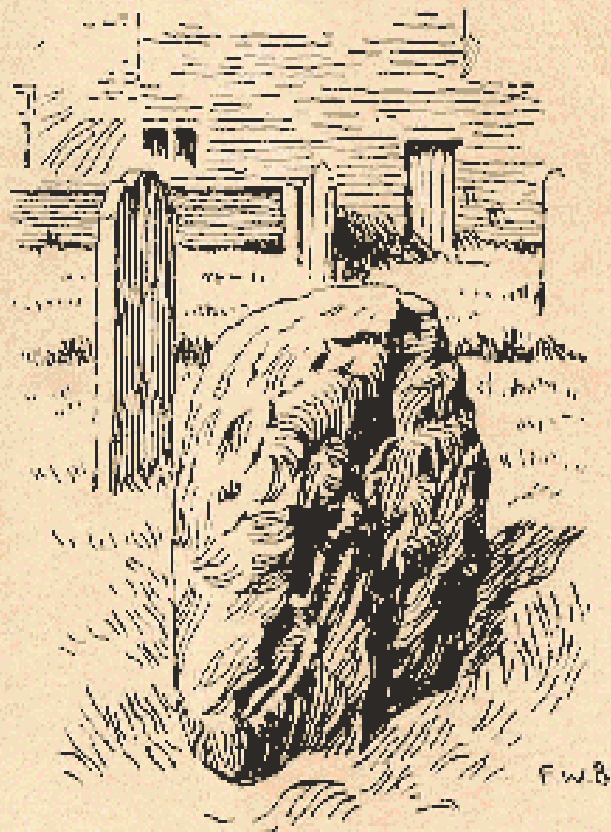


THE  
Ancient Mark-stones  
of East Anglia

THEIR ORIGIN AND FOLKLORE

BY

W. A. DUTT



"DRUID'S STONE," BUNGAY.

LOWEYDORF  
FLOOD & SON, LIMITED  
1926

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Ancient Mark-stones  
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**BY  
W. A. DUTT**

**Author of “Highways and Byways of East  
Anglia”;**

**“Wild Life in East Anglia,” etc., etc.**

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## Preface

*“Whilst toiling along these wild wastes, I observed ... a pile of stones of rather a singular appearance and rode up to it. ... I gazed with reverence and awe upon the pile where the first colonies of Europe offered their worship to the unknown God. The temples of the mighty and skilful Roman ... have crumbled to dust in its neighbourhood. The churches of the Aryan Goth, his successor in power, have sunk beneath the earth, and are not to be found; and the mosques of the Moor, the conqueror of the Goth, where and what are they? Upon the rock, masses of hoary and vanishing ruin. Not so the Druid’s stone; there it stands on the hill of winds, as strong and as freshly new as the day, perhaps thirty centuries back, when it was first raised.”*  
George Borrow’s “Bible in Spain.”

## PREFATORY NOTE

*The aim of the writer of this monograph is to draw attention to a by-path of archaeology where the traveller with some acquaintance with the prehistory, history and folklore of the countryside through which it leads may easily become an adventurer on almost untrodden ground. No pretence is made to say anything new about the well-known megalithic monuments of other parts of the British Isles, but in referring to the race responsible for the introduction of the megalithic culture into these islands more than local significance is given to the ancient folk customs and folklore associated with these archaic monuments. What the writer tries to show is that in a part of England usually supposed to be entirely without prehistoric megaliths there are certainly some large boulders, recognized as mark-stones, that seem to have originally served like purposes to those of many of the more widely known menhirs or standing stones and probably had contemporary origin.*

*For assistance in obtaining information, about some of these mark-stones the writer is much indebted to the Rev. J. E. P. Bartlett, Barnham Broom; Rev. G. H. Holley, Holme-next-the-Sea ; Rev. P. Greeves, Hingham; Messrs. C. G. Chambers, Oulton Broad ; A. Watkins, Hereford; W. Fowler, Beccles; F. R. Wightman, Bungay, and the Editor of the “Here and There” column in the East Anglian Daily Times. The photographs of the Bungay and Beccles boulders were very kindly taken by Miss G. J. Wightman and Mr. W. Fowler, while the line drawings were made by Mr. F. W. Baldwin, of Lowestoft, from photographs by Miss Wightman and Mr. Chambers. The many ethnological, archaeological and other works consulted are mentioned in the text or its footnotes.*

*A few paragraphs, slightly altered, appeared in two articles contributed by the writer to the Eastern Daily Press.*

**W.A.D.  
CARLTON COLVILLE,  
LOWESTOFT,  
May, 1926.**

# Introduction

THE abundant evidence from Europe and Northern Africa that stone circles, dolmens and monoliths of menhir and other types were erected at a time when the inhabitants of the countries in which they occur were in the Neolithic stage of culture justifies us in concluding that many of the similar stone monuments in Great Britain and Ireland were set up during the Later Stone Age. The dolmen, we know, is nothing more nor less than the remains of a megalithic burial chamber, from which the mound of earth originally covering it has been removed. The Uley Long Barrow, in Gloucestershire, is perhaps the best-known English example of this kind of chamber; but in 1924 a more imposing structure of like character was opened and explored on the island of Jersey,\* and proved to date from the Neolithic period.

\**Societe Jersiaise Bulletin Annuel*, 1925, pp. 205–229.

The likeness of many menhirs or standing stones, to the huge blocks used in the construction of dolmens supports the view that the former were also erected in this country by a people with no knowledge of the use of metals. From this, of course, it does not follow that all such relics are of Neolithic date. Stonehenge, modern antiquaries generally agree, dates from the Bronze Age, and from that age down to the present, it may be said, groups and isolated examples of hewn and unhewn stones have been erected for commemorative, protective, boundary and other purposes. { 5 } Further evidence of the Neolithic date of many standing stones may be found in their traditional association with rites and ceremonies which many students of early history and religions identify as being survivals of pre-Celtic forms of worship. These survivals may be due, not so much to Celtic adoption of earlier rites, as to the actual presence among the early Celts of Great Britain and Ireland of considerable numbers of the earlier Neolithic inhabitants of these islands, who persisted in the worship of their own gods. The finding of both “long” and “broad” skulls in Bronze Age barrows proves that in many parts of Britain Celts and an earlier race of people must have lived together on more or less amicable terms,\* and modern investigators of the problems of Early Britain are becoming increasingly disposed to recognize, not only marked Celtic characteristics surviving among inhabitants of parts of the country from which the Celts were formerly believed to have been driven by Saxon invaders, but also pre-Celtic types as being not uncommon in many districts. On the whole we seem to be justified in concluding that there has never been any serious obstacle to the survival among us of beliefs, traditions and folk customs to which prehistoric origin may be credibly ascribed. This is a matter scientifically dealt with by Gomme in his *Folklore as an Historical Science*, also, more popularly, by Johnson in *Folk Memory*, and no one who reads these works with an open mind can be in much disagreement with the conclusions arrived at in them. The persistence with which folk memory has passed on from generation to generation much lore of undeniably ancient origin has only lately been recognized as capable, when scientifically treated, of elucidating early and often prehistoric problems; but since this has been recognized much light has been let into the darkness that surrounds life in Early Britain. It is now agreed that even the strange, and often apparently meaningless, stories attaching to an old boulder by the roadside may have an important significance when compared with like stories similarly { 6 } associated elsewhere. In view of this, an attempt may be made to show that even in East Anglia, where no example of any of the larger megalithic monuments occurs, there are smaller ones worthy of notice, and properties assigned to them deserving of investigation. In doing so it may prove difficult to resist the temptation to make short excursions down certain byways of the subject; but this is almost unavoidable owing to the interest of its side issues.

