The Archaeological Journal.

DECEMBER, 1871.

ADDRESS UPON THE HISTORY OF CARDIFF AND THE SURROUNDING DISTRICT.[1]

By the Most Noble the Marquis of BUTE.

In assuming the office which has been conferred upon me, I feel that it would be unseemly did I not make it my first duty to tender my thanks for being placed in this position. I beg leave now to do so, and to express my hope that no effort of mine may be found wanting to respond to the confidence which is reposed in me. I am well aware how inferior the result of those efforts must be to that which would be offered by many whose experience and knowledge are necessarily greater than mine. It is not without trepidation that I find myself exalted into a temporary Presidency, of however formal a character, among the distinguished antiquaries who are here drawn together. I beseech the indulgence of the members of the Institute for the faults which I can scarcely avoid committing, and I may say that however imperfect my discharge of the offices connected with the Presidency of the meeting may be, the will is not wanting to make it more adequate.

We, in the ancient Lordship of Morganwg, and especially in the town of Cardiff, congratulate ourselves upon the visit of the Institute, with the hopes which it brings us of the elucidation of our history and the skilful investigation and preservation of our antiquities. And we have, moreover, to congratulate ourselves on this, that we do not receive the Institute in a field which is either barren or likely to be unfruitful in those objects to which they are assembled to direct

[1] Read at the opening of the Annual Meeting at Cardiff, July 25, 1871, on taking the office of President of the Meeting.

their attention. While it is better for me to leave to others the scientific criticism of our legends and our history, and the more technical description of our monuments, in which I should necessarily fail, I cannot but rejoice that we are not wanting in that which must be the subject of their labours. The early beginnings of this place are enveloped in the golden, if confusing and illusory haze, which in all countries, but more especially here, covers those ages which the myths of centuries have peopled with heroic shadows. But I think we may say of these great legends, as has been well written of the worst of apocryphal gospels, that even when we may know them to be untrue, the subjects still invest them with interest. In shortly alluding to these and to later and more sober history, I may be excused if I confine myself more particularly to Cardiff. The great earthworks of the castle and the derivation by some of the name of Caerdydd from "Castra Didü" would, according to that story, lead us back into the first century, as being the legendary period of the foundation of Cardiff, and which the scanty Roman remains that have been found here are called in to support. This region is the home of the legend of Llewrwg Mawr, Lord of Morganwg, Lucius the "Light-bringer," to whom is attributed the bloodless conversion of his kingdom, and the establishment of that See of Llandaff whose limits are said to coincide with the borders of his dominions. From hence he is said to have sent to S. Eleutherius for missionaries, and to have received in return Fagan, Medwy, Dofan and Elfan, whose names have memorials in the churches of this neighbourhood. Here he is said to have laid down his crown, happy in the knowledge that his work among his nation was ended, and to have laboured in bearing the light to other peoples, till he found a distant grave in the church of Coire in Switzerland. I have a missal of the church of Coire, printed in 1497, the only copy of the existence of which I am aware, and it appears to me evident that upon whatever grounds, the belief of the inhabitants was that the preacher whose remains are described as resting in that Cathedral was the same Lucius who is termed the enlightener of Morganwg. The Gospel read on his feast commences with the words "Behold we have left all things, and have followed Thee;" and it is again markedly said "Thou hast set upon his head a crown of precious stones," which appears

to me to mean more than is usually attributed to it in this position. There is a passage full of puns upon the word Lucius, and at the end of the book there is a sequence of considerable poetic merit, though in very strange Latin, containing one or two words which I never learnt at school. In it I think Wales is meant by the word "Gallia," as it is still called in French "Pays de Galles," and the language "Gallois." Britain also is apostrophised by name as the happy mother of such a son.

