

The gardens of the Asiatic terrestrial paradises (*παράδεισοι*) excited the early admiration of the inhabitants of the West,\* and the worship of trees may be traced among the Iranians to the remote date of the prescripts of Hom, named, in the Zend-Avesta, the promulgator of the old law. We learn from Herodotus the delight taken by Xerxes in the great plane-tree in Lydia, on which he bestowed decorations of gold, appointing one of the "immortal ten thousand" as its special guard.† The ancient adoration of trees was connected, owing to the refreshing and humid shadow of the leafy canopy, with the worship of the sacred springs.

To this consideration of the primitive worship of nature belongs a notice of the fame attached among the Hellenic races to the remarkably large palm-tree in the island of Delos, and to an ancient palm-tree in Arcadia. The Buddhists of Ceylon venerate the colossal Indian fig-tree, the Banyan of Anurahdepura, which is supposed to have sprung from the branches of the original tree under which Buddha, as the inhabitant of the ancient Magadha, fell into a state of beatitude, spontaneous extinction, *nirwāna*.‡ As separate trees became objects of adoration from the beauty of their forms, so likewise groups of trees were venerated as groves of the gods. Pausanias speaks in high terms of admiration of a grove round the Temple of Apollo at Grynion Æolis,§ while the grove of Colonus is likewise celebrated in the famous chorus of Sophocles.

\* Achill. Tat., i., 25; Longus, *Past.*, iv., p. 108; Schäfer. "Gesenius (*Thes. Linguae Hebr.*, t. ii., p. 1124) very justly advances the view that the word Paradise belonged originally to the ancient Persian language, but that its use has been lost in the modern Persian. Firdusi, although his own name was taken from it, usually employs only the word *behischt*; the ancient Persian origin of the word is, however, expressly corroborated by Pollux, in the *Onomast.*, ix., 3; and by Xenophon (*Æcon.*, 4, 13, and 21; *Anab.*, i., 2, 7, and i., 4, 10; *Cyrop.*, i., 4, 5). In its signification of pleasure-garden, or garden, the word has probably passed from the Persian into the Hebrew (*pardés*, *Cant.*, iv., 13; *Nehem.*, ii., 8; and *Eccl.*, ii., 5); into the Arabic (*firdaus*, plur. *faradisu*, compare Alcoran, 23, 11, and Luc., 23, 43); into the Syrian and Armenian (*partés*, see Ciackciak, *Dizionario Armeno*, 1837, p. 1194; and Schröder, *Thes. Ling. Armen.*, 1711, Præf., p. 56). The derivation of the Persian word from the Sanscrit (*pradésa*, or *paradésa*, circuit, or district, or foreign land), which was noticed by Benfey (*Griech. Wurzellexikon*, bd. i., 1839, s. 138), and previously by Bohlen and Gesenius, suits perfectly in form, but not so well in sense."—Buschmann.

† Herod., vii., 31 (between Kallatebus and Sardes).

‡ Ritter, *Erdkunde*, th. iv., 2, s. 237, 251, und 681; Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, bd. i., s. 260.

§ Pausanias, i., 21, 9. Compare, also, *Arboretum Sacrum, in Meursia Op. ex recet sione Joann. Lami*, vol. x., Florent., 1753, p. 777–844.