\*The typical dolichocephalic skull figured by Taylor in his *Origin of the Aryans* was found in a long barrow at Rudstone, Yorkshire, a parish famous for its huge prehistoric monolith.

## NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK MEGALITHS.

The fact that Norfolk and Suffolk, although abounding in prehistoric relics, possesses no imposing megalithic remains such as circles, dolmens and menhirs must not be taken as proof that the prehistoric inhabitants of this part of the country never participated in the particular religious rites with which many megaliths, and especially the standing stones, were originally associated. That the people who set up these stones in most parts of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland never occupied what is now known as East Anglia is incredible, and in the absence from it of such megalithic material as was elsewhere easily obtainable, we must seek for evidence of the use of such substitutes as were most readily accessible during the period or periods in question. Idols and symbols of wood, as well as stone, were worshipped at that time, or associated with rites of which vague knowledge has been preserved in folk memory and the survival of certain significant customs; but such wooden idols as may have survived the general adoption of Christianity would naturally ere long fall into decay and disappear.

## GLACIAL BOULDERS.

The best local substitute for the rock material elsewhere utilized for standing stones would be found in some of the large ice-borne boulders that waning glacial conditions left scattered widespread over the surface of the land, and embedded in the boulder clay deposited during the glacial period. Such boulders are often brought to light in brickyards and other places where considerable excavations are made, and in prehistoric times many similar ones must have { 7 } been lying about the plains and valley slopes which had been subjected to the scouring effect of floods, due to the melting of glacial ice. The removal of such a boulder to a selected site would be a simple task for people capable of erecting such huge monoliths as the Rudstone and the Devil's Arrows, and the demand for an idol or symbol would be met in the manner characteristic of the period and people. Possibly, in some instances, a boulder might be found so favourably situated as to serve its purpose without removal.

Nearly all of us, at some time, have had our attention attracted by one or another of the large boulders that often appear to have been designedly placed in certain positions by the roadside, or elsewhere, for some purpose not often at first obvious. Some of them are known by names suggesting a long occupation of the sites which ancient records, such as those of boundaries, often confirms, while old folk tales and curious customs associated with them convey some suggestion of their origin and purpose. In the cases of many of them, however, as in those of the better known menhirs of other parts of the country, nothing more definite is known about them than that they have occupied their present positions from time immemorial, and could only have been placed there for some purpose of sufficient importance to make those who did so willing to undertake or possibly enforce, considerable labour.

In almost every part of the British Isles such intentionally placed large stones or boulders occur in considerable numbers, and interesting and remarkable stories are told about many of them, the stories, as a rule, endowing them with magical properties of a kind which help us to form some idea of their original or early significance. In East Anglia, for the reason already given, they are nothing like so plentiful as in many counties; but even in Norfolk and Suffolk they are probably more numerous than most of us imagine, and anyone who cares to make a few inquiries in almost any part of these counties, except in marsh and fen districts, will probably soon learn of the existence of more of them than he suspected.

{ 8 } In view of what we know or can conjecture concerning these ancient stones, the preservation of so many of them, probably in or near their original positions, is not surprising. The early sacredness of some of them, the mysterious qualities attributed to others, and the curses anciently invoked upon removers of boundary marks, combining to endow them with importance or uncanniness, would, in the rural districts where most of them are found, tend to perpetuate belief

in the "unluckiness" of removing them. Besides, not a few of them, like many of the barrows of prehistoric man, were at an early period adopted as boundary marks, still serve that purpose, and until recent times were regularly visited by parish officers in the course of bounds-beating ceremonies. The natural difficulty experienced in removing a heavy boulder any considerable distance is also, in most instances, sufficient reason why it should remain where it is unless circumstances compel its removal. Even then it is probably moved only just far enough to be out of the way of traffic or building operations. An instance of this was observed in the parish of Carlton Colville a year or so ago when, during the rounding off of an awkward road corner, a boulder marking the junction with the road of an ancient trackway across Bloodmoor was moved only a few yards and embedded in the new roadside bank.

## CLASSIFICATION.

As no attempt to classify these stones according to their obvious, probable or possible significance can be made without first ascertaining the various purposes for which similar stones are known to have been set up or placed in position, it will be as well if, at the outset, a list is given of these purposes so far as they are known to us. This, together with some knowledge of local conditions and archaeology, may often enable us to form a likely idea of the heading under which a boulder seen or described comes, although such an identification may not preclude the possibility, and often likelihood, of its having served different purposes at different periods of its occupation of a site.

Standing stones, rock fragments, glacial boulders and other large stones set up or placed on selected sites in the British Isles are known to have served several distinct and definite purposes. They have been:

1. Objects of worship in pagan times and for some time after the introduction of Christianity. Sacred or symbolic stones. Pagan altars.
2. Sun worship stones, marking the rising or setting of the sun on the summer solstices.
3. Foundation stones, founding both sites and buildings.
4. Coronation stones.
5. Land and boundary marks.
6. Road or trackway mark-stones. By-road and cross-ways stones. Guide stones.
7. Community or village mark-stones.
8. Meeting place marks (moots, hundred courts, markets, etc.)
9. Mounting blocks.
10. Parish stocks seats.
11. Memorial stones.
12. Corner stones.

Possibly we have among our standing stones and boulders some which were originally such tribal totems as exist in many parts of the world, and it has been suggested by Mr. C. G. Chambers that some of the boulders found at cross-ways originally, or at some time, served as blacksmiths' anvils. In Scotland, and perhaps in Yorkshire, rough moor stones seem to have been used as Roman milestones, but there appears to be no reason for supposing that glacial boulders were ever employed for the purpose in East Anglia.

## CHRISTIANITY versus PAGANISM.

That many early British churches were erected on the sites previously occupied by pagan temples and idols is a well established fact. We have conclusive evidence that this was one of the proselytising methods of the early Christian missionaries. Pope Gregory, in writing to the

Abbot Mellitus in A.D. 601, commands him to tell Bishop Augustine that "I have, upon mature deliberation on the affair of the English, determined ... that the temples of the idols in that nation ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed. ... For if these temples be well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the worship of the true God; that the nation seeing that their temples are not destroyed may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God may the more faithfully resort to the places to which they have been accustomed."

