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THE PLACE OF EXETER IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.¹

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THE thought sometimes comes into the mind of the English traveller in other lands that the cities of his own land must seem but of small account in the eyes of a traveller from the lands which he visits. I speak of course as an antiquary ; I speak not of modern prosperity and modern splendour ; I speak of the historical associations of past times and of the visible monuments which past times have left behind them. Our best ecclesiastical and our best military buildings, the minsters of Durham and Ely, the castles of Rochester and Caernarvon, are indeed unsurpassed by buildings of the same class in any other land. But buildings of this kind are few and far between ; the English town, great or small, does not, as a rule, make the same impression, as an artistic and antiquarian object, as a town of the same class in Italy, Germany, Burgundy, France, or Aquitaine. The ordinary English market-town has commonly little to show beyond its parish church. Its history, if it has any history, is simply that it has been, so to speak, the accidental site of some of the events of general English history, that it has been the scene of some battle or the birth-place of some great man. In many parts of the continent such a town would have its walls, its gates, its long lines of ancient houses ; it would have too a history of its own, a history perhaps hardly known beyond its own borders, but still a history—some tale of its lords or of its burghers, of lords ruling over a miniature dominion, of burghers defending a miniature commonwealth, but still lords and burghers

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who have a history, no less than kingdoms and commonwealths on a greater scale. In towns of a higher class, the peers of our shire-towns and cathedral cities, the palace of the prince, the council-house of the commonwealth, perhaps a long range of the dwellings of old patrician houses, speak of the greatness of a city which once held its rank among European capitals, as the dwelling-place of a prince or as a free city of the Empire. I speak not of world-famous cities which have been the seats of Empires and mighty kingdoms or of commonwealths which could bear themselves as the peers of Empires and kingdoms. I speak not of Venice or Florence, of Trier or of Ravenna. I speak of cities of a class one degree lower. I speak of the last home of Carolingian kingship on the rock of Laon; I speak of the walls of successive ages, spreading each round another, like the circles of Ecbatana—the works of Gaul and Roman and Frank, of Counts and Bishops and citizens—gathering around the minster and the castles of Le Mans. I speak of the Bern of Theodoric by the Adige and of the Bern of Berchthold by the Aar. I speak of the council-houses of Lübeck and Ghent, of Padova and Piacenza, of the episcopal palace at Liège and the ducal palace at Dijon, of the castled steep which looks down on the church of Saint Elizabeth at Marburg, of the hill with its many-towered church, its walls, its gateways, its rugged streets, which rises above the island home of Frederick at Gelnhausen. We have few such spots as these, spots so rich at once in history and in art. And yet we need not grieve that we are in this matter poorer than other nations. Whatever is taken away from the greatness of particular cities and districts is added to the general greatness of the whole kingdom. Why is the history of Nürnberg greater than the history of Exeter? Simply because the history of England is greater than the history of Germany. Why have not our cities such mighty senate-houses, such gorgeous palaces, as the seats of republican freedom or of princely rule among the Italian and the Teutonic cities? It is because England was one while Italy and Germany and Gaul were still divided. Our cities lack the stately buildings, they lack the historic memories. But they lack them because England became an united nation too soon to allow of her nobles and prelates growing into sovereign princes, too soon to allow of the local freedom of

her cities and boroughs growing into the absolute independence of sovereign commonwealths.

And if the cities of England are less rich in historic memories, less thickly set with historic buildings, than the cities of the continent, they must no less yield to them in mere antiquity. We have no cities like Massalia and Gades, which can trace up an unbroken being and an unbroken prosperity to the days of Greek and even of Phœnician colonization. It is only here and there that we can find a site which can even pretend to have lived on, like the ancient towns of Italy and Gaul and Spain, as a dwelling-place of man from the earliest recorded times, the home in turn of the Briton, the Roman, and the Englishman. Arretium, Tolosa, Remi, a crowd of others in the south-western lands, are cities which have lived on, with their own names or the names of their tribes. They are cities reared by the Etruscan, the Iberian, and the Celt to become possessions of Roman, Gothic, and Frankish masters. In our land Dr. Guest has shown that London itself has but feeble claims to an unbroken being from the days of the Briton. Even of the cities raised in Britain by the Roman, though many are still inhabited, though some have been constantly inhabited, yet many others, like Bath and Chester, rose up again after a season of desolation, while other sites, Anderida, Calleva, Uriconium, remain desolate to this day. All this is the natural result of the history of the country. Britain was the last of her great provinces to be won by Rome; she was the first of her great provinces to fall away. The tie which binds the history of the Roman to the history of the conquered provincial on the one hand and of the Teutonic conqueror on the other is weaker here than in other lands. Nowhere else did the Roman find so little of native groundwork on which to build; nowhere else was his own work so utterly swept away. The grass which once grew over the temples and houses of Deva and Aquæ Solis, the grass which still grows over the temples and houses of Calleva and Anderida, is the best witness to the difference between the English Conquest of Britain and the Gothic, Burgundian, and Frankish conquests of other lands.

