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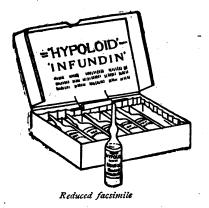
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MEGALITHIC MONUMENTS (I): MAN'S EARLIEST ATTEMPTS AT CONSTRUCTION IN STONE.-Menhirs or single standing stones, cromlechs or stone circles, and dolmens or horizontal stones supported by three or more upright ones, are here illustrated. A host of popular superstitions and beliefs has sprung up around these monuments with regard to their origin and purposes, connecting them with fairies, witches, the devil, giants, heroes, and perhaps especially with Druidical worship and sacrifice. The great sanctity with which megaliths have been invested would make them suitable places of assembly for religious, political and juridical ceremonies, and they may quite well have been so utilised by the Celtic priests-among others-in their time. Among presentday hypotheses may be mentioned those connecting them with stone worship, with sun-worship, with astronomy, and through this with agriculture by calculations serving its practice, and with great events as memorials. While many of those of which the dolmen is the germ certainly were funerary in character, there is very little evidence, if any, to show for what the rest were intended. It is, however, known that the pioneers of this great new development of construction in stone were Neolithic people; they started a movement which continued down to Christian times. Stonehenge is attributed to a date in the early Stone Age.

CULTURE PHASE: NEOLITHIC