In Britain, however, pagan temples were probably very far less numerous than sacred sites on which stones or wooden idols were worshipped ... indeed, some writers have held that the stones themselves were the temples often referred to. In spite of Gregory's instructions regarding the destruction of the idols, the Council of Tours, fifty-six years later, ordered priests to refuse admission to the churches of all "worshippers of upright stones," and a year later the Council of Nantes exhorted them to "dig up and hide those stones which were worshipped" ; while nearly four hundred years later Canute found it necessary to forbid the "barbarous worship of stones, trees, fountains, and of the heavenly bodies." Moreover, historical and archæological evidence goes to prove that in many instances the early Christian priests not only consecrated pagan temples to the worship of the true God, but also permitted the "stones which were worshipped" to remain on the sites, be embedded in the walls or placed on the altars of churches, or made symbolic of the new faith by carving or otherwise marking on them the sacred Cross. A like course was adopted in Egypt by the priests of Heliopolis, who permitted the archaic worship of stones so long as the over-lordship of the great Ra was recognized.

## **PRESERVATION OF PAGAN STONES.**

Evidence of the preservation of pagan stones in their original positions subsequent to the introduction of Christianity and the erection of churches {11} on sites of pagan worship is forthcoming from all parts of the country. The rained tower of Constantine Church, Cornwall, is built on a large rounded boulder weighing nearly quarter of a ton, and this boulder, Mr. R. Ashington Bullen suggests, "marked probably the meeting-place for whatever religious or ceremonial rites were practised." Professor R. Rupert Jones, F.R.S., considers the so-called Chair of Bede, at Jarrow, to have been a sacred stone of early date, and it is known to have been chiselled by modern masons into its present rectangular shape. At the north-east corner of Maplescombe Church, Kent, there is a large mass of tertiary conglomerate which probably is a like significant relic, while during excavations at the ancient church of St. Brelade, Jersey, a large granite block was discovered in a precisely similar position at the angle of the north and east walls. This last-named boulder was considered by the rector to be the foundation stone of the church—an assumption to be considered in relation with the remark of Mr. A. Watkins in *The Old Straight Track*, that the foundation stone is "a symbol of the ancient mark-stone which 'founded' the site." It seems not unlikely that some of these stones were associated with the pagan foundation sacrifices, of which much evidence has been brought to light, and that search beneath them might lead to the discovery of traces of such sacrifices.

Among the instructive facts mentioned in *The Old-Straight Track* is the custom of funeral processions passing three times round the Funeral Stone outside Brilley Church, Herefordshire, and the finding of a huge boulder embedded beneath the churchyard cross at Bosbury, in the same county, and now placed under the church tower. In several instances a pagan sacred stone has actually served as the base of a churchyard cross, while others have been roughly shaped into such crosses. The Rev. Baring Gould, in his *Book of Dartmoor*, has made clear that the design of the ordinary churchyard gravestone has evolved from that of the prehistoric menhir. The carving of the Cross, and in one instance of the Instruments of the Passion, on prehistoric standing stones indicates how such objects of pagan worship became symbols of the Christian Faith.

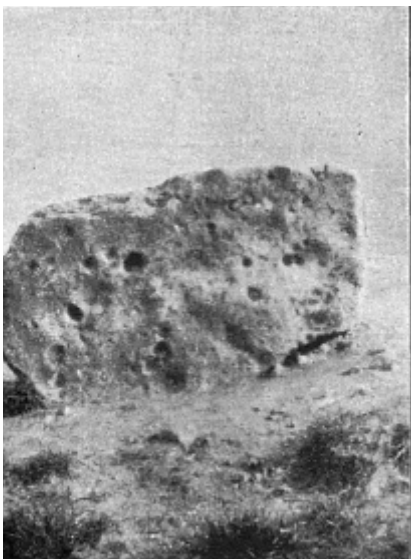
## SOME EAST ANGLIAN BOULDER



### S.Bungay

Some of the noteworthy boulders in East Anglia are preserved in or closely adjoin churchyards. That in St. Mary's Churchyard, Bungay, is known as the Giant's Grave, also as the Druid's Stone, and there is a tradition that girls, after dancing round it twelve times, placed their ears against it to receive answers to their wishes. The preservation of this stone—which has lately been set up on end in probably its original position—is the more interesting in view of the fact that Outney Common, Bungay, was the site of a late Neolithic settlement which was safeguarded from attack on all sides save one by a horseshoe bend of the Waveney, while on the side without natural defence a deep ditch was dug reaching at each end marsh levels that must have been under water in prehistoric times. On the site of this settlement the writer was fortunate enough to discover a fine polished flint axe, a beautifully chipped

triangular flint, knife, a leaf-shaped flint arrow or javelin head, and some bones of a girl or small woman, including one of the back vertebræ and a phalange of a toe. On Broome Heath, about a mile away on the Norfolk side of the Waveney, there is another prehistoric site with earthworks and barrows, and there, too, the characteristic types of flint implements suggest a settlement of late Neolithic or Bronze Age date. As there is general agreement that the worship of standing stones was introduced into Britain during the Neolithic period, the preservation of the large unhewn stone in St. Mary's Churchyard is the more significant for this unmistakable evidence of extended prehistoric occupation of the immediate neighbourhood. Just outside the churchyard wall at Beccles, on the steep slope down to the marshlands of the Waveney Valley, a glacial boulder is deeply embedded,\* and another, discovered about seventy years ago, during the digging up of the foundations of the south aisle of the church at Holme-next-the-Sea, is preserved in the churchyard there. Yet another boulder lies in Thwaite Churchyard; but Wortham's Sacred Stone, which formerly lay just south-west of the tower of Wortham Church, has now been removed into the church itself. In Bramford Church, at the west end of the north aisle (according to a writer in the *East Anglian Daily Times*) "a huge mass of stone juts out into the church from the foundations at the corner of the north-east angle of the tower." In Church Lane, Gorleston, near by the church, there is a large granite boulder.



### Boulder In Beccles Churchyard

\*There may be some indication of the prehistoric importance of Beccles in the name itself. This is usually stated to be derived from *Beata Ecclesia*, significant of the early attachment of the manor to the monastery at Bury; but the element *eccles*, occurring alone or in composition, is the old Welsh *eglwys*, British *ecles*, found twice in Norfolk in the place-name Eccles, and supposed to have denoted a place of some importance, or structure "of a more lasting kind than the ordinary British village." *Introduction to the Survey of English Place-Names*, pp. 22, 23, Latinized the word *isecclesia*, so the "structure of a more lasting kind" here may have been the sacred stone itself.