Yet the very fact that the cities of England must yield in antiquity, in artistic wealth, in historical associations, to the cities of other European lands, does not fail to give them a

special interest of their own. The domestic history of an English town, which was always content to be a municipality, which never aspired to become an independent commonwealth, seems tame beside the long and stirring annals of the free cities of Italy and Germany. Yet, for that very reason, it has a special value of its own. Because the city has not striven after an independent being, it has done its work as a part of a greater whole. Because it has not aspired to be a sovereign commonwealth, it has played its part in building up a nation. And the comparison between the lowly English municipality and the proud Italian or German commonwealth has also an interest of another kind. The difference between the two is simply the difference implied in the absence of political independence in the one case and its presence in the other. The difference is purely external. The internal constitution, the internal history, sometimes the internal revolutions, often present the most striking analogies. In both we may often see the change from democracy to oligarchy and from oligarchy to democracy. In both we may see men who in old Greece would have taken their place as demagogues, perhaps as tyrants. Here, as in other lands, the city has often had to strive for its rights against the neighbouring nobles. Exeter has something to tell of Earls and Countesses of Devon: Bristol has something to tell of its own half citizens, half tyrants, the Lords of Berkeley. We may see germs of a Federal system among the Five Danish Boroughs of Mercia, among the Cinque Ports of Kent and Sussex, and in the Hansa of the Burghs of Scotland. We may see germs too of the dominion of the city, ruling, like Sparta or Bern, over surrounding subject districts, so long as the county of Middlesex neither chooses her Sheriffs herself nor receives them from the central government, but has to accept such Sheriffs as may be given her by the great neighbouring city. To that city which her inhabitants stand thus far in the relation which a Spartan knew as that of *περίοικοι* and a Berner as that of *Unterthanen*.

In the free cities of the continent in short we see what English cities might here grow into, if the royal power in England had been no stronger than that of the Emperors, and if England had therefore split up into separate states, like Germany, Italy, and Gaul. A city or borough, with its

organized municipal constitution, could, if the central power were either gradually or suddenly removed, at once act as an independent commonwealth. It is plain that a county could not do so with anything like the same ease. It has been the constant tendency to unity in England, the tendency to subordinate every local power to the common King and the common Parliament, which has made the difference between a municipality like Exeter and a commonwealth like Florence. And here, in this city of Exeter, reflexions of this kind have a special fitness. No city of England has a history which comes so near to the history of the great continental cities. No city in England can boast of a longer unbroken existence; none is so direct a link between the earliest and the latest days of the history of our island. None has in all ages more steadily kept the character of a local capital, the undisputed head and centre of a great district. And none has come so near to being something more than a local capital. None has had so fair a chance as Exeter once had of becoming an independent commonwealth, the head of a Confederation of smaller boroughs, perhaps the mistress of dependent towns and subject districts, ruling over her *περίοικοι* or *Untertanen* as Florence ruled over Pisa, as Bern ruled over Lausanne.

I think then that it is not with mere words of course that I may congratulate the members of this Institute on finding themselves at last within the walls—here it is no figure of speech to say within the walls—of the great city of Western England. For years we have been, like Swegen or William himself, knocking at the gates. At least we have stood outside, and we would have knocked at the gates, if any gates had been left for us to knock at. What has so long kept us out I know not; that is a question too deep for human powers to solve. One thing at least we know, that we have not, like Swegen or William, had to stand outside because the citizens of Exeter were not willing to receive us within. We have, wherefore no man knoweth, dealt with the Damnonian Isca as the last among the great cities of England, but it has assuredly not been because it is the least. We have seen York and Lincoln and Chester; and, if Exeter must yield to York and Lincoln and Chester in wealth of actually surviving monuments, it assuredly does not yield to any of them in the historic interest of its long annals. It has in

truth a peculiar interest of its own, in which it stands alone among the cities of England. Exeter is among cities what Glastonbury is among churches. It is one of the few ties which directly bind the Englishman to the Roman and the Briton. It is the great trophy of that stage of English Conquest, when our forefathers, weaned from the fierce creed of Woden and Thunder, deemed it enough to conquer and no longer sought to destroy.

The first glimpse of the city shows the traveller that it is one of a class which is common on the continent, but rare in England, and which among West-Saxon cities is absolutely unique. From Winchester onwards — we may say from Dorchester, for the forsaken sites must not be forgotten in the reckoning—the seats of the West-Saxon bishoprics, as a rule, lie low. Take the most familiar test; besides Exeter, Sherborne is the only one to which the traveller on the railway at all looks up, and to Sherborne he looks up far less than he looks up to Exeter. From Sherborne indeed the Lotharingian Hermann took a high flight to the waterless hill of the elder Salisbury; but Richard Poore redressed the balance by bringing church and city down into the plain of Merefield. Dorchester looks up at the camp on Sinodun; Winchester looks up at the place of martyrdom on St. Giles's hill. Wells crouches at the foot of Mendip; Glastonbury, on her sacred island, crouches at the foot of the Archangel's Tor. Bath has in modern times climbed to a height like that of Lincoln or Durham, but the site of her minster shows how the true Bath, the *Aquæ Solis* that Ceawlin conquered, the Old Borough where Eadgar wore his crown, was built, as the Jew says in Richard of the Devizes, "ad portas inferi." But Exeter at the first glance tells us another tale. The city indeed looks up at heights loftier than itself, but the city itself sits on a height rising far above railway or river. Exeter, *Isca*, *Caer Wisc*, is in short a city of the same class as Bourges and Chartres, as communal Le Mans and kingly Laon, as Lausanne and Geneva by their lake, as Chur and Sitten in their Alpine valleys. We have here, what we find so commonly in Gaul, so rarely in Britain, the Celtic hill-fort, which has grown into the Roman city, which has lived on through the Teutonic conquest, and which still, after all changes, keeps its place as the undoubted head of its own district. In

