

CHAPTER XIX.—THEIR ANTIQUITY AS SHOWN BY THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION IN THE BRITISH ISLANDS.

The ring and cup sculpturings have been found in many of the inland districts of England and Scotland. But—for the sake of argument only—let us look at their distribution for a moment in districts nearer our shores. Taking this view of their localisation, we find that they have now been discovered along the *whole length* of the British Isles, from Cornwall and Dorsetshire in the south to Orkney in the far north; and also across their *whole breadth*, from Yorkshire and Northumberland on the eastern coast of England to Kerry on the western coast of Ireland. At these distant and diverse points, and in the mainland districts between them, they everywhere present a sameness of type and form, showing—like a peculiar language—a sameness among the race or races that carved them. In other words, they all evidently indicate, wherever found, a common thought of some common origin, belonging to a common people. But how very long is it since a common race inhabited, simultaneously or successively, the four different and distant parts in the British Islands that I have just named, and dwelt also in the inland and intervening districts? Yet it was evidently at some such remote date that these rude and simple lapidary carvings were primarily

and chiefly made; and the last question that meets us is, What race or races cut them?