YORKSHIRE: ITS SCENES, LORE AND LEGENDS

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Yorkshire: Its Scenes, Lore and Legends by M. Tait & F. D. King

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Trieste

PREFACE.

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"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who ne'er within himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose soul hath ne'er within him burn'd
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering in a foreign strand?
If such there be, go, mark him well,
For him no minstrel-raptures swell;
High though his tit'les, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite these titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

So wrote Sir Walter Scott of Caledonia, o'er whose "stern and wild" scenery he cast the glamour of an imagery so potent, that soulless indeed must the Scotchman be who can view them through the poet's magic glass, and not feel the stirring thrill of patriotism.

One cannot but regret that he wrote so little of Yorkshire. Had his thoughts been directed to its other dales, as "Rokeby" directed them to Teesdale, his pen would have found in them all scenes worthy of its power; scenes, charming or awe-inspiring in themselves, that needed but his master-touch to make them doubly so.

It is to be hoped that one of Yorkshire's own sons may yet arise to do for these scenes what he did for Scotland. But if meanwhile we must be content with less vivid pictures, manhood and youth alike may still find both pleasure and profit in them. To the up-grown there is wide scope, not only for self-cultivation, but for adding to the sum of human knowledge, in studying the origin, surroundings, and associated lore of localities. Combine these branches with the Geographical and Topographical instruction of the young, and we have a subject that stirs up the spirit of inquiry, quickens the imagination, fixes the attention, and develops the intellect—a geographical lesson that is *culture* instead of *cram*.

To this higher educational aim the present sketch owes its origin.

It is an extension of a Prize Essay, written for the Bradford Geographical Exhibition of last year; an Exhibition promoted by the School Board, on the suggestion of T. G. Rooper, Esq., H.M.I. of Schools, with a view to encouraging improved maps, apparatus, and methods for teaching this subject.

Within the handy compass of this small volume has been compressed most that is interesting about the county, descriptive, legendary, and historical, culled from many works, some of which are given in the appended list for the benefit of those who wish to pursue the subject more deeply.

The Contour Maps, which are a special and unique feature of the work, have been carefully reduced from the Ordnance Survey by Mr. F. D. KING, who took the First Prize for Maps at the same Exhibition.

I wish most gratefully to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following gentlemen for valuable aid and hints given to me during the progress of the work:—T. G. ROOPER, Esq., Professor MIALL, W. CLARIDGE, Esq., T. E. EMPSALL, Esq., Sir H. MITCHELL; Messrs. WEST, B. SPENCER, A. H. TAYLOR, E. ROBINSON, and A. E. AINSWORTH, School Board Offices, Leeds; and to the Committee of the Royal Archæological Society, for their kind permission to use the adapted form of their Newton's Map of British and Roman Yorkshire.

M. TAIT.

BRADFORD, *March 12th*, 1888.

YORKSHIRE:

ITS SCENES, LORE AND LEGENDS.

LAND OF BROAD ACRES.

SO pre-eminent in size over all the rest of the counties of England as to merit its name of the Land of Broad Acres, its boundaries marked, for the most part, by mountain, stream, and ocean, Yorkshire presents within itself perhaps the most complete epitome of physical geography and geological study to be found in any other equal area on the globe.

Comparative size.

Here the seeing eye and thinking mind may, indeed, find abundance of "sermons in stones and books in running brooks." Hill and dale, and rock and cliff, have each their wondrous tale of how they were formed and moulded and chiselled by nature's forces, clothed with vegetation, and stored with mineral wealth, fitting the land for man's habitation, and providing him with all the means of prosperity. The remains of British huts, the places where they worshipped, and the barrows where they buried their dead, give us strange glimpses of pre-historic times; while *camp* and *road* and *castle* and *abbey* closely associate it with the most stirring scenes of British, Roman, Saxon, and Feudal days.

Moulding. Chiselling. Clothing. Storing.

Mounting, in imagination, on eagle's wings, and with eagle eye taking in at one view the whole county spread beneath us, we see a wide band of hill-country spreading all down its western side, varying in width from twenty miles in its widest, to less than half that distance in its narrowest, parts. Midway, a break of low undulations, some ten miles across, divides this band into two portions of which the northern is the higher; both decreasing in altitude as the eye follows them eastward. The prevailing green of the northern half, broken by the gleam of many a limestone scarp and cliff, and the darker bosses which mark its highest parts, contrasts strongly with the sombre hues which characterise the heathery moors and dark crags of the southern.

