CHAPTER III.

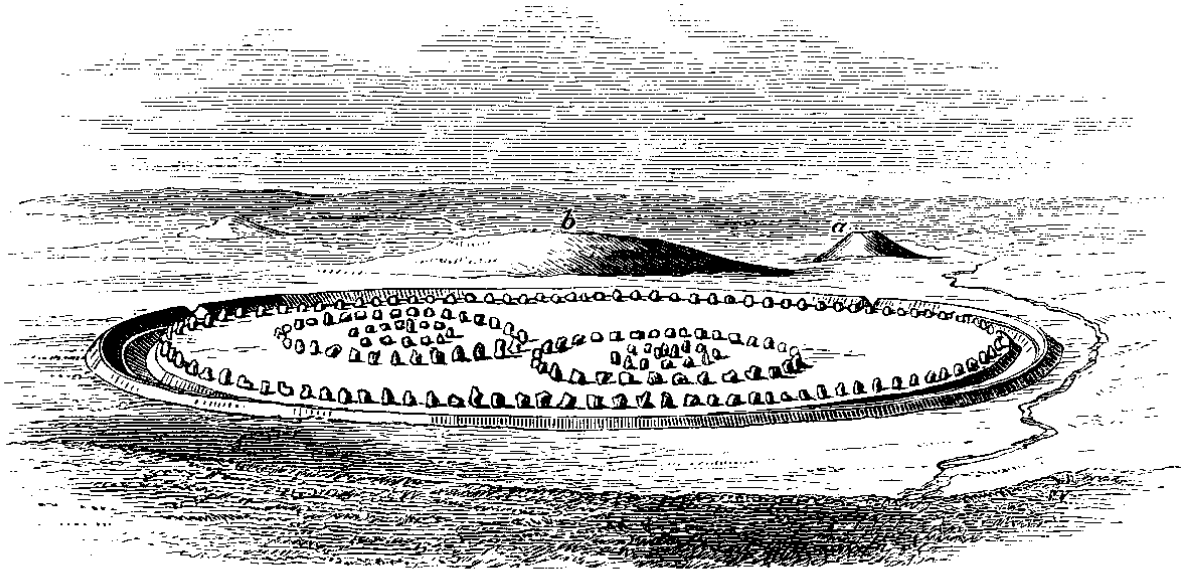
AVEBURY AND STONEHENGE.

IF there existed any acknowledged facts or accepted data with regard to the megalithic remains we are now treating of, the logical method of following out the subject would be to describe first their geographical distribution, and then their uses and dates. While, however, everything concerning them is considered as uncertain - in fact, as unknown, such a mode of treatment, though satisfactory to believers, would fail to carry conviction to the minds of those who doubt. It appears, therefore, that under the circumstances a preferable mode will be to take three or four of the principal and best-known British groups, and to subject them to a tolerably exhaustive examination. If it is possible to dispel the errors that have grown up around them, and to fix their uses and dates on anything like a reasonable basis, the rest will be easy; but so long as men believe in Druids or Dragons, or even think it necessary to relegate these monuments to prehistoric antiquity, it is useless to reason regarding them. By the process it is proposed to follow, it is hoped at least to be able to dispel these mists. Others must judge whether the landscape their dispersion will reveal is either real, or pleasing to contemplate.

The first monument we propose selecting for examination is Avebury, as the largest, and in some respects the most important of the class in this country. Stonehenge might at first sight seem to have equal claims to precedence, but it is exceptional. It is the only hewn stone monument we possess, the only one where trilithons are found with horizontal architraves, and where the outer circle also possesses these imposts. It is, in fact, the megalithic monument which exhibits the most civilized forms, and to Prove its age and use would not necessarily prove those of any rude stone monument found elsewhere. Avebury, on the contrary, though larger than the others, is constructed on precisely the same principle. It has the enclosing vallum, with its ditch inside, like Arborlow, Marden, Arthur's round table, at Penrith, and others we shall meet with further on, while its circle and avenues are identical, as far as we can judge, with numerous examples found elsewhere.

Before, however, proceeding to reason about Avebury, the first point is to ascertain what the group really consists of, which is a much more difficult task than would at first sight appear. Stukeley has introduced so many of his own fancies into his description of the place, and they have been so implicitly followed by all who have since written on the subject, that it is now no easy task to get back to the original form.

The principal monument at Avebury consists of a vallum of earth nearly, but not quite, circular in form, with an average diameter of about 1200 feet. Close on the edge of its internal ditch stood a circle apparently originally consisting of about 100 stones, with a distance consequently of about 33 feet from centre to centre. Inside this were two other double circles, placed not in the axis of the great one, but on its north-eastern side. The more northern one was apparently 3 50 feet in diameter, the other 325 feet. (These particulars are taken from a careful survey made by Sir R. Colt 1812, and published in his 'Ancient Wilts,' vol. ii. pl. xiii. p. 10 et seqq.) In the centre of the northern one stood what is here called a cove, apparently consisting of three upright stones supporting a capstone - a dolmen, in fact, such as we shall frequently meet with in the following pages.

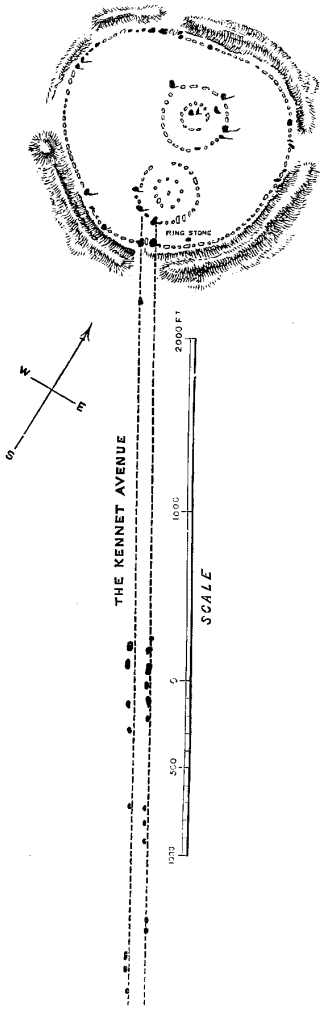


14. View of Avebury restored. *a*. Silbury Hill. *b*. Waden Hill.

14. View of Avebury restored. a. Silbury Hill. b. Waden Hill.

In the southern circle there was only one stone obelisk or menhir. These facts we gather from Stukeley and Colt Hoare, for all is now SO completely ruined and destroyed, that without their description no one could now make even an approximate plan of the place. The stones that comprise these inner as well as the outer circle are all the native Sarsens, which occur everywhere on these downs. In some places, such as Clatford Bottom, about a mile from Ayebury, they lie still in numbers sufficient to erect a dozen Aveburys, and many are still to be seen in the Bottoms to the southward, and indeed in every place where they have not been utilized by modern civilization. No mark of a chisel is to be seen on any of the stones now standing here. For their effect they depend wholly on their mass, and that is so great as to produce an impression of power and grandeur which few Of the more elaborate works of men's hands can rival.

From the outer vallum a stone avenue extended in a perfectly straight line for about 1430 yards, in a south-easterly direction. The centre was apparently drawn from the centre of the great 1200 feet circle, not from those of the smaller ones. This is called the Kennet Avenue, from its pointing towards the village of that name.



15. Plan of Avebury Circle and Kennet Avenue. from Sir R. Colt Hoare.

15. Plan of Avebury Circle and Kennet Avenue, from Sir R. Colt Hoare

I am extremely sceptical with regard to the existence of another, called the Beckhampton Avenue, on which Dr. Stukeley lays so much stress. Aubrey did not see it, though he saw the Long Stone Cove, the "Devil's Quoits," as he called them; and Stukeley is obliged to admit that in his day not one stone was standing. (Stonehenge and Avebury,' p. 34.) It seems that here, as, indeed, everywhere over this country, a number of Sarsen stones were lying about, and his fertile imagination manufactured them into the body of a snake. None, however, are shown in Sir R. Colt Hoare's survey, and none exist now; and beyond the Cove even Stukeley admits that he drew the serpent's tail only because a serpent must have a termination of that sort. There were no stones to mark its form any more then than now. The first objection that appears against admitting the existence of the very hypothetical avenue is, that no curved avenue of any sort is known to exist anywhere, or attached to any monuments. All the curves of the Kennet Avenue are the Doctor's own, introduced by him to connect the straight-lined avenues which were drawn from the circle at Avebury, and that on Hakpen Hill. There are none at Stanton Drew, or other places where he audaciously drew them. Near the church there are, or were, two stones placed in the opening like that called the Friar's Heel and the prostrate stone at Stonehenge, but these are all that probably ever existed of the Beckhampton Avenue. The question is not, however, important. As there were two circles inside the Avebury vallum, there may have been two avenues. All that is here contended for is, that there is no proof of the existence of the second. A dolmen, called the Long Stone Cove, existed near where Stukeley draws its sinuous line, but there is nothing to show that it ever formed any part of such an alignment; and around it there were some standing stones, or rather, even in Stukeley's time, stones which apparently had stood, but there is nothing to show whether forming part of a circle, or as detached menhirs, or as parts of an avenue.

The second member of the Avebury group is the double circle, or rather double oval, on Hakpen hill - Haca's Pen (Haca, or Haco, according to Kemble, was some mythical person with a very Danish name which is found in Hampshire and Berkshire, as well as here. Pen seems to mean merely enclosure, as it does now in English. See Kemble, in 'Journal Arch. Inst.' xiv. p. 134.) this was, according to Stukeley ' 138 feet by 155 feet, and had an avenue 45 feet wide, as compared with 51 feet which Sir R. C. Hoare gives for those of the Kennet avenue of Avebury. The avenue is supposed to have extended in a perfectly straight line for above a quarter of a mile, pointing directly towards Silbury Hill, which is about one mile and a quarter distant.

The third member of the group is the famous Silbury Hill, about a mile distant due south from Avebury. That these two last named are of the same age, and part of one design, seems scarcely open to doubt; but it is quite an open question whether Hacas Pen belongs either to the same age or the same design. Its stones were very much smaller, its form different, and its avenue pointing towards Silbury looks as if that monument existed, and may have long existed before it was built; but of this hereafter.

Besides these three there are numerous barrows, both long and round, in the neighbourhood, and British forts and villages; but these we propose to pass over at present, confining our attention in the first instance to the three monuments above enumerated.

The first question that arises on looking at such a structure as Avebury, is whether it is a temple at all. It has already been attempted in the preceding pages to show what the temples of Britain were in the ages immediately succeeding the Roman occupation; but even if it is conceded that they were small basilicas, it will be contended that this is no answer to the question. If Avebury, it will be said, is a temple, it belonged to a mysterious, mythical prehistoric people capable of executing such wonderful works before they came in contact

with the Romans, but who, strange to say, were incapable of doing anything after the Civilizing touch of that great people had left them feebler, and more ignorant than they were before!

If this question, What is Avebury? is addressed to one brought up in the Druidical faith as most Englishmen have been - he at once answers, It is a temple of the Druids. If pressed and reminded of the groves and the oaks these sectaries delighted in, he will perhaps admit that no soil is so little likely to grow oaks as the chalk downs of Wiltshire, and that there is no proof that any oaks ever grew in the neighbourhood, But this is not a complete answer, for it may be contended that for some reason we cannot comprehend, the Druids may have dispensed with trees on this occasion. The real difficulty is, as before mentioned, that no stones or stone structures are ever mentioned in connection with Druids.

If an educated man whose mind is free from prejudice or preconceived ideas is asked the question, he runs over in his own mind what he knows of the temples of other peoples-Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome, in the ancient or the middle ages. They produced nothing of the sort. Persia, India, China, or the countries in the Eastern seas are all equally unsuggestive; nor will Mexico or Peru help him. The first conclusion, therefore, that he inevitably arrives at is, if these were the temples of file Britons, they must indeed have been a "Peculiar people," unlike any other race that lived at any time in any part of the world.

If they were temples, to what god or gods were they dedicated? It could hardly have 'been Mercury or Apollo, or Mars, Jove or Minerva, mentioned by Caesar, ('Bell. Gall.' vi. 17.) as the gods worshipped by the Druids-and though perhaps these were only the nearest synonyms of Roman gods applied to Celtic divinities, still there must have been such resemblances as to have justified these appellations. We know of what form the temples of these gods were, and certainly they were not built after the fashion of the circles at Avebury. Some antiquaries have timidly suggested a dedication to the Sun. But there is certainly no passage in any author, classical or mediaeval, which would lead us to suppose that our forefathers were addicted to the worship of a deity so unlikely to be a favourite in such a climate as ours. But again, what is a sun temple? Does one exist anywhere? Had the Wiltshire shepherds attempted it, they probably would have found the same difficulty that beset the fire-worshipping Persians of old. it is not easy to get the sun into a temple fashioned by human hands, and his rays are far more available on high places or on the sea-shore than inside walls or enclosures of any sort.

Even putting aside the question to what god it was dedicated, what kind of worship could be performed in such a place? It could not be for speaking in. Our largest cathedrals are 600 feet long, and no man would attempt from the altar of the lady chapel to address a crowd beyond the west door; still less would he in the open air attempt to address a crowd in a circle 1200 feet in diameter, and where from the nature of the arrangements one half of the audience must be behind him. Still less is it fitted for seeing. The floor of the area is perfectly flat, and though people talk loosely of the crowd that could stand on the vallum, or on the berm or narrow ledge between the internal ditch and the foot of the rampart, they forget that only one row of persons could stand on a sharp-pointed mound and that the berm is on the same level as the rest of the floor, and is the last place any one would choose, as 100 great stones were put up in front of it as if especially designed to obstruct the view. This was, in fact, the case with all the stones. Assuming the ceremony or action to take place in the centre of either of the two inner circles, the double row of stones which surround them is so placed as to obstruct the view in, every direction to the utmost possible extent. It may be suggested that the priest might climb on to the cap-stone of the cove, in the northern circle, and there perform his sacrifice in sight of the assembled multitude. It would be difficult to conceive any

place so ill suited for the purpose; and even then, how would he manage on the point of the obelisk in the centre of the southern circle? No place, in fact, can be so ill adapted for either seeing or hearing as Avebury and those who erected it would have been below the capacity of ordinary idiots if they designed it for either purpose. Besides this, it has none of the ordinary adjuncts of a temple. There is no sanctuary, no altar, no ark, no procession path, no priests' house, nothing that is found more or less prominently forming a part of every temple in every part of the world.