Wessex such a history is unique ; in all southern England London is the only parallel, and that but an imperfect one. The name carries on the same lesson which is taught us by the site. *Caer Wisc* has never lost its name. It has been Latinized into *Isca*, it has been Teutonized into *Exanceaster*, and cut short into modern *Exeter*, but the city by the *Exe* has, through all conquests, through all changes of language, proclaimed itself by its name as the city by the *Exe*. In this respect, the continuity of its being has been more perfect than that of most of the cities of northern Gaul. At *Rheims*, *Paris*, *Bourges*, a crowd of others, the name of the tribe has supplanted the true name of the city ; but *Isca*, like the cities of the south, like *Burdigala* and *Massalia*, has never exchanged its own name for the name of the *Damnonian* people. The name and the site of *Exeter* at once distinguish it from most of the ordinary classes of English towns. They distinguish it from Teutonic Marks which have grown into modern towns, and which, like *Reading* and *Basingstoke*, still keep the clan names of the *Rædingas* and *Basingas* : they distinguish it no less from Roman towns like *Bath* and *Chester*, which rose again after a season of desolation—from towns like *Wells* and *Peterborough*, which grew up under the shadow of some great minster—from fortresses or havens, like *Taunton* or *Kingston-on-Hull*, which sprang into life at the personal bidding of some farsighted King—from towns like *Durham* and *New Salisbury*, where church and city arose together as some wise Bishops sought, on the peninsular hill or on the open meadow, a home more safe either from foreign invaders or from unkindly neighbours. *Exeter* is none of these ; like *Lincoln* it stands on a site which Briton, Roman, and Englishman have alike made their own ; like *Lincoln* it is a city set on a hill, it has a temple built on high ; on the whole, *Lincoln* is its nearest parallel among the cities of England ; in some points the histories of the two present a striking likeness ; in others they present differences not less instructive than their likenesses.

Exeter then, as a hill-fort city, has, more than almost any other city of England, a close analogy with the ancient cities of Gaul. But there is another point in which the history of *Exeter* altogether differs from theirs. The Gaulish city has almost always been the seat of a bishopric from the days of

the first establishment of Christianity. The Cathedral Church and the Episcopal Palace stand, and always have stood, side by side, on the highest point of the hill on which the city stands. The city is indeed older than the Bishopric, because it is older than Christianity itself. But the Bishopric is something which was firmly established during the days of Roman dominion, something which, as far as the Teutonic conquerors were concerned, might be looked on as an inherent and immemorial part of the city. There had been a time when Bourges and Chartres and Paris had not been seats of bishoprics; but it was only as seats of bishoprics that their Frankish conquerors knew them. The Roman Bishopric, like so many other things that were Roman, lived on through the Teutonic conquest, and, except in the case of very modern unions and suppressions, it has lived on till our own day. In England, on the other hand, besides the union of some bishoprics and the division of others, there has been a wandering to and fro of the immediate seats of episcopal rule to which there has been no parallel in Gaul. In Gaul, not above two or three bishoprics have been moved—as distinguished from being united or divided—from their original seats; in England it is rather the rule than the exception that a bishopric should have changed its place once or twice since its foundation. The causes of these differences go very deep into the history of the two countries; I have spoken of them elsewhere, and I shall not enlarge upon them now. It is enough to say that the character of the English Conquest, as a heathen conquest, hindered any place within the proper England from being the unbroken seat of any Roman and Christian institution. Add too that in Britain, neither Celts nor Teutons, unused as both of them were to the fully-developed city life of the south, ever strictly followed the rule which was universal in Italy, Spain, and Gaul, of placing the seat of the Bishop in the chief town of his diocese. Hence, while on the Continent, the city and its bishopric are both, from a Teutonic point of view, immemorial,—that is to say, both existed before and lived through the Teutonic conquest—in not a few English cities the bishopric is a comparatively modern institution. The Bishop has not been there from the beginning; he has been placed there by the Confessor or by the Conqueror, by Henry the First or by Henry the Eighth,

