

8. IN FORTIFIED BUILDINGS.

The spade and mattock—those indispensable aids to archæology—have of late disclosed to us, in the eastern parts of Scotland, strange types and forms of archaic houses and places, furnished with more or less powerful artificial defences, analogous to, and yet differing from, the archaic burghs of the northern and western counties. In one or two such fortified dwellings, or clusters of dwellings, stones have been found cut with ring and cup carvings; as at

Tappock, Stirlingshire.—In the old forest of Torwood, lying between Falkirk and Stirling, Colonel Dundas, of Carronhall, has lately made some antiquarian excavations which have resulted in striking success. On the top of a hill in the wood he thought that he saw some indistinct evidence of building. He cut down the trees growing upon the spot, and, digging downwards, he excavated, with great zeal and skill a large strongly-built circular area, above thirty feet in breadth, and ten in depth. A passage from this central area was followed outwards, and opened externally, after going through twenty-five feet of continuous wall. The walls of the passage were built of large stones; and it was

roofed over by horizontal blocks. A second door passed out of the central area, and led to a stair, which mounted upwards to the ground, on a level with the top of the circular building. Externally the building has sloping sides all around; but whether it was originally constructed in this fashion, or the slope is the result of earth and stone accumulated by time, has not yet been ascertained. The interior walls of the central area are cyclopic, or built of large stones without lime. Probably at one time this circular structure was much higher, as Colonel Dundas found in its interior a great accumulation of large stones, similar to those composing the remaining lower portions of wall; and this accumulation looked like the debris of a higher portion of the building that had tumbled and fallen inwards. Amid this debris Colonel Dundas found three stones with circles cut upon them. The carved lines are about an inch broad and half an inch deep. These three stones are represented in Plate XIX. Like the walls of the building, they are composed of sandstone. Two of the stones (figs. 1 and 3) are each about two feet long, by fifteen inches or more in breadth at the broadest part. The stone (fig. 1) shows upon it the remains of two double concentric circles, each provided with a central cup. The stone (fig. 3) has sculptured upon it two concentric rings, the broadest and outermost being nearly six inches in diameter. There is no distinct central cup, but a radial duct or groove traverses the two circles. The second stone (see fig. 2) is about eighteen inches long and sixteen broad, and has on one edge a broken portion of a similar double circle and central cup; and a second figure, consisting of a single ring without a central cup. Three of the four double rings or concentric circles on the stones have thus central cups. From these carved stones being broken in some points through the line of the circles, Colonel Dundas inclines to think that they were probably cut and sculptured before they were used as building material in this ancient structure. Within the central area were found some flat querns.

Laws, Forfarshire.—To another Scottish proprietor, who has made upon his estate extensive diggings, in the same scientific and generous spirit as Colonel Dundas, we owe the disentanglement of another and still more extensive series of old fortified buildings. I allude to my friend Mr Neish, of the Laws, who, as is well known to the Members of the Scot-

tish Society of Antiquaries, has, in digging upon the high grounds above his house at the Laws, between Dundee and Arbroath, disclosed a building, having a central circular area like that at Tappock, paved with two or three layers of stone; and near it and around it a long series of strong and strange cyclopic walls running in the most enigmatical and curious directions. (See the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 1860, vol. iii. p. 440, &c.)

In the course of his diggings among the old and puzzling structures covering this hill, Mr Neish has met with and preserved some stones with cup excavations; and one with a series of three concentric circles cut around a large central cup, the outermost ring being about eleven inches in diameter. This ringed stone and another from the Laws, with cup markings alone, is represented in Plate XII. figs. 4 and 5. The stone with the ring cuttings on it is apparently a fragment of a larger stone. Another similar piece was found, and lost.

PLATE XII.

FROM DORSETSHIRE, NORTHUMBERLAND AND FORFARSHIRE.