Why so hypaethral? Are we to understand that the climate of the Wiltshire downs is so perfect and equable that men can afford to dispense with roofs or the ordinary protection against weather? or are we to assume that the men who could move these masses of stone and raise these mounds were such litter savages that they could not erect an enclosed building of any sort ?

Egypt possesses the finest and most equable, climate in the world; yet all her temples are roofed in a more careful manner and more stately than our mediaeval cathedrals, and so are all those of India and the Eastern climes where shelter is far less wanted than here. In all these countries and climes the temples of the gods are the dwellings or halls of men, enlarged and improved. What they did well for themselves, they did better for their deities. Are men therefore to assume that the Wiltshire shepherd slept on the snow in winter, with no other protection than a circle of widely spaced stones, and had no idea of a roof ? Yet, if he were not hardened by some such process, it is difficult to see why he should build a temple so exposed to the inclemency of the weather that no ceremony could be properly performed in it for one half of the days of the year.

Another objection to the temple theory that would strike most people, if they would think about it, is the enormous size of Avebury. Its area is at least five times that of St. Peter's at Rome; 250,000 people could easily be seated within its vallum, and half a million could stand. Men generally try to adapt the size of their buildings to the amount of accommodation required. But where should such a multitude as this come from? How could they be fed? How could they be lodged? There is no reason to suppose that in any ancient time before the introduction of agriculture, the pastoral population on these downs could ever have been greater than, or so great as, that which now exists there. When Doomsday Book was compiled, there were only two hides of arable land in the manor, and they seem to have belonged to the church. A fair inference from which seems to be that, but for the superior knowledge and influence of the priesthood, the inhabitants of these downs might, in the eleventh century, have remained in the same state of pastoral barbarity in which there is every reason to believe they were stink in pagan times. How a few shepherds, sparsely scattered over these plains, could have erected or have required such a temple as this, is the mystery that requires to be explained. A very small parish church now suffices for their spiritual wants; and if 10,000 pilgrims, even at the present day, when agriculture has been extended to every available patch of ground, visited the place for a week, many of them would be starving before it was over.

It would be easy to adduce fifty other arguments of this sort. Many more must indeed occur to any one who will give himself the trouble to think of the matter; but to those who are accustomed to such investigations the two most convincing probably are, first, that there is no evidence whatever of progress in the design of Avebury. It was built and finished as first designed. The second is, that in it there is a total absence of ornament. In India, we have temples as big as Avebury; but their history is written on their faces. The first step in the process is generally that a small shrine, with a narrow enclosure and small gateway, becomes

from some cause or other, sacred or rich, and a second enclosure is added to contain halls for the reception of pilgrims or the ceremonial display on festal occasions. But no god in that pantheon can live alone. New shrines are added for other deities, with new halls, new residences for priests, and more accommodation for all the thousand and one requisites of a great idol establishment. This requires a third or fourth new enclosure, up even to a seventh, as at Seringham. But in all this there is progress: 200 or 300 years are required, and each century - sometimes each decade-leaves its easily recognised mark as the work progresses. In like manner, the great temple at Karnac, though covering only one-third the area of Avebury, took the Egyptians three centuries to build, and every step of its progress can be easily traced. The works of the earlier Thotmes differ essentially from those of Manepthah and Rameses, and theirs again from those of Seshonk; and these again differ essentially from the little shrine of Osortasen, which was the germ of the whole.

So it was with all our cathedrals. The small Saxon church was superseded by the Norman nave with a small apsidal choir. This was enlarged into the Early English presbytery, and beyond this grew the lady chapel, and as the ill-built, Norman work decayed, it was replaced by Tudor constructions. But there is nothing of the sort at Avebury. Had the temple been built or begun by the sparse inhabitants of these downs, we should have seen something to show where the work began. They must have brought one stone one year and another the next, and inevitably they would have employed their leisure hours, like the inhabitants of Easter Island, in carving these stones either with ornaments or symbols, or fashioning them into idols. There is absolutely no instance in the whole world where some evidence of care and of a desire after ornament of some sort is not to be traced in the temples of the people. Nothing however, of the sort occurs here. Indeed, if there is one thing more evident than another about Avebury, it is that, as it was begun, so it was ended. There is no hesitation, no sign of change: the same men, to all appearance, who traced its plan saw its completion; and as they designed it, so they left it. There is no sign of any human hand having touched it from that hour henceforward till the sordid greed of modern farmers set to work to destroy it, to build with its materials the alehouse and the village which now occupies a small portion of the enclosure.

So too with regard to ornament. This structure, we may fairly assume, if a temple, must have been in use for some centuries; but during that time, or any shorter time that may be assumed, no man had the skill or the inclination to adorn the greatest temple of his native land either with carving or emblems or ornament of any kind. The men who could conceive the great design-so great and noble-could do nothing more. Their hands drooped in listless idleness by their sides, and they were incapable of further exertion! Such a state of affairs, if not impossible, is certainly unparalleled. No such example exists anywhere else with reference to any temple, so far as we know, in any part of the world. Tombs do show these peculiarities at times, temples never.

If these reasons are sufficient to prove that Avebury was not a temple, there are more than can be required, to show that it was not a place of meeting of ancient Britons. Whatever may be thought of the extent of prehistoric assemblies, it will hardly be contended that it was necessary to provide accommodation for the 250,000 men who could be seated in the great circle. Even supposing it were intended only to accommodate 12,000 or 13,000 lords and as many commons in the two subordinate rings, they would hardly have arranged an inner circle of great stones in the middle of each assembly, or placed a spiked obelisk for a woolsack in the one or a tall dolmen under or behind the Speaker's chair in the other. Nothing in fact could be conceived so utterly unsuited for the purpose as these rings, and unless these primeval men were very differently constituted from ourselves, any assembly of elder-men who were likely

to meet at Avebury would have preferred a room however rude, and of one-hundredth part of the extent, for their deliberations to the unsheltered and unsuitable magnificence of the Big Stones. Of course, among all rude people, and often also among those more civilized, open-air assemblies of the people will take place; but then these will always be near the great centres of population. Men will go into the desert for religious purposes, but they prefer talking politics nearer home. In some communities a Campus Martius or a Thing field may be set apart for the purpose; but the first requisite of such a place of assembly is that it shall be open and free from encumbrance of any sort. A Mote hill too, like the terraced Tynwald Mount in the Isle of Man, is an intelligible arrangement, not for a deliberative assembly, but as a rostrum from which to proclaim law. We can also understand why Shire courts should be held on barrows, as seems often to have been the case. For here the judge occupied a dignified position on the summit. His assessors stood behind him, and the pleaders and people in front. Instances are also known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries where local courts were summoned to meet at the "standing stones," or in circles, in Scotland at least; (Sculptured Stones of Scotland', ii. P. xli.) but in all these instances it was apparently to settle territorial disputes on the spot, and the stones or mounds were merely indicated as well-known marks and, consequently, convenient trysting-places. Even if this were not so, it would not be at all to be wondered at that in the middle ages sepulchral circles or mounds were habitually used as meeting-places. They were then old enough to be venerable; and their antiquity must have conferred on them a dignity suitable to the purpose, whatever their original destination may have been. But all this is very different from erecting as a place of assembly so huge and inconvenient a place as Avebury is, and always must have been.

It seems needless to follow this line of argument further, for unless it can be shown that the people who erected Avebury were so differently constituted from ourselves that no reasoning derived from our experience can be applied to them, the answer seems inevitable.

That no such Temple, nor has any such meeting-place, been built or attempted by any set of men in any part of the world. But is there any reason for supposing that the inhabitants of these downs differed so essentially from ourselves? Dr. Thurnam has examined with care some hundreds of skulls gathered from the grave-mounds in this neighbourhood, and has published decades on decades of them. (Thurnam, ' Crania Britannica;' London, 1856 to 1865.) Yet the most learned craniologists cannot detect-except perhaps in degree-any difference that would lead us to suppose that these ancient men were not actuated by the same motives and governed by the same moral influences as ourselves. If this is so, Avebury certainly was not erected either as a temple or a place of assembly, in any sense of the word which we can understand, and those who insist that it was either are bound to explain what the motives or objects could have been which induced the inhabitants of the Wiltshire downs to act in a manner so entirely opposed to all we know of the actions or feelings of all other nations in all other parts of the world.

If, therefore, Avebury was neither a temple nor a place of assembly, what was it? The answer does not seem far to seek. It must have been a burying-place, but still not a cemetery in the ordinary sense of the term. The inhabitants of these downs could never have required a bigger and more magnificent burying-place than any other community in Great Britain, and must always have been quite unequal to raise such a monument. But what is more important than this, a cemetery implies succession in time and gradations in rank, and this is exactly what is most conspicuously wanting at Avebury. It may be the monument of one king or two kings, but it is Not a collection of the monuments of individuals of various classes in life, or of a series of individuals of the same rank, erected at different intervals of time. As before

remarked, it is in one design- "totus teres atque rotundus," erected with no hesitation and no shadow of change.

If, however, we assume that Avebury was the burying-place of those who fell in a great battle fought on the spot, every difficulty seems at once to vanish. It is now admitted that men did bury in stone circles or under dolmens, and beside headstones and within earthen enclosures, and what we find here differs only in degree from what we find elsewhere. It seems just such a monument as a victorious army of say 10,000 men could, with their prisoners, erect in a week. The earth is light, and could easily be thrown lip into the form of the vallum, and the Sarsen stones lay all over the downs, and all on a higher level than Avebury, which perhaps for that very reason is placed on the lowest spot of ground in the neighbourhood. With a few rollers and ropes, 10,000 men would very soon collect all the stones that ever stood there, and stick them up on their ends. They probably would have no skilled labour in their ranks, and no leisure, if they had, to employ it in ornamentation of any sort. Without this, it is just such a monument as might and would be raised by an illiterate army wishing to bury with honour those who had fallen in the fight, and having at the same time no other means of leaving on the spot a record of their own victory.

On theoretical grounds, there seems to be no argument that can be urged against this view; and during the ten years that it has been constantly before the public none have 'been brought forward that deserve notice. It is urged, however, that the evidence is not complete, and that nothing written serves to confirm this view. Those who make the objection forget that one of the first conditions of the problem is that those who erected such a monument should be illiterate. If they could have written to any primeval 'Times,' they would not have taken such pains to lithograph their victory on the spot. Had they been able either to read or write, an inscription would have done more than the 200 or 300 stones of Avebury; but because they could not write, they raised them, and, for that reason also, left us the problem of finding out why they did so,

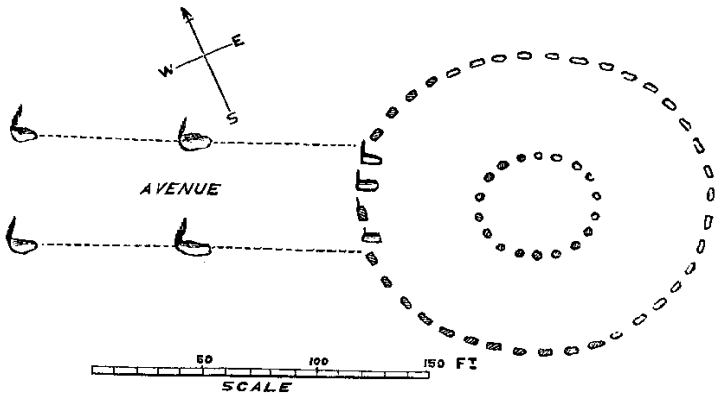
We are not, however, wholly without evidence on this subject. Many years ago Mr. Kemble printed a charter of King Athelstan, dated in 939, which, describing the boundaries of the manor of Overton, in which Avebury is situated, makes use of the following expression: - "Then by Collas barrow, as far as the broad road to Hackpen, thence northward up along the Stone row, thence to the burying-places. (Codex diplomaticus 'Evi Saxonici,' v. p. 238, No, 1120) It does not seem to be a matter of doubt that the stone row here mentioned is the Kennet Avenue, nor that the burying-places (byrgelsas) are the Avebury rings; but it may be urged that the Saxon surveyor did not know what he was talking about; and m, unfortunately, he does not say who were buried there, and gives no corroborative evidence, all we learn from this is that they were so considered in the tenth century.

Something more tangible was nearly obtained shortly before Stukeley's tune, when Lord Stawell levelled the vallum next the church, where the great barn now stands. The original surface of the ground was " easily distinguishable by a black stratum of mould on the chalk. Here they found large quantities of buck-horns, bones, oyster-shells, and wood-coals. An old man who was employed on the work says there was a quantity of a cartload of horns, that they were very rotten, and that there were very many burned bones among them." (Stukeley, 'Stonehenge and Abury,' 1, 27.) On the same page, Dr. Stukeley adds: "Besides some Roman coins accidentally found in and about Abury, I was informed that a square bit of iron was taken up under one of the great stones upon pulling it down." Other Roman coins have, I understand, been found there since, but there is no authentic record of the fact which can be quoted. This is to be

regretted; for the presence, if ascertained, of these coins would go far to prove that the erection of the monument was after their date, whatever that may be.