## SACRIFICIAL STONES.

Some of the pagan stones were originally sacrificial, and in this connection it is interesting to learn that a granite menhir at Holney on Dartmoor was, until recently, the scene of a May festival known as the Ram Feast.\* A ram was caught on the moor, slain on the stone, roasted there, and then divided into portions which were kept throughout the year as mascots. Dancing, wrestling and drinking were kept up until midnight. The saying about a “long stone” near Staunton, in the Forest of Dean, that “if you prick it with a pin at midnight it bleeds,” may be a faint survival in folk memory of sacrifices on the site. Mr. Watkins is inclined to believe that the so-called Sacrificial Stone near the Giant’s Cave, on the Malvern Hills, has been artificially smoothed on one side so that—as a photograph in his book makes clear—it so exactly fits “a human back that almost every inch from neck to heel touched the stone when limply reclining at an angle of 45 degrees.” A prostrate sarsen stone within the earthwork circle at Stonehenge is popularly known as the Slaughtering Stone; but, in the opinion of Mr. F. Stevens, the curator of Salisbury Museum and the author of *Stonehenge To-day*<sup>{14}</sup> and *Yesterday*, this name is “probably a picturesque piece of nomenclature devised by certain bygone antiquaries.” Pope Gregory, however, in the letter already quoted, suggests that “because they (the Britons) have been used to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifices to devils,” they should henceforth “kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating, and return thanks to the giver of all things for their sustenance;” and the evidence that the sacrificing of oxen was preceded by, if not contemporary with, human sacrifice, is too strong to be discredited.

\*The sacrifice of the ram was associated with the worship of Hammon, a nature-god of North Africa, who, like Baal, was worshipped in “high places,” with horrible rites, and in connection with sacred stones. Children were sacrificed to this African Moloch, Diodorus writing of one occasion when 200 children and 300 voluntary victims were offered up to it. Sacrifices of cows still take place in Algiers, and the flesh is divided up among and eaten by the worshippers.

An ancient Gaelic poem refers to the “king idol” of Erin, called Cromm Cruaich, to whom human sacrifices were made and around whom were “twelve idols made of stones” (probably a stone circle), the poem adding that

**“There was worshipping of stones  
Until the coming of good Patrick of Macha.”**

The worship of this pagan deity, with its attendant savage rites, is considered by some authorities on Celtic Britain to be one of several local cults of pre-Celtic origin which persisted after the Celts arrived in our islands. Caesar’s reference to the wicker-work images filled with living men and set on fire, and the assertion in the Celtic poem that the worshippers of Cromm Cruaich poured out the blood of one-third of their offspring to obtain the boon of milk and corn, indicates that the human sacrifices were often on a large scale. The Dartmoor Ram Feast was probably a “practice of symbolic human sacrifice by those who had forgotten its meaning,” in this case apparently associated with the original sacrificial stone. In comparatively recent years there have been well authenticated instances of the sacrifice of animals in England to avert cattle diseases and ensure good luck on farms, and among the Samoyades of Novaya Zembla the sacrifice of a young girl to a stone image is known to have taken place only a few years ago.\*

\*F. G. Jackson, *The Great Frozen Land*, 1895, pp. 88–89.

## BOUNDARY STONES.

At a very early date boundary stones were looked upon as sacred, and curses invoked on anyone who<sup>{15}</sup> removed them. In the old Norse mythology the goddess Frigga was said to apportion fields and consecrate landmarks, while the god Thor was supposed to fix up the stones with his

hammer.\* The Swedish legend of Jack-o'-Lantern is, Mr. Watkins tells us, that he was "a mover of landmarks" and therefore doomed to be out at night for ever and ever; the same writer quotes a folk tale about a man's ghost that used to "walk" and could get no rest because he had moved a landmark; and of another man who could not rest in his grave until the landmark he had removed was replaced in its original position.

\*Wagner, *Asgard and the Gods*, Eighth English Edition, pp. 6, 9.

That some of the standing stones erected by the early inhabitants of Scandinavia were objects of worship seems clear from certain passages in the Sagas, and as, in East Anglia, some of the ancient boulders are preserved in parishes having Scandinavian names, they may have served this purpose here even if not originally placed in their present positions by Norse or Danish settlers. Some likelihood is lent to this idea by evidence that the Scandinavian pagans treated such stones as family gods. The *Kristni Saga* relates that "at Gilja (in the north of Iceland) stood the stone that the family had worshipped, and alleged that their *ar*-man lived in it. Codron declared that he would not be baptised until he knew which was the more powerful, the bishop or the *ar*-man in the stone. The bishop then went to the stone, and chanted over it till it broke asunder. Then Codron considered that the *ar*-man was vanquished." A similar family 'stone' appears to be referred to in the following passage from the *Story of Howard the Halt*: "So when the boards were set, Herstein, the bridegroom, leapt up and over the board to where was a certain stone: then he set one foot upon the stone and spake: 'This oath I swear hereby.'"

In England the application of the Old English adjective *har* (grey, hoar) to such stones would seem to indicate that even in Saxon times some of them were looked upon as objects of antiquity and, as such, may have been chosen as boundary marks. The view has also been advanced that "from its use in *har-stan* the element *har* may be descriptive of a boundary in other compounds also."\* Mr. Watkins quotes from Heming's *Cattulary* an Anglo-Saxon boundary as running on to the haran stone from the haran stone along the green way." Among well-known stones there are two Hoarstones in Oxfordshire, one in Gloucestershire and one in Warwickshire. The *Domesday Heroluestuna* seems to be against any suggestion that the Norfolk town of Harleston may owe its name to the stone preserved there; but it, is at least noteworthy that in the Suffolk parish of Harleston (often spelt Harlestone), near Haughley, there is also, on Rush Green, a well-known boulder traditionally said to mark the site of the burning of martyrs in Queen Mary's reign, and which the writer of the "Here and There" column in the *East Anglian Daily Times*† suggests may have been chosen as being the traditional site of human sacrifices in the days of paganism. As there appears to be no record of any martyrdom having taken place in this parish, the local tradition would seem to be due to vague folk-memory of earlier burnings.

\*Mawer, *Chief Elements in English Place Names*, p. 33.

†30th January, 1926.

A convincing Norfolk example of an ancient stone is the Cowell Stone at Beechamwell. It is embedded in the ground beside an ancient road which thereabouts seems to have been known as Peddars Road and Salters Road, at the point where another ancient trackway, Pincham Drove, runs east from it in a straight line over three miles towards Southacre. This stone, Mr. W. G. Clarke tells us,‡ is the Hundred boundary and also the meeting-place of the boundaries of Narborough, Marham and Swaffham, and, according to a Beechamwell estate map of 1766, was then also the boundary of Beechamwell." It is "a glacial boulder with 10 inches showing above ground, an east and west axis of 3 feet 4 inches, and north and south of 2 feet 11 inches."

‡In *Breckland Wilds*, p. 121.

Many writers on place names have drawn attention to the likelihood of the common termination ton when{17} immediately preceded by an "s," being sometimes a corruption of the Old English

*stan*, meaning “stone.” This difficulty renders the more valuable every instance where early spellings of a place name make the subsequent corruption obvious, and the preservation of the original stone enables us to see for ourselves the ancient object or veneration after which the place is named. We have this at Chediston, near Halesworth, which appears in the Domesday record as “Cidestan,” and where the large stone (now broken into two pieces, but said to have been from 6 feet to 8 feet high) from which the name is derived, can still be seen.



STOCKTON STONE.

