

**HANDBOOK TO THE SEVERN
VALLEY RAILWAY:
ILLUSTRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE
OF PLACES ALONG LINE, FROM
WORCESTER TO SHREWSBURY**

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HANDBOOK

TO THE

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY.

Illustrative and Descriptive of Places along the Line,

FROM

WORCESTER TO SHREWSBURY.

John

BY **J. RANDALL, F.G.S.,**
AUTHOR OF "SEVERN VALLEY," ETC.



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LEGEND OF THE SEVERN, WYE, AND RHEIDOL.

(See *Illustration on the Cover.*)

The Welsh are justly proud of their hills and their rivers; they frequently personify both, and attribute to them characters corresponding with their peculiar features. Of the Severn, the Wye, and the Rhaidol, they have an apologue, intended to convey an idea of their comparative length, and also of the character of the districts through which they flow. It is called "The Three Sisters," and in substance is as follows:— In some primitive period of the earth's history, Father Pinlimmon promised to these nymphs of the mountain as much territory as they could compass in a day's journey to the sea, by way of dowry upon their alliance with certain marine deities they should meet there. Sabra, goddess of the Severn, being a prudent, well-conducted maiden, rose with the first streak of morning dawn, and, descending the eastern side of the hill, made choice of the most fertile valleys, whilst as yet her sisters slept. Yaga, goddess of the Wye, rose next, and, making all haste to perform her task, took a shorter course, by which means she joined her sister ere she reached the sea. The goddess Rhea, old Pinlimmon's pet, woke not till roused by her father's chiding; but by bounding down the side of the mountain, and selecting the shortest course of all, she managed to reach her destination first. Thus the Cymric proverb, "There is no impossibility to the maiden who hath a fortune to lose or a husband to win."

THE
SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY.

THE SEVERN, like other English rivers, may be said to have been the pioneer of railways along its banks: first, in having done much to correct the inequalities of the surface; secondly, in having indicated the direction in which the traffic flowed; so that early in the history of railway enterprise eminent engineers, like the late Robert Stephenson, saw the desirability of following its course, and thus meeting the wants of towns that had grown into importance upon its banks, wants which the river itself was unable to supply. In 1846 the route was finally surveyed by Robert Nicholson, with a view to a through traffic in connection with other railways. The scheme met with opposition from advocates of rival lines. Ultimately, however, the Bill passed the committees of the two Houses, and the promoters were successful, whilst the expenses of counsel and witnesses were enormous. The original estimate for the line was £600,000: £110,000 for land, and £490,000 for works. £8,500 was down for a girder bridge at Arley, £8,000 for one near Quatford, £9,000 for one above Bridgnorth, and £10,000 for one at Shrewsbury. The two bridges near Bridgnorth and the one near Shrewsbury were abandoned, and a considerable saving was effected by shortening the line at Hartlebury, by a junction with the Oxford, Wolverhampton, and Worcester higher up than was originally intended. The estimated cost of the works, in consequence of these reductions, and of the determination of the company to make it a single line, was thus reduced to nearly one-half the original sum.

Although the Severn Valley Railway joins the Main Trunk line at Hartlebury, Worcester is regarded as its proper terminus; and at that point we commence our description.



WORCESTER.

Population, 31,133. Returns two Members to Parliament.
 Market days—Wednesdays and Saturdays. Fair days—Saturday before Palm Sunday, Saturday before Easter Day, August 15th, September 19th, and first Monday in December.

Our engraving represents the "faithful city" as it appears from a point between the bridges, with the Cathedral rising from an eminence above the river. The venerable pile was raised by the brave and pious bishop Wulstan, upon the site of an earlier edifice, formerly the church of a priory founded by one of the Saxon kings. Recent restorations, carried on under the direction of the Dean and Chapter, have led to the correction of defects, resulting from time, and ignorance on the part of past builders, and have disclosed features which add much to the grandeur of the edifice; so that in addition to impressions its magnificence creates upon the mind of the general visitor, it now affords a rich treat to all who delight to trace the boundary lines of ecclesiastical architecture, as they approach or recede from the present time. First, there is the Norman or Romanesque of the period of its erection, of which the crypt and part of the central transept are specimens;