In Cardiff is laid the scene of one of the best known incidents which figure in the heroic cycle of the Arthurian Romances. The battle of the Sparrow-hawk, which forms a feature in Tennyson's "Enid," is described in twelve pages of the history of Geraint in the Mabinogion; and at last when the defeated knight goes to ask pardon of Guinivere, the Queen asks him where Geraint overtook him, and he answers, "at the place where we were jousting, and contending for the Sparrow-hawk in the town which is now called Cardiff." The lordship of Morganwg finally passed out of native hands in 1090, and the scene of the last disastrous battle is fixed at Mynydd Buchan, the Heath, about a couple of miles from this spot. While I am not called upon to offer any historical criticism upon this event, I think I may oblige some of my hearers by repeating the story of the revolution, as it is commonly told. Jestyn ap Gwrgan, Lord of Morganwg, who is said in 1080 to have built largely at Cardiff, and after whom the keep or great tower at the castle is properly called, was in 1090 engaged in a war with Rhys ap Tewdwr, Lord of South Wales, and in an evil hour promised his daughter Nest in marriage to Einion, called the Traitor, if he would procure him Norman assistance. Einion accordingly was the means of bringing into Wales Sir Robert Fitzhamon and the twelve Knights of Glamorgan, from some of whom families in this county still trace their descent. The armies met at Hirwain. Rhys was defeated, and beheaded at a place thence called Pen Rhys to this day. The Normans were paid for their services, and embarked at Penarth to return home. There, however, they lay waiting for a fair wind, when the Traitor, who found his Prince unwilling to give him his daughter, persuaded them to return and seize the Lordship for themselves. The fatal engagement took place at the Heath. Jestyn fled to Somersetshire,

Nest was given over to Einion, and Fitzhamon seated himself at Cardiff as Lord of Glamorgan, in which capacity he issued several charters still extant. The adventurers divided the country among them, but all had lodgings within the Castle of Cardiff. The Lordship passed by the marriage of Fitzhamon's only daughter into the hands of the Earls of Gloucester, and in a few years afterwards Cardiff became the scene of that historical imprisonment which brings its name into every History of England. In the year 1108 Henry I. having taken prisoner his eldest brother, Robert Duke of Normandy, imprisoned him in Cardiff Castle, where he was confined for twenty-six years, until his death in 1134. As he is said to have been at Devizes in 1128, when his son was killed, it is possible that he was occasionally allowed to change his abode. The authentic records concerning his imprisonment are very few and scanty, and it may be hoped that the gross cruelties, such as putting out his eyes, with which it is said to have been accompanied, are without actual foundation. Such stories, however, were rife at the time, and in the year 1119, when Pope Callixtus II. met Henry I. at Gisors, he remonstrated with the King upon his treatment of his brother. Henry replied that, "As for his brother, he had not caused him to be bound in fetters like a captive enemy, but treating him like a noble pilgrim worn out with long sufferings, had placed him in a Royal castle, and supplied his table and wardrobe with all kinds of luxuries and delicacies in great abundance." We may hope that, in the words of William of Malmesbury, "He was kept by the laudable affection of his brother in free custody till the day of his death, for he endured no evil but solitude, if that can be called solitude where, by the attention of his keepers, he was provided with abundance, both of amusement and food." The same writer says of him, "He was so eloquent in his native tongue that none could be more pleasant; in other men's affairs no counsellor was more excellent; in military skill equal to any; yet through the easiness of his disposition, he was ever esteemed unfit to have the management of the State." The mention of his eloquence leads me to a circumstance which, I think, I ought to mention here. It is said that Robert set an example, which I wish were more widely followed, by learning the language of the people among whom he lived, and a poem in that language is

attributed to him. It is a sonnet, said to be addressed to a solitary oak, which stood alone on Penarth Head. I sincerely apologise to the meeting for my inability to recite this poem in the original. I am therefore obliged to substitute for it the following translation by Mr. Taliesin Williams, which first appeared in the notes to his poem of "Cardiff Castle." The heading is, "When Robert Prince of Normandy was imprisoned in Cardiff Castle, by Robert, son of Amon, he acquired the Welsh language, and seeing the Welsh bards there at the festivals, he admired them and became a bard," and these are the verses which he composed :—

"Oak that grew on battle mound
Where crimson torrents drenched the ground;
Woe waits the maddening broils where sparkling wine goes round.

Oak that grew on verdant plain,
Where gushed the blood of warriors slain;
The wretch in hatred's grasp may well of woes complain.

Oak that grew in verdure strong,
After bloodshed's direful wrong;
Woe waits the wretch who sits the sons of strife among.

Oak that grew on greensward bourn,
Its once fair branches tempest torn;
Whom envy's hate pursues shall long in anguish mourn.

Oak that grew on woodcliff high,
Where Severn's waves to winds reply;
Woe waits the wretch whose years tell not that death is nigh.

