INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER, K.G., TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INSTITUTE, HELD AT CHESTER.[1]

It is no light duty to be president of an archæological meeting such as this, in the presence of those who are experts in their several departments. To the qualifications which they possess I have no pretensions, but if you will excuse my shortcomings, and give me your indulgence while I read a few sentences on the archæology of the district, I shall be very much obliged to you. It is my privilege, as Lord-Lieutenant of the County Palatine, to welcome to the ancient city of Chester the Royal Archæological Institute of Great Britain. The association of this city in which we are assembled, the "heir of all the ages" as we regard it, remind us that archæology, "the science of past time," is, after all, a comparative term; for, though we can carry back our history for several centuries, such antiquity is comparatively modern by the side of the antiquity of Egypt, Assyria, and China, which were at the pinnacle of greatness when the Roman power was yet in the womb of time.

It is not my purpose in this address to enlarge upon the value and importance of archæological study—the position it should hold in a well-planned system of liberal education; its relation to historical study—the light it throws upon the past ages—the bearing it has upon politics, which appears so essentially a science of the present time, though a moment's thought will suffice to show that the present cannot be dissociated from the past out of which it has grown, and that the study of the past can at least teach us what to avoid, if we cannot always find something to admire and imitate. Archæology has

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been often the subject of some pleasantry, because at times its too ardent students have given rein to their speculative genius in the region of the absolutely unknown. There is, however, abundance of work, interesting and valuable, in seeking to establish accuracy about facts supposed to belong to the region of the known, and in discussing the conclusions drawn from those facts in the light afforded by recent discoveries. This we may do with advantage as regards Chester, which is very much more than a mere name. I agree with the opinion that it is far more interesting to look upon a town not as a place where a church or a castle can be found, but as having its own personal history, like any individual inhabitant, differing only in this—that it counts its time not by decades of years but by centuries; and that, while generations of citizens pass away and disappear for ever, the old city, like a Phœnix, may find ever-renewed life even out of its ashes.

A glance back over the facts known of the history of this old city shows how important a place it was, as might be expected from its commanding position; and what stirring scenes it has witnessed during the last nineteen centuries. We are told how, as early as A.D. 43 and 48, it had its share in the military arrangements of the Roman commanders Aulus Plautius and Ostorius Scapula —how it was the *point d'appui* of Suetonius in his expedition against the Druids of Anglesea—the headquarters of the Victorious Legion, the legion whose vexillarii took an important part in the defeat of Boadicea, the brave British Queen. We know that while Jerusalem, the Holy City, was being besieged and destroyed (A.D. 70), Chester streets resounded with the tramp of Roman legions—that tribute was being brought from the conquered British tribes, some never reaching the Roman treasury, but sinking, on its way thither, to the bottom of the river, only to be found some 1800 years afterwards, like the pig of lead discovered the other day by the Gasworks at Chester, the exact counterpart of that preserved at Eaton, and stamped with the date of the Emperor Vespasian, and with the name of the tribe Ceangi, whose tribute it was.

Our archœological friends find traces of this occupation, not only in the name of Chester, Castra, the camp *par*

excellence (the Welsh called it Caer Lleon Vawr, *i.e.*, the camp of the Great Legion), but also in the arrangement of the streets: the inscribed altars, which have been dug up ; the hypocaust ; the crocks of coins ; the great roads leading to and from the city which, in a manner so characteristic of those who constructed them, still strike like arrows over hill and plain, unswervingly and perseveringly, to their point. I might be expected to have added to this list of the relics of Roman occupation, the Walls. We shall hope to hear this week some authoritative opinion on the question of the Walls—how far they are Roman. The city must have had some walls. But do any traces of those Roman Walls remain, and are they to be found *in situ*? We shall hope to hear from our learned visitors about the Ceangi, whose home comprised three of the North Welsh counties, Carnarvon, Denbigh, and Flint ; about the long dark period (476-900) which followed when the Roman occupation ended, and the 20th Legion and others were withdrawn finally from Britain because of the troubles near at home. Was that withdrawal, the end of the military occupation, an advantage to this country ? We imagine not. The strong hand was needed then, if ever. They were troublous times, we may conjecture from the two or three facts which are known to the ordinary reader (the references to civil war among the several chieftains, and the appeals to the Romans for assistance, "The Groans of the Britons.") Then, again, about the Irish pirates (or Scots as they were then called) who devastated the Western shores ? How often must they have come with fire and sword, harrying and carrying ? Was there then any other connection or traffic with Ireland ? Was Chester as important a trading centre in the second century as York is said to have been at that time, when the wines of the Levant, the woollens of Asia Minor, the purple of Tyre, the cambric of Cos, the spices of India, the slaves of Africa, the silks of China, were as abundant on the Ouse as they were on the Tiber ? What about the laws and institutions after the Roman withdrawal ? Were they Roman or Celtic ? What was the language spoken ? Did the Latin language take any hold upon the country at that time ? Was the religion Christian or

