INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD CARLINGFORD TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INSTITUTE AT COLCHESTER.¹

My business and duty, and my pleasure, is to open the Congress, by what the programme calls an Address from the President of the Royal Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. Having undertaken many months ago to perform the responsible duty that now lies before me, I, with the usual folly of human nature, at the eleventh hour began to consider what these duties were, and I confess that that very late consideration has left me in a state somewhat of perplexity. At all events, the position of temporary and local President of the Royal Archaeological Institute is one of a somewhat complex and peculiar nature: I have the honour of finding myself for a moment at the head of this great Society, which makes Archaeology its object, and I find myself there without any of what may be supposed to be the necessary qualifications for the post—with nothing more than an ordinary country gentleman's smattering of History, Archaeology, or Architecture. But, as an old politician, and an old official, I am, perhaps, less surprised at finding myself in this position than some other people would have been. As a politician and a Parliament man, I know very well, as you probably do, that a politician at all events, may wake up in the morning and find himself Minister for War, without knowing anything about guns or soldiers, or First Lord of the Admiralty, without knowing anything about ships or sailors, and that is very much my position upon

¹ Delivered August 1st, 1876.
the present occasion. But I am bound to say that my tenure of office is even shorter than that which prevails with Secretaries of State, and First Lords, and Presidents of the Board of Trade, because it is limited to a week, in which I am afraid there is not very much professional knowledge to be acquired. I have been consoled a good deal in my position by being assured by my Archæological friends that very little is expected of their local President in the way of Archæology and Architecture. That expectation is founded, I believe, upon 33 years of experience in all parts of the British Isles, and highly as we may value the good City of Colchester, I do not suppose, at all events, I do not feel, myself to be an exception to that experience. More than that, I am bound to make a confession to you. I think I have detected in the faces of some of my Archæological friends belonging to what, in official language, I may call the permanent Archæological service, a certain dismay at the idea of their temporary President poaching upon their preserves, or venturing upon a professional Lecture upon the subject of Archæology and Architecture. Well, I can assure you that you need be under no feelings of dismay on that account. I am not going to inflict upon you a lecture upon the antiquities of Colchester or the neighbourhood; but I have another character to fill here, which I shall do my best to discharge. I am not merely a sort of First Lord of Archæology, with a week's tenure of office, but it is my business to endeavour to play a double part: I not only unworthily represent the Royal Archæological Institute, but I also represent the County of Essex, in an official capacity, and, especially on the present occasion, Colchester and that part of the County of Essex or land of the East Saxons, which lies within a few miles of us. I represent not only the visitors, but the visited; not only the Antiquaries who come to inspect us, but the antiquities that are to be inspected; not only the learned, but the ignorant; and in spite of some kind things that I have heard in the course of our varied proceedings of this day, I feel, I am bound to say, I am much more at home in the latter capacity, and I do
not think you will differ from me when I say that in that capacity I have the larger body of constituents. Upon the one hand, in this complex character I am trying to fulfil, as the representative for the moment of the Royal Archaeological Institute, I venture to say, and I am sure my noble friend Lord Talbot will bear me out when I say it, that the Institute has gladly and thankfully accepted the invitation to Colchester, that the Society is so well aware of the historical and architectural interest of the place and its neighbourhood, that it would have been ashamed of itself if it had omitted, in its peregrination round the great centres of historical interest in these Islands, to visit the City of Colchester, the ancient Camulodunum of the Romans. On the other hand, in my other honourable capacity as representative of the County of Essex, I say in your name that we are well aware ourselves of the objects of interest which are to be found here. We believe it is well worth while for the central Institute of Archæologists to pay us this visit; we know very well what a long train of historical memories and associations gather round the City of Colchester