or by virtue of an Act of Parliament which many of us are old enough to remember. So it is conspicuously at Exeter. The hill-fort has grown into the city; the city has lived through all later conquests; but the Bishopric is something which, in the long history of such a city, may almost seem a creation of yesterday. Bishops of Exeter have played an important part both in local and in general history; but the city of Exeter had begun to play an important part in the history of Britain ages before Bishops of Exeter were heard of. The episcopal church now indeed stands out only less conspicuously than Bourges or Geneva, as the roof and crown of the whole city; but for ages its predominance in the landscape must have been disputed by the castle on the Red Mount, and Isca had lived and flourished for a thousand years before its height was crowned with a stone of either minster or castle. Let us compare Exeter for one moment with two continental cities in which the points both of likeness and of unlikeness seem to reach their highest degree. As Exeter stands upon its hill, but is still surrounded by loftier hills that look down upon it, so the loftier heights of Chur and Sitten are looked down upon by the snowy peaks of the Pennine and Raetian Alps. Vast as is the difference of scale, there is a real likeness of position as compared with the isolated hill of Chartres, rising in the midst of its vast corn-land. Like the Damnonian Isca, Sedunum and Curia Rætorum are cities which have lived on from Roman to modern times. But in them, not only the city but the bishopric also, has lived on through all changes. And, following the common law of the bishoprics within the Empire, the Bishops of those cities grew to a height of temporal power to which no prelate, not the Palatine of Durham himself, ever reached in England, and which the Bishops of Exeter were among those who were furthest from reaching. At Chur the church and the palace of the Bishop, with its surrounding quarter, grew into a fortified Akropolis, where the Bishop still reigned as prince, even when the lower city had become independent of his rule. At Sitten, church and castle stand perched on the twin peaks of Valeria and Tourbillon. But the castle was the fortress, not of King or Duke, but of the prelate himself. In some English Bishoprics too the Bishop was, if not prince, at least temporal lord. At Wells, for

instance, the city simply arose outside the close, and its municipal franchises were the grant of its episcopal lords. At Exeter, where the Bishop came as something new into a city which had stood for ages, it was as much as he could do if he could maintain the exemption of his own immediate precinct, at all events when the civic sword was wielded by a Mayor of the ready wit and the stubborn vigour of John Shillingford.

It is not however my business to dwell at any detail on either the ecclesiastical or municipal history of the city. I had hoped that those two aspects of its history might have been dealt with in full at this Meeting by the two men who are the fittest in all England severally to deal with them. Such however is not to be our good luck, and it is not for me to try to supply their places. My business is with the city in its more general aspect. I have pointed out two of the characteristic features of its history, how it is rather continental than English in its position as a hill-fort city living out from Roman and British times, while it is specially English in the modern date of the foundation of its bishopric. The first question which now suggests itself is one which I cannot answer. When did the city first become a West-Saxon possession? When did the British *Caer-Wisc*, the Roman *Isca*, pass into the British *Exanceaster*? Of that event I can find no date, no trustworthy mention. The first distinct and undoubted mention of the city that I can find is in the days of *Ælfred*, where, as every reader of the *Chronicles* knows, it figures as an English fortress, and a fortress of great importance, more than once taken and retaken by the great King and his Danish enemies. I am as little able to fix the date of the English conquest of *Isca* as I am to fix the date of its original foundation by the Briton. John Shillingford tells us that Exeter was a walled city before the Incarnation of Christ, and, though it is not likely to have been a walled city in any sense that would satisfy either modern or Roman engineers, it is likely enough to have been already a fortified post before *Cæsar* landed in Britain. Nor can I presume to determine whether *Isca* ever bore the name of *Penholtkeyre*, a name suggestive of that neighbouring height of *Penhow*, of which I shall have again to speak. Nor can I say what was the exact nature of *Vespasian's* dealings with the city at the time when they are connected

in some mysterious way with the selling of thirty Jews—some say only their heads—for a penny. In a later age, another civic worthy, the famous John Hooker, tells us that Vespasian, when Duke under the Emperor Claudius, besieged the city by order of his master, but was driven away, like some later besiegers, by the valour of the citizens, and betook himself to Jerusalem as an easier conquest. These questions are beyond me; but the identity of the British *Caer-Wisc*, the Roman *Isca*, the English *Exanceaster*, is witnessed by a crowd of authorities. Still I know of no evidence to fix the point at which *Isca* became *Exanceaster*, any more than to fix the point when *Isca* came into being. As the story of Saint Boniface runs, we are told that he was born at *Crediton*, and brought up at *Exeter*. For his birth at *Crediton* I know of no ancient authority whatever. His education at *Exeter* rests on the reading of a passage in his biographer *Willibald*, where a name, which we should certainly understand to be *Exeter* if there were no reason to the contrary, is written in so many ways in different manuscripts as to make the case somewhat less strong when there are probabilities the other way to be set against it. I cannot myself bring the West-Saxon conquerors even to the borders of *Somerset* at any time earlier than the days of *Ine*, when the powerful King *Gerent* reigned over *Damnonia*, and when *Taunton* was a border fortress of the Englishman against the Briton. The point is one which I argued more fully last year before the local *Archæological Society* of my own county, whether this doubtful reading of *Willibald* is enough to outbalance the general consent of our evidence as to the progress of English conquest westward—whether it is by itself enough to make us believe that, somewhile before the end of the seventh century, *Isca* was already an English town, where an English-born youth could receive his education in an English monastery. I should myself be inclined to hold that the balance of probability lies the other way, and that *Isca* and the rest of *Damnonia* must have been conquered at some time between the days of *Ine* and the days of *Ecgberht*. It is certain that under *Æthelwulf* *Devonshire* was English, and that the men of *Devonshire*, as West-Saxon subjects, fought valiantly and successfully against the Danish invader. This is the first distinct mention I can find of the district as an English possession, while

