

ON ANCIENT SCULPTURINGS
OF
CUPS AND CONCENTRIC RINGS, &c.

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AMONG the earliest, and yet the most enduring traces of archaic man in this country, are probably to be reckoned his cuttings or sculpturings on rocks and stones. Some of his rudest, and hence, perhaps, his most primitive lapidary carvings, consist of rounded shallow excavations, pits, or cups, and of incised rings or concentric circles. In the present communication it is my object to collect and describe a variety of instances of these ancient lapidary markings of man as they are seen both on separate stones and upon solid rocks in Scotland; illustrating them freely, as occasion may require, by examples taken from other parts of the British Islands.

In attempting to follow out this object, I shall describe first, the chief generic forms of the cup and ring cuttings, and the principal deviations from these generic forms; the localities in which these archaic sculpturings have been found, with the peculiarities of the individual specimens; and the analogous lapidary sculptures found in one or two neighbouring countries. Afterwards, I shall consider various general questions in regard to their meaning, their geographical distribution, the kind of instruments by which they were cut, the age at which they were produced, the people who probably carved them, &c.