heathen? Were any left in Britain of those Christian soldier-converts to whom St. Paul had preached as a prisoner at Rome?

We come down to the Danish occupation. The desolation, when the Danes came on the scene, must have been sad and pitiable. Chester was a ruined city in 895 when the Danes, flying before Alfred the Great, took refuge in it, and attempted to defend the place against the King. They soon retreated to North Wales, and left it ruined, for they were no restorers.

In this ruined state Chester continued until the Amazon Ethelflœda, Alfred's daughter, "Lady of the Mercians" (who built castles at Eddisbury, Runcorn, and elsewhere), restored and beautified it, and repaired the walls, following the line of the Roman fortifications. How far are the existing walls hers, or even of later date?

Some seventy years later (971) we come to a grand epoch in our city's history. Will archæologists come here to tell us that the tale is not true which is so flattering to our pride? Did Edgar, "the Emperor of Britain," make his six or eight feudatory princes (Kenneth King of Scotland, Malcolm of Cumberland, Maccus of the Isles, and five Welsh princes) row him (as we read in Campbell's Histories of British Admirals) up the Dee in a barge to St. John's Church? Again, what have they to tell us of the course of the Dee; did it cover, near the city walls, a wider area or follow a different channel? What light is thrown by the name Ince (Ynys, Welsh for island), and the claim of the Abbot of St. Werbugh in Edward III.'s reign to the sea?

We come to a better known period—the time of the Norman Conquest. We are proud to remember that Chester stood out to the last—"the one great city"—against the Norman invader, but it was at last taken and given to Hugh Lupus on condition that he should keep the Welsh marauders in check. But even here we have to ask (1) What are we to believe about the tradition of Harold's surviving his wounds at the battle of Hastings, and spending his remaining days as an anchorite in a cell near St. John's Church? His wife Algitha, we may remember, was the grand-daughter of Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and Lady Godiva, and in this way he had some

connection with Cheshire. (2) Were the forests which covered so large an extent of Cheshire, not only the great Delamere Forest [of Mara] but that which made Wirral a desolate waste, until they were cleared away by the energetic prudence of Edward III in his campaigns against the Welsh—did these exist in Roman and Saxon times, or were they planted by the forest-loving William? Such a question suggests the difference between the Cheshire of that region and the Cheshire of to-day. Instead of trim, well-cultivated fields, and pastures for cattle and sheep, and comfortable homesteads, a wild, half-reclaimed country with few habitations, and those few miserably built—a huge forest reaching from above Worcester to meet Delamere—the wild bull and boar, wolf and bear, its dangerous tenants.

Stoutly though Chester resisted William the Conqueror, once brought under Norman rule, it became intensely loyal and a strong bulwark of his power. Few places so far distant from the metropolis have been more highly honoured by visits from royal and distinguished persons, or have received more frequent marks of favour, than Chester. A port when Liverpool was a creek in it, Pennant speaks of Chester as "a constant rendezvous for troops and *place d'armes* for every expedition on this side." Thus Edward I. visited Chester in 1282-3-4. Here in 1300 he received the final submission of the Welsh; Edward II. came here in 1312; the Black Prince in 1353 to protect the justices. In 1394 Richard II. selected 2,000 Cheshire archers as his body guard. But loyal as Chester folk were, we must not forget that the population became somewhat mixed. An asylum or sanctuary was established to which felons flocked. So great a nuisance did it become that in Henry IV.'s reign complaint was made to the King of "the many murders, robberies, batteries, and other riot done by the people of the county of Chester to divers of the King's liege people in divers counties of England." Lewis Glyn Cothi, a Welsh bard, describes Chester as "the habitation of the seven deadly sins." We may well congratulate ourselves on the peaceful times of Queen Victoria—thankful that law and order prevail; that the intolerable miseries and sorrows of the