Unfortunately no scientific man saw these bones, so no one was able to say whether they were human or not; but the presumption is that they were, for why should burned bones of animals be placed in such a situation? The answer to this is that the Wiltshire Archaeological Society have made some excavations at Avebury, and found nothing. In 1865, they tapped the vallum in various places, and dug one trench to its centre, and, as they found nothing, concluded that nothing was to be found. But in a mound 4442 feet long, according to Sir R. Colt Hoare, there must be many vacant spots, especially if the bodies were burnt; and such negative evidence cannot be considered as conclusive, nor as sufficient to disprove the evidence acquired in Lord Stawell's diggings. Stukeley's honesty in recording facts of this sort is hardly to be suspected, though the inferences he draws from his facts are generally to be received with the extremest caution. The Society also dug in the centre of the northern circle, where the dolmen stood, and penetrated to the original chalk, but found nothing except the ruins of the stones which had been destroyed by fire, and express great disappointment at finding "no human bones whatever." (The particulars are taken from a pamphlet entitled 'Excavations at Avebury, under the direction of the Secretary of the Wiltshire Archaeol. and Nat Hist. Society,' printed at Devizes, but, - so far as I know, not yet published.) If the bodies were burnt - as we should be led to infer from what Lord Stawell found under the vallum - what they probably would have found, had the "Cove" been complete, would have been a vase or urn with ashes. The barbarians who destroyed the stones are scarcely likely to have spared so worthless a piece of crockery; and if it were broken at the time, it would be in vain a hundred years afterwards to look either for it or for bones that in all probability were never laid there. Nor need better results have been expected from their trench, 60 feet long. A man must know very exactly what he is looking for, and where to look for it, who expects to find an object like an urn, a foot in diameter, in a 28-acre field. Judging from the experience obtained at Crichie, in Scotland, where a funereal deposit was obtained at the foot of every one of a circle of stones that stood inside a ditch like the internal one at Avebury, it is there we should expect to find the deposit. ('Sculptured Stones of Scotland,' vol. i. introd. p. xx.) That is just where nobody has thought of looking at Avebury, though nothing would be easier. There are fifty or sixty empty holes, and any one might without difficulty be enlarged, and if there were a deposit at the foot of each, it would then inevitably be found.

To this we shall return presently. Meanwhile let us see what evidence, if any, is to be obtained from the circle on Hakpen Hill.



16. Circle on Hakpen Hill. From Stukeley.

As 'before mentioned, this monument consists of two ovals, according to Dr. Stukeley the outer one was 138 by 155 feet and the inner 45 by 51 feet. He does not give the dimensions of the stones; but Aubrey calls them from 4 to 5 feet in height which is confirmed by the Doctor's engraving; and, altogether, they do not seem to average one quarter the size of those at Avebury. Of the avenue, only four stones are shown in the plan woodcut (No. 16), and the same number is shown in the view (plate xxi.). In both instances,

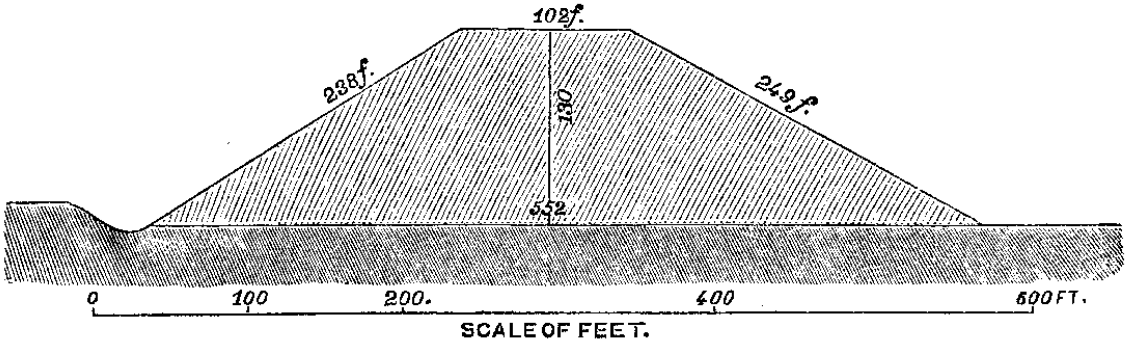
the avenue is represented as perfectly straight, and as trending rather to the southward of Silbury Hill. (A plan of it was published about Stukeley's time by a Mr. Twining in a pamphlet, which was written to prove that this group of monuments was erected by Agricola, to represent a map of England! A plan accompanies it, which shows all the avenues as straight; but what weight can possibly be attached to any evidence coming from man with such a theory as this?) It extended, according to Aubrey, a quarter of a mile say 440 yards.

The most curious circumstance, however, connected with this circle is that, at the distance of about 80 yards from the outer oval, there were found two rows of skeletons, laid side by side, with their feet towards the centre of the circles. In a curious letter, written by a Dr. Toope, of Oxford, dated 1st December, 1685, addressed to Mr. Aubrey, and published by Sir R. Colt Hoare, ('Ancient Wiltshire,' ii. p. 63.) it is said:-" I quickly perceived them to be human." "Next day dugg up many bushells, with which I made a noble medicine. The bones are large and nearly rotten, but the teeth extream and wonderfully white. About 80 yards from where the bones were found, is a temple 40 yards diameter, with another 15 yards; round about bones layd so close that scul toucheth scul. Their feet all round turned towards the temple, 1 foot below the surface of the ground. At the feet of the first order lay the head of the next row, the feet always tending towards the temple." Further on Aubrey asserts that a ditch surrounded the temple, which Stukeley denies; but there seems no difficulty in reconciling the two statements. The destruction of the monument had commenced before Aubrey's time. For it is impossible to conceive bodies lying for even 1000 or 1200 years in so light a soil, at the depth of 1 foot or even 2 feet, exposed to the influence of rain and frost, without their being returned to earth. Most probably there was a ditch, and where there was a ditch there must have been a mound, and that, if heaped over the bodies, might have protected them. The vallum had disappeared in Aubrey's time; the ditch was filled up before Stukeley's, and stones and all had been smoothed over in Sir R. Colt Hoare's; so that now the site can hardly be defined with certainty. A trench, however, cut across it, if it can be traced, might lead to some curious revelations, for there can be no doubt whatever with regard to the facts stated in Dr. Toope's letter. He was a medical man of eminence, and knew human bones perfectly, and was too deeply interested in the diggings, from which he drew " his noble medicine," and to which he frequently returned, to be mistaken in what he stated.

Meanwhile, however, what interests us more at this stage of the enquiry are the differences as well as the similarities of the two monuments. The circles at Hakpen are on a very much smaller scale both as to linear dimensions and the size of the stones than the circles at Avebury; and the difference between burning and burying, which, so far as the evidence goes, seems to have prevailed in the two places, is also remarkable. Do they belong to two different ages, and, if so, which is the elder? The evidence of the tumuli is uniform that the inhabitants of this island buried before they burnt. But can these bones be so old as this would force us to admit they were? So far as the evidence at present goes, it seems impossible to carry the burials on Hakpen Hill back to the earliest period of prehistoric interments; the condition of the bones is sufficient to render such an hypothesis untenable. Unless the phosphate., and other component adjuncts remained in them, they would have been as useless for medicine as for manure, and the exposed Position in which they lay would have reduced these to dust or mud in a very few centuries. From the descriptions we have, the bodies certainly were not in the contracted doubled-up position usual in the so-called bronze age, and there were no traces of the cremations apparently introduced by the Romans, and. practised for some time alter they left. All appear to have been laid out in the extended position afterwards adopted and. continued to the present day. In fact everything would lead us to suppose that Camden was not far wrong in saying that these were the bones of the Saxons and Danes slain at the battle of Kennet in A.D. 1006. (Camden,'Britannica,'127.) Even then, unless there was a mound over them, they could hardly have lasted 600 years in the. state in which they were found. If we do not

adopt this view, but insist that Hakpen and Avebury are contemporary monuments, and part of one great plan, the only hypothesis that occurs to me that will at all account for their peculiarities is that the victorious army burnt and buried their dead at Avebury, and that the defeated force got permission to bury their dead more modestly on Hakpen Hill.

Silbury Hill, which forms the third member of our group, is situated nearly due south from Avebury, at a distance of 1.200 yards from the outside of the ring, of the former, to the foot of



17. Section of Silbury Hill.

the hill, or, as nearly as may be, one Roman mile from centre to centre. Mr. Rickman ('Archaeologia,' xxviii. p. 399 et seqq.) based an argument on the latter fact, as if it proved the post-Roman origin of the group; and like the many recurring instances of 100 feet and 100 yards, which run through all the megalithic remains, it may have some value, but, as a single instance, it can only be looked upon as a coincidence.

The dimensions of the hill, as ascertained by the Rev. Mr. Smith, of Yatesbury, ('Journal Wiltshire Archaeol. and Nat. Hist. Society,' vii. p. 1861.) are that it is 130 feet in height, 552 feet in diameter, and 1657 feet in circumference; that the flat top is 104 feet or 102 feet across, according to the direction in which it is measured; this last being another Roman coincidence, as the top has no doubt both sunk and spread. (Curiously enough these dimensions are almost identical with those of the mound erected by the Belgic-Dutch, to commemorate the part they did not take in the battle of Waterloo. Its dimensions are 130 feet high, 514 feet in diameter, and 1632 feet in circumference. The angle of the slope of the sides is lower, being 27-21 degrees, owing to the smaller diameter of the flat top, which is only 40 feet.) The angle of the slope of the sides is 30 degrees to the horizon.

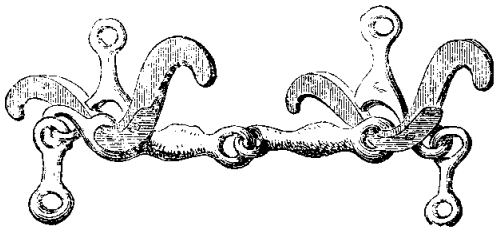
In the year 1777 a shaft was sunk from the top of the mound to the base, by order of the then Duke of Northumberland and Colonel Drax, but no record has been preserved of what they found, or rather did not find, for had they made any discovery of the least importance, it certainly would have been communicated to some of the learned societies of the day. Subsequently, in 1849, a shaft was driven nearly horizontally from the southern face on the level of the original soil to the centre, where it met the Duke's shaft; and subsequently a circular gallery was carried round the centre, but in vain; nothing was found in these excavations that would show that the mound had ever been used for sepulchral purposes, or that threw any light whatever on its history or destination? (Douglas 'Nenia Brit.' p. 161. See also Salisbury volume of the Archaeological Institute, p. 74.)

Judging from the analogies gathered from our knowledge of the parallel Indian series, we ought not to be surprised if this really were the only result. From the accounts of the Chinese travellers who visited India in the fifth and seventh centuries, we learn that about one-half of the topes they saw and described were erected to commemorate events, and not to contain

relics, or as simulated tombs. Wherever Buddha or any of his followers performed any miracles, or where any event happened of sufficient importance to make it desirable that the memory of the locality where it happened should be preserved, there a Tope was erected. To take an example as bearing more directly than usual on our present subject. When Dutthagamini, king of Ceylon (161 B.C.), defeated the usurper Ellala, and restored the true faith, " he erected near the capital a dagoba in commemoration of his victory. A stone pillar marks the spot where the action commenced, and another stone pillar exists there with an inscription to the effect that it marks the spot rendered sacred by the death and blood of Ellala." ('Journal Royal Asiatic Soc.' xiii. p. 164; and Major Skinner's plan of Anurajapura.) The dagoba is a simple mound of earth, and, so far as known, has never been opened. In Afghanistan, many of the topes opened by Messrs. Masson and Honigberger were found to be what they call "blind topes," but they were not able to detect by any external sign whether their researches were likely to be rewarded with success or to end in disappointment. (Wilson, 'Ariana Antiqua,' p. 41; and Masson's 'Memoir,' passim.)

Whether these analogies are worth anything or not, nothing appears, at first sight at least, more probable than that, if the fallen chiefs of a victorious army are buried at -Avebury, the survivors should have employed their prisoners as slaves to erect a mound on the spot probably where the chiefs were slain and the battle decided. The tradition, however, having been lost, the mound stands silent and uncommunicative, and it is not easy now to read its riddle.

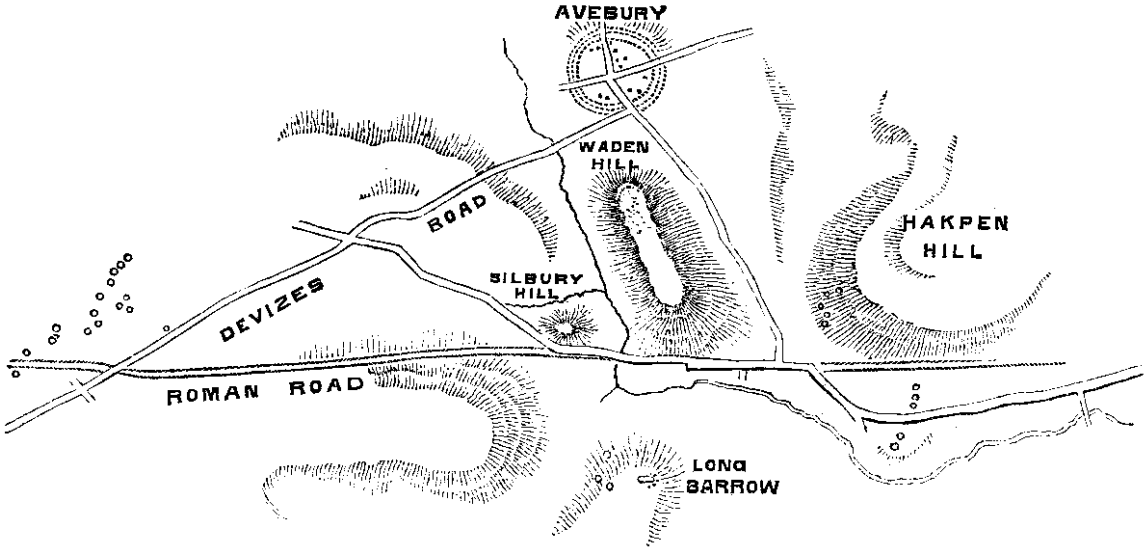
It is very premature, however, to speculate either on these analogies or on the negative results of the explorations made into the hill these last were undertaken, like the diggings at Avebury, on the empirical assumption that the principal deposit would be found in the centre, and at Silbury on the ground level, which is exactly the place where almost certainly it was not. Supposing that there is a low-level sepulture at Silbury, it probably will be found within 30 or 40 yards of the outer face of the mound, on the side looking towards Avebury, if it is connected with that monument. But the knowledge we have acquired, as will be afterwards detailed, from the examination of the Minning Lowe, Arbor Lowe, Rose Hill tumuli, and other monuments of this class, would lead us to expect to find the principal deposit near the summit. The bit of a bridle (woodcut No. 18) and the traces of armour which were found in Stukeley's time, near the summit, mark in all probability the position of the principal graves, and nothing would surprise me less than if five or six entombments were found arranged around the upper plateau at a small depth below the surface. We shall be in a better position to judge how far this is probable when we have finished this chapter; but till the evidence is adduced, it is useless to speculate on its effect.



