MEGALITHIC MONUMENTS IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

BY THE MARQUIS DE NADAILLAC.

NOTHING in the ancient history of man is of more considerable interest than are those monuments, at once rudely grand and mysteriously simple, which have been designated megalithic. They may be simply raised stones, isolated menhirs, cromlechs arranged in a circle, or artificial caves formed by placing flat flags horizontally on standing supports. Dolmens or covered passages were usually buried under masses of earth or stones, so as to form veritable tumuli; but they always present the common character of being constructed in rough blocks, virgin of all human labor.

Megaliths are important on account of their number[1] and their dispersion. They are to be found, with a likeness running through them all, in places most remote from one another, on different continents. At Carnac and at Kermarin are immense rows of stones, of which the menhirs of the Khasias of India appear like exact copies. Similar dolmens are standing in Palestine, Ireland, and Hindostan. Megaliths can be found in Peru and among the aboriginal monuments of North America, in Spain and Denmark, in the Orcades and the islands of the Mediterranean, on the shores of the Black Sea and of the Baltic, at the foot of Mount Sinai, and in Iceland at the edge of
the eternal glaciers. The dolmens raised upon the top of a tumulus in Algeria may be compared with those standing in the department of the Aveyron or with those in Kintyre, Scotland, and Röskilde in Scandinavia; the cromlech of Maytura, in Iceland, with that at Halskov, in Denmark; the circle at Peshawur, in Afghanistan, with the circle of Stennis, in one of the Orcades; the tombs of the Neilgherries with the *chondets* that are found in Africa; the cromlechs of Algeria with those of Aschenrade, on the Dwina; the triliths of Stonehenge with those of Tripoli, or those mentioned by Palgrave as in Arabia. Even a superficial study will disclose the relations that exist between the covered passages of Provence and the megaliths of Brittany, and between these and analogous constructions in Spain and Algeria. A common thought, and an identical funeral rite, are revealed.

M. Cartailhac, for many years editor of the "Materiaux pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Homme" ("Materials to be used for the History of Man"), has, in a recent book on "Prehistoric Ages in Spain and Portugal" ("Les Ages préhistoriques en Espagne et en Portugal"), described some remarkable monuments in the Iberian Peninsula, most of which have not been previously brought to the scientific attention of students in other countries. The megaliths of Portugal consist in a great part of dolmens, or *antas*, as they are called there. Three hundred and fifteen of them were known in 1754. Some of them have disappeared; but though Pereira de Costa could report upon only thirty-nine at a conference held in connection with the International Exposition in Paris in 1867, Gabriel Pereira, a short time afterward, enumerated one hundred and eighteen,
and these were mostly situated in the province of Beira and near Evora and Elvas, in Alemtejo.

In every country the rocks are disintegrated by the effect of weather-changes into large blocks. The megalith-builders chose those blocks for their purpose which offered the fairest surface. The inclosure was hollowed out. The stones chosen for the walls of the burial-chamber were raised, planted in the soil, and covered with large flat stones; and then the interstices were filled up with pebbles. A low, narrow entrance-gallery was made by a similar method, and, after the funeral rites were performed, the crypt was covered with a tumulus—a protecting envelope which has in most cases been removed long ago under the impulse of curiosity or with the hope of finding hidden treasures. The few dolmens still buried are called *mammoas* or *maminhas* (*mammæ*), from their peculiar form.

These antas frequently served for a considerable number of burials each, and in that case the entrance-gallery seems to have been kept open. At other times, a single corpse was deposited, and the crypt was closed, as the friends thought, forever.

Notwithstanding it has suffered considerable mutilations, the crypt of the great anta of Freixo (Fig. 1) is still standing, although the corner-stone has disappeared and the covered gallery has become dilapidated. The walls of the crypt, which is 4 metres in diameter, are composed of seven stones, 3.80 metres high, while the entrance is only 45 centimetres wide.
Numerous antas have been explored at various times in search of the treasures which popular traditions suppose to be hidden in them; and scattered bricks, pieces of pottery, iridescent glass, and rubbish of the Roman period, testify to the energy of the diggers. The neolithic articles under the dolmens which remain unviolated are similar to those in the megaliths of the neighboring countries. The anta of Portimão has furnished hatchets, stone adzes, steatite heads, and admirably worked arrowheads; that of Monte-Abrahão hatches of trap and diorite, stone scrapers, a button of bone and pearls of Calâis, that precious stone described by Pliny and remaining unknown from his time; the anta of Estria, a curious plaque of slate covered with straight or broken
Fig. 2.—Burial-place of Marcella, Algarve—Plan and Profile View.

