IV.

NOTICE OF A CUP-MARKED BOULDER, CALLED THE *SAJ DI GORONE*, OR STONE OF THE HEEL, NEAR STRESA ON THE LAGO MAGGIORE.

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This is a micaceous boulder on the moor near Gignese, 1800 feet above Stresa, at the south end of Lago Maggiore. The top of the boulder is about $5\frac{1}{4}$ feet from the ground; but the ground slopes rapidly, with the result that the cup-markings on the stone cover an area 12 feet from top to bottom with a breadth of about 6 feet. There are about 150 complete cups, isolated and independent of one another, and a large number of broken cups, grooves, ovals, and cups joined by channels. The largest cup is about 5 inches across, the majority from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches; the smallest is only 1 inch. They are mostly bowl-shaped, but the largest is more like a funnel. I show a rubbing of the whole cup-marked surface, taken with leaves of the Spanish chestnut on nine sheets of the *Daily Telegraph*; a cast of the largest hole, taken with linen blotting-paper; and casts of twelve smaller holes, an oval, and a channel, taken with sheets of the *Guardian* softened with fluid flour paste, and left on the stone to dry. I had no proper materials with me. I show also a photograph of the stone (fig. 1) enlarged from a snap-shot.

The name of the stone in Italian patois, *Saj di Gorone*, means the stone of the heel. The peasant girl who told me this pointed out by her gestures that a heel would fit into the holes. This is curiously true of the broken holes, where the weathering of the stone has worn away some of the lower half of the rim and left the appearance of half an amphitheatre.

It is rather startling to find this same idea of a heel associated with a flat slab of mica schist 10 feet by $7\frac{1}{2}$, and about $2\frac{1}{3}$ feet thick, lying not far from Zmutt, in the Zermatt valley (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 8th December 1898). That stone is called the

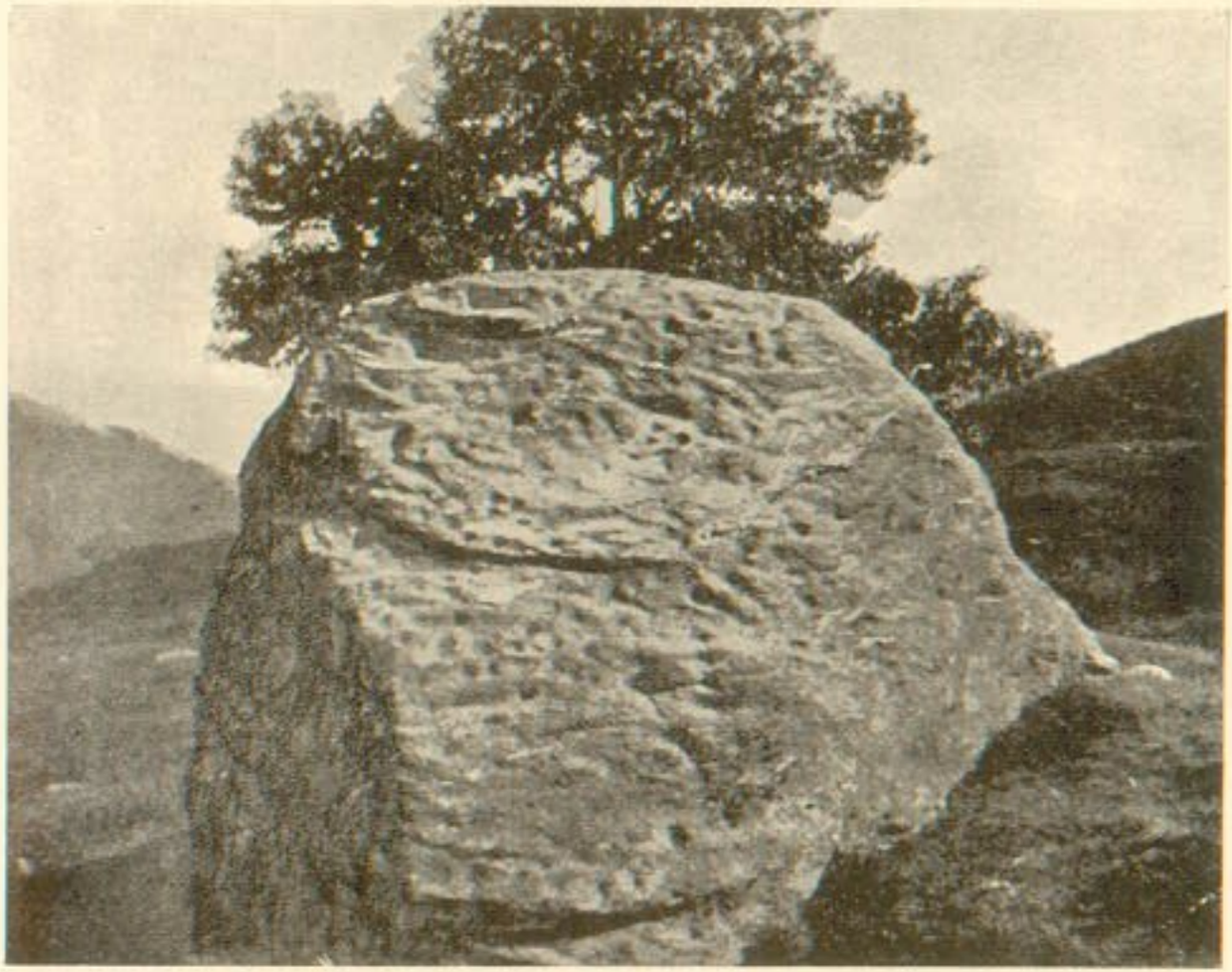

Fig. 1. Cup-marked Boulder called the Saj di Gorone, near Stresa.
(From a photograph by J. E. W. Browne.)

Heidenplatte, "the flat stone of the heathen." It has about 100 circular hollows on its surface, from 8 inches to 2 inches across, and from 3 inches to $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch deep. The tradition in Valais is that the Heidenplatte was the stone on which the pagan orators stood to address the assembly gathered round them, and that the rotation of the orator's heel produced in the course of time these hollows! In this case there is no appearance of the half amphitheatre, for the surface is horizontal, and the weathering affects all parts alike.

Julius Cæsar was much harassed by a Gaulish tribe, the Salassi, which occupied the Great and Little St Bernard. They or some neighbouring tribe of Gauls occupied the Théodule Pass, on which many Roman coins have been found, and the valleys on either side of the Monte Moro Pass. The Monte Moro Pass leads down to Stresa, and the Théodule Pass is connected at its southern end by a very easy way with Alagna and the Val Sesia; thus the geographical connection of the Saj di Gorone and the Heidenplatte is closer than at first sight would appear. And it is evident that there may well be a close connection between the pagan rites of the Gaulish tribes occupying the Alps in the north of Italy and the pagan rites of our Celtic ancestors or predecessors who made the cup-markings so frequently found in Scotland. Thus this coincident tradition about the connection of a heel with cup-marking is well worth thinking over carefully; though it is not improbable that the whole subject belongs to the pre-Celtic period, and that the tradition is of modern invention.

It will be seen from the rubbing that there are not rings round any of the cups. It may be added that I could not find any sign of tool marks. The cup-marked surface of the rock looked weather-worn to a degree which indicated great antiquity; but if any sharp tool had been used, there would have been marks in some of the cups. They were, no doubt, produced by the rapid rotation of some blunt instrument, of stone or even of hard wood, with the assistance of sharp sand.