18. Iron Bit of Bridle. Found in Silbury Hill.

At one time I hoped that the Roman road might be found to have passed under the hill, and if this were the case, it would settle the question as to whether it were pre- or post-Roman. In order to ascertain this, some excavations were made into the hill in 1867, and simultaneously on the high ground to the southward of it. As traces which seemed undoubtedly to mark the existence of the road running past the hill, at about 50 to 100 yards to the southward, were found there, the excavations into the hill were discontinued, and the line of the road considered as established. Owing to various mishaps, no plan of these discoveries has yet been published, but the

annexed woodcut, which is traced from the Ordnance Survey sheet, will suffice to explain its bearing on the question.



19. Plan of Avebury, from Ordnance Survey. The line of the Roman road is hatched throughout.

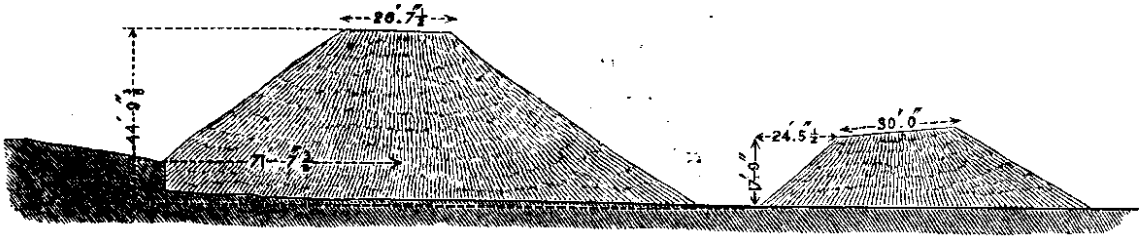
Standing on Silbury Hill and looking westward, the road coming from Bath over the downs seems to come direct at the hill. After passing the Devizes road, it trends to the southward, and shortly again resumes its original direction. About a mile before it reaches the hill, it again resumes its southward direction, and passes it at a distance of between 50 to 100 yards, making, apparently, for the spot where the bridge over the Kennet now exists, and may have existed in Roman times. Those who contend for the pre-Roman antiquity of the hill rest their case on the assumption that the Romans always made or wished to make their roads perfectly straight, and that this being deflected to the south, it was in consequence of the hill being there at the time the road was made. This, however, is singularly contradicted by the line of this very road westwards from the Devizes road. According to the Ordnance Survey, it is set out in a curve for 31 miles till it meets the Wands-dyke. Why this was done is not clearer than why the road should have been curved to the eastward of the Devizes road. But, on the other hand, supposing the hill to have been where it now stands, and the Romans wished the road to be straight, nothing in the world was so easy as for them to set out a line mathematically straight between the Devizes road and the point where it passes the hill. The country is and was perfectly open, and quite as flat as any Roman road-maker could desire, and signals could have been seen throughout with perfect facility. It is crediting the Roman surveyors with a degree of stupidity they certainly did not show elsewhere, to say, if they wanted a straight road, that seeing the hill before their eyes, they first set out their road towards it, when they knew that before they had advanced a mile, they must bend it so as to avoid that very obstacle. Even then they would have tried to make it as straight as possible, and would have adopted the line of the present coach-road, which runs inside their line and between it and the hill. At the same time, if any one will turn to Sir R. Colt Hoare's map of the Roman roads in this district- "Stations Calne and Swindon "-which includes Avebury, he will find that all are set out in lines more or less curvilinear, and sometimes violently so, when any object was to be gained by so doing. Though, therefore, as a general rule, it is safe to argue on the presumption of the straightness of Roman roads, it may lead to serious error to rely on such evidence in every instance.

The inference drawn from the piece of the Roman road further eastward on Hakpen Hill is the same. It is perfectly distinct and quite straight for about a mile, but if it had been continued in

that line, it would have passed the hill at a distance of at least 200 yards to the southward, and never have joined the other piece till long after it had passed the Devizes road. It was deflected northward in the village of Kennet, apparently to reach the bridge, and then to join the piece coming from Bath.

The result of all this seems to be, that the evidence of the Roman road is inconclusive either way and must be withdrawn. Taking the point where it passes the Devizes road, and the piece which is found on Hakpen hill as fixed points, to join these it must have passed considerably to the southward of the hill; whether lit did so in a mathematically straight line or in one slightly curved, was a matter for the judgment of the surveyor; but till we know his motives, it is not in our power to found any argument upon them.

If, however, the Roman road refuses to give evidence in this cause, the form of the hill offers some indications which are of value. As before mentioned, it is a truncated straight-lined cone, sloping at an angle of 30' to the horizon, while all the British barrows known are domical or, at least, curvilinear in section. In all his experience, Sir R. Colt Hoare met with



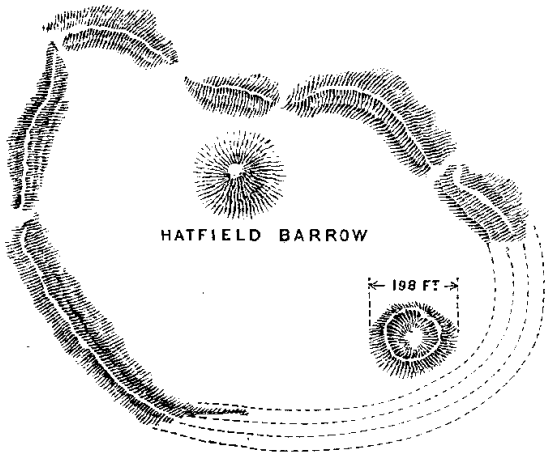
20. **Elevation of the Bartlow Hills. From the 'Archæologia,' xxx.**

only one straight-lined monument of this class, which consequently he calls the Conical Barrow. Whether it was truncated or not is not quite clear. There are bushes, or weeds, growing out of the top, which conceal its form. (Sir R. G Hoare, 'Ancient Wiltshire,' i. pl. ii. fig. 8.) Nothing was found in the barrow to indicate its age except a brass (-bronze?) spear-head, but it was attached to a British village, apparently of the Roman period, inasmuch as iron nails and Roman pottery were found in it. (Ibid. i. p. 191.) Be this as it may, there are a range of tumuli at Bartlow, on the boundary between Essex and Cambridgeshire, which are all truncated cones, and are undoubtedly of Roman origin. A coin of Hadrian was found in the chamber of one of them, and Mr. Gage, and the other archaeologists who were present at the opening, were all agreed that all the four opened were of about the same age. ('Archaeologia,' xxx. p. 300 et seqq.) We may therefore feel assured that they were not earlier than the time of Hadrian, though from the style of workmanship of the various articles found, I would feel inclined to consider them somewhat more modern, but that is of little consequence. The point that interests us most is, that the angle of the Conical Barrow quoted above is 45° to the horizon, that of the principal tumuli at Bartlow 37 $^1/_2$°, and that of Silbury Hill 30°. Here we certainly have a sequence not long enough to be quite satisfactory, but still of considerable value, as an indication that Silbury hill was post-Roman.

On the other hand, we have undoubted evidence that the truncated conical form was common in post-Roman times. We have one, for instance, at MarIborough, close by, and if that place was Merlin's bury, as Sir R. Colt Hoare would fain persuade us it was, it assists us considerably in our argument. Without insisting on this, however, Mr. George Clark, in his most valuable paper on Ancient English Castles, ('Arch, Journ,' xxiv. pp. 92 and 319.) enumerates ninety truncated cones erected in England, he considers, between the Roman times and the Norman conquest. "These earthworks," he says, "may be thus described: First was cast up a

truncated cone of earth, standing at its natural slope from 50 feet to 100 feet in diameter at the top, and from 20 feet to 50 feet high." (Ibid. p.100.) Mr. Clark does not believe that these were ever sepulchral, nor does it occur to him that they might be memorial. I should, however, be disinclined to accept the first conclusion as absolute till excavations had been made into some of them, at least, where I fancy we may find indications rather tending the other way. Whether they were memorial or not must depend on traditions that have not hitherto been looked for. Mr. Clark's contention was that all had at some time or other been used for residential purposes, and as fortifications' and many are recorded as having been erected as castles. All this is probably quite correct, but the point that interests us here is, that there are nearly one hundred examples of truncated cones of earth thrown up in England after the Roman times, and not one before. If this is so, the conclusion seems inevitable that Silbury Hill must belong to the latter age. Whether this conclusion can be sustained or not, must depend on what follows from the other monuments we are about to examine. The evidence of the monument itself, which is all we have hitherto had an opportunity of bringing forward, may be sufficient to render it probable, but not to prove the case. Unless other examples can be adduced whose evidence tends the same way, the case cannot be taken as proved, however strong a prima facie presumption may be established.

Though a little distant. it may be convenient to include the Marden circle in the Avebury group. It is situated in a village of that name seven miles south of Silbury Hill. When Sir R. Colt Hoare surveyed it fifty years ago, the southern half of the vallum had been so completely destroyed, that it could not be traced, and he carried it across the brook, making, the whole area about fifty-one acres. ('Ancient Wiltshire; ii. 5. Unfortunately there is no scale attached to the plan of the Marden circle, and no dimensions quoted in the text.)



21. Marden Circle. From Sir R. C. Hoare. No Scale.

My impression is that this is a mistake, and that the area of the Circle was only about half that extent. The rampart was of about the same section as Avebury, and the ditch was inside as there. Within this enclosure were two mounds, situated unsymmetrically, like the circles at Avebury. The greater one was opened with great difficulty, owing to the friable nature of the earth of which it was composed; and Mr. Cunnington was convinced that it was sepulchral, and contained ore or more burials by cremation; but Sir R. Colt Hoare was so imbued with the Druidical theory as to Avebury, that he could not give lip the idea that so similar a monument must be also a Druidical altar, and the whole a temple. The second barrow was too much ruined to yield any results, and on revisiting the spot, it was found to have been cleared away. A great part of the vallum had also been removed, but in it was found at least one skeleton of a man who had been buried there. ('Ancient Wiltshire,' p. 7.) How many more there may have been it is impossible to say. The destroyers of these antiquities were not likely to boast of the number of bodies they had disturbed.

The great interest of this circle is that it contains in earth the counterpart of what was found at Avebury in stone; not that this necessarily betokens either an earlier or a later age. There are no stones to be found at Marden, which is on the edge of the chalk, while the country about Avebury was and is covered with Sarsens to this day. It may, however, be considered as very positive evidence of the sepulchral nature of that monument, if such were needed, and if it were thoroughly explored, might perhaps settle the question of the age of both. In this respect,

the Marden monument affords a better field for the explorer than Avebury. The destruction or disfigurement of its mound, or vallum, would be no great loss to antiquaries, if a proper record were kept of their present appearance; while to do anything tending towards the further dilapidation of Avebury is a sacrilege from which every one would shrink.

Before leaving the neighbourhood it now only remains to try and determine who the brave men were who were buried at Avebury, and who the victors who raised the mound at Silbury, assuming that the one is a burying place, and the other a trophy. Some years ago I suggested it was those who fell in Arthur's last and greatest battle of Badon Hill, fought somewhere in this neighbourhood in the year A.D. 520, and nothing that has since occurred has at all shaken my conviction in the correctness of this determination,' but a good deal has tended to confirm it. (I adopt Dr. Guest's dates for this part of the subject, not only because I think them most probable, but because I think, from his knowledge and the special attention he has bestowed on the subject, he is most likely to be right. See Salisbury Arch. p. 62.)

The authors of the 'Monumenta Britannica ('Athenaeum Journal,' Dec. 13, 1865.) fix the site of this battle at Banesdown, near Bath, which is the generally received opinion. ('Mon. Brit.' p. 15.) Carte, and others, have suggested Baydon Hill, about thirteen miles west by north from Avebury, while Dr. Guest carries it off to Badbury, in Dorset, ('Salisbury Vol.', p. 63.) a distance of forty miles. Unfortunately, Gildas, who is our principal authority on this matter, only gives us in three words all he has to say of the locality in which it was fought-" Prope Sabrinum 0stium ('Mon. Brit.' p.15.) and it has been asserted that these words are an interpolation, because they are not found in all the ancient MSS. If they are, however, 'an insertion, they are still of very ancient date, and would not have been admitted and repeated if they had not been added by some one who knew or had authority for introducing them. As the words are generally translated, they are taken to mean near the mouth of the Severn, a construction at once fatal to the pretensions of Bath, which it is impossible any one should describe as near that river, even if any one could say where the mouth of that river is. It is most difficult to determine where the river ends and the estuary begins, and to a mediaeval geographer, especially, that point must have been much nearer Gloucester than even Bristol. This, however, is of little consequence, as the words in the text are not "Sabrinae ostium," but "Sabrinum ostium"; and as the river is always spoken of as feminine, it is not referred to here, and the expression can only be translated as "near the Welsh gate." Nor does it seem difficult to determine where the Welsh gate must have been.

