

or amongst the earlier inhabitants of France. In the tumulus on the island called Gav'innis, in the Gulf of Morbihan, the local guide points out to visitors a sinuous line which is believed to represent the serpent, but anyone who examines closely the rich sculpturing about it will see at once that the artist had no preconceived plan, and that the sinuous line, being made last, is the unforeseen, haphazard result.

It is difficult to believe that the "alignements" were not connected with some religious observances or creed. The extraordinary size of some of the menhirs forming them, and particularly of the fallen and broken one near the Dol des Marchands, is such as to force one to question whether any influence, save religious, could have compelled the founders to undertake the gigantic toil of their erection. Undoubtedly they must have been regarded as sacred objects, and this leads one to understand why they were used in some cases for human burial. Their use, therefore, as burial monuments may have been secondary. We have an instance of such secondary use in the case of cathedrals and churches of to-day. The existence of stone circles or cromlechs, like the one which terminates the alignements at Menec, would further seem to strengthen the view that all these monuments were in some way connected with religious observances.

The dolmens present less difficulty as to their significance. They are more or less caverns formed in many cases of gigantic stones which are usually only partially sunken in the earth, and covered by very much larger flat stones, often weighing many tons. In these chambers have been found human bones, flint and sometimes bronze implements, with some specimens of rude pottery. Wedge-shaped specimens (*celts*) of jade, or green stone, have also been found in some dolmens. This bears on the "axe" cult which undoubtedly obtained amongst the dolmen-builders. In the dolmen near Locmariaquer, called the Dol des Marchands, a large figure of an axe is engraved on the under surface of the covering stone. On the large flagstone on the floor of another dolmen of that neighbourhood, the *Mané-Lud*, there is a very large figure of an axe in relief. This is pointed out by the local guide as the figure of a sword. On one of the flat stones taken from the tumulus to the south of Locmariaquer, called *Mané-cr-H'roec*, there are many axes sculptured. In order to understand the significance of these figures, one must compare them with what has been observed in several of the Marne caves. In these are three instances of a female figure rudely sculptured, associated with the outlines of hafted axes. In the dolmen of Collorgues, in the Department of Gard, the slab forming the central part of the roof has a female figure rudely outlined, and under it is cut the figure of an axe. All these sculptures have been found associated with burial. The axe, therefore, was the symbol of some cult, believed to be that of a deity who is now termed the "Axe Goddess." This cult was accepted by the Celtic and other contemporaries and successors of the dolmen-builders in Gaul, and was continued even during the Roman occupation, for amongst the Romanized Gauls the practice obtained of putting a figure of an axe on a headstone, or in place of the figure the words, "*sub oscia*," or "*sub ascia dedicavit*." What the cult of the Axe Goddess signified it is impossible to do more than conjecture. Its association with death and burial possibly points to the belief in a goddess of death. The cult has for students of the origin of religions this important interest: it is the only one we know as belonging to the Neolithic age, and, further, it was handed down from Palæolithic times, or at least from the transition period between the Palæolithic and Neolithic ages, when the caves were not inhabited, but used as burial places. Borlase⁽¹⁾ attempts to show that the cult obtained over the whole of Western Europe, and he claims that indications of it are shown in the pottery of Hissarlik found there by Schliemann. That it had a wide range may be granted, for in Palæolithic times there was probably one race

(1) The Dolmens of Ireland, vol. ii., page 578.