CHAPTER II.—SOME OF THE CHIEF DEVIATIONS FROM THE GENERIC TYPES.

Each of the generic types of cup and ring cuttings which I have attempted to describe is liable to present many diversities and differences of form. A brief glance at some of the principal deviations of form presented by them may enable us to take a more comprehensive view of these lapidary sculpturings.

The cup-cuttings, such as constitute our first type, rarely deviate much from the usual round form. But various occasional combinations and arrangements of them are worthy of remark. Thus two or more of them are sometimes conjoined by a straight incised line or groove. Occasionally the uniting groove is perpendicular, uniting two placed above each other, either of the same or of different sizes (Plate II. fig. 1). In other instances it is lateral (Plate II. fig. 3). I have seen an instance at Ballymenach, in Argyleshire, of a lateral or transverse groove uniting a line of five or six cups. (Plate XVII. fig. 4.) Occasionally the conjoining gutter is of an irregular branched form, connecting two or more cups (see Plate II. fig. 4 and Plate XIV. fig. 4); and more rarely two connecting grooves cross each other in a crucial form.

The uniting channel is sometimes, partly perhaps from weathering and disintegration, as deep as the cups which it unites.

In a few rare cases, two or more cups are placed in the centre of a ring-cutting, as seen in the Northumberland examples sketched in Plate II. figs. 5 and 6. More rarely, a series of small cups or stars forms a kind of beaded arrangement around the circles, as in the Jedburgh stone (Plate XVI. fig. 1). In the Pitscorthie and Letham stones, instead of an incised ring, six or seven cups at one part form a circle around a central cup (see Plate XX. fig. 1).

In specimens of the common interrupted concentric rings of the fourth type, the radial groove, instead of being single, is sometimes

double or even treble, as in a Northumberland specimen represented in Plate II. fig. 7).

A straight bisecting line, in addition to the radial groove, traverses in a few rare instances the whole ring-cutting, as seen in a specimen at Auchenbreach, figured in Plate II. fig. 8.

The radial groove is occasionally more or less zig-zagged, instead of straight, as it traverses the various concentric rings of its circle. In the fourth type everything is, in a few instances, apparently complete, and the space for an incised radial line or groove left, but it remains, as it were, uncut (Plate II. fig. 13).

Two or more of the series of concentric circles or their grooves occasionally touch and amalgamate, as in Plates XV. and XXII.; and smaller circles are seen sometimes included within the area of larger circles, as in Plate XXIV. Occasionally the fifth type assumes a kind of horse-shoe pattern, as in Plate II. fig. 9. There is an example of this kind on a rock at Calton More, in Argyleshire.

At Auchnabreach, in the same county, there are specimens of two and three volutes conjoined together. (See Plate II. fig. 10 and Plate XXIII.)

In one specimen of the ring-cutting at Rowton Lynn, in Northumberland, the circumference of the outer circle has nine straight lines, diverging at nearly right angles from its circumference. (See Plate II. fig. 11.) At Auchnabreach there is another specimen of three still longer straight lines, radiating off from the outer rim of the circle. (See Plate II. fig. 12.)

In a few instances the congeries of concentric rings forms an oval, a a reniform, or a pyriform, instead of a round figure. (See Plates XXI. and XXIII., &c.)