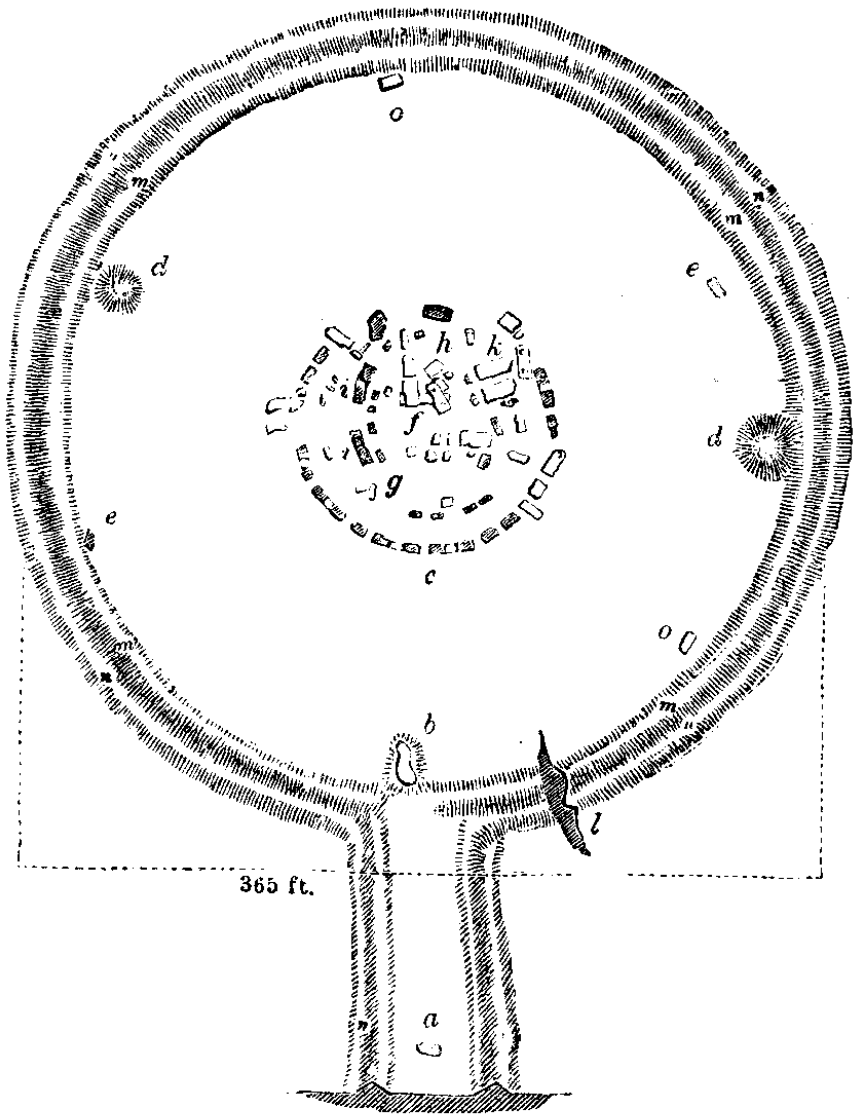
The Wandsdyke always seems to have been regarded as a barrier erected to stop the incursions of the Welsh into the southern counties, and that part of it extending from Savernake forest westward, for ten or twelve miles, seems at some comparatively recent period to have been raised and strengthened (Colt Hoare, 'Ancient Wiltshire,' ii. p. 22.) (either by the BeIgae or Saxons) to make it more effectual for that purpose. According as an army is advancing northward from Winchester, or Chichester to the Severn valley, or is marching from Gloucester or Cirencester towards the south, the rampart either protects or bars the way. In its centre, near the head-waters of the Kennet, the Saxons advanced in 557 to the siege of Barbury Castle, and having gained that vantage ground, they again advanced in 577 to Deorham, and fought the battle that gave them possession of Glewanceaster, Cyrenceaster, and Bathanceaster. (Saxon Chronicle, in 'Mon Brit'. 304.) What they then accomplished they seem to have attempted unsuccessfully thirty-seven years earlier, and to have been stopped in the attempt by Arthur at Badon Hill. If this is so, there can be very little difficulty in determining the site of the Welsh gate as that opening through which the road now passes 2 $^{1}/_{2}$ miles south of Silbury Hill, in the very centre of the strengthened part of the Wandsdyke. If this is so, the Saxons under Cerdic must have passed through the village of Avebury, supposing it then existed, on their way to Cirencester; and if we assume that they were attacked on Waden Hill by Arthur, the whole history of the campaign is clear. If we may rely on a nominal similarity

the case may be considered as proved. Waden is the name by which the hill between Avebury and Silbury is called at the present day by the people of the country, and it is so called on the Ordnance survey sheets, and etymologically Waden is more like Badon than Baydon, or Badbury, or any other name in the neighbourhood. The objection to this is that Waden Hill is not fortified, and that Gildas speaks of the "Obsessio Montis Badonici." It is true there is no trace of any earthworks on it nosy, but in Stukeley's time there were tumuli and earthen rings (apparently sepulchral) on its summit, which are represented in his plates; but no trace of these now remains. The hill was cultivated in his day and in a century or so beyond his time all traces of ramparts may have been obliterated, supposing them to have existed. The true explanation of the difficulty, however, I believe to be found in Jeffrey of Monmouth's account of these transactions. He is a frail reed to rely upon; but occasionally he seems to have had access to authorities now lost, and their testimony at times throws considerable light on passages of our history otherwise obscure. According to him there was both a siege and a battle; and his account of the battle is so circumstantial and so probable, that it is difficult to believe it to be a pure invention. If it is not, every detail of his description would answer perfectly to an attack on an army posted on Waden Hill. ('Jeffrey of Monmouth,' ix. p. 4.) The siege would then probably be that of Barbury Hill, which Cerdic would be obliged to raise on Arthur's advance; and retreating towards the shelter of the Wandsdyke, he was overtaken at this spot and defeated, and so peace was established for many years between the Brits and the Saxons. It may be true that the written evidence is not either sufficiently detailed or sufficiently precise to establish the fact that the battle was fought on this spot. It must, however, be conceded that nothing in all that is written contradicts what is here advanced, and when to this we add such a burying place, Avebury at one end of Waden Hill, and such a monument as Silbury Hill at the other, the proofs that it was so seem to me to amount as nearly to certainty as we can now expect to arrive at in such matters.

Those who believe, however, that all these monuments are absolutely prehistoric, will not, of course, be convinced by any argument derived from a single monument; but if it should turn out that even a more certain case can be made out for the equally modern age of others, that point must eventually be conceded. When it is, I feel no doubt that it will come eventually to be acknowledged that those who fell in Arthur's twelfth and greatest battle wore buried in the ring at Avebury, and that those who survived raised these stones and the mound at Silbury in the vain hope that they would convey to their latest posterity the memory of their prowess.

STONEHENGE.

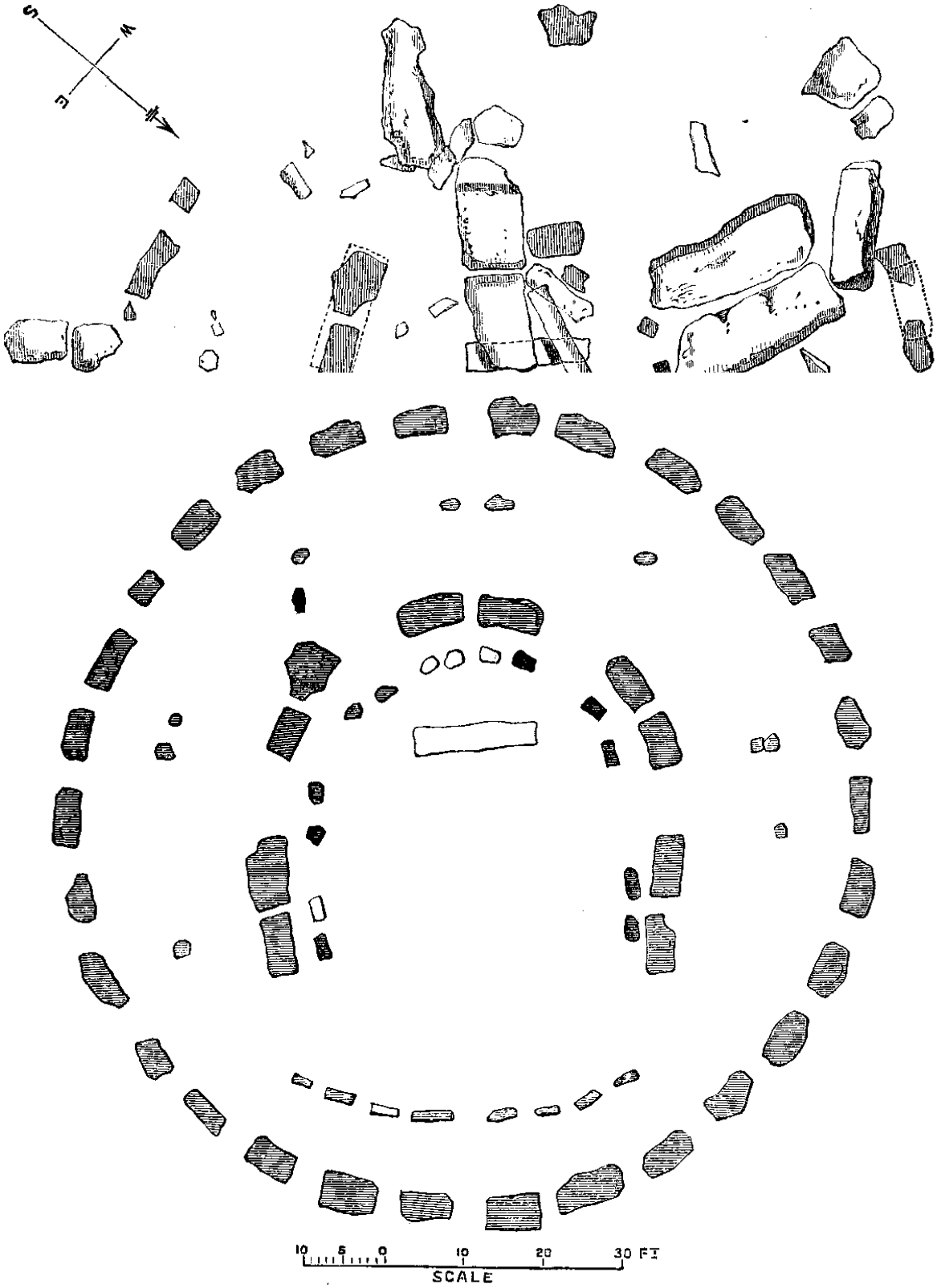
Although from its exceptional character Stonehenge is not so valuable as some others for evidence of the age or uses of the rest of the monuments of this class, it is in some respects even more important for our argument, inasmuch as it possesses a more complete mediaeval history than almost any other of the series. It must be confessed that this history is neither so clear nor so complete as might be wished; but, with the other evidence that call be adduced, it makes up a case so strong as to leave little to be desired. Before, however, proceeding to this,



22. General Plan of Stonehenge. From 'Knight's Old England.'

it is necessary to ascertain what Stonehenge really is, or rather was, for strange to say, though numberless restorations of it have been published, not one is quite satisfactory. There is very little discrepancy of opinion with regard to the outer circle or the five great central trilithons, but there is the greatest possible variety of opinion as to the number and position of the smaller stones inside the central or between the two great circles.

There seems to be no doubt that the outer stone circle originally consisted of thirty square piers, spaced tolerably equally in the circle. Though only twenty-six can now be identified, either standing or lying in fragments on the ground, it seems equally certain that they were all connected by a continuous stone impost or architrave, though only six of these are now in situ. (The history of the plan given on page 92, and from which all the dimensions in the text are quoted, is this. When I was staying with my friend, Mr. Hawkshaw, the eminent engineer, at Eversley, I was complaining of the incorrectness of all the published plans, when he said, " I have a man in my office whose plans are the very essence of minute accuracy. I will send him down to make one for you." He did so, and his plan, to a scale of 10 feet to 1 inch, is before me. I afterwards took this plan to Stonehenge, and identified the position and character of every stone marked upon it.)



21. Plan of Stonehenge restored.

23. Stonehenge as at present existing, from Mr. Hawkshaw's plan.

The diameter of the circle is generally stated to be about 100 feet, and as this has been suggested as a reason for its being considered as post-Roman, it is important to know what its exact dimensions are. It turns out that from the face of one pier to that of the opposite one, where both are perpendicular, the distance is 97.6, or exactly 100 Roman feet. The distance from the outer face of these piers to inside of the earthen vallum, that surrounds the whole is

again 100 feet, though that cannot now be ascertained within a foot or two, or even more; but as this makes up the 100 yards and the 100 feet which recur so often in these monuments, these dimensions can hardly be considered accidental, and "valeant quantum" are an indication of their post-Roman date.

(I am almost afraid to allude to it even in a note, lest some one should accuse me of founding any theory upon it, like Piazzi Smyth's British inches in the Pyramids, but it is a envious coincidence that nearly all the British circles are set out in two dimensions. The smaller class are 100 feet, the larger are 100 metres in diameter. They are all more than 100 yards. The latter measure is at all events certainly accidental, so far as we at present know, but as a nomenclature and "memoria technica" the employment of the terms may be, useful, provided it is clearly understood that no theory is based upon it.)