the first distinct mention of the city, as I have already said, comes later in the same century, in the wars of Ælfred. But though it was English by allegiance, it was not till two generations later that the city became wholly English in blood and speech. In Æthelstan's day the city was still partly Welsh, partly English. We can, if we please, according to many analogies elsewhere, conceive the two rival nations dwelling side by side within the same enclosure, but separated again by enclosures of their own, Britons and Englishmen each forming a city within a city. To this state of things the Lord of all Britain, the conqueror of Scot and Northman, the lawgiver of England, deemed it time to put a stop, and to place the supremacy of the conquering nation in the chief city of the western peninsula beyond all doubt. Hitherto we may be sure that the English burghers had formed a ruling class, a civic patriciate. Now, strengthened doubtless by fresh English colonists, they were to become the sole possessors of the city. Exeter was a post which needed to be strongly fortified, and for its fortifications to be put in no hands but such as were thoroughly trustworthy. The British inhabitants were driven out, and, to the confusion of those who tell us that Englishmen could not put stones and mortar together till a hundred and forty years later, the city was encircled by a wall of square stones, and strengthened by towers, marking a fourth stage in the history of English fortification. Ida first defended Bamborough with a hedge or palisade; a later Northumbrian ruler strengthened it with a wall or dyke of earth. Eadward the Elder surrounded Towcester with a wall of stone; Æthelstan surrounded Exeter with a wall of squared stones. This is not theory, but history. If anyone asks me where the wall of Æthelstan is now, I can only say that a later visitor to Exeter took care that there should not be much of it left for us to see. Yet there are some small fragments, huge stones put together in clear imitation of the Roman nature of building, which may well enough be remains of the great wall of Æthelstan. But suppose that not a stone is left, suppose that Swegen left no trace of what Æthelstan reared, still, as I understand evidence, the fact that a thing is recorded to have been destroyed is one of the best proofs that it once existed.

Now the distinguishing point in this stage of the history

of Exeter is this, that it, alone of the great cities of Britain, did not fall into the hands of the English invaders till after the horrors of conquest had been softened by the influence of Christianity. Whatever was the exact date of the conquest of Devonshire, it was certainly after Birinus had preached the faith to that most heathen nation of the Gewissas, after Cynegils and Cwichelm had plunged beneath the waters of baptism, and had built the minster of Dorchester and the old minster of Winchester. When Caer-Wisc became an English possession, there was no fear that any West-Saxon prince should deal with it as Æthelfrith had dealt by Deva, as Ceawlin had dealt by Uriconium and Aquæ Solis, as Ælle and Cissa had dealt by Anderida. The Norman came to Exeter as he came to Pevensey, but he did not find the walls of Isca, like the walls of Anderida, standing without a dwelling-place of man within them. They did not stand, like the walls of Deva, again to become a city and a fortress after a desolation of three hundred years. When Isca was taken, the West-Saxons, as I before said, had ceased to be destroyers and deemed it enough to be conquerors. Thus it was that Exeter stands alone, as the one great English city which has lived an unbroken life from præ-English and even from præ-Roman days. Whatever was the exact date at which the city first became an English possession, it was with the driving out of the Welsh inhabitants under Æthelstan that it first became a purely English city. As such it fills, during the whole of the tenth and eleventh centuries, a prominent place among the cities of England, and a place altogether without a rival among the cities of its own part of England. The complete naturalization of the British city by the expulsion of its British citizens was accompanied by a meeting of the Witan of the whole realm within the newly-raised walls, and at that meeting one of the collections of laws which bear the name of Æthelstan was put forth. Later in the century we find the fortress by the Exe the chief bulwark of western England during the renewed Danish invasions of the reign of Æthelred. It is a spirit-stirring tale to read in our national Chronicles how the second millennium of the Christian æra is ushered in by the record which tells us how the heathen host sailed up the Exe and strove to break down the wall which guarded the city—how the wall of Æthelstan, defended by the valiant

burghers, bore up against every onslaught—"how fastly the invaders were fighting, and how fastly and hardly the citizens withstood them." It was no fault of those valiant citizens that, as ever in that wretched reign, the valiant resistance of one town or district only led to the further desolation of another. Exeter was saved, but the Unready King had no help, no reward, for the men who saved it; the local force of Devonshire and Somerset had to strive how they could against the full might of the invader; and the overthrow of Penhew and the wasting of the land around followed at once upon the successful defence of the city. The very next year Exeter became part of the morning-gift of the Norman Lady, and for the first time—a foretaste of what was to come before the century was out—a man of foreign blood, Hugh, the French churl, as our Chroniclers call him, was set by his foreign mistress to command in an English city. With no traitor, with no stranger, within their walls, the men of Exeter had beaten off all the attacks of the barbarians; but now we read how, through the cowardice or treason of its foreign chief, Swegen was able to break down and spoil the city, and how the wall of Æthelstan was battered down from the east gate to the west. I do not pretend to rule whether this means the utter destruction of the wall or only the destruction of two sides of it; but it is certain that sixty years later, when Exeter had to strive, not against Norman traitors within, but against Norman enemies without, the city was again strongly fortified according to the best military art of the times. It may be noticed that, in the description of Swegen's taking of Exeter, though we read of plundering and of breaking down the walls, we do not, as we commonly do when a town is taken, hear of burning. As a rule, houses in those days were of wood; and it is sometimes amazing how, when a town has been burned, we find it spring up again a year or two later, sometimes only to be burned again. Whether, in a city which was so early fortified with towers and walls of squared stones, other buildings, too, may not have been built of stone earlier than was usual in other places, I leave to local inquirers to settle.

