

happened, however, on one occasion, that Demetrius the Acheontic king, emboldened by the protection of Antigonus, king of Macedonia, directed that place should be reserved in the sanctuary for Aristogora, his mistress, to view the ceremony, threatening with severe penalties those who would oppose him. Athenians in their infancy were allowed to participate, and before their death were obliged to be initiated.

After the sacred herald proclaimed "If any atheist, Christian or epicurean be present, let him depart," and let only those who believe in God come forward," the candidates entered one at a time into the sacred adytum and took a second oath of secrecy. They were asked, "Have you eaten bread?" to which they answered, "No! I have drunk of the cyceon, I have taken from the chest after having labored, I have placed in the basket, then from the basket into the chest." This answer proved that they had been previously admitted at Agra into the lesser mysteries. The candidate was presented naked, and was then covered with a fawn-skin, which he girt about his loins; then taking off this garment, he was clothed with the sacred tunic, which he was obliged to wear till it fell in pieces. While waiting in the prondos or porch for the opening of the gates of the sanctuary, the candidate was in utter darkness, illumined only at intervals by flashes of lightning accompanied with the roar of thunder and the rush of the tempest, the lightning revealing ghastly phantoms, and, among others, that of Cerberus, the watch-dog of the infernal regions. It is most probable this was the period at which took place the representation of the tragical death of Iacchus or Bacchus, killed by the Titans, allegorical of the battle between the two principles of light and darkness, which caused the priests of Eleusis to be called Philopomenes, or friends of war. In the midst of the confusion, the gates of the sanctuary were thrown open, and the candidate perceived the statue of the goddess surrounded with the most brilliant light; he was then called an Epopé, and the sacred doctrine revealed to him. After these ceremonies, the candidates returned to Athens, resting during their journey under the sacred fig tree. The eighth day of the ceremony was sacred to Esculapius, who, it is said, having arrived too late to participate in the ceremonies, the Athenians caused the whole to be repeated on the following day, and since then it has been customary to have a second initiation for the benefit of those who did not arrive in time to take part in the first. The ninth day was called "plemoché" after the name of an earthen vessel of a peculiar form. The priest filled two of those vessels with wine, and then emptied them—the one towards the east, and the other towards the west, pronouncing certain mysterious words, and accompanying the action with gestures of sorrow. On the next day the gymnastic games took place, which closed the whole ceremony.

The mysteries sacred to Bacchus, and known under the various names of Dionysiad, Sebasian, and Orphic, were believed by the Greeks to have been very ancient. Herodotes says they were brought from Melampé, and were practiced in Thrace, Arabia, and even in India.

The Dionysiads, like the other mysteries, were divided into greater and lesser. The latter, to which women were admitted, took place yearly at the

autumnal equinox, and commenced with the sacrifice of a hog, which the trierophant divided among the candidates, which is said to have been eaten raw. After this sacrifice, both the initiated and the candidates entered the temple in procession, carrying branches of trees and performing the sacred dance; the mystic basket, containing among other things the phallus, made of fig tree wood, was also borne aloft. On the night after the procession, the initiatory ceremony took place, the candidate representing Bacchus, and was figuratively put to death by the Titans. The greater Dionysiads were celebrated every third year at the vernal equinox, and in the neighborhood of a marsh. On the night previous to the initiation, a he-goat was sacrificed by the wife of the Acheontic king, assisted by the "gerairai" or elders. She represented the spouse of Bacchus, and being installed on a throne, the initiates of both sexes made obeisance with cries of "Hail spouse, hail great intelligence!" Then followed the successive introduction of the aspirants into the porch of the temple, and the purification by fire and water; this latter was accomplished by the candidate leaping from a raised platform, catching as he leaped at the image of the phallus, made of flowers and suspended between two pillars. He was then admitted into the temple, crowned with flowers and covered with a fawn-skin, in the presence of the statue of the god, which was brilliantly illuminated.

#### MITHRAS.

It is not known who first established the mysteries of Mithras. Their origin is generally attributed to Zoroaster, a Persian legislator, but there were more than one of this name, who flourished at widely different periods. The first Zoroaster is said to have lived about 3,200 years before the Christian era, and most probably derived his doctrines from the Brahmas of India. His disciples, the Magi, practiced their rites under various difficulties until the coming of the last Zoroaster, who resided for some time in Egypt, whither he had gone to perfect himself in the science and philosophy of the priests of that country. From the ruins of the ancient laws of the Magi he formed a new system, which became eventually the religious code of the Persians, Chaldeans, Parthians, Bactrians, Medes, &c.

According to this doctrine, the Supreme Being, or "Zeruané Akarené," (that is, the Eternal) created the primitive light, from which issued "Ormuzd," the king of light. By means of the sacred word, Ormuzd, in his turn, created the world; there also emanated from him an Order of Genii called "Arnschaspands," who surrounded his throne, and were the media through which the prayers of inferior spirits and of men were transmitted; from Ormuzd also emanated another inferior class of Genii, called "Izeds" who had Methras for their chief, and who with him and the Arnschaspands, watched over the well-being of mankind, and the preservation of the world, of which they were the angels or governors. From Zeruané Akarené, at a later period, emanated Ahriman. This spirit, like Ormuzd, was created pure, but soon became jealous of his elder brother Ormuzd, and for his hatred and pride was condemned by the Supreme to dwell in the Empire of Darkness. From this time a fierce war was waged, with varying success and defeat, between Ormuzd, the Arnschaspands and the Izeds, on the one side, and Ahriman and the evil Genii called Dews and Archidews, on