allemagne[2].

Thus much then as to the people who carved this Baalite memorial at Cerne; and with regard to the era of its execution, it will have been observed that Hecatæus of Abdera speaks of Stonehenge, not as being built in, but as existing prior to, his time. This author was a physician attached to the court of Ptolemy Lagus; and it may, therefore, be regarded as conclusive that Stonehenge, Old Sarum, and the Wansdyke are all of the age of at least four hundred years before the Christian era. But the Cerne memorial must have been carved to commemorate a victory

2 The generally received opinion as to the etymology of the term "Belgæ" is altogether unsatisfactory. It has been asserted by some, and amongst others by that ingenious scholar and unhappy man, Eugene Aram, that the word Belgæ "imports the same and is the same word with the Greek Πελασγοι, either from the people coming by sea or from their vicinity to it." But this derivation of the term "Pelasgic" is questionable, and, after an elaborate investigation, Mr. Harcourt has arrived at the conclusion that the term was a distinction not of country but of religion, that the name was not patronymic but mythological. [Doc: Del: i, 505; ii, 219]. And as one of the clans of the Belgæ was known, whilst on the continent, as that of the Morini, and subsequently to the settlement in Britain, as that of the Durotriges, both of which words, in the Celtic tongue, signify "the settlers by the water side," it is clear that such clans were thus locally designated, in contradistinction to those otherwise situated, and the conclusion is inevitable that the generic term could not have the same meaning as that which we find to be attached to a specific distinction. And, moreover, the names of some other of the Belgic clans denote them to be of anything but of maritime localities; for nearly all of them obtained their denomination from their topographical position, as the Catuaci, on the hills near the pass of a river; the Ambiani, in an enclosure; &c.

gained long prior to this time, being to the south and west of valla of certainly prior erection, as thrown up by the Belgæ in the course of their earlier struggles and before they acquired the extended territory subsequently bounded by the Wansdyke. And, as the Belgæ can hardly be said to have invaded Britain earlier than the sixth century before Christ[3], it seems rational to conclude that this magnificent memorial was to commemorate a victory achieved by the invading Baalic tribes of the great Celtic population somewhat more than five hundred years before Christ, and some two thousand three hundred and fifty years before this our day.

From that time the figure has here reposed, as changeless as the wild hills around it, the record of an once all pervading superstition, but which has since faded before the light of returning Truth. But, as century after century "like the

3 With respect to the precise era of the first colonization of Britain, we have no certain data. Richard of Cirencester with much probability places it at a thousand years before Christ. "A. M. 3000.—Circa hæc tempora cultam et habitatam primum Britanniam arbitrantur nonnulli, cum illam salutarent Græci Phœnicesque mercatores." Regarding the period of the Celto-Belgic invasion, however, we are enabled, by the concurrence of circumstantial evidence, to arrive at a more satisfactory conclusion. This event may be safely inferred to have taken place about six hundred years before the Christian era. At that period the Celtic population on the continent was so abundant that a general fermentation seems to have taken place amongst them, and their chiefs recommended two of their princes to lead a numerous body over the Alps into Italy. One large multitude passed them near Turin, defeated the Tuscans, and founded Milan: another party settled about Brixia and Verona; whilst succeeding adventurers spread themselves over other districts. [Turner, Anglo-Sax: i, 33.] We learn from Pliny [v, 34] that these proceedings took place during the reign of Tarquinius Priscus at Rome; and that monarch died 578 years before the Christian era. Although the portion of this irruption which is recorded happened on the east of the Celtic territory, yet the same cause was in operation in every direction, and the superabundance of population creating a convulsion at the centre, the impulse arising therefrom must have been felt in every extremity, and no where more strongly than in the natural direction of the tide of western migration. It is therefore highly probable that the maritime tribes of the Celto-Belgæ, feeling the pressure of this impulse, were then thrust across the ocean to participate in the territories of the insular Celtæ of Britain.

camel's shadow on the sand," have passed beneath the feet of this engraved colossus, how many and how mighty have been the national, the social, and the religious changes of which it has been the silent and unconscious witness. The corrupted and perverted faith of which it is the enduring memorial became intermingled with and still further debased by the idolatrous and degrading impurities of polytheistic Rome, and ultimately shrank before the pure and bright effulgence of the Christian revelation, the benign and chastening beams of whose resistless truth were early poured upon the people of this far distant isle. Under the influence of the piety then engendered, the stately towers and solemn cloisters of the abbey sequestered in the vale beneath, sprang into existence,—the fond retreat of learning,—at once the offspring and the source of religious zeal and pious practice,—the dispensary of charity and hospitality, whence unnumbered blessings flowed throughout the neighbourhood. But the leaven of evil was again at work, and the fair front of Christianity became blurred and disfigured with Papal deformities. The day of the Reformation, however, was at hand; and if, in the years of her purification, the Anglican Church has had to undergo the ordeal of evils necessarily inherent in the use of human instruments, let us hope that she will profit from the things of the past, and that she will henceforth maintain the purity of her faith, until the influence of Christian truth shall have been

extended over every region of the globe, and every foul and corrupt superstition shall have fallen before it, leaving as the sole record of its existence, traditions as obscure as those we have considered, and monuments as silent as the Giant of Cerne.

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