

11. ON ISOLATED STONES.

In the preceding pages I have cited numerous examples of the cup and ring carvings, as found on individual stones connected with archaic sepulture or habitation. Some of the examples already quoted, as the stones found at Walltown, Auchinlary, Frith, &c., are so indeterminate in the conditions under which they were found, that perhaps they should have been more correctly placed in this chapter. I have notes of a few instances where the sculptures were found on stones of a still more isolated cast; as at

Balvraid, in Glenelg, Inverness-shire.—Mr Joass, of Dingwall, discovered, about half a mile from the well-known old brochs of Glenelg, a stone covered with cup-markings, and represented in Plate XIV. fig. 2. "The stone, which measures above six feet in length, is," he writes me, "lying on the ground. The markings I have sketched are quite distinct; but there are a great many more, particularly towards the left-hand end, which are rather faint, and they appear to be disposed in rows with a certain degree of regularity."

Cargill, Perthshire.—In the thirteenth volume of the first Statistical Account of Scotland, a description of the parish of Cargill was published about fifty years ago. It is therein stated, "Near the village of Cargill may be seen some erect stones of considerable magnitude, having the figure of the moon and stars cut out on them, and are probably the rude remains of Pagan superstition. The corn field where these stones stand is called Moonshade to this day" (p. 536). The stones thus marked, and standing in Moonshade or Moonbutt's field, were dug around and under,

¹ See Dr Reeves' *Life of St Columba*, pp. 377 and 384; Anno Dom. 683, "Obsessio Duin At.;" Anno Dom. 736, "Engus Mac Fergusu, rex Pictorum, vastavit regiones Dailriatai et obtinuit Dun Att."

and buried some half century ago in the agricultural improvement of the ground. Mr Fergusson, the very intelligent schoolmaster of the parish, has repeatedly tried to discover these buried stone relics, but hitherto in vain. But he has been more successful in disinterring other marked and carved stones in his neighbourhood.

A. In Newbigging, which borders upon the Moonshade fields, he raised a stone, a corner of which jutted from the earth. It is a slab of grey whinstone, three feet six inches in length, two feet one inch in breadth, and seven inches in thickness. Upon one of its faces—as represented in Plate V. fig. 3—are five series of concentric circles and some isolated cups. The external rings of four of the series of circles run more or less into each other. The radial ducts from two of the largest unite into a common gutter, which, after running a considerable space, ends in an isolated cup. Two of the circles do not show any radial groove.

B. More lately in Gladesfield, about ten or twelve hundred yards west of the supposed site of the Moonbutts, Mr Fergusson has uncovered a stone still more sculptured. The stone is about five feet in height, and three and a half broad. One side of it is sculptured in the way represented in Plate V. fig. 4. The sculptures consist of a number of scattered isolated cups, of several cups surrounded with circles, and of radial grooves, some of which are connected with a gutter which runs straight along the surface of the stone for a distance of about four feet. Some of the circles are single; one cup has two, another three, and a fourth has four or five concentric circles drawn around it. One concentric circle has its outer ring passing in its course through three cups; and its radial duct runs outward to the left, and forms the beginning or end of the long, linear straight groove which passes longitudinally along the face of the stone.

C. About two hundred yards north of the stone (*A*) is the Brisbane stone, about six feet in length, and three and a half in breadth, with a cup-marking or two upon its face.

D. Upon a stone, about a hundred yards or more east of the school-house, Mr Fergusson has found a stone with twelve or fifteen cup-marks upon it. The stone was discovered in “a small mound” composed of stones and earth. The mound is about twenty-four feet long, fifteen broad, and three high. Further researches in this mound or barrow may

possibly result in the discovery of sepulchral remains, which may prove interesting.

Mr Fergusson believes that the stones at Cargill are arranged in a methodic and angulated direction in regard to each other. In their near neighbourhood one or more megalithic circles are reported to have formerly stood.