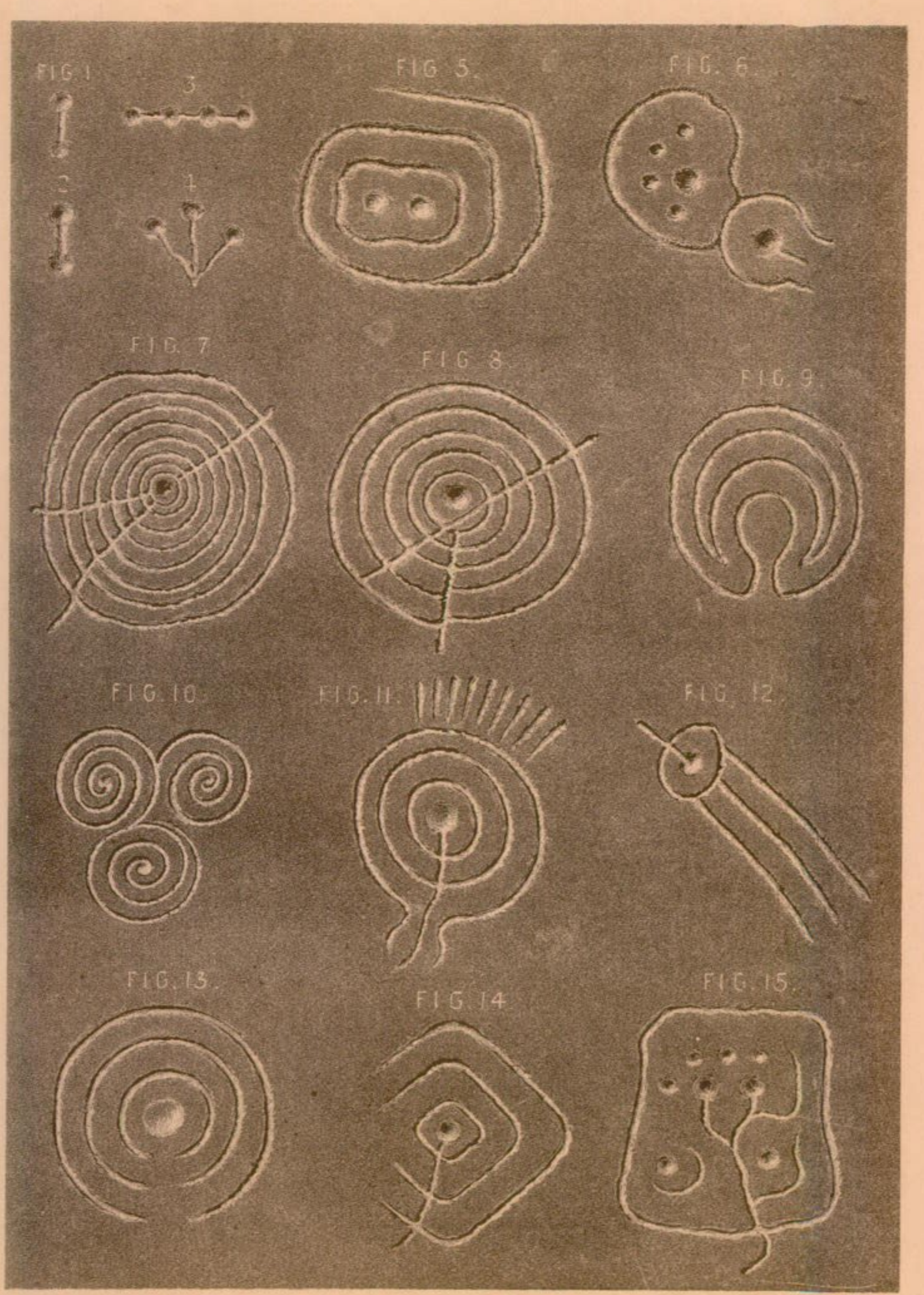
There, occur also, in some localities, along with the circular type of concentric rings, angulated and irregularly straight lines; or even lozenge-shaped concentric forms, as in Plate II. figs. 14 and 15, and Plate XIII. fig. 4, which perhaps ought to have been considered as an eighth type of these markings; and still more rarely straight and angled conjoined lines of a broken gridiron pattern appear. In some rare examples, as in castings and drawings kindly sent me by Miss Dickson from Doddington, there are angled inclosures cut around a series of circular markings

and cups (see Plate II. fig. 15). In a few instances, also, an irregular circular enclosure, in the same way, comprehends a series of cuttings; or, projecting from the circumference of a ring, it includes a number of cups and depressions, and other minor forms.

Usually the circular lines of a concentric ring are cut with great regularity, and almost mathematical precision. But not unfrequently they display no very marked accuracy of form, and unite very irregularly. In the sketch, for example, of a specimen from Auchnabreach (see Plate II. fig. 8), it will be observed that the two outer rings do not meet at corresponding points as they approach the radial grooves; and there are two or three specimens in the same locality where the series of concentric circles are so very clumsily drawn as to seem deeply indented and crushed in at one side.

PLATE II.

CHIEF DEVIATIONS FROM THE GENERAL TYPES.



A. Ritchie Lith. Edin.

PLATE XIV.

STONES FROM ROSSHIRE AND FORFARSHIRE.