

STONEHENGE.

I write this article hoping that it will be of interest to those of our men who in the days to come will visit the Motherland, and in their spare moments seek pleasure in seeing some of the ancient landmarks.

Stonehenge, with its mysterious origin, seldom fails to exert a fascination upon those who see it for the first time. How long elapsed until its erection, from the days when the first settlers crossed into Britain from the Continent and fought for a place in the sun with the wild beasts of the swamp and forests, will probably never be known.

The builders of this huge structure, being without graven or written speech, have left no record of their day or generation. That they possessed energy, ambition, and perseverance, allied to engineering skill of no mean order, is as evident as that they were being of thew and sinew. It seems reasonable to suppose that Stonehenge was built during a time of peace and prosperity, and that it formed the central shrine of a powerful early race. The builders passed away to be forgotten as a dream; their burial mounds lie around on the plain and beyond it in almost uncounted numbers; but while its gaunt ribs remain, men will continue to speculate about the origin and purpose of this great circle of stones which prehistoric inhabitants of Britain set up and made the riddle of the centuries.

The Welsh historian, Nennius (c810 A.D.) mentions Stonehenge, and states that the stones were erected in memory of four hundred and sixty British nobles here massacred by Saxon Hengist in 472. This massacre, suggestively called "Bradychiad y Cyllyll Hirion" ("The Treachery of the Long Knives") probably did take place here, though the Temple was then much older than any English Cathedral is to-day.

Two kinds of stones were used in the making of Stonehenge, and experts in lithology have decided that the "Foreign" or Blue stones have come from the Prescelly Range in Pembrokeshire, my home country. The other stones are of local origin, and were found near the plain itself. There are huge stones to be found still, though in decreasing numbers, scattered all over the plain. The general name for them is "Sarsen," but the country folk, always picturesquely-minded, call them "Grey Wethers," and indeed in North Wilts it is not hard to conjure up their poetic resemblance to a flock of Titanic sheep reclining at ease upon the pasturage of the Downs. The alternative name "Sarsen" has an interesting derivation. It is a corruption of the word "Saracen." But