

Great Grandfather Griffin's Trip to Bath - 1873

Leaving Plymouth at 11 o'clock on the morning of June 30th 1873 by an excursion train to Bristol. As we travel through the country at the rate of 20 miles an hour, the nature around us in all its splendour of an hot June sun. The mowers to work in the harvest fields cutting the fine tall grass and then a little further on we see them to work saving that highly prize food for the cattle. Which this summer is very plentiful. Then on passing Ivybridge we seen that noble block of buildings the paper mills belonging to J. Allen Esq. Then on the other side we pass the range of hills bordering on Dartmoor. A little further on we pass that beautiful river the Dart. Next comes the Town of Dawlish with the briny Ocean breaking in on the beach which is lined with visitors, and the men are to work repairing the breach in the sea wall caused by the Gales of last winter. It is a magnificent sight on a bright summer's day as this is to look out on the Horizon and the mercantile navy riding on the vast ocean. Also in the distance you can see the pretty little town of Exmouth. Then on the other Hand we pass the far famed Powderham Park the seat of the Earl of Devon. Now in the distance we see the Old City of Exeter with its Church steeples towering towards the sky most prominent being its old cathedral. At the Entrance to the city we pass through the nursery belonging to Mr. Addiscott where all the trees are out in their summer's beauty.

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X-MS-Has-Attach:
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Thread-Topic: Hello
Thread-Index: A57gX7MIP3ZL4HTquumT03ahJrvmAAa3g
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Passing on through St. Thomas station and along the river Exe, we arrive at the Terminus of the South Devon Railway, St. Davids Station, at 1 o'clock where we have a quarter of an hour to spare. At the exact time we start again on our journey up the country.

We do not stop at many stations now but go on flying through the country by the aid of the Iron Horse, the steam engine, which was such a wonder to our forefathers. We now get into a change of scenery, the Hills are lost and the level land meets the eyes of the Traveller. The corn beginning to ripen and the barley looking its best. As I look at the fields of barley, I think what a sin it is to turn this grain into that noted poison of Alcohol which kills its 60,000 lives annually, when it could be turned into the staff of life, a loaf of Bread and feed its thousands that are starving now, and also the comfort that would attend it at the homes of those who have a drunkard father. If it was not for this dreadful poison, what happy homes there would be. May the day soon come when Barley shall no more be grown for the making of Alcoholic Liquor.

In this part of the country you can see across the country for miles as the hills are not so plentiful as they are around the South of Devon. In due time we arrive at the town of Taunton. Then again we see Bridgewater in the distance noted for its Tile Works. A little further on, we stop at the Weston Junction where at a mile's distance, you can see the fashionable watering place of Weston Super Mare with its villas dotted around on the hills that

surrounded it. After a short ridge further on we see the smoke arising from some large manufactories in the distance and also the air is full of smoke. Which from its density and size we know it to be that centre of a very large district the old city of Bristol. Where during this week the Independent Order of Good Templars will hold their fourth Annual Session of its Grand Lodge. Excursion trains are coming in from North, South, East and West with its excursionist and also bringing delegates from the Subordinate Lodge to attend the Grand Lodge to represent their views upon the work of the order and its progress during the past year, also to elect its officers, to form its governing body for the ensuing year. We arrive at Bristol at 4:15 p.m. and, finding that there is a train about to start for Bath, I take the opportunity of finishing my journey without any delay. Leaving the smoky city behind in half an hour I arrive in view of the city of Bath with its crescents and churches in the distance. The home of my boyhood where I was born on the 22nd day of May 1851. On arriving at Bath station, it brings to memory a very painful recollection of the past. It was at this station that an accident befell my dearly beloved Father whereby he lost his life. He was returning from Sivingdon Flower Show on the 8th of September 1859 by the midnight mail. Where he had been a very successful exhibitor that day having won 10 prizes and also carried off the challenge cup. Which was a solid silver sugar basin lined with gold. As he was getting out of the train, he was thrown under the wheels of the carriage by a sudden jerking at the back of the engine and 8 carriages passed over his leg and so

