

The Tree of Mamre was evidently precisely one of this class; and those who have crossed the Suez Desert before railway days will remember such a *Dirakht-i-Fazl*, an aged mimosa, a veritable *Arbre Seul* (could we accept that reading), that stood just half-way across the Desert, streaming with the *exuviae veteres* of Mecca Pilgrims. The majority of such holy trees in Persia appear to be Plane-trees. Admiration for the beauty of this tree seems to have occasionally risen into superstitious veneration from a very old date. Herodotus relates that the Carians, after their defeat by the Persians on the Marsyas, rallied in the sacred grove of Plane-trees at Labranda. And the same historian tells how, some years later, Xerxes on his march to Greece decorated a beautiful Chinar with golden ornaments. Mr. Hamilton, in the same region, came on the remains of a giant of the species, which he thought might possibly be the very same. Pliny rises to enthusiasm in speaking of some noble Plane-trees in Lycia and elsewhere. Chardin describes one grand and sacred specimen, called King Hosain's Chinar, and said to be more than 1000 years old, in a suburb of Ispahan, and another hung with amulets, rags, and tapers in a garden at Shiraz.* One sacred tree mentioned by the Persian geographer Hamd Allah as distinguishing the grave of a holy man at Bostam in Khorasan (the species is not named, at least by Ouseley, from whom I borrow this) comes into striking relation with the passage in our text. The story went that it had been the staff of Mahomed; as such it had been transmitted through many generations, until it was finally deposited in the grave of Abu Abdallah Dásitáni, where it struck root and put forth branches. And it is explicitly called *Dirakht-i-Khushk*, i.e. literally *L'ARBRE SEC*.

This last legend belongs to a large class. The staff of Adam, which was created in the twilight of the approaching Sabbath, was bestowed on him in Paradise and handed down successively to Enoch and the line of Patriarchs. After the death of Joseph it was set in Jethro's garden, and there grew untouched, till Moses came and got his rod from it. In another form of the legend it is Seth who gets a branch of the Tree of Life, and from this Moses afterwards obtains his rod of power. These Rabbinical stories seem in later times to have been developed into the Christian legends of the wood destined to form the Cross, such as they are told in the Golden Legend or by Godfrey of Viterbo, and elaborated in Calderon's *Sibila del Oriente*. Indeed, as a valued friend who has consulted the latter for me suggests, probably all the *Arbre Sec* Legends of Christendom bore mystic reference to the Cross. In Calderon's play the Holy Rood, seen in vision, is described as a Tree:—

———“cuyas hojas,
Secas mustias y marchitas,
Desnudo el tronco dejaban
Que, entre mil copas floridas
De los árboles, el solo
Sin pompa y sin bizaria
Era cadáver del prado.”

There are several Dry-Tree stories among the wonders of Buddhism; one is that of a sacred tree visited by the Chinese pilgrims to India, which had grown from the twig which Sakya, in Hindu fashion, had used as a tooth-brush; and I think there is a like story in our own country of the Glastonbury Thorn having grown from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea.

[“St Francis' Church is a large pile, neere which, yet a little without the Citty, growes a tree which they report in their legend grew from the Saint's Staff, which on

* A recent traveller in China gives a perfectly similar description of sacred trees in Shansi. Many bore inscriptions in large letters. “If you pray, you will certainly be heard.”—*Rev. A. Williamson, Journeys in N. China*, I. 163, where there is a cut of such a tree near Taiyuanfu. (See this work, I. ch. xvi.) Mr. Williamson describes such a venerated tree, an ancient acacia, known as the Acacia of the T'ang, meaning that it existed under that Dynasty (7th to 10th century). It is renowned for its healing virtues, and every available spot on its surface was crowded with votive tablets and inscriptions. (*Ib.* 303.)