Oak that grew through years of woes,
Mid battle broils' unequalled throes;
Forlorn is he who prays that death his life may close."

In 1134 Robert died at Cardiff, and is stated to have been carried to Gloucester, and "buried with great honours in the pavement of the church before the altar." I went recently to that splendid church, but the site of Robert's grave is now forgotten. On the walls of the chapter-house have been discovered some blank shields, with inscriptions over them commencing "Hic jacet," followed by a name. They are possibly the names of persons buried in that church for whose souls there were foundations. One of them bears, "Hic jacet Robertus," &c. In one of the chapels of the apse is a large wooden image, said to represent the unfortunate prince. Without entering into any question of its date, which is hard to tell since it has been

gaudily painted at some recent period, I may merely remark that it was possibly used in funeral ceremonies. It does not claim to be contemporary, though it is recorded that an effigy was used at the funeral of Henry I. in 1136. The attitude is violent, and, unless my memory fails me, exactly the same as that of an ancient stone image on the tomb of a Templar in Dorchester church, near Oxford.

With the death of Robert, Duke of Normandy, ceases that period which I may be permitted to call the more picturesque. Into the genealogy and dates upon which the tamer, if more reliable history is constructed, I beg leave to allow more skilled workmen to enter, touching merely upon one or two leading statements. In the year 1158, the Welsh, under Ivor Bach, founder of Castle Coch and Morlais, are said to have resisted the oppressions of the Normans by an armed and successful attack upon Cardiff. The Welsh leader, says Giraldus, "after the manner of his people, had a property in the woods and mountains, of which the Earl of Gloucester strove to gain possession. The Castle of Cardiff is mightily defended with walls which ring by night with watchmen's cries. It is garrisoned by 120 soldiers, and a strong force of archers, and the paid retainers of the lord filled the town. Nevertheless, the said Ivor placed ladders by stealth against the wall, gained possession, and carried off the Earl, the Countess, and their only son to his own woodland fastnesses where he held them prisoners till he not only recovered that of which he had unjustly been deprived, but wrung from them concessions besides." In Cardiff came the first of those warnings which are said to have preceded the misfortunes of the later days of Henry II. Upon Low Sunday, in 1171, after church, the King was going out riding. An old man, "yellow haired, with a round tonsure, thin, gaunt, clothed in white, barefooted," addressed him in English, and bade him stay while he forbade him in the name of Christ, of the Holy Virgin, of St. John the Baptist and St. Peter, to tolerate throughout his realm buying and selling, or any work beside necessary cooking on the Lord's Day. "Which command if he should obey, his undertakings should be prosperous." The King in French desired the groom who was holding his horse to "ask the clodhopper where he dreamt all that" (*inquire a rustico si ista somniaverit*). The question being put in English, the Seer answered in the

same language that whether he had dreamt it or not, if the king rebelled against his message he should hear that, within the year, of which he should suffer to the day of his death ; and within the year, says the writer, he heard that his sons had leagued against him. Under Edward I. the lordship of Glamorgan was assumed by the King on the pretence of a dispute about the boundary of the county at Morlais, which has only been settled in this nineteenth century, and he re-granted it with greatly weakened powers. With the death of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, killed by the Scotch at Bannockburn, the lordship of Glamorgan passed through his eldest sister to the Despensers, to whose taste and munificence we owe the once splendid castle of Caerphilly —at that time a far more important town than this. In the year 1404 the town and castle of Cardiff were almost entirely destroyed by Owen Glendwr. We are told that he besieged the town and castle, "and they that were within sent for help to the king, but he came not, nor sent them any succour." Owen then took the town of Cardiff, and burnt the whole of it, except the street where the Grey Friars' Convent was, which street and convent he spared, because of his love for those brethren. Then he took the castle, and destroyed it, and took away the great wealth which was therein, and the Grey Friars petitioned to have restored to them their books and chalices, which were in the castle for safety, and he answered them, "Wherefore have you stored your goods in the castle ? If ye had kept them in your house they had been safe." Isabel, heiress of the Despensers, married secondly Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, in the reign of Henry VI. In this family the lordship remained till it went by the Lady Ann of Warwick, wife of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, to the Crown, when he became Richard III. The lordship passed with the Crown to Henry VII., who made a grant of it to Jasper, Duke of Bedford, but upon his decease it again reverted to the Crown, and descended to Henry VIII. Edward VI. inherited it, and sold it to Sir William Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke.