much injured him that he was immediately carried to the hospital and his dear leg was then taken off by the surgeon. He did not survive the shock and his dear spirit passed away to the regions of happiness and bliss beyond the skies where sin and suffering are not known. At 4 to 3 on the morn of the 9th of September. Leaving a loving wife and kind mother with 6 children to mourn the loss of the kindest of husbands and the best of parents. I leave the sad scene behind and descend the stairs and find myself once more heading over old ground. I pass on up through the streets passing by the Abbey and Guild hall to Morford Street, not stopping to notice anything as I am wishing to arrive at my destination. I call on Miss Cross, an old Friend of my mothers who recognizes me directly after an absence of 3 1/2 years. I take with her and then look for lodgings she directs me across the street to Mrs. Burridges who I find to be the mother of one of my sister's old schoolfellows who very kindly accommodates me. After a refreshing wash I start on my visits to my Old Friends passing through Waloot then by the Victoria Park on the one hand and the common on the other. I arrive at Weston Road the site of our old home. Where also is situated the residence of two nurserymen who children went to school with me in the days gone by. The first one I come to is Mr. Drummond who I see standing in his garden talking to his wife. I walk in and ask him if he remembers me. Which he does not until I mention my name when he holds out the hand of welcome. His daughter being fetched she also does not know me until I ask her if she remembers a little boy called Jim

Griffin that used to play with her. Oh, yes, that I do, she says many a game together we have had on the lawn, and she also bids me welcome. Here I find the hand of Death has visited this family circle since I left Bath carrying off two daughters and a son also the mother is replaced by a very kind mother-in-law. After a short stay, I leave them to pay a few more visits promising to come back and sup with them. I next seek out Harry Carpenter my old school companion. On arriving at his house, I find that he is not at home. But leaving my name and promising to call again, I repair to the Bristol Road passing through our old nursery which I find is greatly altered, the upper part being dotted over with villas. I see the old home of my birth and childhood is still standing but is added to with another wing being built. The lower part is still kept in a garden and the old lodge is also left standing with our old name of Bath Nursery still left on its piers. As I stand and look at the Old Place, it brings back to my mind many a pleasant recollection of the past and I begin to picture to myself what it would have been if the hand of the Lord had spared the head of our Family to the present time. But I cast away those thoughts and think that Providence with its all seeing Eye knew what was best and therefore look forward to the future with a hope for the best. Going along Bristol Road, I ask an old woman if she can tell me where Jane Crocker lives. She looks around at me and asks me if I am not the son of Mr. Griffin that used to keep the nursery. I tell her yes and find out that she is the wife of Old Mr. Collins who used to live in a cottage adjoining our nursery and we children

used to steal the figs and plums from off his trees that overhung our garden. I find that our old servant Jane is still alive and is living in a thatched cottage close by the Gas Works. She does not know me until I call her Jane, the old name that Ma gave her when she was living with us. Then we have a long chat over olden Times when she used to nurse me. I do not find her in the best of circumstances, but when next I pay Bath a visit I hope to find her in a better home. Leaving her with a promise to call again before I start for home, I proceed to see our Old Baker Boy, Richard Canterbury, son of our old cartman who emigrated to Australia some years ago but he has passed away. I find Richard master of his own business and living in his own house which he is very proud of. After a short stay, I again repair to Mr. Drummonds to take supper where I spent a very pleasant evening talking over old Times and the changes that has taken place since we left. Wishing them good night with a promise to take tea with them on Friday, I start for my lodgings call of Miss Cross first. On arriving at home I am introduced to the two Miss Burridges. To finish my first day's pleasure.

On Tuesday morning, I walk down to the station for to go to Bristol. And have the company of a young lady who has styled herself my Keeper during my short stay here. I find that there will not be any train start for an half an hour so I turn around and walk back through the city to my Keeper's place of business. Then again proceed to the station and start on my journey to Bristol.

As I leave the station and walk through the streets, I find it all in a bustle and the streets are much dirtier than the city I have just left behind me. I cross Bristol Bridge and proceed to High Street to look for an old playmate of bygone days. I look for the Noah's ark and walk in to ask if Miss Townsend is there. Now this I find she is an I ask to see her. She recognizes me directly. Not having many minutes to spare, I leave, promising to call again and take dinner with her. There find a sister Templar the only one that I have met with amongst my old friends. I now proceed to Colston Hall where is assembled the largest Parliament of Social Representatives that ever met for the good of the country. They are not met to make laws for to govern this land but to promote ways and means for the sobriety of this Christian country and to bring about the downfall of drinkdom and to overthrow the Drink traffic which has been and is now the [..ware] of many an Englishman's home. This Order is known by the name of the Independent Order of Good Templars, of which I am happy to say I am a member. And having my Lodge been place in such an Office as to entitle me to take my Grand Lodge Degree. The way in which this noble order has grown, planting itself in almost every village and town in the Kingdom, the enthusiasm it has excited the influent it has gathered, cannot be slightly passed over, nor yet ignored. As I near the Hall, I pass many a brother and sister with their Regalia Box in their Hand. Then again I see many a group around all waiting to take their Grand Lodge Degree. The Highest Honor that can be conferred on them. At 11:30 we enter the Hall and as I take my

