A BRIEF HISTORY OF WORCESTER: OR, "WORCESTER GUIDE" IMPROVED WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES, AND SEATS. THAT ARE MOST WORTHY OF NOTICE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649034338

A brief history of Worcester: or, "Worcester guide" improved with a description of the neighbouring villages, and seats. That are most worthy of Notice by R. G.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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William Cowan

A BRIEF

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OR,

"WORCESTER GUIDE" IMPROVED:

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A DESCRIPTION

OF THE

NEIGHBOURING TOWNS, VILLAGES,
AND SEATS,
That are most worthy of Notice.

FIFTH EDITION,
With considerable Additions and Improvements,
Embellished with elegant Copper Plates.

WORCESTER,
PRINTED BY J. TYMBS:

And may be had of the Booksellers in Worcester, Ludlow, Kidderminster, and Birmingham.

Sold also by G. R. Ward, Paternoster Row, London.

1806.

PREFACE.

THE utility, convenience, information, and amusement, which works of this nature are calculated to afford, is generally admitted; but more particularly so by the traveller and man of business, whose time and inclinations will not admit of perusing the more extensive and elaborate productions of a similar nature.—To these, and the public, the Editor would, with the greatest deference, submit the present work, which is derived from the most authentic sources, and rendered with a faithfulness on which they may rely:—he therefore hopes, it will be found, upon the whole, as

adequate to the purpose of general information, and satisfactory to the curious, as the size and nature of the work will possibly admit.

R. G.

Worcester, 1806.

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HISTORY

OF

WORCESTER,

&c. &c.

ETYMOLOGY.

THE origin of celebrated cities is not less obscure, than the first production of the rivers, on which their commerce and splendour depend; and yet the antiquary, as well as the naturalist, will be warm and confident—the one, as if he had traced all the secret syphons that feed the fountain; the other, as if he had turned up foundation-stones, inscribed with the name of the prince that laid them. But after the strictest search into history, it certainly proves a matter of difficulty at the present period, to investigate with any accuracy or precision, the ancient name of the city of Worcester. It is unquestionably of great antiquity; for we find it mentioned in various authors by different appellations, during the time it was under the dominion of the Saxons. Writers, however, in general, during those dark periods,

were by no means exact in the regularity of their orthography, and hence arises the uncertainty in which the origin and ancient state of our cities is involved. Worcester is called by the Welch, *Caerwrangon*, i. e. a fortified city; by the Saxons it was written *Wigaerne*, signifying "the warrior's lodge," the hero's place of retirement; others deduce the etymology from *Wic*, as the hills encompass it from the east to the Severn. It was, as some writers relate, probably built by the Romans (said to be founded by Constantius Chlorus) who, to prevent the incursions of the Britons on the opposite side of the Severn, planned cities as fortresses on the eastern bank. But without venturing etymologies, founded upon learned conjecture, or the fanciful interpretations of individuals, which are so various on this subject, we shall content ourselves with the most probable and true derivation of the present name of Worcester, from Doomsday-Book, where it is written *Wirecestre*, the station or camp under the hill; its termination, *cestre* (agreeable to the celebrated Camden) plainly denoting it to be a fortified place, as we find no exception whatever of the kind in the whole kingdom.