

claws of cold. Fire, at the same time that it was so beneficent and useful, was the unseen home of a dread, unapproachable, and destroying deity. Everything perished at its touch. Whatever it embraced vanished into vapor. Nothing resisted it except air and water, earth and stone. Hence, perhaps, the worship of these other elements: earth, air and water, were the kindred of fire, sharers in its immortality and mystery. The stones upon which it was ligated became an altar, and in time themselves sanctified every gift. Every meal became a sacrifice. Hence, at all events, is the probable origin of the worship which was extended to objects formed of stone. May it not be by another curious tradition from that unremembered past that we still instinctively seem to venerate stone, as a material, far above all other materials? It impresses us in buildings with a feeling of majesty which is not to be easily explained away, or wholly accounted for, merely by its durability or costliness, as compared with wood and other baser materials. It certainly seems to agree with this theory that stone, the material of altars, was reserved by the first builders for the temples which enclosed the altars. The multitudinous dwellings, both of kings and tribesmen, which must have surrounded Stonehenge, have evidently been of perishable materials, and disappeared long before any historic record. The circled stones alone remain, almost as intact as in the days of the Druids.

The possible sacredness that invested the shapen stones, even before their erection into a temple building on the intended site, may be the explanation of one of the greatest mysteries which must appeal to the mind of any beholder of this marvel of primitive workmanship.

It seems almost an inexplicable problem—how these huge monoliths—each of many tons in weight—could have been dragged, slowly as they must necessarily have been, by the

rude machines of the period, without roads, by mountain paths, through morasses and forests, from the coast of Devenshire to so distant a site as Salisbury Plain. The mechanical marvel involved in the shaping and transport seems not nearly so difficult of explanation as the moral fact. In a purely tribal age, it is impossible to suppose any one lordship so extensive as to embrace the region from the seacoast to the spot where Stonehenge stands. It is probable that the boundaries of numbers of hostile tribes must have been crossed. By what means was a state of peace maintained, or rights of transit secured for the transport of these huge masses, with the armies of men and enormous trains of oxen which must have been necessary for the tedious process? The explanation becomes less difficult if we conceive that veneration and sanctity attached to the very form and substance of the stones, and so communicated an immunity to their hewers and drawers. The genius of a modern novelist impelled him to select Stonehenge as the scene where retribution was destined to come upon his fugitive hero and heroine. There the enshrouding night failed to hide them. The stern Law, which they had escaped so long amid the habitations of men—It was the gloomy and implacable Divinity, long slumbering amid its ancient stones, that, affronted at their blood-guilty presence, revived and denounced them to their executioners.

In silent, almost awful, majesty, these lonely pillars, stand like a temple of desolation in the midst of the waste. I was, perhaps, more impressed by them because of the singularly sympathetic and appropriate circumstances under which I first came upon them. It was a May Day. I had been reading in a London journal what might be described as an essay upon the decay—in fact, the writer undertook to say the absolute disappearance—of the old May Day cere-