

**THE TALE OF
WORCESTER FIGHT
AND OTHER POEMS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649350674

The tale of Worcester Fight and other poems by W. E. Jourdain

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

W. E. JOURDAIN

**THE TALE OF
WORCESTER FIGHT
AND OTHER POEMS**

THE
TALE OF
Worcester Fight
AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY
W. E. JOURDAIN.

LONDON:
LONDON LITERARY SOCIETY,
376, STRAND, W.



Dartford:

Printed by J. SNOWDEN,

High Street.

P R E F A C E
TO
“*The Tale of Worcester Fight,*”
and other Poems.

On taking up my residence at Worcester towards the latter part of last year, my attention was naturally drawn to the historical associations connected with the city, and the events of which it had been the scene, more especially during the stirring period of the Great Civil War. The old bridge at Powick; the old house at the end of New Street, where Charles II. lodged during his stay at Worcester, before the battle which for the time annihilated his hopes of sitting on the throne of England; the Commandery, where Duke Hamilton and sundry other Royalists were conveyed, wounded and disabled from the strife,—now converted into a College for the Blind Sons of Gentlemen; numerous antique quaint-timbered dwellings in Friar Street and elsewhere, almost certainly coeval with the era, still stand as memorials. Fort Royal Hill, now built over, marks the site of the Royalist stronghold; Perry Wood, from whence Cromwell's batteries bombarded the City, and whither the Cavaliers made their last fruitless sally,

still waves its foliage on the slope of the Red Hill, and other spots of interest could be pointed out. Musing on these scenes of the Past—a habit I am somewhat prone to—the idea struck me of embodying the principal incidents of "Worcester's Famous Fight" (though other conflicts had taken place there previously) in the form of a Poem. The next consideration was—in what way should the narrative be given? I at length decided it should be as related by an old citizen of Worcester, who had witnessed the chief part of the events, to his grandson, at a period long subsequent. It was next a question whether I should make him Royalist or Parliamentary? In the one case I might describe the Cavaliers—as perhaps most poems and romances do—as all brave, generous, and captivating, and their opponents as all hypocrites, scoundrels, and traitors; on the other hand I might adopt the sentiments so vigorously expressed in Lord Macaulay's fine ballad of the "Battle of Naseby." After some consideration, I resolved to represent my narrator as a Royalist, as most of the people of Worcester evidently were, but one whose early devotion to the Stuart dynasty had been chilled by more recent

occurrences ; by Charles II.'s debaucheries, and James II.'s bigotted and tyrannical conduct during his short reign. This gave me the advantage of holding the balance more fairly between the opposing parties. I have depicted the narrator as a shrewd, practical character, as befits a smart tradesman, and of a somewhat caustic temperament, which enables him keenly to detect the faults and errors committed by those of his own side in politics. To accord with this portraiture is the designedly generally plain and homely style of the narrative. The seemingly illiberal remarks on the Scots would also, I think, be true to, and characteristic of, the time, and reflect the ordinary prejudices of Englishmen—especially of Royalists—in connection with the supposed treachery of their northern brethren towards King Charles the I. The details of the battle are, I believe, given pretty accurately. Many anecdotes and local touches additional I might have brought in to heighten the effect, but in that case the poem would have swelled to too great a length. I had already written the greater part of it, when for the first time I came across Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's romance of "Boscobel," which partly treats of the same

subject, and which enabled me to make a few slight corrections, as the author seems to have consulted the best authorities. The other poems in the volume are selected from a considerable number composed at various dates. Some few have already appeared in different periodicals. They are not, perhaps, quite in the style of the leading poetry of the day, but when I first began to scribble rhymes other models were before me, new influences are predominant now. My conception of poetry is—first the evolving of a grand or beautiful idea, then the striving to embody it in the most fitting and appropriate words. Now, I may be wrong; but it strikes me the defect of the modern school is the too great a piling up and overloading on the original idea of laboured epithet, and wordy imagery. However that be, I must leave my humble productions to take their chance, and stand upon their own merits—if they have any. I would fain hope that some at least are not quite unworthy of perusal: at any rate, they reflect truthfully, I believe, the feelings inspiring me at the time, and I now dismiss the volume to the kind consideration of my readers.

W. E. JOURDAIN.



THE TALE OF WORCESTER FIGHT,

As narrated by an old citizen to his grandson, A.D. 1691.

COME hither, grandson Harry, come sit thee down a space,
While mem'ries of the stormy past I struggle to retrace;
Thou oft hast asked me for the tale—I'll tell it thee to-night,
Of what thy grandsire saw and heard of Worcester's famous fight.

Faith 'twas for us in Worcester town a bitter time and sore,
Though storm and siege, aye, more than once we underwent before;
Each party helped themselves in turn, could purse and pocket wring,
Whether they fought for Parliament, or battled for the King.

Though Rupert first at Powick Bridge the Roundheads put to rout,
Soon he and all his Cavaliers were fain to hurry out;
And then Lord Essex shaved us close—a heavy fine and great,
Five Thousand Pounds—and carried off our Corporation plate.

The brass was torn from off the tombs in the Cathedral aisles;
Vestment and surplice, cope and hood were heaped in burning piles;
Carved oak and sculptured stone-work fair were hacked about and
hewed,
While glittering fragments of stained glass the floor and pavement
strewed.