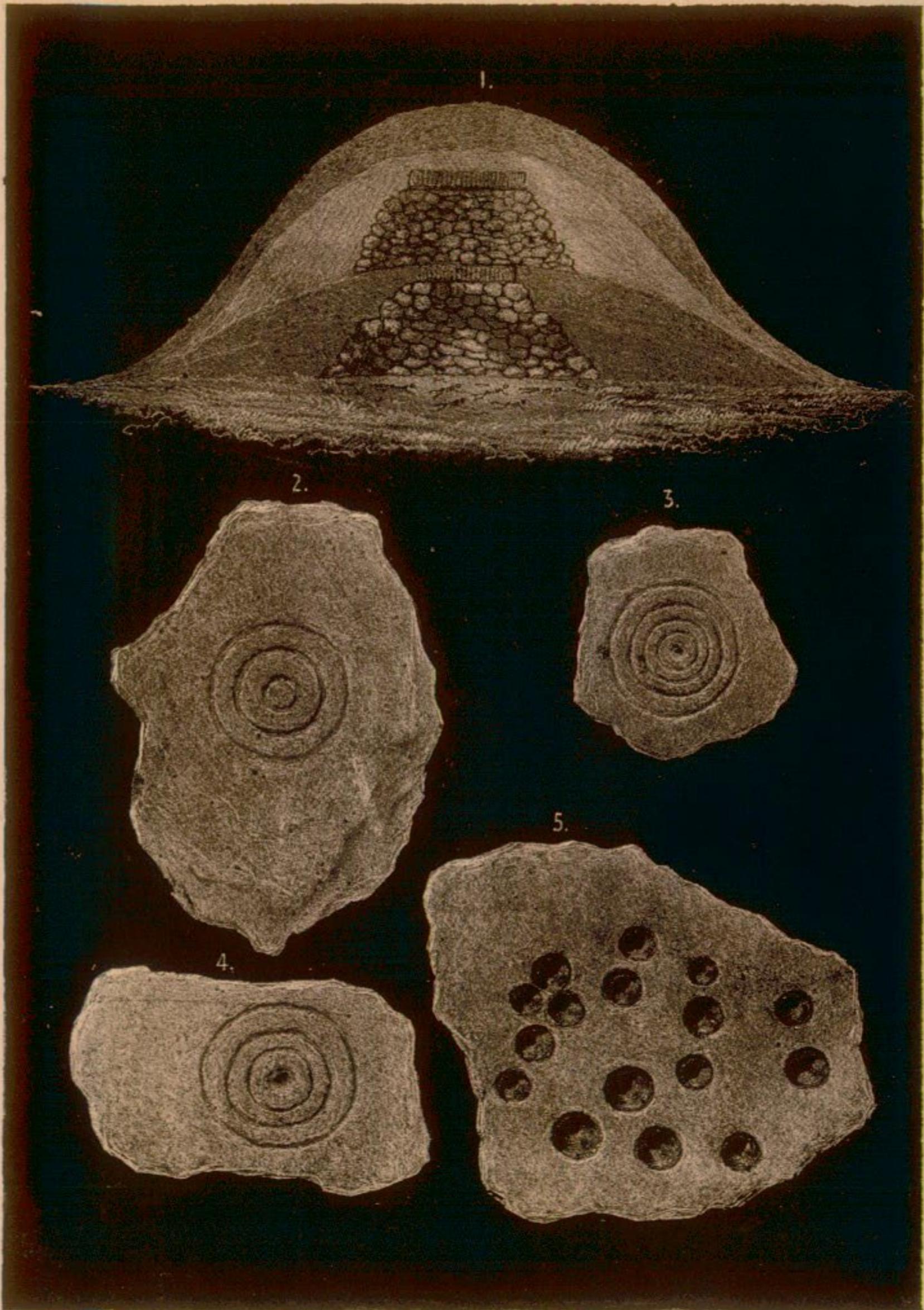


PLATE XIX.

FROM TORWOOD, STIRLINGSHIRE, AND ORKNEY.