### Stockton

That other parishes and places in Norfolk and Suffolk owe their names to ancient mark stones there can be no doubt; but until the English Place Name Society is able to deal with these counties and give us, as in its other volumes, full lists of early spellings of their place names, it is hazardous to profess sureness about the many “ston” and “stone” names. Munford, in his *Local Names of Norfolk*, suggests that Geldeston is a parish which may derive its name from some remarkable memorial stone which once existed there. He notes that the place is not mentioned in Domesday Book, “being included and accounted for under the lordship of Stockton”; but apparently he was not aware that Stockton Stone—from which Geldeston may be derived—is one of the best known mark stones in the county. In several counties Hundred Courts assembled at ancient stones. In Norfolk the Court for Gallow met in 1561 and 1568 at Longfield Stone.

## MAGICAL PROPERTIES.

The most interesting old boulders and standing stones are those with traditions attaching to them, or properties popularly attributed to them suggestive of the nature of the original purposes or worship of such objects. The two Cairngorm stones were resorted to as efficacious in preventing barrenness, and that at Burghead, Elgin, was visited as recently as the eighteenth century by women about to become mothers, and was said to give forth sounds like “a rocking cradle and a crying child.” This last mentioned stone is now built into a churchyard wall. According to legend, the Stone of Fail, better known as the Stone of Destiny, uttered a human cry when touched by the rightful king of Erin.\* When trodden on by King Conn it is said to have shrieked so loudly as to be heard throughout Bregia (East Meath). On the island of Fladda Chuain a blue stone fixed to the church altar was washed by the local fishermen to ensure fine weather, while the fishermen of Iona, by touching a pillar-shaped rock three times, and at the same time invoking the Trinity, gained skill and accuracy in steering boats. Giraldus Cambrensis relates a story in which a Welsh woman, who had a quarrel with Henry II, appealed to a “speaking stone” for vengeance.

\*The original King’s Bench was a large stone at the east end of Westminster Hall, on which the Saxon kings were lifted when passing from the palace to the abbey. Swedish kings were inaugurated on a stone said to mark the grave of Odin, near Upsala.

Early legend attributed the erection of the monoliths, dolmens and stone circles to a race of giants. The Giant’s Staff is a Cornish menhir; the stone in Bungay Churchyard is the Giant’s Grave,

and folk tales explain the presence of other megaliths to their being cast or dropped there by giants or the Devil. In view of what we know of the origin of the race responsible for the introduction of the megalithic culture into these islands, it is interesting to note that according to tradition the huge stones now forming Stonehenge were brought to Ireland from Africa by the giants who first colonized that country and were venerated on account of their miraculous virtues, "for any water in which they were bathed became a sovereign remedy either for sickness or for wounds." Their removal from Ireland to England and erection on Salisbury Plain was attributed to a British king, Aurelius. The familiar stories of how early saints voyaged to and fro between Brittany and Britain on slabs of stone, or in stone boats, are also significant of the magical qualities with which sacred stones were credited.

Some of the magical properties attributed to standing stones and boulders are difficult to account for owing to the indefiniteness of our knowledge of the prehistoric rites with which these stones were<sup>{19}</sup> associated; but the similarity of these attributes in all parts of the country seems to signify that these rites, or the beliefs in which they originated, were identical or similar in different districts. For instance, Mr. W. Fowler, of Beccles, informs the writer that for generations mothers have told children that two stones, lying outside a barn at Sheringham, "when they hear the cock crow run across the road," while Mr. Watkins asserts that a monolith known as the Whetstone, standing on the Hergist Ridge in Herefordshire, is said "to go down to a brook to drink when it hears the cock crow," and that the Four Stones at New Radnor are reputed to go down to Hindwell Pool to drink when they hear the sound of Old Radnor bells. Similar stories are told by the peasants of Brittany about the local menhirs and dolmens. In Norfolk it is recorded that a Dole Stone in Flegg Hundred\* was reputed to come down regularly from its hedgerow to drink at the nearest water. At Lowestoft a similar story attaches to a mass of stones, cemented together, preserved just within the entrance to Belle Vue Park, and which traditionally formed part of the foundations of an ancient beacon tower. Mr. C. G. Chambers relates that when he was a boy "every boy in Lowestoft believed that this heap of stones flew down to the sea and had a dip as soon as the Town Hall clock struck twelve. It was supposed to start at the first stroke of the clock and be back by the twelfth stroke." In a lane near Debenham, Suffolk, a large boulder goes by the name of the Groaning Stone, for "when it hears Debenham's church clock strike the magic hour of midnight it turns over and groans." South Lopham possesses an Ox-foot Stone, owing its name to a mark on it, which is traditionally said to be the impression of the hoof of a cow (!) that came 'regularly to be milked by the poor inhabitants during a long period of dearth.†

\**Eastern Counties Collectanea*, p. 3.

†At the gate of Capena, in Tuscany, there was a stone ... which was dragged forth in seasons of drought to cause rain." Maclagan, *Our Ancestors*, p. 291.

Most of these and other similar stories told about standing stones and ancient boulders are, it seems, difficult to account for, unless we agree that they are<sup>{20}</sup> distorted versions of primitive facts or debilitated survivals of primitive beliefs. Many of them probably had their origin in times when sacrifices, both human and animal, were made to pagan deities either on or before such stones. The later, and even recent, sacrifices known to have been made on some of them in this country, and on the continent of Europe, appear to have been made for the purpose of obtaining like benefits to those desired by the Irish worshippers of Cromm Cruaich, while the view that human victims were acceptable to the pagan gods survived long after the introduction of Christianity. Indeed, a remarkable passage quoted by Mr. W. A. Craigie in his *Religion of Ancient Scandinavia* makes it clear that in Iceland the earliest Christians themselves were prepared to make such sacrifices. "The heathens," they said, "sacrifice the worst men, and cast them over rocks and cliffs; but we shall choose the best men, and call it a gift for victory to our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Scots fishermen who brought out their sacred stone and "washed" it in order to gain good fortune at sea; the pouring of wine into a hollow in a Somersetshire stone at which the Hundred Court of Stone met; the groaning and crying out of famous stones; the slaughtering of the ram

on the stone at Holney; the supposed bleeding of pricked stones; the custom of depositing food on ancient megaliths; the common and widespread story concerning the partiality of such stones for bathing or drinking, and the hours, midnight or sunrise, at which stone ceremonies took place or magical movements are said to be performed—all these things seem to point to early sacrificial associations, of which the dancing round the stones was part of the ritual. We must guard, however, against assuming that every old boulder of which such tales are told must necessarily be a pagan idol, symbol or sacrificial stone, for the early movements of people, the destruction or concealment of pagan stones, and a natural human tendency to attribute the powers believed to be possessed by certain stones to other similar ones, may easily have led to superstitions originating in prehistoric times becoming associated with Saxon boundary stones or even, as appears to be the case with the Lowestoft stones,{21} with what is probably a fragment of an old beacon tower.