Migvie, Aberdeenshire.—At a distance of about two hundred yards eastward from the old churchyard of Migvie, the plough, a few years ago, struck upon a flat stone, which, when dug out, was found to be nearly triangular in shape, about two feet nine inches long, and three feet across at its broadest part. Part of its surface was covered with various cup excavations, four of which were united crosswise by ducts or gutters, and some in pairs by grooves of various depths. For a drawing of the stone I am indebted to the kindness of Dr Robertson, of Indego. The field in which this stone was discovered, and still lies, is about a mile distant from an earth-house or weem, which was found in the same parish.

Inchtute, Perthshire.—My friend, the Rev. Mr Honey, of Inchtute, showed me some time ago a whinstone block, found in the foundation of a wall opposite the church, and having on its hard and smooth surface three or four cup markings, of the usual breadth and depth.

Arbirlot, Forfarshire.—About two miles from the Kirktown of Arbirlot, Mr Gibb, of Aberdeen, some years ago observed and sketched an earth-fast stone presenting the cup and ring markings figured in Plate XV. fig. 3. They will be observed to belong to the second type, described in p. 4. Other similar stones are said to be in the neighbourhood. Dr Dickson, of Carnoustie, and Mr Miller, of Arbroath, have both of late searched, but hitherto unsuccessfully, for these marked rocks. The so-called "Girdlestone," in the adjoining parish of Rescobie, about four feet long and three broad, is cut on its surface with two circles, the largest of which is above two feet and a half broad, and hence does not, I believe, belong to the class which we are considering in this essay.

Pitscandly, Forfarshire.—In Mr Stuart's work on the "Sculptured Stones of Scotland" he mentions a carved fragment at Pitscandly, in Forfarshire. Mr Shaw has kindly examined this stone for me, and furnished me with a drawing of it, which is copied in Plate XVI. fig. 4. The stone is about a foot and a half in breadth and length; on its surface are two

or three cup-excavations, a single incised ring, and two concentric circles, with a central cup and long radial groove. In the "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland," vol. ii. p. 190, Mr Jervise mentions this piece of carved stone, and describes it as reputed to have scaled off from one of the two remaining large obelisks of Pitscandly—an opinion which, he informs me, some later observations of his own have confirmed. These Pitscandly stones stand on the top of an artificial mound. One of them is of great size, and "both," adds Mr Jervise, "appear to be the remains of an ancient circle. A clay urn, with burned ashes, was found at the base of one of the stones. The whole of the locality abounds in traces of ancient sepulture."

La Mancha, Peeblesshire.—A broken slab, about two feet square, covered with very rude double rings and a spiral circle, was found by Mr Mackintosh, at La Mancha, in Peeblesshire, in digging in a bank of gravel. There were some other large stones near it; none of them marked. Possibly this stone, therefore, is sepulchral in its character. The half-effaced circular sculptures upon it are represented in Plate XVI. fig. 3.

Jedburgh, Roxburghshire.—Sometime ago Mr Tate, of Alnwick, discovered in the garden of Mr Matthewson at Jedburgh a stone cut with concentric circles, possibly a sepulchral cist, but peculiar in some respects. The stone is roundish, but broken off at one side, and about eighteen inches broad. Its face is covered by five incised concentric rings, and through the central cup pass at right angles two straight lines, which completely bisect all the circles. The outermost circle is about fourteen inches in diameter. Some inches to the left of the central cup is a second, with one incised circle around it. Arranged circularly outside of the outermost circle is a series or ring of points or stars, each cut out—so Dr Falla writes me—"as with a single stroke of a pick, rather than hewn out." I am indebted to the same gentleman for the sketch of this stone, given in Plate XVI. fig. 1.

High Hucklow, Derbyshire.—A detached flat stone, found in the Peak of Derby, and which I have already alluded to at page 6, is of the same shape as some of the urn covers met with elsewhere. The cast of it sent to me by Dr Aveling shows it to be a broken slab, measuring twenty-one inches by eighteen, and cut on one side by a concentric

circle of seven rings, and probably of twenty inches in diameter, when the stone was entire. There is no central depression nor radial groove. See a representation of this fragment in Plate XVI. fig. 2.

PLATE V.

STONES AT MAUGHANBY AND CARGILL.



PLATE XIV.