Mountain Ranges.

Away to the east another parallel range, of equal width in its northern part, almost fills the north-east corner with wild, dark moors; and then, to the south of a broad vale which cuts right through this eastern range, it continues in an L shaped upland, its rolling swells all covered with corn-fields and pastures, from Flamborough Head to the Humber, where it terminates in a narrow strip.

Between these two opposing ranges spreads a wide, low, agricultural plain, nowhere more than 250 ft. above the level of the sea, 80 miles long, 12 miles across in the north, and thrice that distance in the south; and through it runs a river's silver streak, that gathers in its course countless similar streaks from its bordering hills. Within the angle of the south-eastern range another similar, but smaller, plain stretches from the foot of the hills, to the sea in the east, and the Humber in the south.

Plains.

Such, briefly, is the picture of Yorkshire. Frame it in with the Tees on the north, the German Ocean on the east, the Humber partly along the south, and, roughly speaking, the Backbone of England on the west, and it is complete.

The Frame.

Before studying each district separately and more closely, a word about the origin of the rocks with which we shall come in contact. Be it remembered, that by the term rock, we mean not only hard, stony substances, like limestone, sandstone, &c., but plastic clay, laminated shale, and loose, incoherent sand or gravel. Practically, all the rocks we shall meet with in the study of Yorkshire are sedimentary, *i.e.*, formed *by* or *in* water, from the waste of pre-existing lands. Both their composition and their fossils prove this. Hence, all this area must, in comparatively recent geological times, have been below the level of the sea, where it was slowly built up from "fragments of an earlier world." Of the manner in which this was done, we have innumerable existing examples. All rivers carry down to the sea more or less of the matter of the rocks through which they flow. Insoluble matter they carry in suspension, and deposit as sediment. From careful observations of the proportion of sediment per gallon in the Thames water, it has been calculated that that river daily carries down as much sand and mud as would load fifty barges of 50 tons each. The extensive sandbanks which impede navigation about its mouth, and which, perhaps, are destined to be the quarries of a future world, have all been thus carried down and built up particle by particle. Even what we have long been taught to call the "everlasting hills," like everything else in creation, are doomed to gradual waste and decay. Pressure, heat, and chemical action convert

Rocks—Fragments of earlier worlds.

sand into sandstone, and mud into clay and shale and slate. All these, originating in sediment, abraded, transported and deposited by the machine-like operation of streams and currents are classed as *mechanically* formed rocks. But the limestone, chalk, and oolite we shall come across have a still more interesting history. The lime of which they are composed was not carried in *suspension*, but in *solution*, and so could not be deposited directly as sediment.

Another great factor in nature's wondrous workshop came into play here. *Organic* creatures secreted the lime from the water to form their cases or stems; and when they succumbed to the common lot of all, left their shells and skeletons to swell the evergrowing sea-floor. Our thick north-western limestone plateau was built up by successive colonies of coral polypes and beds of sea lilies, the north-eastern oolite by generations of somewhat similar zoophytes, and the chalk of the south-eastern by myriads of animalculæ; and, because living organisms originated them, we call them *organic* rocks. From similar developments going on now in various parts of the world, we are able to gather that the sandstones and clays were deposited near the shores of the older land, the limestones in clear water of moderate depth, and the chalk in the deep ocean. The accompanying map shows the areas of the various rocks in Yorkshire, and the diagram the order of their formation.

But for some *compensating force*, all land must eventually be reduced to the sea level. Nature provides such a force. Pressure and chemical change produce heat, and heat causes expansion. Highly heated rocks at a great depth, unable to expand laterally, force themselves up in great folds and crumples. The weakest parts are forced up highest, and when the whole area is raised above sea level, these highest parts are mountains and hills. In the upheaval, great breaks occurred, the rocks on one side of the fracture slipping down, sometimes hundreds, sometimes even as much as 3,000 feet below the same rocks on the other side. Whether the upheaval was gradual or sudden is somewhat uncertain; but the coast of Norway is now undergoing slow elevation, as the result of some such internal force.

A compensating force.

CRAVEN.

THIS N.W. part is called Craven, the land of crags, because of its bold cliffs and scars. We can roughly mark its limits in this way. Take a line due N.W. from Ilkley, then two parallel lines, one 10 miles E., and the other 10 miles W., and you include roughly the