A common and widespread folk story about churches and humanly set up stones being built or set up in the daytime and removed by the Devil to a different site during the night dates, it is generally agreed, from the days when there was strong pagan opposition to the erection of Christian churches on pagan sacred sites, and to the removal of the sacred stones from such sites. This was the difficulty that—as has already been explained—was got over in many instances by the consecration of the pagan stones or the embedding of them in the walls of churches. Bede records that the inhabitants of Northumbria, even after they had accepted Christianity, shrank from incurring the hostility of the old deities by destroying their temples. Redwald, King of East Anglia, is said to have kept two altars in the temple in which he worshipped, one for the worship of the grim idol of his forefathers and the other for that of the true God. The folk story about the removal of the stones by the Devil does not appear to occur in Norfolk or Suffolk, but it has long been told to account for the standing of Syleham Church practically on the marsh level.

In Lincolnshire there are at least two famous stones of which similar stories are told. At Anwick, near Sleaford, the Drake Stone is said to cover a vast board of treasure. Several people tried unsuccessfully to remove the stone, and when a team of horses was yoked to it the chains broke and the Devil appeared in the form of a drake and flew off in a cloud of smoke. After this the stone became haunted by imps, and one night it disappeared, digging operations having caused water to rise and cover it. Eventually it was recovered and is still to be seen. This story may be compared with the one told about the big boulder at Merton, Norfolk, the removal of which, it is said, would cause the waters to rise and cover the whole earth. The other Lincolnshire boulder, Fonaby Stone Sack, is reported to have been removed by a farmer, with the aid of twelve horses; but following upon its removal he experienced such bad luck that he was {22} glad to return it to its original position, and, although the return journey was uphill, one horse was able to perform the task.

## HOLED MEGALITHS.

The magical properties of holed megaliths have often been referred to by writers on these prehistoric monuments, and the powers attributed to them were in some degree extended to pebbles with holes in them. The larger holed stones were sometimes known as “swearing stones,” and it is suggested that they were associated with early marriage rites.\* In Cornwall, Ireland and elsewhere children were passed through holed stones to be cured of various ailments, while in the case of adults it sufficed if the linen clothes of the sick person were passed through the holes. An East Anglian survival of this belief is found in the hanging up of a holed flint in stable or cow-shed, to prevent witches from hag-riding the horses or injuring the cows. In Antrim a holed pebble is hung round the cow’s neck.

\*The dancing and nuptial associations of megaliths are well illustrated by the familiar story told of the Devil piping for the wedding party at midnight in one of the stone circles at Stanton Drew, in Somersetshire. *Notes and Queries*, vol. iv, p. 3.

In Ireland, in recent years, pilgrimages have been made, not only to sacred wells, but also to standing stones, around which the pilgrims crawled on hands and knees “westward as the sun travels ...until their voluntary penances were completely fulfilled.”† In some instances there is evidence of the “lucky” properties of pagan stones becoming transferred to the altars of the early Christian churches. In Anglesey, which is well known to have been the headquarters of a powerful pagan cult at the time when the soldiers of Paulinus had to face its Bacchantic torch-bearing women as well as its fighting men, it is not so very long since it was believed that to get under the altar of St. Hilary’s Church by means of an open panel was to ensure life during the coming year; while in Iona the marble altar was entirely destroyed by fragments being used to safeguard against shipwreck.

†Beatham, *Gael and Cymbri*, pp. 236–8.

## RITUAL DANCING.

Among well-known megaliths are Spinster’s Rock, many Bridestones and Merry Maidens, and a Stone Dance. The last two names are especially significant in view of the dancing known to have taken place around many such stones, usually on May Day and at midnight—evidently a folk-survival of pagan ritual dancing. The famous Yorkshire Rudstone, standing in a churchyard, may very well derive its name from a Celtic word signifying frisking, capering or whirling about. St. Samson, we are told, found the Cornish natives dancing round a table stone, and he marked it with a cross and let it stand—a proceeding quite understandable when we remember the size and weight of the ordinary dolmen capstone. The tradition of dancing round the Druid’s Stone in Bungay Churchyard has already been mentioned. When it last occurred, and why it ceased, appears not to be known; but at Moncontour, near St. Malo, the bishop had to issue a special statute forbidding dancing in the churchyard there. The dancing, in later times, appears to have given place to processions round ancient wells, buildings and other objects held to be sacred. At Blessin, the women of Cancalle, when their fathers, husbands, brothers or sweethearts are late in returning from the oversea fisheries, pace with lighted candies round the little chapel of St. Charles, “commencing always on the side whence the home-bound breeze should come.” In Norfolk and Suffolk it is still believed by many girls that if any one of them walks alone three times round a churchyard at midnight, she will see the man whom she is destined to marry. This is very significant in view of the nature of the midnight revels recorded to have taken place around well-known megaliths in France and other countries in mediæval times, in spite of the denunciations of the local priests.

On the Ordnance Survey maps a Skipping Block—a name suggestive of dancing—is still marked on the borders of the parishes of Barnham Broom and Kimberley, and the Rev. J. E. P. Bartlett, rector of Barnham Broom, states that old inhabitants of the neighbourhood remember having heard of a large {24} stone standing there, and which was used as a mounting-block and had been cut into steps for that purpose. Such a use of it, however, does not seem to account for its name, and its being an ancient parish boundary mark indicates considerable antiquity. At North Thoresby, Lincolnshire, in a field called Bound-Croft, a large blue stone at which the manor court was held was, in the early part of the last century, the centre around which, on fair day, games were played.

## ALIGNMENT OF ANCIENT STONES.

The contention of Mr. A. Watkins that many of the ancient mark-stones so plentifully scattered over Britain prove, on investigation, to be in alignment with other similar stones, as well as with other sites of early occupation or importance, has led to his theory being tested by many observers in different parts of the country with results that have surprised most of them. The sites and objects with which the stones align include early camps, artificial mounds and other earthworks, old fords, beacon hills, moats, sacred wells and churches—the last-named, in many instances,

probably built on pagan sacred sites. Mr. Watkins believes that the evidence is strong enough to prove that these alignments or “leys” are of very early date and that they indicate the former existence of straight trackways which could have been made only by a people among whom there were men specially skilled in “sighting” such alignments.

The whole matter is of great interest—how great can be fully appreciated only by those acquainted with the vast amount of information found in Mr. Watkins’s book, *The Old Straight Track*.

It is mentioned here because, although familiar mark-stones are comparatively few in Norfolk and Suffolk, two of the best known of them, Stockton Stone and Harleston Stone, appear to provide evidence corroborative of the alignment theory. A straight line drawn from Harleston Stone to Stockton Stone on the one inch to the mile Ordnance Survey map is found to pass directly through a remarkable moated pond at Earsham, called the Lay, onward to an earthwork enclosure on Bungay Common, thence to {25} a similar enclosure with tumuli on Broome Heath, over Longford Bridge (across a small tributary of the Waveney between Broome and Ellingham) and, after passing over the site of Stockton Stone, continues straight on to the artificial mount known as Bell Hill and beyond it to the elevated site of Belton Church.