Inside these outer circles stand the five great trilithons. Since the publication of Sir R. Colt Hoare's plan, their position and plan may be considered as settled. According to him, the height of the outer pair is 16.3, of the intermediate pair 17.2, and of the great central trilithon as it now stands 21.6. In their simple grandeur they are perhaps the most effective example of megalithic art that ever was executed by man. The Egyptians and Romans raised larger stones, but they destroyed their grandeur by ornament, or by their accompaniments; but these simple square masses on Salisbury plain are still unrivalled for magnificence in their own peculiar style.

All the stones in these two great groups are Sarsens, as they are locally called, a peculiar class of silicious sandstone that is found as a local deposit in the bottoms of the valleys between Salisbury and Swindon. It is the same stone as is used at Avebury, the difference being that there the stones are used rough in their natural state, here they are hewn and fitted with very considerable nicety. Each of the uprights has a tenon on its surface, and the undersides of the architrave, or horizontal piece, have each a mortice, or rather two mortices, into which these tenons fit with considerable exactness.

Besides these there are even now eleven stones, some standing, others thrown down, but still existing within the inner circle. These are of a different nature, being all cut from igneous rocks, such as are not to be found nearer than Cornwall or even Ireland. It has not been exactly ascertained whence they came; indeed, they seem to be of various, kinds, and consequently must have been brought from different places. Locally they are called Blue stones, and it may be well to adopt that short title for the present, as involving no theory' and as sufficing to distinguish them from the local Sarsens.

None of the blue stones are large; one of the finest (23 in Sir R. Colt Hoare's plan) is 7 feet 6 inches high 2 feet 3 inches wide at base, tapering to 1 foot on top. The others are generally smaller. One blue stone opposite 23 is grooved with a channel from top to bottom, though for what purpose it is not easy to guess. On the most cursory glance, it is evident that these stones generally stood in pairs, about 3 feet apart; but some are so completely overthrown and displaced, that it is not quite clear whether this can be predicated of all. Entering the choir on the left hand we find one that seems to stand alone. But we way infer that this was not always so, from the circumstance that there lies close by it an impost stone with two mortice holes in it, only 3 feet 6 inches apart, which must have belonged to a smaller order of trilithons,

and is just such as would fit a pair of blue stones. The, next pair on the left is very distinct, and stands between the two great trilithons. The next Pair is also similarly situated. On the opposite side there are two pairs, but situated, as far as can be made out, in front of, and not between the trilithons; and again, there are two blue stones behind the stone called the Altar stone, but so displaced by the fall of the great trilithon behind them, that it is impossible to make out their original position with certainty.

It will probably be impossible to determine whether all the pairs of the stories were miniature trilithons or not, till we are able to turn over all the stones that now strew the ground, and see if there is a second stone with two mortices 3 or 4 feet apart. In the meanwhile there is a passage in Henry of Huntingdon's work which may throw some light on the subject. He describes Lapides mirae magnitudinis in modum portarum elevati sunt, ita ut portae portis superpositae videantur." ('Historia,' in Mon. Brit.' P. 694.) With a very little latitude of translation, this might be taken as referring to the great trilithons towering over the smaller; but if we are to adhere to the literal meaning of the words, this is inadmissible. Another explanation has therefore been suggested. The impost stone of the great trilithon has apparently mortice holes on both sides. If those on one side are not mere wearings of the weather, this must indicate that something stood upon it. If we assume two cubical blocks, and. raise on them the stone now called the Altar stone, which is of the exact dimensions required, we would have an arrangement very similar to that of the Sanchi gateway, ('Tree and Serpent Worship,' by the author, . plates iii. et seqq.) a cast of which is now exhibiting at South Kensington, and which would fully justify Huntingdon's words. If it is objected that it is a long way to go to Sanchi to look for a type, it may be answered that the Imperial coins of Cyprus show a very similar construction, and both may be derived from a common centre. On the whole, however, I am inclined to the first explanation. There certainly were large and small trilithons, and. too great accuracy of description is not to be expected from a Latin writer in the middle ages.

A good deal of astonishment has been expressed at the labour it must have required to transport these blue Stones from Cornwall or Wales and to set them up here If we refer them to the pre- Roman times of our naked blue painted ancestors, the difficulties are, of course, considerable. But after Roman times, the class of vessels they were in the habit of building in these islands must have made their transport by sea easy, even if they came from Ireland, as I believe they did. And any one who has seen with what facility Chinese coolies carry a-bout monolithic pillars 10 feet and 12 feet long, and thick in proportion, will not wonder that twenty or thirty men should transport these from the head of Southampton water to Stonehenge. (Twenty Chinese coolies would carry any one of them up in a week.) With the works the Romans left, and the modicum of civilization the natives could not fail to have imbibed from them, the whole was simple, and must have been easy.

Still more wonder Alas been expressed at the mass of the stones composing the great trilithons themselves, and speculations have been rife as to how our forefathers could, without machinery, drag these masses to the spot, and erect them as they now stand. A good deal of this wonder has been removed, since it was understood that the Sarsens of which they are composed are a natural deposit, found on the surface on all the bottoms in the Wiltshire downs. Owing to the progress of civilization ' they have disappeared about Salisbury, but they are still to be seen in hundreds in Clatford Bottom, and all about Avebury, and in the northern portion of the downs. The distance, therefore, that the stones of Stonehenge had to be dragged was probably very small; and over a hard, even surface of chalk down, with a few rollers and ropes, must have been a task of no great difficulty. Nor would the process of blocking them up with a temporary mound composed of wood and chalk be one that would frighten a rude people with whom time was no object. After all, Stonehenge is only child's play as compared with the monolithic masses the Egyptians quarried, and carved, and moved all over their country, long before Stonehenge was thought of, and without machinery in the sense in which we understand the term. In India, our grandfathers might have seen far more wonderful things done before we crushed all feeling and enterprise out of the people. The great gateway, for instance, at Seringham is 40 feet high, 21 feet wide, and 100 feet deep. The four door posts are each of a single block of granite, more, consequently, than 40 feet in length, for they are

partially buried in the earth. The whole is roofed by slabs of granite, each more than 21 feet long and raised to the height of 40 feet; and all of these, though of granite, are elaborately carved. Yet the building of the gateway was stopped by our quarrel with the French for the possession of Trichinopoly in the middle of the last century. The Indians in those days had no machinery, but with plenty of hands and plenty of leisure mountains may be raised; and it is on this principle that barbarous nations act and by which they achieve such wonders. The masses of Stonehenge are not, however, so very great after all, but they impose by their simplicity. To use an apparent paradox, it is one of the most artistic buildings in the world from its very want of art. The 40 feet monoliths of Seringham do not impress as much as the 20 feet stones of Stonehenge, because the one is covered with sculpture, the other more nearly in a state of nature, and the effect on the mind is immensely enhanced by the monolithic simplicity of the whole.

Strange to say, this very grandeur and apparent difficulty is one of the most common reasons adduced for its pre-Roman antiquity. Few can escape from an ill-defined impression that what is great and difficult must also be ancient, though the probability is, that if the feeling were analyzed it would be found to have arisen from the learning we imbibed in the nursery, and which told us of the giants that lived in the olden time. If, however, we turn from the teachings of nursery rhymes to the pages of sober history, what we learn is something very different. Without laying too much stress on the nakedness and blue paint of our ancestors, all history, and the testimony of the barrows, would lead us to suppose that the inhabitants of this island, before the Romans occupied it, were sparse, poor in physique, and in a very low state of civilization. Though their national spirit may have been knocked out of them, they must have increased in number, in physical comfort, and in civilization during the four centuries of peaceful prosperity of the Roman domination, and therefore in so far as that argument goes, became infinitely more capable of erecting such a monument as Stonehenge after the departure of the Romans than they had been before their advent.

It certainly appears one of the strangest inversions of logic to assume that the same people erected Stonehenge who, during the hundreds, or it may be the thousands, of years of their occupation, could attempt nothing greater than the wretched mole-hills of barrows which they scraped tip all over the Wiltshire downs.

Not one of those has even a circle of stone round its base; nowhere is there a battle stone or a stone monument of any sort. Though the downs must have been covered with Sarsens, they had neither sense nor enterprise sufficient even to set one of those stones on end. Yet we are asked to believe that the same people, in the same state, erected Stonehenge and Avebury, and heaped up Silbury Hill. These monuments may be the expression of the feelings of the same race; but if I am not very much mistaken, in a very different and much more advanced state of civilization.

We shall be in a better position to answer a question which has frequently been raised, whether or not the blue stones were a part of' the original structure, or were added afterwards when we have discussed the materials for the history of its erection; meanwhile we may pass from these, which are the really interesting part of the structure, to the circle which is generally supposed to have existed between the outer circle of Sarsens and the inner choir of great stones.

With regard to this nothing is certain, except in respect to eight stones, which stretched across the entrance of the choir, and may consequently be called the choir screen. Of the four on the right hand side only one has fallen, but it is still there; on the left hand only two remain, and

only one is standing but the design is perfectly clear. The two central stones are 6 feet high, and the stones fall off by regular gradation right and left to 3 feet at the extremities. They are rude unhewn Sarsen stones, but there is nothing to indicate whether they were, or were not, a part of the original design.

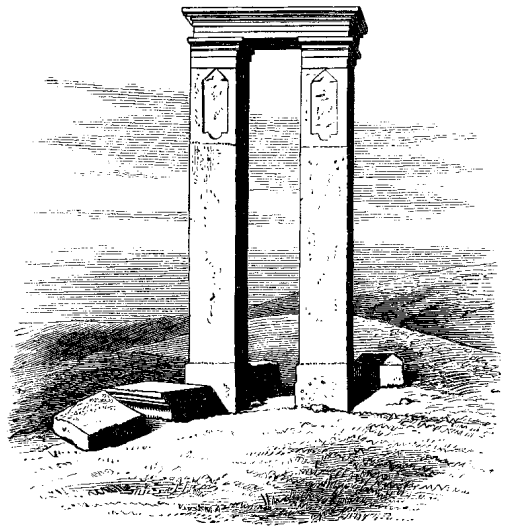
Beyond this, between the two great Sarsen circles, there exist or some nine or ten stones, but whether they are in situ or not, whether they were ever more numerous, it seems impossible to determine. On the left hand, near the centre, are a pair that may have been a trilithon ' but the rest are scattered so unsymmetrically that it would be dangerous to hazard any conjecture with regard to their original arrangement. It seems, however, most improbable that while the choir screen is so nearly entire even now, that this circle, if it ever existed, should have been so completely destroyed. Had it been complete, it would probably have consisted of 40 stones (excluding, of course, the choir screen), and of these only 10, if so many, can be said to belong to it. These are rude unhewn stones, and of no great dimensions.

In addition to these, there are two stones now overthrown lying inside the vallum, unsymmetrically with one another, or with anything else. Here again the question arises, were there more? There is nothing on the spot to guide us to our answer, and as nothing hinges upon it, I may perhaps be allowed to suggest that each of these marks a secondary interment. At the foot of each, I fancy urns or bones, or some evidence of a burial might be found, and if the place had continued for a century as a burying place, it might have been surrounded by its circle of stones, like Avebury, or Crichie, or Stanton moor. The place, however, may have become deserted shortly after these two were erected, and none have been added since.

There are still two other stones, one standing, one lying in the short avenue that leads up to the temple. Their position is exactly that of the two stones, which are all that is visible of the so-called Beckhampton avenue, at Avebury. But what their use is it is difficult to guess. Were either of the places temples, they would have been placed opposite one another on each side of the avenue, so that the priests in procession and people might pass between, but being placed one behind the other in the centre of the roadway, they must have had some other meaning. What that may have been I am unable to suggest. The spade may tell us if judiciously applied, but except from the spade I do not know where to look for a solution of the riddle.

Those who consider that Stonehenge was a temple have certainly much better grounds for such a theory than it would be possible to establish in respect to Avebury. Indeed, looking at the ground plan above, there is something singularly templar in its arrangement. In the centre is a choir, in which a dignified service could be performed, and a stone lies now just in such a position as to entitle it to the appellation it generally receives of the altar stone. Unfortunately for this theory, however, it lies flush with the ground, and even if we assume that the surface has been raised round it, its thickness is not sufficient to entitle it to be so called, judging from any analogous example we know of elsewhere. Around the choir is what may fairly be considered the procession path; and if its walls had only been solid, and there were any indications that the building had ever been roofed, it would be difficult to prove that it was not erected as a temple, and for worship. As, however, it has no walls, and it is impossible to believe that it was ever intended to be roofed, all the arguments that apply to Avebury in this respect are equally applicable here, with this one in addition. Unless its builders were much more pachydermatous, or woolly, than their degenerate descendants, when they chose this very drafty and hypaethral style of architecture, they would certainly have selected a sheltered spot on the banks of the Avon close by, where, with trees and other devices, they might have provided some shelter from the inclemency of the weather. They never would have erected

their temples on the highest and most exposed part of an open chalk down, where no shelter was possible, and no service could be performed except at irregular intervals, dependent on the weather throughout the year. As, however, it differs not only in plan but in construction-being hewn and having imposts - from all the rude stone circles we are acquainted with elsewhere, no theory will be quite satisfactory that does not account for this difference. My belief is, that this difference arises from the fact that alone of all the monuments we know of its class, it was erected leisurely and in time of peace by a prince retaining a considerable admixture of Roman blood in his veins. All, or most of the others, seem to be records of battles erected in haste by soldiers and unskilled workmen: but of this hereafter.

