

**FACT VERSUS FICTION. A
DESCENT AMONG
WRITERS ON BRISTOL
HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY**

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Fact Versus Fiction. A Descent Among Writers on Bristol History and Biography by George Pryce

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GEORGE PRYCE

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DESCENT AMONG
WRITERS ON BRISTOL
HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY**

FACT *versus* FICTION.

A DESCENT

AMONG WRITERS ON

BRISTOL HISTORY

AND

BIOGRAPHY, &c.

BY GEORGE PRYCE, F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF

"NOTES ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL AND MONUMENTAL ARCHITECTURE
AND SCULPTURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES IN BRISTOL;" "MEMORIALS
OF THE CANTYNGES' FAMILY AND THEIR TIMES; WESTBURY COLLEGE,
REDCLIFFE CHURCH, AND CHATERTON," ETC., ETC.

"Those who have once declared themselves of a particular opinion,
cannot bring themselves to think they could possibly be in the wrong;
consequently they cannot persuade themselves of the necessity of re-
examining the foundations of their opinion."

BURTON.

BRISTOL:

J. RIDLER, HIGH STREET.

1858.

Bz 5168.238.15



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PREFACE.

The frequent complaints made of the inaccuracies contained in Mr. Barrett's "History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol," and of the little dependence to be placed in the statements of most of his successors in the same line, has induced me to put forth this little work, in which some of the most palpable errors of the writers referred to are examined, with a view to ascertain how far they will bear the test of criticism. As the History of Bristol is yet to be written, I have thought that by this publication some trifling assistance might be rendered to the venturesome individual, who, desirous of undertaking the hazardous task, has the three main requisites at hand, without which it would be folly to attempt it, namely, time, a love of his subject, and *money*—the latter to lose—*of course*. He must come to his labour without prejudice; throw aside the idle gossip of his predecessors; cast off the myths of the Middle Ages, for stern realities; and the fictions of monkery, for facts resulting from investigation. Whatever is written of Bristol *now* must be the record of *truth*, or it were better not to be written at all.

Some of the subjects in this volume have been partially treated of in my former publications; but as they are either out of print or otherwise inaccessible to the

masses, the present work has been issued for the purpose of giving, at a cheap rate, a more extended circulation to opinions which I have long cherished in regard to certain passages in Bristol History and Biography, &c.

GEORGE PRYCE.

CITY LIBRARY,

Bristol, January, 1858.

TURGOT.

"If any faith may be reposed in the manuscripts of Rowley, we find in the account of the *Carvellers*, that Turgot was assuredly of this place. *Turgotte born of Saxonne Parents yan Bristolwe Towne.*"

JACOB BRYANT.*

* This Turgot is said to be a Bristol man."

WILLIAM BARRETT.†

Perhaps there is no provincial town in England, the history of which has been so trifled with, as that of Bristol. To Thomas Rowley, who is represented as a priest residing here in the fifteenth century, has been ascribed the authorship of numerous manuscripts containing narratives relating to the old town, which long passed as genuine; but which are now regarded as the inventions of that unfortunate genius Thomas Chatterton. In addition to these fictions there are a goodly number of *manuscript calendars*, which have an equally mischievous tendency, because they claim our confidence as being the *presumed* productions of men contemporary with the times of which they write, and the events they *profess* to chronicle. Of such aids our local historians have largely availed themselves; and by doing so they have rendered their works almost useless as authorities on the subjects on which a few of them have expended no mean amount of labour.

* Observations upon the Poems of Thomas Rowley, p. 571.

† History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol, p. 31.