

TOURIST'S GUIDE TO THE WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE

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Tourist's Guide to the West Riding of Yorkshire by G. Phillips Bevan

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G. PHILLIPS BEVAN

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PREFACE.

A CHEAP and portable guide-book seems a fitting accompaniment to a cheap tour; and the Editor has endeavoured to produce one which shall fulfil this purpose, while it directs the attention of the traveller to all that is worth seeing. Superfluous description has been avoided, the object of the work being merely to denote the leading points, and thus not to encumber the tourist with unnecessary remarks, which entail a more or less bulky volume.

1839.

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[Each place is described where marked by capital letters.]

THE WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE.



(A)—GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

YORKSHIRE is at once the largest and the most diversified county in all England, containing, in its area of 5961 square miles, scenery of the most varied kind. From its great size, it has been found convenient from a very early date to divide it into three divisions or Ridings (from a Scandinavian word, "trithings" or thirds); and of these the present volume deals only with the West Riding, which is the largest and most important in every way, and particularly in an industrial point of view, so that it may be said to be the centre of Yorkshire life. The outward conformation of the county to a great extent, and the mineral treasures underneath, have contributed to make the West Riding one of the most important districts in the kingdom; while the same conformation has given it those beautiful outlines of mountain, hill, and valley, which place Yorkshire so high in scenic reputation. The western boundaries of the Riding are formed by grand masses of mountain, which have been made classic by the brush of Turner and by the geological investigations and writings of the late Professor Phillips. Running southward from Westmorland, past Hawes, where it enters the West Riding, is that fine range of limestone mountains which culminates in Ingleborough, Pen-y-ghent and Great Whernside, forming, so to speak, the buttress of this corner of the county. Farther south, towards Skipton and the Lancashire boundary, the hills decline in height, though they still possess great beauty and varied outlines; and, as they trend eastwards, gradually assume the more monotonous and less picturesque shapes which prepare the tourist for the dense populations and the smoke-stained atmosphere of the

manufacturing districts. From the great range of the Pennine chain, which runs more or less persistently as a backbone from Derbyshire to the Scottish border, issues nearly every river of importance in the West Riding. The most northerly of these is the Wharfe, which rises in Langstrothdale, and after a winding and picturesque course past Kettlewell, Kilnsey, Linton, Bolton Abbey, Ilkley, Otley, Wetherby, and Tadcaster, joins the Ouse near Cawood. East of the Wharfe, and separated from it only by the Great Whornside, rises the Nidd, flowing through the beautiful valley of Niddedale, though this last cannot compare for varied scenery with Wharfedale. Flowing past Pateley Bridge, Ripley, and Knaresborough, it also joins the Ouse near Nun Monkton. The Ure, which is to the eastward again of the Nidd, is another romantic stream, though its course takes it more into the North than the West Riding; it enters the latter at Ripon, and, flowing past Borough-bridge, joins the Swale, a North Riding river, at Myton.

South of the Wharfe, and running almost a parallel course, is the Aire, which takes its rise amidst the bold cliff scenery of Malham and Gordale, and, flowing past Gargrave, Skipton, Keighley, Bingley, Shipley, Leeds, Castleford, and Snaith, finally joins the Ouse near Gool. The more beautiful portion of the Aire is confined to its earlier course, for later on it assumes a rather canal-like character; and although flowing through charmingly wooded valleys, it soon becomes identified with the manufacturing districts, whose woollen factories, cloth mills, dye works, iron and glass works, with sundry similar establishments, speedily rob it of its beauty. At Castleford it is joined by the Calder, a considerable stream, which rises in the moors round Todmorden, and flows in a picturesque valley past Hebden Bridge, Sowerby Bridge, Brighouse, Mirfield, Dewsbury, and Wakefield, supplying the necessary water power to a very important clothing district. Near Mirfield it receives the Colne, which is made up of the Holme and other streams from the southern Yorkshire moors, and flows past Huddersfield. From the southern watershed of these moors runs the Don, not far from Penistone, and flows past Sheffield, near which town it receives the Rivelin and Sheaf, and at Rotherham the Rother. Thence it winds northward to Doncaster and joins the Ouse near Gool.

The Ouse itself, though a sluggish and uninteresting river, is an important water way for a considerable portion of the West and East Ridings; being in fact an amalgamation of rivers, such as the Swale, Ure, Nidd, Wharfe, Aire, Calder, and Don. It flows past York (where it commences to be navigable) and Selby, leaving the West Riding at Goole, where it becomes almost an estuary and finally merges into the Humber. As the Ouse, indeed, it may be said to have no beginning and no end. The only other river which claims attention is the Ribble, which rises in the fells to the north of Ingleborough and on the borders of Westmorland, and flows southward through a very charming country past Horton, Settle, and Bolton, to Clithero, a little before which it enters Lancashire. As a stream of importance, the Ribble is essentially more Lancashire than Yorkshire.

Although the hill scenery of the West Riding is fine and well marked, none of the mountains are of any great height. The principal are Ingleborough, 2361 ft.; Pen-y-ghent, 2231; Great Whernside, 2414; Dent Crag, 2253; Simon Seat, 1598; Moughton Fell, 1402; Beamsley Beacon, 1314; Rombald's Moor, 1323; Otley Chevin, 925; while the ranges of high moorland, which occupy so large a portion of the county between Saddleworth, Halifax, and Keighley, are of an average height of about 1200 to 1800 feet. Geologically speaking, the West Riding of Yorkshire is not so varied as other counties, although the formations there to be found may be studied on a scale that occurs nowhere else in England. This particularly applies to the Carboniferous formation, which, with its subdivisions, comprises five sixths of the Riding. The oldest rocks are to be found close to the Westmorland corner, in the Ingleton Lower Silurian slates and the flags of Ribblesdale. There are no Upper Silurian rocks in any part of the West Riding, and but very little Devonian or Old Red sandstone. The Carboniferous limestone is on a great scale of development, and embraces all the chain of hills as far south as Keighley. We see in all this region how the waters of the ancient seas ground down and abraded the limestone, for there is a curious uniformity of outline and parallelism of strata (causing what appears to be a succession of steps), which is a most characteristic feature of Yorkshire scenery. This was probably the effects of the depression