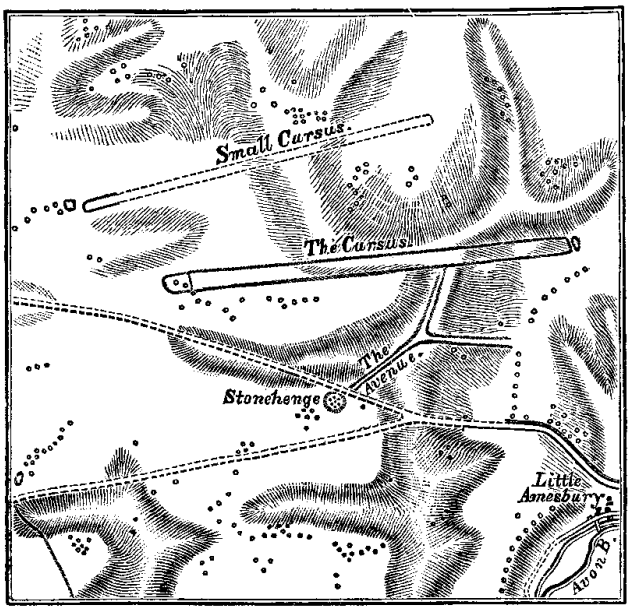


25. Tomb of Isidorus, at Khatoura.

Owing to its exceptional character, the usual analogies apply less directly to Stonehenge than to almost any other monument. We shall be better able to judge how far those derived from India apply, when we have described the monuments of that country. In Europe the trilithon is certainly exceptional, and its origin not easily traced. My own impression is, that it is only an improved dolmen, standing on two legs instead of three, or four; but if that is so, the intermediate steps are wanting which would enable us to connect the two in a logical manner. They were not, however, quite unknown in the Roman world. Several exist in Syria, for instance; three of these are engraved in De Vogue's work. One (the tomb of Emilius Reginus, A.D. 195) consists of two Doric columns, with an impost; another (woodcut No. 25) is the tomb of a certain Isidorus, and is dated A,D. 222, and is more like our Salisbury example; both these last-named are situated near Khatoura. (Syrie Centrale,' by Comte M de Vogue. Though this work was commenced some ten years ago, and subscriptions obtained, it is still incomplete. Notext has yet been published, and no maps, which makes the identification of the places singularly difficult.) The bearing of such an example as this on the question of the age of these monuments admits of a double interpretation. According to the usual and specious mode of reasoning, the ruder form must be the earliest, and the architectural one copied from it. But this theory I believe to be entirely at variance with the facts, as observed. The rudeness or elaboration of a monument will probably be found in all instances to be an index of the greater or less civilization of the people who erected it, but seldom or ever a trustworthy index of time. What interests us more at present is the knowledge that these Syrian examples are certainly sepulchral, and their form is thus another argument in favour of the sepulchral character of Stonehenge, if any were needed. More satisfactory than this, however, is the testimony of Olaus Magnus, archbishop of Upsala, quoted above. (Vide ante, footnote, p, 15.) He describes and figures "the most honourable monuments of the great of his country as erected with immense stones, and formed like great gates or trilithons" (in modum. altissimae et latissimae januae sursum transversumque viribus gigantum erecta). There is no reason for supposing that this author ever saw or even heard of Stonehenge, yet it would be difficult to describe either the purpose or the mode of construction of that monument more correctly than he does; and in so far as such testimony is considered valuable, it is decisive as to both the age and use of the monument.

Passing on from this branch of the enquiry to such local indications as the spot affords, we find nothing very relevant or very important either for or against our hypothesis. It has been argued, for instance, that the number of tumuli that stud the downs within a few miles of

Stonehenge, is a proof that this temple stood there before the barrows were erected, and that they gathered round its sacred precincts. The first objection to this view is, that it is applying a Christian precedent to a Pagan people. Except the Jews, who seem to have buried their kings close to their temples ('Topography of Jerusalem,' by the Author, p. 58.) I do not know of any people in ancient or modern times except Christians who did so, and we certainly have no hint that the ancient Britons were an exception to this universal rule.



26. Country around Stonehenge. From Ordnance Survey maps. Scale 1 inch to 1 mile.

Assuming, however, for the sake of argument, that this were otherwise, we should then certainly find the barrows arranged with some reference to Stonehenge. Either they would have gathered closely around its precincts, or ranged in rows alongside the roads or avenues leading to it. Nothing of the sort, however, occurs, as will be seen from the woodcut in the following page. Within 700 yards of the monument there is only one very insignificant group, eight in number (15 to 23 of Sir R. Colt Hoare's plan). Beyond that they become frequent, crowning the tops of the hills, or clustering in the hollows, but nowhere with the least apparent reference to Stonehenge. If any one will take the Ordnance Survey maps, or Sir R. Colt Hoare's plans, he will find the barrows pretty evenly sown all over the surface of the plain, from two or three miles south of Stonehenge as far as Chidbury camp, eight miles north of it. Indeed, if Sir R. Colt Hoare's plans are to be trusted, they were thicker at the northern end of the plain than at the southern; ('Ancient Wiltshire,' i. p. 178, plan vi.) but as the Ordnance maps do not bear this out, it must not be relied upon. Nowhere over this large area (say 10 miles by 5 miles) is there any trace of system as to the mode of placing these barrows. Indeed, from Dorchester up to Swindon, over a distance of more than seventy miles, they are scattered either singly or in groups so completely without order, that the only feasible explanation seems to be, that each man was buried where he lived; it may possibly have been in his own garden, but more probably in his own house. The hut circles of British villages are in grouping and in form so like the barrows, that it is difficult not to suspect some connexion between them. It may have been that when the head of a family died, he was buried on his own hearth, and an earthen mound replaced the hut in which he lived. Be this as it may, there is one argument that those overlook who contend that the barrows came to Stonehenge. It is admitted that Stonehenge belongs to the so-called Bronze age, (Sir John Lubbock, 'Prehistoric Times,' p. 116.) but one half of the barrows contain only flint and stone, and consequently were there before Stonehenge was built. Nor is it by any means the case that the nearest it were those which contained bronze or iron, it is generally quite the contrary; with all his knowledge, even Sir R. Colt Hoare never could venture to predict from the locality whether the interment would be found to belong to one class or to another, nor can we now.

One of the most direct proofs that this argument is untenable is found in the fact, that the builders of Stonehenge had so little respect for the graves of their predecessors, that they actually destroyed two barrows in making the vallum round the monument. Sir R. C. Hoare

found an interment in one, and from this he adds, "we may fairly infer that this sepulchral barrow existed on the plain, I will not venture to say before the construction of Stonehenge, but probably before the ditch was thrown up." (Sir R. Colt Hoare 'Ancient Wiltshire,' i. p. 145.)

It seems needless, however, to pursue the argument further. Any one who studies carefully the Ordnance Survey sheet must, I think, perceive that there is no connexion between the earthen and the stone monuments. Or if this fail to convince him, if he will ride from Stonehenge over Westdown to Chidbury camp,' (The name is written as Sidbury in the Ordnance maps.) he can hardly fail to come to the conclusion that Stonehenge came to the barrows, not the barrows to Stonehenge.

One other indication drawn from the barrows has been thought to throw some light on the subject. In one of those (No. 16) near Stonehenge, about 300 yards off, were found chippings of the same blue stones which form the inner circle of the monuments; but there was nothing else in this barrow to indicate its age except a spear-head of brass in fine preservation, and a pin of the same metal, which seemed to indicate that it belonged to the bronze age. In another (No. 22) a pair of ivory tweezers were found. From this discovery it was inferred, and not without some show of reason, that the barrows were more modern than Stonehenge; and if we are to believe that all barrows are pre-Christian, as some would try to persuade us, there is an end of the argument. But is this so? We have just seen that the Bartlow hills were certainly Roman. We know that the Saxons buried in bows in the country, down at least to Hubba the Dane, ('Archaeologia,' vii, pp. 132-134.) who was slain in 878, and in Denmark, as we shall presently see, to a much later period; and we do not know when the Ancient Britons ceased to use this mode of interment. Whoever they were that built Stonehenge, they were not Christians; or, at all events, it is certainly not a Christian building, and we have no reason to assume that those men who were employed on its erection, and who had for thousands of years been burying in barrows, changed their mode of sepulture before their conversion to Christianity. It is infinitely more probable that they continued the practice very long afterwards; and till we can fix some time when we feel sure that sepulture in barrows had ceased, no argument can be drawn from this evidence. That the chief mason of Stonehenge should be buried in his own house, or own workshop, appears to us the most natural thing in the world; and that a village of barrows, if I may use the expression, may be contemporary with the monument I regard also as probable; but unless from some external evidence we can fix their age, their existence does not seem to have any direct bearing on the points we are now discussing.

The diggings inside the area of Stonehenge throw more light on the subject of our enquiry than anything found outside, but even they are not so distinct or satisfactory as might be desired. The first exploration was undertaken by the Duke of Buckingham, and an account of it is preserved by Aubrey. He says, " In 1620 the duke, when King James was at Wilton, did cause the middle of Stonehenge to be digged, and this underdigging was the cause of the falling down and recumbencie of the great stone there," meaning evidently the great central trilithon. In the process of digging they "found a great many bones of stagges and oxen, charcoal, batter dashes (whatever that may mean), heads of arrows, and some pieces of armour eaten out with rust. Bones rotten, but whether of stagges or of men they could not tell. " ('Ancient Wiltshire,' i. p. 154.) He further adds that Philip Earl of Pembroke did say that an altar stone was found in the middle of the area here, and that it was carried away to St. James'." What this means it is not easy to discern, for Inigo Jones distinctly describes as the altar the stone now known by that name, which measures, as he says, 16 feet by 4. It seems impossible that any other could have existed without his knowing. it, and if it existed it would have favoured his views too distinctly for him not to mention the fact.

As the digging above referred to must have taken place between what is now called the altar stone and the great trilithon, it is of considerable interest to us. But strange to say it leaves us in ignorance whether the bones found there were human or not; one thing, however, seems tolerably certain, that the arrow-heads and armour were of iron, from the state of rust they are described as being in, and this so far is indicative of a post-Roman date.

Another curious fact is mentioned by Camden. In his plate (page 122), half plan, half elevation-at a spot marked C outside the vallum, men are represented as making an excavation, and the reference is "Place where men's bones are dug up." This is of no great value in so far as Stonehenge itself is concerned, but it is curious from its analogy with the place where the bones were found on Hakpen Hill, and way serve as an indication to the spot where the bones may yet be found in Avebury. As we shall see further on, there are strong reasons for believing that the principal interment at least was not inside the circle, but situated externally on one side.

In more modern times, Sir R. Colt Hoare adds-" We have found, in digging (within the circle), several fragments of Roman as well as coarse British pottery, parts or the head and horns of deer and other animals, and a large barbed arrow-bead of iron," thus confirming what Aubrey tells us of the Duke of Buckingham's excavation to the fullest extent. Mr. Cunnington also dug near the altar to a depth of nearly 6 feet, and found the chalk bad been moved to that depth. At about the depth of 3 feet he found some Roman pottery. Soon after the fall of the great trilithon, in 1797, he dug, out some of the earth that had fallen into the excavation, and "found fragments of fine black Roman pottery, and since then another piece on the same spot. " ('Ancient Wiltshire,' i. p. 150.)

No excavation in the area has been undertaken since Sir R. Colt Hoare's day, but as both he and Mr. Cannington were experienced diggers, and perfectly faithful recorders of what they found, it seems impossible to doubt, from the finding of iron armour and Roman pottery in such places, and at such depths that the building must have been erected after the Romans settled in this island. As no one now will probably be found to adopt Inigo Jones' theory that it was built by the Romans themselves, we must look to some date after their departure to which we may assign its erection.

For the written history of Stonehenge we are unfortunately forced to rely principally on Jeffrey of Monmouth, who though a recorder of historical events, was also a fabulist of the most exuberant imagination. It is consequently easy to throw discredit on his testimony, and some consider themselves justified in putting it aside altogether. If, however, we are to reject every mediaeval author who records miracles, or adorns his tale with fables, we may as well shut up our books at once, and admit that, between the departure of the Romans and the arrival of the Normans, the history of England is a mere confused jumble, in which may be found the Dames of some persons and of the battles they fought with one another, but nothing more. It is an easy process, and may be satisfactory to some minds. The attempt to separate the wheat from the chaff is a more tedious and laborious task, surrounded by difficulties, and open to criticism, but it is one that must be undertaken if truth is to be arrived at. In the present instance the choice of difficulties seems to be clear. Either we must reject the history of Jeffrey as entirely fabulous and unworthy of credit, or admit his principal statement that Stonehenge was erected by Aurelius Ambrosius as a monument to the memory of the British chiefs treacherously slain by Hengist.

The first account we have of the event which led to its erection is in Nennius, who lived much nearer to the time of the occurrence than Jeffrey, who copied his narrative. It is as follows:-

The Saxons having been defeated in several actions on the coast of Rent by Vortimir, were shut up in Thanet and forced to wait till they could summon succour from home. When these arrived, Hengist, before attempting open force, had recourse to stratagem, and at a feast held at the palace or monastery at Amesbury, to which it was agreed all should come unarmed, three hundred British nobles were treacherously slain by the followers of Hengist, who had concealed their weapons under their cloaks. War ensued on this, and lasted apparently for four years, when Ambrosius, who had succeeded to Vortigern, forced the Saxons to sue for peace. (Nennius, in 'Mon. Brit.' p. 69.) That being established, Jeffrey represents him as erecting Stonehenge by the aid of Merlin as a monument to those who were so treacherously slain by Hengist. The massacre took place apparently in the year 462, and the erection of Stonehenge consequently may have been commenced about the year 466, and carried on during the following years, say down to 470 A.D. If he had been content to tell the story in as few words as are used here, it probably never would have been doubted; but Merlin, in the first place, has a bad character, for he is mixed up with the mediaeval romances which made the story of Arthur famous but fabulous, and the mode in which he is represented by Jeffrey as bringing the stones from Ireland is enough to induce incredulity in all sober minds. (Jeffrey, viii. c. 9.) As I understand the narrative, it is this - there existed on a mountain in Ireland a monument something like Stonehenge, which Merlin, when consulted, advised the King to copy. This certainly is the view taken of the matter by Geraldus Cambrensis in 1187, inasmuch as he tells us, that in the spot referred to "similar stones, erected in a similar manner, were to be seen in his day," though in the same sentence he tells us, that they, or others like them, were removed to Salisbury Plain by Merlin. ("Fuit antiquis temporibus in Hibernia lapidum congeries admiranda quae et Chorea gigantum dicta quia gigantes eam ab ultimis Africae partibus in Hiberniam attulerunt et in Kildarienes planicie non procul a Castro Nasensi, tam ingenii quam virium opere mirabiliter erexerunt. Unde et ibidem lapides quidam, aliis simillimi similique mode erecti usque in hodiernurn conspiciuntur. Mirum qualiter tanti lapides tot etiam et tam magni unquam in unum locum Eel congesti fuerint vel erecti. quantoque, artificiis lapidibus tam magnis et altis alii superpositi sint non minores; qui sic in pendulo et tanquam in inani suspendi videntur tit potius artificum studio quani suppositorum podio inniti videantur. Juxta Britannicam historiam lapides istos rex Britonurn AureIius Ambrosius divina Merlini diligentia de Hibernia in Britanniam advehi procuravit; et ut tanti facinoris egregium aliquod memoriale relinqueret eodem ordine et arte qua prius in loco constituit ubi occultis Saxonum cultris Britanniae flos occidit et sub pacis obtentu nequitiae telis rnale tecta regni juventus occubuit.' - Topogr. Hibernix, vol. ii. ch. xviii. If we could trust Ware, they still existed in the beginning of the last century. He speaks of "Saxa illae in gentia et rudia que in planitie non longe a Naasa in agro Kildariensi a et alibi visuntir", Hist. Hib. xxiv. 103.)