seat, I look around and see the different Regalias. What a magnificent sight to see close of 3,000 members of the order here. I met some to discuss the working of the order and others to look on and vote. And then again there is those in the Purple Degree who having by their own Lodge earned the Office which entitles them to this Grand Degree and as my eyes are wandering around the Hall, I cannot help thanking my own Lodge for having conferred on me the honor of being able to be present at this magnificent gathering and also of being able to take my Grand Lodge Degree. My train of thoughts are now turned in another direction for our G. W. C. I. Enters and the who assemblage rises to their feet and gives him an hearty welcome. Here's a young man 30 years old as the members look at him they seem tarted to think that one so young can carry on the management of so large an order. He now proceeds to confer the Degree on those who are eligible to take it and 2,000 brothers and sisters rise to their feet and listen to the noble Ritual and unwritten work of this the Highest Degree that the order can confer on its brethren. I do not stay in the Grand after I am made a member of it but retrace my steps back to high Street where I partake of dinner. After having dined, she very kindly offers to take me for a walk around Bristol. As we proceed through the streets of this old city, I cannot help noticing some of its old Buildings especially the Exchange where the Old Tables are now standing in the street. We proceed on till we come to Durdham Horon, this is a high piece of land outside the city from here you have a magnificent view of the surrounding country. We cross the Down and enter the

Zoological Gardens. Where there is a very good collection of the Beasts of the Desert and wild parts of the World. As we proceed around the Gardens at a brisk pace so as to be back in time to see the Lion and Lioness have its food it being near their feeding time. We arrive at their den just as the Keeper enters the House with their food consisting of bullocks heads and huge pieces of animal food, in a large basket. He takes it out of the basket with a prong and passes it under the wire and the noble animals immediately devour it. We pass on next to the young Tigers who are playing like a lot of cats then to the Brown Bear with its cubs and then the Elephant with its large and comfortable stable. We now leave the Gardens and cross Clifton Down. Here the scenery is magnificent and far surpasses the Down that we have just left behind us at the end of the Down we come to Clifton Suspension Bridge, the masterpiece of engineering skill. We now make our way back to Bristol through Clifton with its splendid blocks of buildings which leave Bristol all in Dark when compared to this place. After Tea, I visited Mr. Townsend, brother Templar, in fact the whole of the family are Templars. After an hour's chat over old days, I walk to the station as I go along I hear that dreadful cry of Fire and with the thoughts of Bristol Fires, I follow the crowd with the risk of losing the train. But when I arrive at the scene of the fire, I find that it is only a little smoke issuing from an upstairs room and with a few bucketfulls of water, it is all over. I arrive at the station and look for Bath and arrive home all safe and so finished my second days holidays.

Wednesday morn in company with my Keeper Agnes Burridge we take a pleasant walk around the Victoria Park and as I go along I see the same old spots where I have spent many an hour in the days gone by. It all seems the same to me. I can picture to myself walking along here with my kind father Sunday eve after chapel. Then again I fancy myself picking up the mulberries and then in the Dairy having some Curds and Whey. As we leave the Park, I have a look at the noble Lions over the Entrance Gate. I look well at these for I remember them well having been told when young that when they heard the clock strike 12, they would come down and boylike I have waited for to see them come down. But have always been doomed to disappointment. I leave my Keeper at her place of business and proceed to Hamper's Shop to see Miss Nichols an old Friend of my Sisters. Then I take a walk down around the station and back by the Hospital where my Father breathed his last. I now repair to Morford Street to spend the rest of the morn with Miss Cross and in the afternoon start for Weston. I do not find the Old Grove there now but a new road cut with its magnificent Villas on each side but I do see the old School House and a little further on the Old Cottage where we school boys used to buy our fruit. As I look at the School House many happy recollections of my school days come back and make me wish that I had the time to go over it again. But it is only idle wishing and cannot be recalled. I go on and arrive at the Churchyard which contains the remains of my loving Father. I will not dwell on that subject but

suffice it to say that I cut some of the grass and with a lingering look at his grave, I proceed to look for the Rev. Bond who was pastor of this Church [Grandad has inserted here that this is the Lower Weston Parish Church] when I was born, having been here no less than 45 years. After a chat of half an hour, I retrace my steps back through Weston Road to see my old schoolmate and playfellow Harry Carpenter. I find him at home and he has grown into a fine young man and we have a very pleasant chat over our old games and school times. After having had tea with Miss Cross, I call of Mr. Harding then go to the Sydney Gardens to hear the Hanoverian Band. In these gardens was the last place I was with poor Father. The day before he died Bath Flower Show was held here and I was with him all the day. After a walk around the Gardens, I sit and listen to the music of the Band then I proceed to the Guildhall where there is to be a Templars Public Meeting held. I find some of my Plymouth Friends here and after a short stay at the meeting, I walk with them to the station. Then home to my Lodgings and so finished my third day.

