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ON THE HABITATION TERRACES OF THE EAST RIDING.

BY J. R. MORTIMER, ESQ., F.G.S.

These terraces must not be confounded with the cultivated terraces which are so common in the immediate vicinity of old villages, and are undoubtedly the work of the Roman and mediæval plough.

The lance-pointed terraces or platforms, which form the subject of this paper, are visible on many of the steep hill-sides of the Yorkshire Wold valleys, and many others which have once existed have now been erased by natural or artificial causes. They are quite distinct from any other form of earthworks or hill-side ledges, and where they remain perfect in outline, are remarkably alike both in shape and in size. They are generally found on that side of the valley which faces the morning or the mid-day sun, at about one-third the distance from the foot of the slope, and run parallel with the course of the valley. They are found in some cases as single platforms, in others as double platforms, whilst sometimes there are three or even more terraces running parallel one above another. One end of each terrace is always of full width, while the other end runs out to a fine point; and it is also worthy of note, that when two or more of these ledges are found lying like steps, one above the other, they always have their wide ends in the same direction. When well-preserved, they are found to have a breadth varying from fifteen to twenty-one feet, and a length of one hundred to two hundred yards. I know of no written allusion to this peculiar form of terrace, which is seldom found mapped even on the ordnance sheets. From 1863 to 1865 I took the measurements of several of the most perfect of these terraces; but could not, for a long time, determine their purpose. I hope that the following descriptions may enable other observers to recognize similar terraces in other parts of the country.

No. 1. This terrace was 135 yards in length, with an average width of about 6 yards, except at the pointed east end. It is found in Rain Dale, near Fimber, and is situated a little distance above the foot of the hill-side, facing N.W.

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No. 2. This terrace is a little to the east of that described above, and though partially obliterated at the time of our research it seemed to have its broad end cut across by the old British entrenchments which encircle the village of Fimber.

Nos. 3 and 4. These are on the S.E. hill-side of Rain Dale, a few feet one above the other. They had been a long time under the plough, and were partly effaced. An excavation, which was made across them, showed an accumulation of soily matter, in some places $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 feet in thickness, at the bottom of which lay pieces of animal bone, and several fragments of a kind of coarse pottery, much resembling the dark kind rarely found whole, but not unfrequently in fragments, in British barrows.

Nos. 5 and 6. These are also together, on the north side of the railway, between Fimber and Burdale. They are cut obliquely by an old filled-in hollow-way (fig. 1), one of six found radiating from the village of Fimber. The great age of these two terraces is shown by their being intersected by the hollow-way, as this contained fragments of Roman pottery in all the three sections which we dug across it, but in no case was the pottery found lower than half its depth, indicating that this road had been disused and half filled up by slowly accumulating debris, before the pot-sheds found their way into it. This is strong evidence that it was constructed in pre-Roman times, while the terraces are still older. Outside the area immediately surrounding Fimber are many similar terraces on the sides of the valleys, some being in fine preservation. One of these is well shown on the hill-side, close by the south side of the road from Raisthorpe to Thixendale. It is cut across by a chalk pit, and the section thus obtained clearly shows that the form of the terrace is due to material having been removed from its upper to its lower side, and there can be no doubt of its artificial construction. Two fine terraces, one above the other, curve round the N.E. end of Brubber Dale, about a mile-and-a-half to the north of Fridaythorpe. They are about ten yards above the valley bottom, and face the rising sun. Again there is a series of three terraces, pleasantly situated on the western hill-side of Wad Dale, about one mile N.N.W. of Weaverthorpe. At the time of my survey, Oct. 5th, 1883, the east end of Wad Dale plantation

covered the ground, and the terraces were sharply defined. In every case these terraces show most clearly that they have been made with a definite purpose. It has been suggested by Mr. Stackhouse that the somewhat similar terraces he observed on the hill-sides in the South of England, had been made by the ancient Britains as advantageous stations for placing their war-chariots before a battle, from which they might swoop down upon their enemies with greater force. But it seems to me that for such a purpose their form and position is quite unsuited, indeed almost impracticable; and I think that these simple hill-side terraces could hardly have been made for any other purpose than as sites of primitive dwellings. Their narrow ledge-like form and situation, on ground generally with a cheerful aspect and difficult to approach, would make them a pleasant and somewhat secure position for habitations such as would be erected by a few early hunters. At that time this neighbourhood would be more or less a wooded district, and, it is fair to presume, sufficiently well stocked with game to supply a scanty population whose wants were few, with food and and clothing, and the large game which would mostly move along the bottom of the valley could be readily observed by the occupiers of these ledges.

Since writing this paper, Mr. Foote, of the Indian Geological Survey, has discovered similar pre-historic artificial terraces in India.* The abstract of Mr. Foote's paper states that "in December, 1885, he re-visited Bellany, and looked up the localities where he had found the celts, both chipped and polished. Mr. Foote's reasons for regarding many of the localities at which he got numerous celts and other implements, as old settlements or village sites of the celt makers, are the following: Whenever the celts and other implements were found in large numbers, the hills on which they were found showed many signs of human habitation. Many small terraces have been raised among the great blocks of granitic gneiss of which all the hills but one consisted. Many of the terraces were evidently constructed with reference to the convenient proximity of rock shelters, and in most

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cases they lie on the eastern flanks of the hills, where they obtain shelter from the blazing afternoon sun." And he adds: "On the terraces and flats are large quantities of flakes produced by the manufacture of the implements, and implements in all states of completion."

These artificial terraces are most probably imitations of natural ledges, such as are on the hill-sides in other parts. In the early ages man would select these natural platforms as secure and suitable places for his dwellings, and where nature had not placed them he would with his own hands supply their absence. They denote a very early state of culture, and probably were the first earthworks constructed by man in this neighbourhood.

That man did occupy natural hill-side terraces in early times we have substantial evidence. During the summer of 1885, Mr. W. Horne, of Leyburn, discovered on a natural terrace on the limestone escarpment called "Leyburn Shawl," ancient interments, one of which was accompanied by a unique article of bone, which had probably served to secure a skin garment. He also found bones of the reindeer and the red-deer, chipped flints, fragments of rude pottery, and numerous collected sandstone boulders, reddened and cracked by fire, which he believes to be pot-boilers. There is also a carefully constructed cairn on this terrace, which Mr. Horne has already partially opened, and intends completing it. Here we have evidence that in early times there was often but a step between the habitation of the living and the house of the dead.

NOTES ON THE PALÆONTOLOGY OF THE WENLOCK SHALES OF SHROPSHIRE.

(MR. MAW'S WASHINGS, 1880.) BY GEORGE ROBERT VINE.

In his presidential address to the Geological Society, Feb., 1881, Mr. Robert Etheridge gave a full synopsis of the then known British Wenlock fauna. The number of genera and species that had been tabulated up to that time were, for 13 groups of fossils, 171 genera and 536 species. He also stated that 58 genera and 125 species