It will be agreed that in a district where mark-stones are few and far between it can hardly be by accident that the two most noteworthy of them—both of acknowledged antiquity—should align with three of the very few ancient earthworks of the neighbourhood, with an ancient ford and with a pond unlike any other in the Eastern Counties, in that it consists of a pool some acres in extent almost entirely surrounded by a moat. This pond lies in a natural basin, the sloping sides of which are strewn with Neolithic flint flakes, and the site is one of the most likely ones to provide an enterprising antiquary with traces of lake-dwellings similar to those discovered in the Breckland meres. The artificial mount known as Bell Hill is one of the unexplained mysteries of the district. With too small a summit ever to have been a castle mound, and yet larger than any tumulus in Norfolk and Suffolk, it seems possible that like Bel Tor on Dartmoor, the Baal Hills in Yorkshire and other “Bell” sites, this peculiar mount may have been a scene of the ancient ceremonies of Beltaine connected with fire worship. I hazard the conjecture that it may be accountable for the stone-marked alignment between it and the moated site known as the Lay. Investigators of the ley theory have found that in many parts of Britain where ancient mark-stones are numerous similar alignments are traceable; but in East Anglia, where there are few such stones now in evidence, it is not often easy to arrive at definite conclusions concerning them, owing to the difficulty of working on one inch to the mile maps large enough to make alignments clearly obvious. Many mark-stones have undoubtedly become hidden from sight by roadside banks being so commonly used for the dumping of road scrapings. In this connection it is interesting to record that a friend of the writer was able to discover three such hidden boulders by means of ley-tracings on maps, and subsequently visiting spots where he believed the stones might be {26} found. The instructions given to the early Christian priests to hide the pagan sacred stones, no doubt led to many such stones being buried out of sight.

## **SURVIVAL IN FOLK-MEMORY**

Regarding the stories told of many of these stones, generally attributing to them impossible movements, curative qualities or magical properties, their significance is not always clearly determinable; but when we know that much of this lore is very like that attaching to the “holy wells” and “wishing wells,” which were scenes of pagan rites long after the introduction of Christianity, and to some of which even now miraculous powers are accredited, can it be doubted that much of this lore has persisted in folk memory from pagan times, and probably, in some degree, from the Later Stone Age? The evidence of anthropology, in the opinion of modern students, proves that among the population of England to-day Celtic and, indeed, Neolithic types abound “even in the Anglo-Danish counties of Lincoln, Norfolk and Suffolk. . . . The old teaching about the extermination of one race by another, whether of Neolithic people by Goidels, of Goidels by Brythons, or of all these by Romans, Saxons, Danes or Normans, is not now set forth

by many writers of repute. ... Dr. Beddoe has calculated that over the greater part of England the Celtic strain amounts to one half.”\* Writing of the Old English village, Professor F. York says “It is probable that the *thegen* and *geneat* and village tradesmen, save, perhaps, the smith, were mostly of English blood, with such mixture as marriage or concubinage with the British women caused; the other classes, over most of the island, were probably of Celtic or pre-Celtic blood.”† Mr. R. G. Collingwood, F.S.A., who touches on the subject in his recently issued manual on *Roman Britain*, also agrees that “there is much evidence of a mixed population in the Anglo-Saxon period, a population containing a British strain strong enough to influence the character of the whole.” Again, the French ethnologist, Dr. Colignon, remarks that “When a race is well seated in a region, fixed to the soil by agriculture, acclimatised<sup>{27}</sup> by natural selection and sufficiently dense, it opposes—for the most precise observations confirm it—an enormous resistance to new comers whoever they may be.” The conclusions arrived at by the writers just quoted are supported by Professor Eilert Ekwall, who, in contributing the “Celtic Element” chapter to the recently issued *Introduction to the Survey of English Place-Names*, remarks that “The view often held that the British population was exterminated or swept away seems to have lost ground of late years. The numerous British place-names in England tell strongly against it.”  
\**Folk Memory*, pp. 56, 91, 92.

†*Social England*, 1898, I, pp. 124–5.

The attitude taken up by the Romans towards the British during the former’s occupation of the country, must not be ignored in any attempt to explain how it came about that strange rites, associated with Neolithic and Celtic religious ceremonies, survived to become recorded in recent times as examples of common folk belief and custom. Themselves familiar with a polytheistic religion—and, as Mr. John Ward remarks “polytheism has unlimited elasticity,”—the Romans came to identify various gods of Britain with some of their own, and, in consequence, we find among the altars of that period which have been brought to light, several inscribed to deities bearing Celtic or other names often equated with those of the Græco-Roman pantheon. It is not always possible to distinguish old British deities from those whose worship was imported into this country by a Roman soldiery consisting of representatives of various continental races included within the Roman Empire; but enough is known to assure us that little or no obstacle was placed by the Romans in the way of the worshippers of native gods. Even local religious cults among the Britons appear to have had their temples here in Roman times, and to have become Romanized. Some of these native divinities such as Nudd or Lludd, to whom there was an important shrine at Lydney, on the banks of the Severn, are conspicuous figures in early Celtic mythology; but altars have been found in Britain to several other gods and goddesses who appear to have had no known worshippers outside of the British Isles. As Mr. Ward writes: “We know too little of the religions of pre-Roman Britain to estimate how many of the latter (deities) were<sup>{28}</sup> indigenous, and how far imported by the military”;\* but it is obvious that little or nothing occurred during the Roman occupation to disturb the continuity of those primitive religious rites, of which there are emasculated survivals down to our own day.

\**The Roman Era in Britain*, p. 13.

All these important conclusions may be legitimately quoted in support of the contention that from the Later Stone Age—of which Norfolk and Suffolk have produced more abundant relics than any other part of England—until quite recent times there has never been any serious obstacle to the survival of superstitions which prehistoric practices gave rise to in connection with standing stones and other megalithic monuments.

## THE MEGALITHIC CULTURE

Most prehistorians now agree that the period of what is known as the megalithic culture began, so far as Britain is concerned, towards the end of the Neolithic Age in our islands, and that the introduction of this particular culture was due to the arrival here of a race of people of African



origin, which has left impressive relics of its presence in the shape of dolmens, menhir and other megalithic monuments in the continent from which it came and the countries into which it migrated. This African or Lybian race—the Mediterranean race of Professor Sergi, still represented by the Berbers in Northern Africa—is believed to have reached our islands by way of Spain. As instances of the cultural states and religious beliefs of the Lybians of North Africa and the Neolithic inhabitants of the British Isles, we may take the following customs prevalent in the former country in historical, and in Great Britain and Ireland in prehistoric times: (1) Human sacrifice by fire; (2) sacrifice of children to ensure fruitful seasons; (3) sacrifice of animals and eating of the victims; (4) killing of aged and infirm parents; (5) worship of standing stones; (6) dolmen-burial; (7) construction of stone circles and alignments; and (8) ritual dancing around standing stones.

Against subsequent Celtic invasions this Neolithic race seems to have maintained its hold so firmly in some districts that even to-day it retains some measure of distinctiveness, while there is probably not a county in the United Kingdom, or in Ireland, where it is not still represented. In the case of this pre-Celtic race, as in that of the Celtic, the “extermination theory” no longer finds many supporters, and in view of the belief that it was able to impress certain features of its culture upon its dominating conquerors, as they in turn were able to impress many of theirs on later comers, the survival of beliefs and customs of Neolithic origin presents itself as a natural occurrence.