Lines and resembling an episcopal crozier in shape; and the dolmen of Nora, besides flakes and finely cut arrowheads, a highly ornamented ivory disk, the use of which it is hard to determine. The burial-place of Marcella (Fig. 2), a regular cromlech, is one of the richest in funeral paraphernalia. There have been collected from it, together with fine specimens of flint-flakes, retouched on the edges, and of triangular points, three vases covered with ornaments, and forty-three hatchets, nearly all of diorite, and remarkable specimens of work. Some human bones lay in the midst of these memorials of human wealth. Unfortunately, they have been scattered.

We can not leave the antas of Portugal without mentioning the bowls which M. Cartailhac observed on some of the megaliths of Alemtejo. Such vessels have long been known in prehistoric archaeology. They are found in Switzerland, in the
Pyrenees, in Brittany, in Scotland, in Scandinavia, and on the rocks of Hindostan. The bowls, engraved on the walls of some of the crypts, recently disengaged from their earthy envelope, have doubtless, as M. Cartailhac observes in relating his discovery, an indisputable antiquity, value, and meaning; but we can not determine the age, and the value and meaning are unknown to us. Megaliths are especially abundant in Estremadura, the richest province in Roman Spain, now the most wretched and least populous. They are called garitas by the peasants of the province, but farther north, in the Asturias and the Basque provinces, they are known as arcas. A most remarkable example of these works is situated at Equilaz, on the road from Vittoria to Pampeluna. The chamber is of a horseshoe-shape, 5.70 metres long and 4.50 metres wide. It was crowned by a single stone, which had been broken recently. Another, nearly similar, with an approach covered with three large flat stones, and a narrow entrance-way, is still to be seen at Caugas de Oñu, 60 kilometres from Oviedo. We also mention the megalithic sepulchres in the province of Barcelona, at Pla-Marshall, and the one near Villalba-Saserra, known as the Pedra arca. Both of these are placed in the center of a cromlech formed of stones planted in a standing position. The ruins of the covered ways giving access to the crypt are still visible. Thirteen megalithic crypts are described as remaining in Andalusia and the ancient kingdom of Granada. The structures were formerly much more numerous; but they have been destroyed in the processes of agriculture or in the search for minerals. Such a fate has overtaken the important monument of Dilar, two leagues south of Granada. But indisputably the most
remarkable megalith in Spain is the Cueva de Mengal, near the village of Antequera, province of Malaga (Figs. 5, 6, 7). The walls of the sepulchral chamber are composed
FIG. 4.—LAPA DOS MOUSOS.
of twenty stones, and are crowned with five stones, while solidity is assured by setting three pillars in the interior, at the junctions of the roof-tables. Contrary to what we have hitherto observed, the stones of the walls have been rough-hewed, and those forming the pillars even
seem to have been cut. The crypt is 24 metres long, and has a maximum breadth of 6·15 metres, and a height varying from 2·70 metres to 3 metres. It is one of the largest crypts known. The chamber of the dolmen of Pastora, farther west, beyond Seville, is 27 metres long and only 1 metre wide and 2 metres high. The excavations of Pastora have yielded thirty bronze arrow-heads.
The age of the megaliths still presents an unsolved problem. It is probable that if the most ancient ones date from neolithic times, their construction was continued through many generations as an ancestral tradition; and we find them still being built when copper, and afterward when bronze, took the place of stone. There are also in Alemtejo and in the Algarves important cemeteries, in which the great crypts, covered alleys and tumuli are replaced by stone coffins measuring 2 metres long and half a metre deep. The walls are generally formed of six flags, the bottom and lid of other flags. We reproduce one of these tombs (Fig. 8), which is situated at Cerro del Castello, and probably dates from the bronze age. Another tomb, near Odemira, contains broken bones, and with them arms and utensils of stone, and an arrow-head, and a hatchet of copper,
without any admixture of

tin. Here we are witnesses of the transition between two distinct epochs; and, as in several other countries in Europe, pure copper is the first metal employed.

A new funeral rite responds to these new times. Incineration, imported, doubtless, by foreign conquerors, takes the place of inhumation. Cists of a reduced size (Fig. 9), urns, covered with large stones, receive the ashes, and the few fragments of bone that escape the flames, the last vestiges of that which was a man. We are touching upon the epoch when history begins. Megaliths are no longer raised in Europe. They remained for a long time an unimportant memorial of barbarous populations; and it is only in our days that they have been restored to their true place in the history of art and of human progress.

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1. ↑ A French sub-commission on megalithic monuments was appointed in 1879, for the purpose of assuring the preservation of the more important
among these structures. An imperfect count, made under its direction, raised the number of dolmens, menhirs, polissoirs, basin-stones, and rocking-stones, still standing in France, to 6,310. Tumuli, which are very numerous, are not included in this enumeration.

2. ↑ Human bones, belonging to more than eighty persons of all ages and both sexes, have been collected from within this dolmen.
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