

the other. This war was destined to last 12,000 years and to terminate in favor of the principle of light. From the celestial regions the war was transferred to our globe, which had been formed and brought to its present state by Ormuzd in the course of 3,000 years, and in six distinct periods; he also formed the other planets of our system, and all the heavenly bodies. Ormuzd also made man, and watched over him with great solicitude. Ahriman seduced the first couple, Meschia and Meschiani, by means of milk and fruits, first gaining over the woman; but notwithstanding the fall of man, there is to be no ultimate danger, for he is assisted by the good spirits, and will be gradually purified, for the final triumph of good is resolved in the councils of the Supreme.

The Ized Mithras presides in the sun, and is sometimes confounded with that luminary; an exclusive worship was rendered to him, eclipsing that of Ormuzd himself. He is represented in monumental remains as a young man, having a Phrygian bonnet on his head, and clothed with a tunic and mantle, with one knee on a prostrate bull, holding him by the muzzle with one hand while he plunges a dagger into his neck with the other. Alluding to the force or strength of the sun in the sign of Taurus, the Bull, the principal festival of this sun-god was that of his birth, viz., at the winter solstice; in Persia the celebration of his mysteries took place at that period, but in Rome at the vernal equinox.

The initiation was divided into several degrees, accompanied by rigorous trials of endurance. The candidate was required to cross a considerable body of water by swimming, to throw himself into the fire, to submit to long fasting and scourging, and, in fact, to undergo tortures of every kind, each being more intense than the preceding, and so much so as to place his life in great danger. After these trials were ended he was brought into a cave representing the world; on its sides was traced a plan of the celestial regions, and shewing the revolutions of the heavenly bodies. He was then purified by baptism, and a mark placed on his forehead; he offered as a sacrifice, bread and a vase of water, pronouncing mysterious words; he was presented with a crown on the point of a sword, which, when they endeavored to place on his head, he rejected, saying: "Mithras is my crown." He was now called a "soldier," and those who assisted at the ceremony were his companions in arms.

The second grade was—for men, that of "Lion," and for women, "Hyena." The candidates were enveloped in a mantle covered with figures of animals, alluding to the constellations of the Zodiac, and his hands and tongue anointed with the honey of purification. He next passed through a sort of dramatic pantomime, which gave Archelaus occasion to say, "Barbarous Persian! you impose on the people, and celebrate the mysteries of your god like an expert comedian." The candidate was next placed behind a curtain, which, being suddenly withdrawn, he is seen surrounded by figures of griffins and other animals.

After the grade of Lion comes that of Priest or Raven; next that of Persian, where the candidate was clothed in the dress of that nation; then followed the grade of Bromius, an epithet of Bacchus; next that of Helion or the sun; and lastly, that of Father. The initiates of this last degree were called "Hawks,"

birds consecrated to the sun by the Egyptians. They had at their head the Father of Fathers, or the Hierophant. These grades, seven in number, bore reference to the number of planets as then known. There are but a few fragmentary details of the ceremony of reception. As in the mysteries of the Sabasien Bacchus, a golden serpent is placed in the bosom of the candidate. This reptile, which changes its skin and renews its strength yearly, was among the ancients a type of the sun, whose heat is renewed every spring. In another grade, the candidate was figuratively sacrificed, and brought to life again with cries of joy. From the custom of exposing to view during the ceremony, human skulls and bones, the disciples of Mithras have been falsely accused of offering human sacrifices.

To shew the knowledge these ancient sages had of astronomy, we may mention, that in one of their ceremonies they represent the double movement of the planets and fixed stars.

Their ceremonies had also an allusion to the gradual purification of disembodied spirits in their passage through the various constellations; and to symbolize this purification, the candidate ascended a sort of ladder or stair, and in doing so had to pass through seven different doors in succession, besides an eighth at the top of the ladder. The first door, of lead, sacred to Saturn; 2nd, of copper, to Venus; the 3rd, of brass, to Jupiter; the 4th, of iron, to Mercury; the 5th, of mixed metal, to Mars; the 6th, of silver, to the Moon; and the 7th, of gold, to the Sun; while the 8th door was the figurative entrance to the place of everlasting happiness, the abode of uncreated light, and the final resting-place of immortal souls.

The mysteries of Mithras, as we have said, had their birth in Persia, from whence they passed to Armenia, Cappadocia, and Cilicia, and were introduced into Rome in the days of Pompey.

DRUIDS.

About 600 years before our era, the Cimbri, a warlike and prolific people from the Crimea, made an irruption into Northern and Western Europe, and successively established themselves in the countries comprised between Scandinavia and the chains of the Alps and the Pyrenees. They brought with them the Druidical mysteries, whose chiefs were among the Scandinavians called "Drottes," and among the Gauls "Druids." They were divided into three classes,—the "Vates," or depositories of the established sacred doctrines, who filled the offices of priests and judges; the "Bards," who sung the sacred hymns at the mystical ceremonies, and celebrated the actions of their great men and heroes; and the "Embages," who presided over the civil government and agriculture. In Gaul, the Druids had their principal seats of initiation in the forest of Drèux, and in Britain, in the island of Mono, now the isle of Man. The establishment of the Romans in Gaul and Britain caused the overthrow of the Druidical system in those countries; but persecuted there, they fled to, or rather they acquired new strength in Germany and Scandinavia, where they appear to have incorporated into their religious system new rites brought from the East. The "Edda," a sacred Scandinavian book recovered during the past century, furnishes many references to the initiation of this people. The candidate is