After the capture by Swegen, we hear nothing more of the city itself during the rest of the Danish wars. Doubtless it submitted, along with the rest of western England, when

Æthelmær the Ealdorman of the Defnsætas, and all the Thegns of the west, acknowledged Swegen as King at Bath. In the war of Cnut and Eadmund the men of Devonshire fought on the side of England at Sherstone, but we hear nothing specially of the city. Our only knowledge of Exeter between the Danish and the Roman invasions consists of the fact of the foundation of the Bishopric, and of the further fact that the city which had been part of the morning-gift of Emma became also part of the morning-gift of her successor Eadgyth. The two facts are connected. The special relation of the Lady to the city accounts for the peculiar ceremony which, though the charter in which it is recorded is marked by Mr. Kemble as doubtful, can hardly be mere matter of invention. In that charter we are told that Leofric, the first Bishop of the new see, was led to his episcopal throne by the King and the Lady, the King on his right side and the Lady on his left, each of them taking him, if the words of the document are to be followed literally, not so much hand-in-hand as arm-in-arm. Here, as everywhere else in these times, in every expression and in every ceremony, the strong *Regale*, the undoubted ecclesiastical supremacy of the King and his Witan, or, to speak more truly, the identity of the nation and the national Church, comes out plainly. The Bishop is not only placed in his Bishopric by the King, but the Lady, as the immediate superior of the city, has her part in the ceremony. Exeter now became a city in the ecclesiastical as well as in the civil sense. And the change is one which is worthy of notice on many grounds. The foundation of the Bishopric of Exeter was accompanied by several circumstances which mark it as an event belonging to an age of transition. It was among the last instances of one set of tendencies, among the earliest instances of another. The reign of Eadward the Confessor is the last time in English history, unless we are to except the reign of Edward the Sixth, when two English bishoprics were joined together, without a new one being founded to keep up the number. Such an union had happened more than once in earlier times; it happened twice under Edward, when the Bishoprics of Devonshire and Cornwall, already held in plurality by Lyfing, were formally united under Leofric, and when the Bishoprics of Dorset and Wiltshire were united under Hermann. But this translation is also the first

instance of a movement which, like so many other movements, began under the Normannizing Eadward and went on under his Norman successors, a movement for bringing into England the continental rule that the Bishopric should be placed in the greatest city of the diocese. The translation of the see of Saint Cuthberht to Durham was not a case in point ; Ealdhun sought a place of safety, and chose one so wisely that a city presently grew up around his church. But the translation of the West-Welsh Bishopric from Crediton and Saint Germans or Bodmin to Exeter was the beginning of a system which was further carried on when the great Mid-English Bishopric was moved from Dorchester to Lincoln, and when the East-Anglian Bishopric was moved from Elmham, first to Thetford and then to Norwich. Again, the first Bishop himself represents in his own person more than one of the tendencies of the age. He represents the dominion of the Englishman over the Briton ; he represents the close connexion of the Englishman of that generation with his Teutonic kinsmen beyond the sea. Leofric, a native of his own diocese, is described as a Briton, that is, I conceive, a native of Cornwall. But, like the great mass of the landowners of Cornwall in his day, he bears a purely English name. Either he was the descendant of English settlers in the British land, or else he was the descendant of Britons who had so far gone over to English ways as to take to English proper names, just as the English, a generation or two later, took to Norman proper names. In either way, he represents the process through which the list which Domesday gives us of the landowners of his diocese in the days of King Eadward reads only one degree less English than the list of the landowners of Kent and Sussex. But Leofric, whether English or British by blood, was neither English nor British by education. His bringing up was Lotharingian, and he was the first prelate of his age to bring the Lotharingian discipline into England. He thus represents the high position which was held at the time, as seminaries of ecclesiastical learning and discipline, by the secular churches of Germany, by those especially of that corner of the Teutonic Kingdom which might be looked on as the border-land of Germany, Gaul, and Britain, and which drew scholars from all those countries alike. Leofric represents further that close connexion, especially in ecclesiastical matters, between

England and the Teutonic mainland which began under Æthelstan and Eadgar, which went on under Cnut, and which reached its height when Godwine and Harold found it an useful counterpoise to the Norman and French tendencies of King Eadward. Leofric again, in the constitution which he brought into his church, the stricter discipline of Chrodegang, marks the beginning of a tendency which was afterwards carried on by Gisa at Wells, and for a moment by Thomas at York, but which presently gave way to the system which Remigius brought from Rouen to Lincoln, and which, in theory at least, still remains the constitution of the Old-Foundation churches of England. Leofric survived the Norman invasion; he survived the great siege of Exeter, in which his name is not mentioned. Insular by birth, but continental in feeling, he was succeeded by almost the only one among the Norman settlers in England who became an Englishman at heart. Osbern, a son of the famous Gilbert of Brionne, a brother of the fierce Earl of Hereford, came to England, like so many of his countrymen, to seek his fortune at the court of King Eadward. Of him alone among the foreign prelates of that day we read that in his manner of life he followed the customs of England, and had no love for the pomp of Normandy. Of his English tastes we have still a negative witness among us. Through his episcopate, down to the fourth year of Henry the First, the church in which Englishmen had been content to worship still stood. The oldest parts of the present church of Exeter date only from the time of his successor.