These beliefs and customs are relics of the religious ritual and usages of a race in some ways far more savage than we have reason to believe the Gaels or Brythons to have been when they appeared in Britain, and yet also, in some ways, more advanced than their conquerors: they were worshippers, as Mr. Gomme asserts, of “deities which there is little difficulty in recognizing as the counterparts of those religious goddesses of India, who are worshipped and venerated by non-Aryan votaries.” There is much evidence that their religious rites were those of an agricultural people, and, as the Celts were hunters and warriors rather than agriculturists, it is more than probable that they were the chief cultivators of the soil in Celtic and Roman times. Their rites of nature worship, often bloody and orgiastic, appear to have been very similar to those the Lybians are known to have practised on and around just such megaliths as are found in most parts of the British Isles. The statement of Pliny that the British women who took part in religious mysteries stained themselves in imitation of the dark races, is evidently a reference to the survival of such practices, or may even signify that the women in question actually belonged to the African race and had darker skins than their Celtic contemporaries in Britain. That some of our standing and holed stones were considered representative or symbolic of deities who demanded the sacrifice of youthful victims; that they were set up, like the “high places” of Baal, in order that their worshippers might “cause their sons and daughters to pass through the fire of Moloch”; and that the passing of children through holed stones is a ceremony having its origin in pagan sacrifices, seem natural conclusions to draw from the foregoing evidence.

## **THE EARLIER THE HIGHER CULTURE.**

Although it may be distinctly antagonistic to the ideas commonly held regarding the stages of cultural development of the early inhabitants of the British Isles, there is much to be said in favour of the suggestion that the race of African origin which introduced the megalithic culture into these islands, possessed a higher culture than the earliest Celts who came after them, and that degeneration, rather than advancement, ensued upon contact with the Celts. To a large extent this would be a natural consequence of conquest by and living in subjection to a more powerful race of different ideals and warlike tendencies. The African race—to which, in view of their early migrations, the name of Mediterranean better applies—was that which gave us the wonderful Etruscan culture, the marvels of Cretan Knossos and many of those of early Egypt. “These are the folk who underlay classic civilization. The empires of Greece and Rome have disappeared, together with their culture, but have left this old population where they stood before.”\* Upon their lore and fable is based much of Greek and Latin literature, and what we

now know of them helps to explain the assertions of Herodotus and others regarding the African origin of Hercules, Neptune and other gods and goddesses. Into the British Isles they brought forms of nature-worship conducive to a mystical ecstasy, which often degenerated into orgiastic revelry—a lack of self-control approaching mania which has not been without manifestation among modern representatives of the race under circumstances creating extreme emotion. Even in our own day, it may be this African element among us which is occasionally responsible for startling revelations of primitive superstition and savagery. Yet while there are these survivals, and occasional outbreaks of an ancient and obscure malignity, this same element is probably accountable for much of the weird and beautiful of the old Celtic mythology. Probably, it would not be going too far to say that it was the intermingling and intermarriage of the southern race with the Celts which makes modern Celts in these islands what they are in temperament to-day, they {31} owing to the southerners just as much as the modern Norwegians owe to the mystic, poetic Finns.

\*Bradley *Malta and the Mediterranean Race*, p. 85.

One might easily imagine that this southern race, after venturing into these colder and probably almost uninhabited lands,\* became the victims of a kind of permanent nostalgia, which later manifested itself as an established disposition towards dreamy despondency and fatalistic acceptance of the depressing conditions of serfdom, attended by an abject belief in the necessity for propitiating at all costs unfriendly supernatural powers. For in the remoter districts, where the old Neolithic element is most easily identifiable, this still seems to be the prevailing disposition among the agricultural and seafaring folk, and, although it is often supposed to be accounted for by the Celtic temperament, it is not characteristic of the exuberant, versatile and combative Celt.

\*It is now believed that some of the earlier Palaeolithic people were still inhabiting parts of the coast of Britain when the Neolithic immigrants arrived.

The late J. Romilly Allen, F.S.A., some time ago drew attention† to evidence from Ireland which might be interpreted as showing that the Celts of the Bronze Age were largely indebted to the Neolithic aborigines for their artistic development, and that the absorption of the aborigines by the conquering Gaels had had a stimulative effect on decorative art. In Co. Meath, he pointed out, the best specimens of Bronze Age ornament sculptured on stone occur on megalithic monuments of the type admitted to belong to the Neolithic period, so that in Ireland the erection of dolmens, chambered cairns and other similar structures must have continued during the Bronze Age, or the characteristic patterns of the latter age must have been derived from a Neolithic source.

†*Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times*, p. 43

A recent summary of modern conclusions regarding this wonderful race, which gave to many parts of Europe such a remarkable and distinctive culture, is that “It held our islands till the coming of the Celts, who fought with the aborigines, dispossessed them of the more fertile parts, subjugated them, even amalgamated with them, but certainly never extirpated them. In the time of the Romans they were practically independent in South Wales. In Ireland they were long unconquered and are found as allies rather than {32} serfs of the Gaels, ruling their own provinces, and preserving their own customs and religions. Nor, in spite of all the successive invasions of Great Britain and Ireland, are they yet extinct, or so merged as to have lost their type, which is still the predominant one in many parts of the west, both of Britain and Ireland, and is believed by some ethnologists to be generally upon the increase all over England.”\* If this be the case, it is in agreement with the result of anthropometric investigation in Crete, where the alien elements which settled in the island after the end of the Minoan Ages seem to have bred out to a large extent, and the long-headed Mediterranean type has re-established itself even where the broad-heads became numerically preponderant.

\*Squire, *Celtic Myth and Legend*, pp. 20–21

## ENDURING NATURE-WORSHIP.

*Probably there is no part of Great Britain and Ireland where a study of local folklore would not lead to like conclusions to those arrived at in the foregoing pages. The late Canon J. C. Atkinson, who for more than forty years was indefatigable in acquainting himself with the ancient lore, custom and belief of the moor folk of the Yorkshire parish in which he dwelt and ministered, writes that "the more one really enters into the story of the folklore still surviving in these dales of ours ... the more one finds to suggest how hard has been the struggle between the old paganism and the new Christianity. Survivals of this form or that of the old nature-worship ... meet one at every turn." And elsewhere, after commenting on the comparative ease with which the heathenish practices of the Saxons and Danes were suppressed in Northern England, he adds "But the far older nature-worship, the rude fetichism which dated back to ages long before history, had tougher and deeper roots. The new religion could turn the nature-deities of this primeval superstition into devils, its spells into magic, its spae-wives into witches, but it could never banish them from the imagination of men; it had in the end even to capitulate to the nature-worship, to adopt its stones and its wells, to turn its spells into exorcisms and benedictions, its charms into prayers."†*

†*Forty Years in a Moorland Parish*, pp. 131, 236.



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