As he probably speaks of what he saw with his own eyes, his words furnish tolerably clear evidence that Merlin had not removed what still remained at Kildare so many centuries after his death. It is also evidence, however that the design of the monument was brought from Ireland, and even copied from a circle, the remains of which may probably still, if looked for, be, found. So far as we know there was nothing like Stonehenge existing in England, nor in France, in the 5th century. But, as we shall presently see, there probably may have been in Ireland. The only trilithons I know of elsewhere are three in a monument in the Deer Park near Sligo. They are small and simulate portals, but they are more like Stonehenge than any else now known. At the age we are now speaking of Ireland had contrived to nurse her old traditions uninfluenced by Roman or foreign examples, and had attained to that stage in art which would enable her to elaborate such a style of architecture. While in England it is most improbable that anything so purely original could have been elaborated during the Roman occupation of the island. Still a monument like this must have had a prototype, and unless we can prove its existence here before Caesar's time, it is to Ireland or some foreign country that we must look for the model that suggested the design. But, after all, are we not fighting with a shadow? May it not be that the tradition of a monument being brought from Ireland applies only to the blue stones? I have been assured by competent geologists, though I have not seen the fact stated in any form I can quote, that these belong to rocks not found in Great Britain, but which are common in Ireland. If this is so, there would be no greater difficulty in bringing them from the Sister Island than from Wales or Cornwall. Once on board ship the difference of distance is nothing If they did come, from Ireland nothing is more likely than that, after a

lapse of eight or ten centuries, the facts belonging really only to a part should be applied to the whole; and in that case the aid of Merlin or of some equally powerful magician would certainly have become indispensable. In that age, at least, I do not know any other agency that could have accomplished the transference, and I am not at all surprised, under the circumstances, that Jeffrey arrived at the same conclusion.

The true explanation of the mystery seems to be, that the design of Stonehenge may have come from Ireland, the native style of art having been in abeyance in England during the Roman occupation, and that the blue stones most probably came from the Sister Island, which is quite enough to account for the Merlin myth; but of all this we shall be better able to judge when we have discussed the Irish antiquities of the same age.

To return to our history, however, a little further on Jeffrey asserts that Aurelius himself was buried "near the convent of Ambrius within the Giant's Dance (chorea gigantum), which in his lifetime he had commanded to be made." (' Hist. Brit.' viii. ch. xvi.) As far as it goes, this is a distinct assertion that the place was used for burial, otherwise from the context we would gather that the Britons slain by Hengist were buried in the cemetery attached to the monastery, and that Stonehenge was consequently a cenotaph and not a Monument. But again, in recording the life of Constantine, the nephew and successor of Arthur, after relating how he defeated the Saxons and took vengeance on the nephews of Mordred, he goes on to say- "Three years after this he was killed by Conan, and buried close to Uther Pendragon, within the structure of stones which was set up with wonderful art, not far from Salisbury, and called in the English tongue Stonehenge." ('Hist. Brit.' xi. ch. iv.) This last event, though no date is given, must have occurred some time between 546, or four years after Arthur's death, and 552, the date of the battle of Banbury Hill, where Conan his successor commanded. Assuming for the moment that this may be the case, may it not suffice to explain one of the mysteries of Stonehenge, the presence of the pairs of blue stones inside the choir? Why may we not suppose that these were erected in memory of the kings or others who were buried in front of them? Why may not Aurelius and Constantine have been buried in front of the two small pairs at either end of the so-called altar stone? If this were so, and it appears to me extremely probable that it was, the last remains of the mist that hangs over the uses of this monument would be dispersed.

From the time of Jeffrey (1147) all subsequent mediaeval historians adopt the account of these events given by him, with occasional but generally slight variations, and even modern critics are inclined to accept his account of Constantine and Conan, as his narrative can be checked by that of Gildas, who was contemporary with these kings. Similar statements are also found in the triads of the Welsh bards, which some contend are original and independent authorities. (This is the principal argument of Herbert's, 'Cyclops Christianus.') My own impression is that they may be so, but I do not think their independence has been so clearly established as to enable us to found any argument upon it. On the other hand, the incidental allusion of Jeffrey to the erection of Stonehenge as a cenotaph to the slain nobles, and the subsequent burial there of the two kings, seems so likely and natural that it is difficult to see why they should be considered as inventions. The two last-named events, at all events, do not add to the greatness or wonder of the kings, or of his narrative, and are not such things as would be inserted in the page of history, unless they were currently known, or were recorded somewhere in some writing to which the historian had access.

Before quitting Stonehenge there is one other antiquity connected with it, regarding which it is necessary to say a few words. Both in Sir R. Colt Hoare's plan and the Ordnance Survey' there are marked two oblong enclosures called the greater and lesser "Cursus," and along which the antiquaries of the last century amused themselves by picturing the chariot races of

the Ancient Britons, though as they ascribed the introduction of races to the Romans, they admitted that they must have been formed after the subjection of the island by that people. ('Ancient Wiltshire,' i. p. 158. See also woodcut No. 26, p. 102. The dotted part of the smaller cursus is a restoration of my own.) The greater cursus is about a mile and three-quarters long, by 110 yards wide. The smaller is so indistinct that only its commencement can be identified; but even as concerns the larger, I walked twice across it without perceiving its existence, though I was looking for it, and no one I fancy would remark it if his attention were not turned to it. Its boundary mounds never could have been 3 feet high, and now in many places are very nearly obliterated.

That these alignments were once race-courses, appears to me one of the most improbable of the various conjectures which have been hazarded with regard even to Stonehenge. No Roman race-course, that we know of, omitted to provide for the horses returning at least once past the place they started from, and no course was even a mile, much less a mile and three-quarters lone. What sort of horse-races the British indulged in before the Conquest I don't know, nor will I hazard an opinion on the subject; but if they wanted the races to be seen, there are several beautiful and appropriate spots close at hand where they could have laid out a longer course along one of the bottoms, where tens of thousands might conveniently have witnessed the sport from the sloping banks on either hand, whereas here only the front rank could have seen the race at all, and that imperfectly. It may also be remarked that the east end of the cursus is closed by a mound which must have been a singularly awkward position for the judges, though that is the place assigned to them by Sir Richard; and the west end is cut off also by an embankment, behind which are several tumuli on the course, which seems a very unlikely racing arrangement.

But if not race-courses, what were they? If any one will turn back to woodcut No. 12, p. 55, representing the alignments at Merivale bridge, and compare them with the cursus as shown in woodcut No. 26, p. 102, representing the ground about Stonehenge, I think he must perceive that the two cursus, if complete, would occupy exactly the same relative position with regard to Stonehenge-on a much larger scale of course-as those at Dartmoor do to the circle there. The arrangements are so similar that the purposes can hardly be different. At first sight this seems to tell against the battle theory. We know of no battle fought on Salisbury Plain. This, however, is the merest negative assumption possible. We know that the massacre at Amesbury was followed by a four years' war, between Ambrosius and the Saxons. (Vide ante, p. 107.) Battles there must have been, and many, and what so likely as that the crowning victory should have been fought in the immediate proximity of the capital of one of the contending parties. If these cursus do mark the battlefield, it will at once account for the somewhat anomalous position of Stonehenge. What is so likely as that the victor should have chosen the field of his final victory to erect there a monument to the memory of those whose treacherous slaughter had been the cause of the war? Of course this is only an hypothesis, and it is only put forward as such, but it seems to me infinitely nearer the truth than that of the gratuitous suggestion of a race-course, and looks like one of the coincidences sure to occur when the investigation is on the right path towards the true solution.

The first impression that the narrative of the preceding pages will convey to most readers, will probably be that there must be something more to be said on the subject, or that something important is left out. if, it may be argued, the case is so clear as here stated, it could never have been doubted, and must have been accepted long ago. All I can say in answer is, that if anything is omitted I am not aware of it. Everything I know of has been stated as fully and as fairly as seemed necessary for its being clearly understood. In this instance it must be remembered that the usual arguments drawn from the division into stone,

bronze, and iron ages hardly come into play. Nothing has been found inside Stonehenge but iron and Roman pottery. Even admitting the barrows in the immediate proximity of Stonehenge to be coeval, before their testimony can be of any avail, it must be ascertained when men ceased to be buried in barrows, and when a man might not wish a bronze spear-head to be entombed with him as a relic, even if he did not fight with it in his lifetime. Even c then, however, the evidence would be too indistinct to outweigh that of the finds inside the circle.

If, after what has been said above, any one still maintains that Stonehenge is a temple, and not sepulchral, we have no common ground from which to reason, and need not attempt it. Or if anyone as familiar with the locality as I am personally, or who has studied the Ordnance maps with the same care, likes to argue that the barrows came to Stonehenge, and not Stonehenge to the barrows, we see things with such different eyes that we equally want a common basis for argument.

In a case like the present, however, the great difficulty to be overcome is not so much cool argument and close reasoning, as a certain undefined feeling that a monument must be old because we know so little about it. "Omne ignotum pro antiquo" is a matter of faith with many who will listen to no argument to the contrary, and in the case of Stonehenge the false notion has been so fostered by nearly - early all those who have written about it since the time of James I, that it will be very difficult now to overthrow it. Those who adhere to it, however, hardly realize how dark the ages were between the departure of the Romans and the time of Alfred the Great., and how much may have been done in that time without any record of it coming down to our day. Even if we give them all the megalithic monuments we possess, it is very little indeed for so large a population in so long a time.

Even at a much later period of English history than we are now occupied with, it is wonderful how little we should know of our monuments if we depended on the "litera scripta" for our information. Any one who is familiar with the guide-books of the last, or beginning of the present century, will see what dire confusion of dates existed with regard to the erection of our greatest cathedrals and mediaeval monuments. Saxon and Norman were confounded everywhere, and the distinction of any of the styles between Early English and Perpendicular was not appreciated, and frequently the dates were reversed. In fact, it was not till Rickman took the matter in hand that order emerged out of chaos, and he succeeded because his constructive knowledge enabled him to perceive progressive developments which formed true sequences, and he Was thus able to supply the Want of written information. Every tyro now can fix a date to every moulding in any of our mediaeval buildings, but if we had only written history to depend upon, in nine cases out of ten he could not prove that the building was not erected by the Romans or the Phoenicians, or anybody else. If this is the case in an age when writing was so common as between the Conquest and the Reformation, should we be surprised if we find matters so much darker between the departure of the Romans and Alfred, when written history hardly helps us at all? But Rickman's method will, when applied to Stonehenge and similar monuments, if I am not very much mistaken, render their dates nearly as clear as those of our mediaeval monuments have been rendered by the same method.

None but those who have had occasion specially to study the subject can be aware how devoid of all literary records the period is of which we are now treating. So meagre and so scarce are they, that many well-informed persons doubt whether such a person as King Arthur ever lived; and scarcely one of his great actions is established by anything like satisfactory contemporary testimony. Yet, in all ages, and in all countries where histories either written or oral exist, they are filled with the exploits of favourite national heroes-as Arthur was-which,

even where they are fullest and most diffuse, it is the rarest possible thing to find in them a record of the building of any temple or tomb. From the building of the Parthenon to the completion of Henry VIII.'s Chapel, the notices of buildings in general histories are as few and meagre as may be, and are comprised in a few paragraphs scattered through many hundred volumes. No one, I am convinced who has thought twice on the subject, would expect to find any notice of buildings in the few pages which are all we possess of history between the departure of the Romans and the time of the Venerable Bede; yet the absence of record is the argument which, if I am not mistaken, has had more influence on the popular mind than almost any other. Too generally it is assumed that, as we know nothing about them, they must be old. To me, on the contrary, nothing appears so extremely improbable as that the builders, while leaving no record of their exploits, should have left any written account of the erection of the Rude Stone Monuments.

One other point seems worth alluding to before concluding this chapter, which. is that nothing has been advanced, so far as I know, that would lead us to suppose that the people of this island were, before the time of the Romans, either more numerous or more powerful, and consequently more capable of erecting such monuments as Stonehenge and Avebury, than they were after that people had resided for four centuries among them. All our existing knowledge seems to tend to a diametrically opposite conclusion, and now that the day for vague declamation and a priori reasoning is past, if any proof to the contrary can be brought forward, it would be well that it were now adduced, for otherwise judgment may go by default. If we mistake not, the case must be strong and clear that is to outweigh the evidence just brought forward in reference to the two monuments the use and age of which we have just been discussing.