and its neighbourhood, and we feel a proper pride in their possession. The truth is that in and around this City—within a few miles—there are many most interesting memorials of the long and glorious history of our country, mainly, I must say, confined to the earlier portions of that great history. Here, in this City and its neighbourhood, the early races who inhabited our country played a great part, Briton and Roman, Saxon and Dane. There are many other parts of England in which the later history of the country is more fully and remarkably illustrated than it is here, but as to the earlier history of the Island I think my scientific friends around me will agree that there are few places of greater interest in the British Isles than the City and neighbourhood of Colchester. It is difficult, as one glides in the railway train through this rich, and peaceful, and smiling Essex, almost upon the track of the Roman road, to realise the scenes which have been enacted in this region; it is difficult to throw one's imagination back to that remote age when all that Britain, as it was then Britain, not England, all that Britain knew of Englishmen was that
they were an inconvenient set of free-booters, infesting what was called the Saxon shore in this immediate neighbour-hood. That was before the days when England was England, and what scenes and what figures have this place and neighbourhood witnessed since that distant day! It would be tedious to attempt for a moment, although it would be easy, to go through the list. If one thinks for a moment, one has, for instance, a Cymbeline, the British Chief Cunobelin, whose coins we can see and handle in the Museum here, and which, I believe, have been dug up over and over again; we can see the Emperor Claudius, with his elephants, tramping along, probably this very street of Colchester, to the astonishment of the northern people; we can see the grim figure of her of whom we have heard in our youth, Boadicea and her Iceni, sweeping down from what was to be first East Anglia, and then Suffolk and Norfolk, upon the Roman Colony in Colchester. I have a sort of infantine recollection of Boadicea, but it seems to me, upon comparing notes with younger people, that she has rather gone out of fashion in these days. Nevertheless, I believe that many men, who have reached that uncertain time of life that I have, will remember some traditions of the school-room, and certain lines of Cowper that they used to learn, about

"When the British warrior Queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods."

Anyhow, it is an historical fact that Boadicea is a great Colchester heroine, and that the fearful revenge which she and her British followers took for fearful wrongs, has been in its time one of the most extraordinary events that have been enacted upon British soil. Then we come to the times in which Colchester was secured against such dangers by Roman fortifications, and to the days which seem so short now, but which were long then—the days lasting for many generations and several centuries, during which Colchester was one of the foremost colonies and garrisons in the Island. Those times have utterly passed away, but they have left here many remarkable monuments, and when we see or handle a Roman brick or a
Roman coin, we are carried back in imagination to those almost incredible days, and we learn that the presence of the legionaries here was not a dream. After that we come to the time when Britain became England, and then during a length of centuries many stirring scenes were enacted in the neighbourhood of Colchester. It is well known that the East Saxons were among the very earliest conquerors and settlers of our race in the land of Britain, and it so happened that afterwards, in following centuries, some of the most bloody and fearful struggles that took place between the two great races who have formed the people and the language of England, were carried on within but a few miles of where we are now assembled. Anyone who has looked into that portion of the History of England will at once remember the names of Maldon and Assandune (Assingden), those two great battle fields which were the scenes of bloody fights in the days to which I am now alluding. One of these,—and one of the most interesting, Maldon—you will, if you please, have an opportunity of visiting during the excursions of this Society; and let me remind you that this particular fight has had the good fortune to be sung in one of the noblest monuments of the early language of England. These great struggles were scarcely known—I believe certainly not in their interest and importance, even to the educated people of England—until within a very few years; and the man who has made them known to us I am happy to say is sitting by me now. It is my friend, Mr. Freeman in his work "The History of the Norman Conquest," who has revealed to most of us the truth and the interest of that great period of our history. I am glad to welcome Mr. Freeman here into this land of the East Saxons. I have been accustomed rather to associate him with the land of Alfred and Wessex than with the land of the Trinobantes, or East Saxons; but he has made every part of England his own in working up the great drama of his History, and I have no doubt he is as much at home at Maldon as at Athelney or at Battle. Well, after the Norman conquest, to which in these desultory remarks I have now arrived, no doubt the interest of Essex somewhat fails. After the