On Thursday at 7 a.m. in charge of my Keeper, I go for a walk through Camden Crescent to Jacobs Ladder which we duly climbed, and then continued our walk through Lansdown passing Kingswood Grove School on our Right and Lansdown College our left, then through the Higher Common to Walcott and home to breakfast. After reading the paper I next proceed to Bathford to visit a friend of my mother's. I find her living at Bellmaine Villa

and after an hours chat, I start for Bathampton Station and look for Bath where I duly arrive and dine at West's London Dining Rooms. In the afternoon I visit the Museum where I find a good collection of all kinds of fossils and different kinds of birds, comprising a very nice museum.. Next I proceed to the Abbey and after entering my name in the visitors book I go around the noble edifice, it is now under repair having been so for the last 5 years. Having finished my visit here, I start for Gothic Cottage, close by the high Common, the residence of Lucinda Harding, now Mr. Page, where I spend the remainder of the afternoon over a pleasant chat of bygone times. Having taken tea with her, I start for the city to meet my Keeper for a visit to the Theatre to listen to the Opera of the Bridge of Sighs and so ended my fourth days pleasure.

Friday morn at 7 a.m., in company with my Keeper, I again took an early walk this time through Larkhall and Grovenor across the Bridge and back to Pultney Street by the Canal then home to breakfast. This morning I spend in the city. First I have a look at the New Midland Railway Station which is quite a model station, it having an iron semi roof. Next I visit the Grand Pump Rooms and taste of the far famed Bath Mineral waters. I also visit Mr. Cooling, a reedman in Broad Street who was an apprentice of my Fathers. After having dined at Mrs. Burridges I indulge myself with a short nap. Having done so I proceed once more to Bristol Road to say Good Bye to Jane. But not finding her at home, I next visit H. Carpenter and having wished him well, I visit Mr.

Drummond and take tea with him. Having done so and had a good chat, I say Good Bye and retrace my steps to Bristol Road, this time finding Jane at home, where I spend a very pleasant hour, and wish her well. I go through the Victoria Park and listen to the music of the Band. Then to the circus to see Dr. Bush, an ex mayor of the city and our family doctor during the time that we were living here. I stay with him for about an hour. I then go back to Miss Crosses for a short time. Then for a short walk with my Keeper, through Camden Crescent on to Larkhall and so ended my last day in Bath.

Saturday morn being wet, I was disappointed in not being able to take my walk, having intended going to Beccen Cliff. But I promise to go on my next visit to Bath. At 8 a.m. I proceed to the Midland Station to start on my journey home. Just as the train is about to start, I see my Keeper on the Platform with a bunch of flowers in her hand. It is a splendid bunch from Mr. Drummond for my mother. She having very kindly brought them down to me as they did not come in time for me to take them. Having thanked her and once more said Good Bye, I am off with the Iron Horse fast for Bristol. The travelling on the Narrow Gauge is much faster and more comfortable than on the Broad Gauge. Arriving at Bristol Station in due time I proceed to High Street to say the parting word there. After having had lunch with Emma Townsend and leaving part of my flowers with her. Taking one each to keep in remembrance of each other, I start for the Great Western Railway

and pick up my Plymouth friends on the platform. It seemed quite a pleasure to see the old face again. Having met with Mrs. Burdick we keep together and we get in a very comfortable carriage all together just the same party as came up. We are no sooner seated than we are off leaving Bristol and all its dirt behind. We proceed fast on our journey home. We have a pleasant chat over the week that has passed and forgetting how fast we are rattling along, we find ourselves at Bridgewater. Then next on to Taunton and down to St. David where I find my sister Lizzie and I. Bannister waiting for me after a quarters hours stay we are off again and the sun is shining in all its glory we leave Exeter behind and pass by the mighty ocean it is now high tide and the sea is dotted over with pleasure boats sailing in all directions. We are soon at Newton and here we have to change carriages and get further to the rear. We do not stop long but are soon on our journey to Plymouth where we arrive about half past five, and I get home at 6, rather surprising them at home as they did not expect me till late and so ended my first visit to my native home and also my first week holidays. Having thoroughly enjoyed it and regretting that the time had come for me to come home again.