With the renaissance I feel that that period, to the investigation of whose monuments your attention will be particularly called, ends. Had I a mind to weary you by any further remarks, I should have but little to say. In the

reign of Mary a person of the name of Rawlins White was burnt in Cardiff, at the instigation of the Bishop of Llandaff. There is an account of it by Fox, but the Archdeacon of Llandaff informs me that the Cathedral body have lost the original records of their proceedings on the occasion. In the reign of Elizabeth the inhabitants had sunk very low, and were given up to rioting and piracy. In January, 1577, John Davids, J.P., "excuses himself for not arresting Callice, the pirate, as Cardiff is the general resort of pirates, where they are sheltered and protected." In April, however, in the same year, Fabian Phillips and Thomas Lewys detail to the Council their proceedings in the examination of upwards of sixty of the pirates and their maintainers at Cardiff, and complain of the difficulties of their service, the townspeople being unwilling to give any information. A certain number of witnesses were, however, procured, and in the following year the Council obtained a confession from the men of Cardiff of their dealings in piracy, and a note is preserved of the charges to be brought against the prisoners. Some miscarriage of justice must have taken place if the same prisoners are meant when the Lords of the Admiralty were asked, in 1629, for a commission to try the twenty-three poor prisoners who then remained in Cardiff gaol for piracy. Iniquity at this dark period invaded even the Judicial Bench. In 1587 William Matthew, Justice of the Peace, being accused of the murder of Roger Phillips, at Cardiff, sent in a medical certificate to say that his health was too delicate to allow him to appear, but the Council of the Marches complain that he had immediately gone to London. In 1602, a brisk trade in cannon, for the use of the Spaniards, was being carried on. At the time of the Civil War the inhabitants turned their attention to politics, in which they were much divided. The town and castle were occasionally occupied by different factions, and the castle was once cannonaded by the Republicans. Charles I. came to Cardiff, whence he dates a letter to Prince Rupert, in August, 1645. There is an account in Clarendon of the difficulties which he experienced. He left Cardiff and went over the mountains to Brecknock, where he writes to the Prince of Wales, August 5th. It is unnecessary for me to allude further to the complicated events of this period, the most important of which was perhaps the battle of St. Fagan's. A person

named Evan Lewis played a remarkable part under the Commonwealth. In 1662 he was arrested for being in London contrary to the proclamation, and Walter Lloyd furnishes a description of him, in which he says, "he was indicted for highway robbery, fled to Eliz. Price, of Glamorganshire, who entertained him as a servant to her son John Price, one of the judges who condemned Col. Gerard and Dr. Hewitt to death. He then became governor of Cardiff, a sequestrator, committee man, and member of Parliament, and obtained signatures to an address for the murder of the late King, and to another justifying the same."

After the Restoration things must have remained at a very low ebb. In 1661 the civic authorities of Cardiff represented that they were already reduced to great poverty and on the verge of ruin in consequence of the wealth and prosperity of Caerphilly, and they procured the prohibition of the fair held there every three weeks; nor am I aware that that town ever after became of importance till the opening of the minerals up the country. Towards the latter end of the seventeenth century the system begun by the burning of Rawlins White was pursued by persecuting the Quakers and the Baptists, amongst whom Vavasor Powell is the most distinguished name. In concluding these remarks, with which I hope that I have not worn out your patience, I cannot but utter a word of regret at the total destruction of old St. Mary's Church, once finer than St. John's, by flood, and of the ancient walls and gates by the barbarism of men; to which latter cause we must assign the disappearance of the Blackfriars and the house of the Herberts at Grey Friars, as well as the appalling transformation of the castle at the beginning of this century. While engineering might have successfully resisted the encroachments of nature, it is your office by antiquarian education to raise around our monuments a bulwark against the ravages of the human destroyer. Would that our lost treasures had survived to receive a new lease of life from your presence. For those that remain we would fain hail the advent of the Institute as a good omen. Finally, I would again say with how much pleasure we greet you, and how heartily the Institute is welcome—while I must for myself again ask the indulgence of the members for what I fear will be a very inefficient discharge of the duty of President of the meeting.