Norman Conquest our monuments are less remarkable, and our historical associations less exciting. But still, during the long period of the Middle Ages, we have monuments which are good specimens and good records of the two great characters which strike the eye in that age—I mean the feudal Baron and the mitred Abbot. We have two great religious houses, or rather, the relics and remains of them, which you will no doubt visit, in Colchester itself; and we have, at all events, two magnificent and first-rate specimens of the keep of the Norman Baron—the one being that great Castle which lies within a few yards of us in this room, which I believe to be one of the most interesting buildings of its kind in the breadth and length of this island, made out of the abundant resources of the Roman materials which lay at the hand of the builder, within a very few years of the great events of the Norman Conquest. The other great Norman keep, which you will have the opportunity of visiting if you please, is the magnificent Castle of Hedingham, the head quarters of the great family of De Vere. I need hardly remind you of the burning times which succeeded this period—a very considerable interval—the time of the Civil Wars, in which Colchester played a great part. I have myself been visiting to-day the spots which saw the painful scenes of the siege of Colchester enacted; and I have seen that place especially in which one of the very few deeds was done by an exasperated conquerer—one of the very few cruel and unnecessary deeds which disgrace our civil wars—I mean the execution under the Castle wall, of the gallant defenders of Colchester. Many years elapsed after that terrible time, before Colchester regained and recovered its former aspect. There is a very interesting book—I don’t know whether it is known to you or not—written by De Foe; a little book of travels over England, a large portion of which he devotes to Essex and Colchester, written about the year 1722, and in that he describes Colchester as it then met his eyes, and he says that Colchester “is still mourning in the ruins of the civil war.” That certainly is not the case to-day; and let me say that it is a great happiness and great good fortune for this country, and for this Institute which is meeting here
to-day, that such an interval of peace and calmness has elapsed since those days, as enables us to deal with these questions, I hope with intense interest, but with impartiality and calmness. I take it that whatever our historical sympathies may be, there are few who do not find themselves able to give credit both to Cavalier and Roundhead of those days. There are few, at all events, who would feel like that very original and eccentric man who died lately, and whose memoirs were written the other day, the Vicar of Morwenstow, in Cornwall, who refused to admit that Milton was a poet; and had such a hatred of the Puritans that he said the only man who ever estimated him at his right value was the bookseller who offered him £10 for "Paradise Lost." I think there are few of us who will look upon the past with such heated minds as that, and that we shall be able to afford our pity and our pride, both for the Cavalier and the Ironside. These few remarks have referred, as you will see, to two of the branches which constitute the programme of this Institute; I mean History and Archaeology. With respect to Architecture, I believe that we have not quite so much to say for ourselves in this County of Essex. I believe we are not very rich in great specimens of the Architecture of England, either in the round-headed or pointed styles; and that, perhaps, not through any fault of our own, but from the important fact that in Essex we have always had a great deal of wood but no stone. And, as many of you know well, we have—I don't know whether in the immediate neighbourhood or not—a great many interesting Churches, in which timber, and magnificent ancient timber work, plays a great part; but I believe it to be true that in specimens of architecture we are not very rich. At the same time I am certain you will find quite enough to interest you in that department. At this point there is an observation I should like to make before I sit down. I should like to point out to you the value of the lesson read to us by the combination in the programme of this Institute of Architecture with History, and with Archaeology, for, as Tennyson says on another subject—

"These are three sisters friends to man,
Which never can be sundered without tears."