The great ecclesiastical change of the eleventh century has carried us on, in point of date, beyond the great time which stands out above all others in the history of Exeter, the time when we may say that for eighteen days Exeter was England. The tale of the great siege I have told elsewhere in as full detail as existing records gave me the means of telling it, and I will not tell it in the same detail again. But the story of the resistance of the western lands and their capital to the full power of the Conqueror is one which ought never to pass away from the memories of Englishmen. The city, with its walls and towers again made ready for defence—the mother and the sons of Harold within its walls—the march of the Conqueror to the Eastern gate—the faint-heartedness of the leaders—the strong heart of the

commons, who endured to see their hostage blinded before their eyes—the resistance as stubborn against William as it had been against Swegen—the breach of the walls by arts which to the simpler generalship of Swegen were unknown—the escape of Gytha and her companions by the water-gate—the bloodless entry of the Conqueror—the foundation of the castle to curb the stout-hearted city—the raising of its tribute to lessen the wealth which had enabled it to resist—all form a tale than which, even in that stirring time, none, save the tale of the great battle itself, speaks more home to the hearts of all who love to bear in mind how long and hard a work it was to make England yield to her foreign master. Our hearts beat with those of the defenders of Exeter; we mourn as the mother of the last English King flees from the last English city which maintained the cause of the house of Godwine. But we see none the less that it was for the good of England that Exeter should fall. A question was there decided, greater than the question whether England should be ruled by Harold, Eadgar, or William—the question whether England should be one. When Exeter stood forth for one moment to claim the rank of a free Imperial city, the chief of a confederation of the lesser towns of the West—when she, or at least her rulers, professed themselves willing to receive William as an external lord, to pay him the tribute which had been paid to the old Kings, but refused to admit him within her walls as her immediate sovereign—we see that the tendency was at work in England by which the kingdoms of the Empire were split up into loose collections of independent cities and principalities. We see that the path was opening by which Exeter might have come to be another Lubeck, the head of a Damnonian Hansa, or another Bern, the mistress of the subject lands of the western peninsula. Such a dream sounds wild in our ears, and we may be sure that no such ideas were present in any such definite shape to the minds of the defenders of Exeter. But any such conscious designs were probably just as little present to the minds of those who, in any German or Italian city, took the first steps in the course by which, from a municipality or less than a municipality, the city grew into a sovereign commonwealth. Historically that separate defence of the western lands which ended in a separate defence of Exeter is simply a case of the way in

which, after Harold was gone, England was conquered bit by bit. York never dreamed of helping Exeter, and Exeter, if it had the wish, had not the power to help York. But it is none the less true that, when we see a confederation of western towns, with the great city of the district at their head, suddenly starting into life, to check the progress of the Conqueror, we see that a spirit had been kindled, which, had it not been checked at once, might have grown into something of which those who manned the walls of Exeter assuredly never thought. We cannot mourn that such a tendency was stopped, even by the arm of a foreign conqueror. We cannot mourn that the greatness of Exeter was not purchased at the cost of the greatness of England. But it is worth while to stop and think how near England once was to running the same course as other lands, how easily the Earls of Chester and Shrewsbury might have grown into sovereign princes, Margraves of their border principalities—how easily the Palatine Bishops of Durham might have grown into spiritual princes, like their brethren of Speier and Bamberg—how easily Exeter and Lincoln might have taken their places as the heads of confederations of free cities in the *Wealh-cyn* and among the Five Danish boroughs. From such a fate as this, from the sacrifice of the general welfare of the whole to the greater brilliance of particular members of the whole, we have been saved by a variety of causes, and not the least of them, by the personal character of a series of great Kings, working in the cause of national unity, from West-Saxon Ecgberht to Norman William. The tendency of the patriotic movements in William's reign was a tendency to division. The tendency of William's own rule was a tendency to union. The aims of the Exeter patricians could not have been long reconciled with the aims of the sons of Harold, nor could the aims of either have been reconciled for a moment with the aims of the partizans of the Ætheling Eadgar, of the sons of Ælfgar, or of the Danish Swegen. We sympathize with the defenders of Exeter, of York and Ely and Durham, but we feel that, from the moment when England lost the one man among her own sons who was fit to guide her, her best fate in the long run was to pass as an undivided kingdom into the hands of his victorious rival.

