

XVIII.—ON YODEN, A MEDIAEVAL SITE BETWEEN
CASTLE EDEN AND EASINGTON.

BY ROBERT MORTON MIDDLETON, JUN., F.L.S., F.Z.S., MEMBER
OF THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

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OUR learned Vice-President, Mr. Longstaffe, in his "Durham before the Conquest," notices Yoden as follows, viz:—"The Yoden, which distinguished itself from South Yoden, and from the north side of Eden Dene, overlooked Hartness, has dwindled to a farm-house or two. But the site of its village, perhaps, exists in a field about half-way in a line between Horden Hall and Eden Hall. The field is full of ruins, within, as it appears, a bounding trench, and on their north side is a large cone, doubly or trebly trenched in a semi-circular manner, from the top of which a commanding and beautiful view of the sea-coast is acquired."¹

The site in question has, within the past few weeks, been excavated by Mrs. Rowland Burdon, the proprietress of the Horden Hall estate. It was thought probable, from the name of the place and the occurrence of such antiquities in the neighbourhood, that Saxon remains might be found, and it was surmised that possibly the site might have been previously occupied by the Romans. But the use of the spade has proved it to be mediaeval only. The mounds cover foundations of the rudest description, consisting entirely of mere shapeless masses of un-hewn stone, chiefly the magnesian limestone of the district.

The following objects have been found, viz. :—

Part of a knocking stone or grinding stone, used for grinding or bruising barley, etc., by the agency of a round, flattish stone held in the hand. The rock of which it is composed is a somewhat coarse sandstone.

¹ Proc. Archæol. Inst., 1852, Newcastle, Vol. I., p. 55.

A hone, or sharpening stone, of the the usual hard siliceous schist.

A large number of pieces of green salt-glazed pottery, of the common mediaeval type, made probably between the 14th and the 16th centuries. The glaze was produced by coating the pottery with molten lead, and when the baking was almost completed, introducing a quantity of salt into the hot kiln.

One or two fragments of brown-glazed pottery.

A bronze buckle, or "girdle-end," of about the 16th century.

A few bones of domestic animals.

Shells of the periwinkle (*Littorina littorea*), limpet (*Patella vulgata*), mussel (*Mytilus edulis*), and the large *Cyprina islandica*.

Some pieces of iron ore occurred, as well as three or four iron nails, and part of a horse-shoe, much corroded.

There were abundant traces of fire, together with remains of charcoal and fragments of coal.

Some of the mounds, including one well-marked semi-circular one, proved to be earthworks only.

The foundations are, probably, those of herdsmen's or quarrymen's huts, which were built, doubtless, mainly of turf, wood, and wattle. They are clustered on the south and west of the conical hill named by Mr. Longstaffe, which must have afforded grateful shelter from the north-east winds so prevalent on this coast. There is a large disused quarry west of the hill.

I had hoped that something of greater antiquity might be found below these scanty remains, but the stones appear to rest on the boulder clay itself. There is nothing artificial about the hill, which has been carefully tested in several places, and which is clay and gravel, clearly of glacial origin. The Sheraton hills are the same; so also is Beacon Hill, near Elwick. The mounds at Low Throston are also, for the most part, glacial deposits: Mr. John Richardson, the owner of that estate, cut a road through them in 1876, when nothing of human handiwork was found except a silver coin of Henry VIII; many basaltic boulders were turned out, and the sections show distinct stratification of glacial sands and gravels.