

notice, as being perhaps the oldest in the Holy Land. One of these is named by the common people "Sepulchre of Hiram," although it is probably of that older date when men had not begun as yet to bury their dead in rock-hewn sepulchres. There is first a pedestal of limestone, consisting of three layers of large, hewn blocks, (one of which is nine feet long,) the last layer projecting somewhat. On this gray, weather-beaten base rests a gigantic stone coffin, of limestone, twelve feet long by six feet in height and breadth, with a lid three feet thick, which still remains in its original position. The coffin, however, is untenanted. The body was removed through that hole which we see at one end. Whose dust lay there, to be so rudely dealt with, no one can tell; only one thing can be conjectured, that he was of a people that lived originally in a level country, like the valley of the Euphrates or the Nile, where the people must needs raise their dead aloft, to save their graves from being covered by the river in times of inundation.

A SYRIAN STONEHENGE.

The other ancient remains are half-way between Tyre and Sidon, and between the high-road and the sea. These remarkable remains are not mentioned in Ritter's elaborate book the "Erdkunde," nor does it seem that Dr. Robinson nor Dr. Thompson knew anything about them. They were visited by James Finn, Esq., her Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem, the year before I made his acquaintance in that city. In his "Bye-ways in Palestine," he calls it "The Syrian Stonehenge," and describes it as follows:—

"There are upright stones standing from four to six feet each above the

present level of the ground, but which may not be the original level. The largest stone still shows six feet by a breadth of two. They anciently formed a *parallelogram*, not a *circle*, which is commonly believed to be an emblem belonging to Baal-worship.* Within the enclosure is a depression of ground, in an oval shape, almost filled up with weeds, which demands but little effort of the imagination to suggest the position of an altar, now removed, leaving only the hollow orifice of a channel for carrying away blood or ashes."

There is every probability that he of the stone coffin worshipped the true God within that square enclosure; for the fact of its being square, and not round, contains a world of meaning. The oblong square form was the orthodox form of the temple, as we see in the old temples of Egypt, and in the tabernacle of Moses. The altar of the Lord was also square, and the breast-plate of the high-priest; whereas the circular forms and groves were avoided from their connection with the idolatrous worship of the sun. It is therefore more than likely that in this Syrian Stonehenge we see the remains of the open-air worship of Jehovah that prevailed all over this land before corruptions came in; and the form was changed to the circular form familiar in Britain, from which our word "church," "kirk," comes."

* There have been several theories given of the origin of the word "Church," "Kirk." The word, no doubt, comes from "Circus," the Latin for a ring, a circle, originally pronounced "kirkus," which was the "circle" of stones within which our forefathers celebrated their worship. The German race retained this word for their Christian worship, whereas the Celtic tribes nearer Rome took the Latin word "Ecclesia," as seen in French "Eglise," and Gaelic "Eaglais."