With the submission of Exeter to William we might fairly

end our tale of the place of Exeter in English history. It was now ruled for ever that the city by the Exe was to be an English city. It was to be no separate commonwealth, but a member of the undivided English kingdom, yet still a city that was to remain the undisputed head of its own district. Its history from this time, as far as I am concerned with it, is less the history of Exeter than the history of those events in English history which took place at Exeter. It still has its municipal, its ecclesiastical, its commercial history; it still had to strive for its rights against Earls and Countesses and Bishops; it still, in later days, could bear its share in the great seafaring enterprises of commerce and discovery. But from the entry of William, Exeter has no longer a separate political being of its own. It is no longer an object to be striven for by men of contending nations. It is no longer something which might conceivably be cut off from the English realm, either by the success of a foreign conqueror or by the independence of its own citizens. In the other sense of the words, as pointing out those events of English history of which Exeter was the scene, the place of Exeter in English history is one which yields to that of no city in the land save London itself. It was with a true instinct that the two men who open the two great æras in local history, English Æthelstan and Norman William, both gave such special heed to the military defences of the city. No city in England has stood more sieges. It stood one, perhaps two, more before William's own reign was ended, indeed before William had brought the conquest of the whole land to an end by the taking of Chester. The men of Exeter had withstood William as long as he came before them as a foreign invader; when his power was once fully established, when the castle on the Red Mount, reared by the stranger on the earthworks of earlier days, held down the city in fetters, they seem to have had no mood to join in hopeless insurrection against him. When, a year and a half after the great siege, the castle was again besieged by the West-Saxon insurgents, the citizens seem to have joined the Norman garrison in resisting their attacks. According to one account, they had already done the like to the sons of Harold and their Irish auxiliaries. The wars of Stephen's reign did not pass without a siege of Exeter, in which King and citizens joined to besiege the rebellious Lord of Rouge-

mont, and at last to starve him out within the towers which legend was already beginning to speak of as the work of the Cæsars. I pass on to later times; the Tudor æra saw two sieges of the city, one at the hands of a pretender to the Crown, another at the hands of the religious insurgents of the further West. Twice again in the wars of the next century do we find Exeter passing from one side to the other by dint of siege, and at last we see her receiving an invader at whose coming no siege was needed. The entry of William the Deliverer through the Western Gate forms the balance, the contrast, and yet in some sort the counterpart, to the entry of William the Conqueror through the Eastern Gate. The city had resisted to the utmost, when a foreign invader, under the guise of an English King, came to demand her obedience. But no eighteen days' siege, no blinded hostage, no undermined ramparts, were needed when a kinsman and a deliverer came under the guise of a foreign invader. In the army of William of Normandy Englishmen were pressed to complete the Conquest of England; in the army of William of Orange strangers came to awake her sons to begin the work of her deliverance. In the person of the earlier William the Crown of England passed away for the first time to a King wholly alien in speech and feeling; in the later William it in truth came back to one who was, even in mere descent, and yet more fully in his native land and native speech, nearer than all that came between them to the old stock of Hengest and Cerdic. The one was the first King who reigned over England purely by the edge of the sword; the other was the last King who reigned over England purely by the choice of the nation. The coming of each of the men who entered Exeter in such opposite characters marks an æra in our history. And yet the work of the two was not wholly alien to each other. The later William came to undo the work of the earlier, so far as it was evil, to confirm it so far as it was good. With the one began the period of foreign domination, which seemed to sweep away our ancient tongue and our ancient law. With the other began that period of internal progress, every step of which has been in truth a return to the old laws of England before the Norman set foot upon our shores. And yet, after all, William the Conqueror did but preserve what William the Deliverer came to

restore. His Conquest ruled for ever that England should remain an undivided kingdom, and, in so ruling, it ruled that the old laws and freedom, trampled on indeed but never trampled out, should live on, to spring up again in newer forms. When the one William renewed the Laws of Eadward, it was but a link in the same chain as when the other William gave his assent to the Bill of Rights. In the one case the invader came to conquer, in the other he came to deliver ; but, in both cases alike, the effect of his coming was to preserve and not to destroy ; the Conqueror and the Deliverer alike has had his share in working out the continuous being of English law and of English national life, The unwilling greeting which Exeter gave to the one William, the willing greeting which she gave to the other, marked the wide difference in the external aspect of the two revolutions. And yet both revolutions have worked for the same end ; the great actors in both were, however unwittingly, fellow-workers in the same cause. And it is no small place in English history which belongs to the city whose name stands out in so marked a way in the tale alike of the revolution of the eleventh century and of the revolution of the seventeenth. It is no small matter, as we draw near by the western bridge or by the eastern isthmus, as we pass where once stood the Eastern and the Western Gate, as we tread the line of the ancient streets, to think that we are following the march of the Conqueror or of the Deliverer. It is no small matter, as we enter the minster of Leofric and Warelwast and Grandison, to think that on that spot *Te Deum* was sung alike for the overthrow of English freedom and for its recovery. It is no mean lesson if we learn to connect with the remembrance of this ancient city, among so many associations of British, Roman, and English days, two thoughts which rise above all the rest, the thought that there is no city in the land whose name marks a greater stage in the history of the Conquest of England, that there is none whose name marks a greater stage in the history of her deliverance.