And while, on the one hand, History gets on very badly, and has made many blunders without the help of Archaeology, that is to say, the study of documents and books has got on very badly in the hands of men who have not had eyes to see, or who have not taken the trouble to examine, the records left on the face of the land by our forefathers; On the other hand—and this strikes me most forcibly—Architecture has done a good deal of mischief when separated from History and Archaeology. I know, from what I have heard in the course of the day, I am getting on rather delicate ground; nevertheless, I must say what I have to say on this point, and it seems to me that one of the foremost duties of this Institute is to endeavour to propagate, throughout the length and breadth of the land, what I may call the historic sense—the historic sentiment—a reverent feeling for the works of our forefathers. That propagandism seems to be our especial duty, and I hope the effect of such meetings as this will be to add new interest to our homes, fresh interest to our walks and our journeys—possibly, to enhance our affection for our country. But more than that, it ought, and I hope it will, teach many of us a reverent care for the works that have been handed down to us from our ancestors—the desire to preserve them against all dangers, including that which I am bound to call the peril of architectural restoration. We know the ravages that have been made by enlightened architects, in what is called the restoration of the ancient buildings, and, of course, especially of our ancient Ecclesiastical buildings. It is not only, as is ordinarily the case, a smattering of Architecture that is dangerous, but even a knowledge of Architecture, without the association of what I call the historic sense, the historic sentiment; that knowledge and that fancy has led to many lamentable deeds, and the sweeping away of what were supposed to be incongruities in a building, probably a Church, and in the endeavour to reduce all to some fancied standard of architectural correctness. We may hope that things are already very much improved in this respect; we may hope that the days have passed in which such things were done, as for example one which is denounced by my friend Mr. Freeman in that same great
book—and it has a connexion with this neighbourhood—when he tells you that the tomb of Brightnoth, the hero of the battle of Maldon—the tomb of that hero in Ely Cathedral was swept away, demolished, and his ashes scattered, by what the historian calls "the savages of the 18th century." Such a deed as that, I believe, will never happen again; but I feel convinced that our only security against such mistakes and ravages is that historic sense and feeling to which I have referred. It is not enough, it seems to me, to feel, with Wordsworth,

"The memorial majesty of time,"
in the case of great buildings and noble monuments; one wants to have the same feelings carried into all matters, small and great. One wants a certain tenderness for "old, unhappy, far-off things," and even for old and ugly things. Without that feeling, I believe, we shall have no safety in the work of restoration. Of course there will be doubtful cases, and ugliness sometimes reaches a point which becomes unbearable; but still, upon the whole, the only safety is to listen to the Muse of history, and she will always say "Let it alone." In connexion with that there is a question which I cannot pass before I sit down without one word of notice. It is the question of State interference in the preservation of our national monuments. This is a matter of practical and, I may say, Parliamentary interest. It was only to-day that I heard from the highest possible authority, Mr. Parker, that the Government of Italy has utterly outstripped us in this matter. The Government of Italy has recognised the duty of the State to preserve these national monuments, and has fulfilled the duty in a trenchant manner, which is undoubtedly alien to our English ideas, and which I shall not attempt to recommend, at all events in a manner which I should not have the pluck to stand up and support before either the House of Commons or the House of Lords. But a distinguished English antiquary has been endeavouring to preserve our national monuments in an extremely cautious and prudent way, and I confess I find it impossible to fill even for a moment the honourable position of President of this Institute without saying a word of appeal on behalf of Sir John Lubbock's Bill. I do not know what the object and duty of such an Institution or of such a meeting
as this is if we do not do something in behalf of that measure. I am sorry to say, and I do not think it creditable to the House of Commons, that that measure has failed again; it has not been rejected, and therefore there is every hope for the future; but it has not succeeded. Of course one knows the difficulty with the noble British sense of the rights of property, but we know that the wholesome feeling can be, upon occasions which seem to the public sufficient, made to give way to the public interests, and whenever one-fiftieth part of that feeling, which over-rides the rights of property for the sake of a new railway, a road, or a drain, shall be applied to our national monuments, this measure of Sir John Lubbock will pass without any difficulty. In the meantime I hope that we, at all events, all in this room, will give it the support it deserves. I am not going to detain you any longer. I have endeavoured to fulfil the duty of making a sort of ceremonial address upon these subjects, the interest of which, little as I know of them, I feel very strongly, but I now have the pleasure of handing you over to the severer discipline of the Vice-Presidents, and I trust that as they will find, as I believe they will, much in this city and its neighbourhood to interest them, so we shall find much to learn from them; and I sincerely hope that the week which has begun so successfully to-day will be one of pleasure and profit to its end, and that neither the Institute, nor the people of Colchester and its neighbourhood, will then have any other feeling than one of mutual congratulation.