

class consisted of the *Druids* who added moral philosophy to the study of physiology.

In their private retreats, they entered into a disquisition of the origin, laws and properties of matter, the form and magnitude of the universe, and even ventured to explore the most sublime and hidden mysteries of nature. On these subjects they formed a variety of hypotheses, which they delivered to their disciples in verse, in order that they might be more easily retained in memory and *administered an oath not to commit them to writing.*

In this manner the Druids communicated their particular tenets and concealed under a veil of mystery every branch of useful knowledge, which tended to secure to their order universal admiration and respect, while the religious instructions were every where received with reverence and submission. They were entrusted with the education of youth, and from their seminaries issued many curious and valuable productions. As judges of Law, they determined all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; as tutors they taught geometry, philosophy, astrology, geography, politics rites and ceremonies and as bards in their songs they recommended the heroic deeds of great men to the imitation of posterity.

They worshipped one supreme God, immense and infinite but would not confine their worship to temples built with human hands; professing *the universe was the temple of the Deity*, esteeming any other inconsistent with his attributes.

They had a Chief or Arch—Druid in every country who acted as high priest or pontifex maximus. The arch-druid had absolute authority over the rest and commanded, decreed, punished at pleasure. He was elected from among the most eminent Druids, by a plurality of votes.

The oak was held sacred by the Druids under whose branches they assembled and held their solemn rites. The oak, hieroglyphically, represents strength, virtue, constancy and sometimes longevity. The *mistletoe* which they held in the highest veneration, has excellent medicinal qualities which formed the chief of their *materia medica.*

At the conclusion of each year they held a general festival and assembly, in which they paid their adoration and offered gifts to the God of Nature, bringing with them mistletoe and branches of oak. At their sacrifices and their religious offices, they wore *white apparel.*

The first day of May was also a grand annual festival in honor to Belinus or the sun, which great luminary was their principal object of worship. On this day prodigious fires were kindled in all their sacred places. *Midsummer-day* and the first day of November were likewise annual festivals, the one to implore the friendly influence of heaven upon their fields, and the other to return thanks for the favourable seasons and the fruits of the earth, as well as to pay their yearly contributions to the ministers of their religion.

It was an article in the Druidical creed: That it was unlawful to build temples to the gods, or to worship them *within walls and under roofs.* All their places of worship therefore were in the open air, and generally on *eminences*, from which they had a full view of the heavenly bodies, to whom much of their adoration was directed. But to shelter themselves against the winds and rains and to guard against intruders while instructing their disciples or performing religious rites, they made choice of the deepest recesses or *groves* and woods for their sacred