poorer classes in those early times have been abated, the sense of insecurity removed; that it would not be necessary now to fear, as in 1130, the irruption of the Welsh, which made Pulford so unpleasant a residence for the monks that they migrated to Dieu La Cresse, or, to qualify leases and warranties (as may be seen from deeds in the Muniment Room at Eaton of the time of Edward II.), with the condition that "peace continued." The lessee in 1299 was bound to keep up the buildings *nisi tempore guerre fuerint combusta*, unless they should have been burnt in time of war; and rents were payable only *tempore pacis*. The arrangements for the excursions of the members remind me that the present jurisdiction of the County Palatine is much circumscribed. Once a part of the great kingdom of Mercia, ruled at one time by Penda, the champion of heathendom, before whom one Christian King after another had fallen—later by Offa (757-819), on equal terms with Charlemagne, by whom he was styled "the mightiest potentate of the West"—then by Edgar, of whom we have spoken, this city could not fail to have been the scene of many battles and sieges. Under the Palatine Earl, if not before, the county included a portion of Wales within its jurisdiction. When, therefore, we visit Rhuddlan Castle, we shall not be going out of the boundaries, if we may say so, of Old Cheshire. Rhuddlan was given by Hugh Lupus to his warlike lieutenant, and in later days was held by a Cheshire knight, Randall, with a motley following of fiddlers and musicians, against Llewelyn and his Welshmen. Mold, too, which was another dependency of Hugh Lupus, came into unpleasant collision with Chester on more than one occasion. In 1645 it was held by a daring marauder, Reginald Meredyth Griffith, who plundered all who were obnoxious to him, and who made the Chester people the special objects of his unwelcome attention. A number of tradespeople from Chester repaired to Mold Fair to dispose of their wares. This was an excellent opportunity for Griffith, A quarrel was raised, swords were out at once, blood spilt. Griffith captured the worthy Mayor of Chester, Robert Browne, who had attended the fair as a draper. Mr. Browne paid the penalty for his fellow citizens. Hurried up to the tower

after the fight, he was hanged without ceremony on an iron staple fixed in the ceiling of the great hall. Shortly afterwards an attempt was made by Chester men to avenge this murder. Two hundred stout and active men left Chester, but they were entrapped into Griffith's house, which he himself set on fire, and they were all but a few killed without mercy. Such were the relations between Chester and Mold in 1465. Our proposed visit will be much more peaceable. If we carry back anything it will be, I hope, some voluntary offering for the museum which was opened yesterday. We have succeeded at last in raising a commodious building, which will be most useful as a receptacle for curiosities and antiquities connected with the district which might otherwise be lost. Architecturally, it will be a handsome addition to our public buildings; and if the well considered designs of the committee in connection with the teaching of science and art in their various branches are carried out, it will enable Chester to take a high position as an educational centre, and thereby confer a great benefit upon an extensive district.

I have said nothing in this address about the ecclesiastical or the literary history of the city, the Mystery Plays of Higden, the names of the eminent and famous men who have been born in the county. But may I refer to the work on "Roman Cheshire" which is being brought out by Mr. Thompson Watkin, author of "Roman Lancashire," and which promises to be a valuable supplement to the standard works of Ormerod, Earwaker and Baines; and the useful pamphlet on "Inscribed Stones," brought out by Mr. Williams? I will conclude by repeating the cordial welcome which it gives me great pleasure to offer to the members of the Archaeological Institute on behalf of the county of Chester, and to assure them that we shall look with interest for the instructive papers which they are doubtless prepared to read before us.