

**THE ANNALS OF BRISTOL
IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY
(CONCLUDED) 1887-1900**

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The Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth Century (Concluded) 1887-1900 by John Latimer

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JOHN LATIMER

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(concluded)

1887—1900

BY

JOHN LATIMER

AUTHOR OF

"ANNALS OF BRISTOL IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND
EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES"

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IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

1801-1857.

1255
1887
1888
1889

THE following pages, completing the *Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth Century*, have been written at the urgent request of numerous purchasers of the volume issued in 1887; and the compiler has once more to appeal for that kindly consideration which has been already so largely extended to him.

The years whose story is here narrated have been more full of incidents interesting in themselves, and more big with promise as regards the future of Bristol and its citizens, than any previous period of similar length. Much compression has been found necessary in dealing with the principal events, but it is hoped that no important fact has been omitted, and that the narrative will be found both impartial and trustworthy.

Many persons being apparently desirous to bind this supplement with the published *Annals*, the sheets are issued in a form convenient for that purpose.

JOHN LATIMER.

TRELAWNY PLACE, December, 1901.

THE ANNALS OF BRISTOL

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY.

(Conclusion.)

At a meeting of the Council on January 1st, 1887, it was announced that Mr. Charles Wathen, who had twice occupied the civic chair, had presented the Corporation, for the use of the Mansion House, with two elegant pieces of plate, weighing nearly 300 ounces. A cordial vote of thanks was accorded to the donor.

Owing to the urgent want of additional accommodation for shipping, the Council, on February 8th, adopted a proposal for the construction of a deep-water wharf at Canons' Marsh. The wharf was completed and opened in February, 1891, having cost, including the purchase of the land, £72,461.

"Number 1" tunnel, near St. Anne's, on the Great Western Railway, was ordered to be converted into an open cutting during the early months of 1887. Its demolition, which was not completed until March, 1889, enabled the directors to lay out extensive sidings in that locality for facilitating traffic.

The governors of the General Hospital resolved in March upon a considerable extension of the institution, by the erection of additional wards, nurses' rooms, &c. The outlay was originally estimated at £10,000, but was ultimately double that amount. (See October 23rd, 1891.)

The Bill of the Bristol Consumers' Water Company, proposing to utilise the Severn Tunnel springs for the supply of the city (see p. 534), after encountering a determined opposition from the Water Company, was rejected by a committee of the House of Lords on May 16th.

A portion of the church of St. Francis, Ashton Gate, was consecrated by Bishop Ellicott on June 2nd. His lordship stated that it was the last of the churches proposed to be erected by the Commission of 1883. (See p. 517.) The nave of the

church was opened on April 1st, 1891, when £5,000 had been expended on the fabric.

The completion of the fiftieth year of the reign of Queen Victoria was celebrated on June 21st with universal demonstrations of loyalty. On the previous day a religious service had been held in the Cathedral in the presence of the Mayor and Corporation, the magistrates, the Merchants' Society, the Corporation of the Poor, the clergy of the city, about sixty ministers of various denominations, and a great number of citizens of all sects—a reunion quite unprecedented in local annals. On the morning of the Jubilee the members of the Corporation, attended by the regular troops stationed at Horfield, the various corps of Volunteers, and the boys of the endowed schools, assembled in Old Market Street, and proceeded through the principal thoroughfares, which were gaily decorated and crowded with spectators, to Durdham Down, where the military fired a royal salute. Generous subscriptions had been offered for the entertainment of the poor, about 9,000 of whom were liberally regaled. In the evening the city was brilliantly illuminated, and enormous bonfires blazed on Brandon Hill and Durdham Down. Similar beacon fires had been prepared on all the chief eminences in the adjacent counties, and on the Observatory Hill upwards of thirty could be discerned in more or less distant localities. On the 22nd the children of the elementary schools walked in procession through the streets to the places fixed for their entertainment—the park at Bedminster, Durdham Down, and Arley Hill. About 38,000 in all were said to have been present. On the 23rd musical services took place in the Cathedral, Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum* and Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* being performed in the morning, and the oratorio of *Elijah* in the evening, by a body of 597 vocalists and instrumentalists. On the 25th, a body of Regular and Volunteer troops, numbering nearly 4,000, assembled on Durdham Down, it being intended that the manœuvres should take the form of a pitched battle. Owing to the conduct of the spectators (about 50,000), many of whom were said to have resented the erection of large stands, admission to which was reserved to ticket holders, the military display became impracticable. It was announced on the 21st that the Mayor (Alderman Edwards) would receive the honour of knighthood, and the formal ceremony was performed by the Queen on the 5th of August. At a meeting of the Council in October, Sir George Edwards stated that the public subscription had amounted to £5,900, of which £2,280 were expended on treats, and £2,000 had been remitted in support of the Imperial Institute in London. Bonfires and

various expenses had absorbed £310, and a balance of £1,300 would be contributed towards the erection of the Queen's statue. (See p. 535.)

Telephonic communication was opened on July 7th between Bristol and Gloucester. Communications had been previously opened with Cardiff and Swansea. The annual charge for communicating with Swansea was £40; or to and fro, £60. To Gloucester the charges were £20 and £30.

The Council resolved in August that a piece of ground called Gaunt's Ham, at Barton Hill, about two acres in extent, should be prepared for a place of public recreation. The purchase, laying out and enclosure of the ground were stated in January, 1889, to have cost £5,846, and a further vote was afterwards required to complete the ornamentation.

On August 11th Sir George Edwards exhibited to the Council his plan for the construction of a new road from the Blind Asylum to the centre of the city, by which the journey would be shortened by nearly a quarter of a mile and the gradient greatly improved. He proposed that in the first instance the section between the top of Park Row and Colston Street should be taken in hand. At a subsequent meeting, October 15th, Sir George stated that if the Corporation would lay out a street fifty feet wide, and give up for that purpose some property standing on the line of route, he would himself present nine-tenths of the rest of the ground required. The Council, by a majority of 15 votes to 14, declared it inexpedient to consider the scheme until the question of retaining the Drawbridge was disposed of. The project thus remained dormant for several years. But on February 11th, 1896, a report was submitted to the Council by a special committee that had been appointed to consider Sir George's plan for a thoroughfare from Colston Street to Park Row, he having offered to sell nearly all the property required to make the street for £20,000. The committee recommended that his proposal should be accepted, and stated that the cost of construction would not exceed £42,000. On a division the scheme was rejected by 29 votes against 24.

During the summer months of this year, at the instance of a number of public-spirited citizens, evening concerts were given at the Promenade, Clifton Down, the public garden in Lovers' Walk, and the park at Bedminster, for the entertainment of the public. It was hoped that those who attended would support the movement by small subscriptions; but on more than one occasion the amount collected from several thousand people amounted to only a few shillings. The expenses were thus chiefly borne by the promoters, who, nevertheless, resolved to