STONES FROM ROSSHIRE AND FORFARSHIRE.

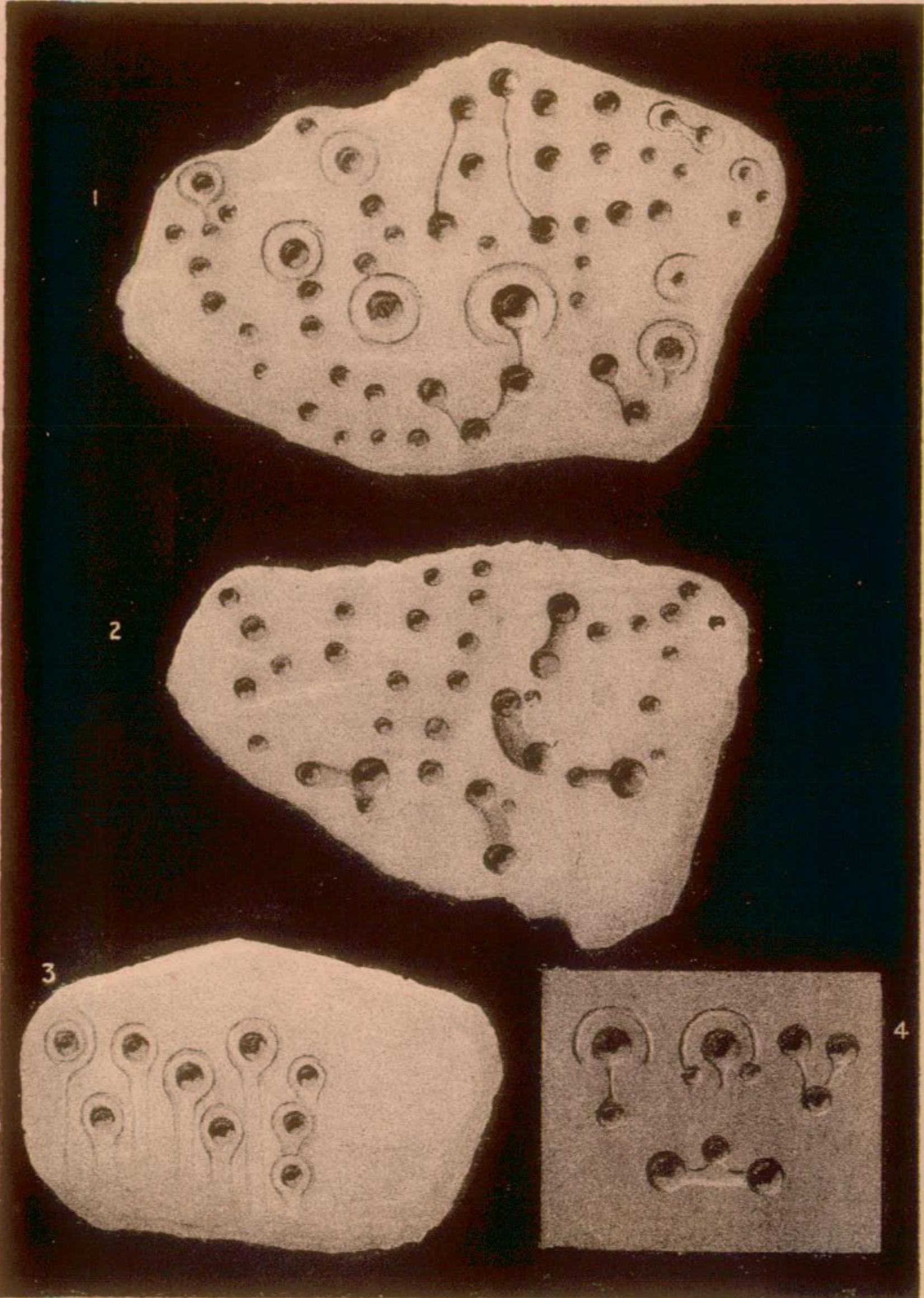


PLATE XVI.

ISOLATED STONES FROM JEDBURGH, &c.,

