

of Your Majesties' visit to this City, and the inauguration of our new Dock at Avonmouth, honoured in commemoration of Your gracious presence by the name of The Royal Edward Dock.

Constituted under Charters of Your Majesty's Royal Predecessors on the Throne of England, King Edward VI, Queen Elizabeth, King Charles I, and King Charles II, our Ancient Guild was incorporated for the promotion of the commerce of the City, and for the protection of its Citizen Merchants, and under the privileges thus granted, and the regulations of our Guild, the City of Bristol so prospered as to become the second Port of the Kingdom. Among the duties undertaken by our Society not the least important were those of collecting the revenue and shipping dues of the Port, and of expending these dues in the formation of the Quays and Harbours of the ancient City.

In the performance of these duties our Guild won so high a reputation, both for integrity of purpose and ability in the management of affairs, that the first Citizens of their times were proud to enrol themselves as members of our Society, and to confide to the Merchant Venturers the Trusteeship of their private charities and public benefactions. One of such was the eminent philanthropist of the eighteenth century, Edward Colston, who amongst his other charities, founded a hospital for the boarding, clothing, and education of 100 poor boys, and made the Merchant Venturers Trustees of this bounty, the duties of which Trust since its formation in the year 1708 to the present day, the members of our Guild have faithfully discharged.

Following on these lines and actuated by its guiding desire to promote the interests of the poorer Citizens of Bristol according to the changing circumstances of the times our Society was among the first to recognise the paramount need of practical education for the artisans of this country to meet the rising tide of foreign competition, and as one of the happy pioneers of technical education built and equipped the Institution known as the Merchant Venturers Technical College, which provides the working classes of this City with the means of a technical education in the widest sense and from the lowest to the highest stage.

And now again in the important movement soon, it is hoped, to be crowned with completion by Your Majesty's Royal Charter for the foundation of a University in this City, our Society aspires to co-operate, and by undertaking the technological department of the University to lighten the labours of those who seek to diffuse the love of letters and the spirit of scientific research.

Always foremost amongst the subjects of the Throne in loyalty and devotion to the Reigning Monarch, we have thus ventured to address Your Majesties, earnestly praying that the blessings of peace, in whose sacred cause Your Majesty's signal and bloodless victories have added fresh lustre to the Crown, may continue to attend Your reign, and that under Your beneficent rule the glories and the strength of the British Empire may be maintained and increased.

To which Address His Majesty was pleased to return the following gracious Answer:—

"The Queen and I are highly gratified to receive your Address of Welcome from the Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol.

"Your ancient Guild has, during its long existence, performed functions of great public utility and importance, none more important than that which is now occupying your attention, namely, the higher education of the Citizens of Bristol.

"It is necessary to the development of the resources of the country, and to the cause of progress, that scientific and technical education should be encouraged in every way.

"Our chief education authorities have, I am glad to say, long been convinced of this important truth, and throughout the country efforts are wisely made to introduce into the course of instruction, in addition to a basis of general knowledge and culture, the pursuits of those practical and technical subjects which are essential to the success of Commerce and Industry.

"I have heard with interest of the special exertions which you have made in this direction, and I cordially wish them success.

"I earnestly join with you in the prayer that the blessings of peace may continue to attend Us."

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To Their Most Gracious Majesties King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra.

*May it please Your Majesties,*

We, the Members of the Bristol Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping, as representing the trade and commerce of this ancient City, humbly desire to offer to Your Majesties a most loyal and dutiful welcome on the occasion of Your visit to open the new dock which bears His Majesty's name.

The ancient Port of Bristol has for many centuries held a high position among the maritime cities of the United Kingdom, and has played an important part in National and Imperial affairs. It was from Bristol the Cabots set forth upon the voyage which resulted in the discovery of the mainland of America, and thus laid the foundation of Your Majesties' world-wide Empire. In 1837, the year His Majesty The King's gracious and ever revered Mother, Queen Victoria, ascended the Throne, was built and launched in this port the celebrated "Great Western," the first regular Transatlantic steamship, which inaugurated a new era in the system of communication between the old world and the new. It was Bristol, too, that produced the iron-built, screw-propelled "Great Britain," a pioneer of her class, the launch of which is ever memorable to Bristolians, by reason of the presence on that occasion of His Majesty's august Father, the late lamented Prince Consort.

It is to us a source of unbounded satisfaction that this new development in the commercial life of the City, so successfully inaugurated six years ago by Their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales, should receive so practical a manifestation of Your Majesties' approval, as the presence of Your Majesties amongst us to-day displays. We humbly beg to offer to Your Majesties an assurance of our heartfelt gratitude and of our loyal devotion at all times to Your Majesty's Throne and Persons. Our earnest hope and prayer is that the blessings of peace, happiness, and prosperity, which have hitherto so abundantly attended Your Majesties' reign, may be continued in the future to all Your Majesties' loyal subjects throughout the whole of the British Empire.