

BRIDGWATER  
in the  
LATER DAYS

BEING A SUCCEEDING VOLUME TO  
"THE ANCIENT BOROUGH OF  
BRIDGWATER"

by the  
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Eighteenth-Century Deism,"*etc.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BRIDGWATER: PAGE AND SON  
1908

PREFACE

IT was not my intention, when I completed my previous book, *The Ancient Borough of Bridgwater*, to write a second volume dealing with the story of the town during the period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mediaeval times possess a greater interest for me, and it was my hope that another hand would write the later volume, if such were ever called for. But I was urged, from many quarters, to undertake the task myself, and eventually did so. This book is the result of the effort.

There is, of course, very little that is common to the two books. The times changed so completely and so quickly that the eighteenth century seemed like the dawn of a new age. Elections to Parliament began to assume an importance which they had never before possessed. A keen desire to acquire the right of franchise grew up in the minds of men, which found its expression in the Reform Bill of 1832. The great ministers of the Crown grew to be men of such commanding influence that they ceased to merely ratify the wishes of the Sovereign. They initiated, guided, and carried out a policy of their own, based in ever-increasing measure upon the wishes of the electors. The Sovereign still wielded great influence, but

he ceased to be autocratic. The balance of power came to lie with the Cabinet, behind whom lay the popular will. My aim has been rather to exhibit something of the tendencies of expanding thought and life, as illustrated in the later history of an ancient English provincial town, than to crowd the canvas with details of events.

Again I have to express my thanks for much help received. The Municipal authorities have again permitted me to use their documents, and the Town Clerk and Mr. R. J. Letherby have been exceedingly courteous in giving me access to them. I am indebted to my friend Mr. Richard Cooke, of Detling, for many suggestions in the plan of the book. Several documents and papers have been lent to me by Mr. Edward Trevor, Mr. A. J. Coles, Mr. Maurice Page, Mr. Alderman Pollard, Mr. W. H. Kitch, Mr. H. E. Vine, Mr. W. H. Smith, Capt Jobson, Mr. Harden, the Rev. H. Butler, the Rev. H. Trotman, and others. An old inhabitant of the town, Mr. Henry Hayward, now eighty-five years of age, has, too, given me much information drawn from his long personal acquaintance with the place. So also has Mr. Creedy, who has seen ninety-six years of Bridgwater life. Mr. Trevor's documents have been specially useful, notably in enabling me to fix the exact site of the old Castle, which has been drawn upon the map which I owe to the kindness of Mr. A. B. Cottam, our Diocesan Surveyor. I desire also to acknowledge my thanks to Messrs. Brendon & Son, who have taken extreme care with the printing of the two volumes, and to the publishers.

Lastly, I thank the many friends who have encouraged me with their kind appreciation during the preparation of the work. I hope they will not be utterly disappointed with the result.

ARTHUR H. POWELL.

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ERRATA IN THE FORMER VOLUME (*THE  
 ANCIENT BOROUGH OF BRIDGWATER* ).

Page 137. Read William Wollen, 1785-1844.  
 Omit James Wollen's name from the list of  
 vicars of Bridgwater. He assisted his father,  
 but never was vicar of the town.

Page 237. In the last line of Henry Newbolt's  
 poem read *the land his soul desired*, for *this soul  
 desired!* The latter is an obvious error.

Edited by Tony & Jane Woolrich, 21/07/2020

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