secondly, the First Pointed or Early English, as seen in the eastern transept; thirdly, the Middle Pointed or Decorated, as in the tower, guesten hall, and refectory; and, fourthly, the Third Pointed or Perpendicular, as in the north porch, in the cloisters, and Prince Arthur's Chapel. Amongst ancient mural monuments, covering the dust or commemorating the virtues of the great, will be found King John's tomb, in the centre of the choir; one in white marble of Prince Arthur; and those of bishops Sylvester, Gauden, Stillingfleet, Thornborough, Parry, and Hough, the latter a *chef d'œuvre* of Roubilliac's; also that of Judge Lyttleton, "the father of English law;" and others of men renowned for learning, piety, or bravery. Near this fine old ecclesiastical edifice once stood the feudal stronghold that protected it, the only remaining portion of which is a crumbling mass of stone known as Edgar's Tower. From standing in the college precincts it is sometimes mistaken for a portion of the cathedral; it is, however, a relic of the old castle, the keep of which rested on a mound of sand and gravel, which was found to contain, upon its removal in 1833, Roman remains of the reigns of Augustus, Nero, Vespasian, and Constantine. In High Street, leading from the Cathedral to the Cross, is the Guildhall, erected from a design by a pupil of the great Sir Christopher Wren, and considered to be one of the most handsome brick-fronted structures in the kingdom. It is decorated with statues of Charles I., Charles II., Queen Anne, and with emblematic figures of Justice, Peace, Labour, &c.; whilst over the doorway is the city coat of arms, with the motto, "*Floreat semper fidelis civitas.*" The lower hall contains a collection of interesting specimens of ancient armour, gleaned from the battlefields of Worcester, and one of those quaint old instruments of punishment formerly used for scolds, called a "brank." In the municipal hall, on the second floor, is a portrait of George III., who presented it to the inhabitants, and others of citizens who have done good service to the town, or in some way distinguished themselves, the last added being that of Alderman Padmore, one of the members for the city.

The churches are fifteen in number, some being ancient edifices, others recent erections built on the sites of older structures, whilst a few are copies of the originals. There are nearly as many dissenting and other chapels, several of which are handsome specimens of modern architectural skill.

Among instances of domestic architecture of past centuries may be mentioned, "The Old House" in "New Street," from which Charles II. escaped after the battle of Worcester. It was the house also in which Judge Berkeley was born, and has over the door the inscription, "Love God (W. B. 1557, R. D), Honor the King."

Worcester is rich in schools, almshouses, and institutions, whose united incomes, representing a total of £4,000, speak much for the public spirit and large-hearted benevolence of the inhabitants.

The Museum and Natural History Society, in Foregate Street, to which visitors are admitted on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays,* with its collection of antiquities, fossils, and objects of natural history, should be visited. Also, the Arboretum and Public Pleasure Grounds, near Sansome Walk, where fêtes are given and bands frequently play. The grounds are tastefully laid out, portions being set apart for games of archery, cricket, bowls, and quoits. The usual admission fee is sixpence, but on Mondays they are free to the inhabitants.

In describing Worcester it would be unpardonable not to allude to its hops, from 2,000 to 3,000 pockets of which, it is said, not unfrequently change hands, in the market in the Foregate, during the season.

Glove making also is still one of the staple trades, nearly half a million being annually manufactured by Messrs. Dent and others.

Worcester is celebrated for Porcelain of a very superior kind; and facilities are afforded to strangers visiting the manufactory, both in Diglis, and in Lowesmoor. The productions of the former are highly esteemed by connoisseurs. The works have the good fortune to receive distinguished and even royal patronage; and the show-rooms form one of the attractions of the city.

The Iron trade, so far as regards the manufacture of bridges, machinery, and general castings, notwithstanding the distance from the iron making districts, is well represented by the Vulcan Works, and those of Messrs. Padmore and Hardy. Other establishments on a large scale have sprung into existence in the city and its suburbs, in which chemistry and machinery, singly or combined, produce results

* Upon payment of one shilling.

the most astounding. Among them are those of Hill, Evans, and Co., where the visitor wanders amidst enormous vats, from which as many as 1,208,600 gallons of vinegar have been produced in a single year; and those of Lewis, Watkins, and Co., where a large portion of the vinegar is used in preparing pickles, and where hundreds of tons of preserved fruits and jam are annually produced for sale. There are also those of the well-known firm of Lea and Perrin; the chemical works of Webb; the extensive carriage manufactory of McNaught and Smith, and others upon which space forbids us to dwell.

The Severn supplies the inhabitants with water, which is purified by means of extensive filter-beds at the upper end of Pitchcroft, and then thrown by machinery to the top of Rainbow Hill, a position sufficiently elevated to ensure its distribution over the upper stories of the highest houses. The "Old Waterworks" remain, and, as will be seen from our



OLD WATERWORKS.

sketch, form a picturesque object in the landscape. The Severn is, however, no longer the fast-flowing stream poets have described it, but what it has lost in speed it has gained in depth, breadth, and majesty; the locks and weirs at Diglis—the former two abreast, and the latter stretching 400 feet across the stream—giving to it the aspect of a lake, an aspect aided by the appearance upon its surface of a number of swans.