INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF SIR JOHN DORINGTON, BART., M.P., TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INSTITUTE, HELD AT GLOUCESTER.[1]

I have the pleasure of thanking the Institute for the great honour they have done me in accepting my services as their president for this meeting, and in so doing conferring a distinction not only on the humble individual who addresses you, but also indirectly on the Archæological Society, of which I am a past president; a great distinction in itself, and to which no doubt I owe the suffrages which have placed me in this chair.

My own Society, the Gloucestershire Society, has now left fourteen years of useful life behind it, duly recorded in its annual volume, and in those pages, and in the pages of the still older Society, the Cotswold Naturalists, who occasionally threw a little dash of romance into their more prosaic pursuits, by diving into the history of the works of man, instead of into the construction of the rocks, those who are strangers to Gloucestershire, to whom we heartily bid welcome, may read a very large amount of our Gloucestershire archæological lore.

I hope those present will criticise our productions, will bring to our assistance their wider and perhaps more trained experience, whilst we, the *αὐτοχθονης*, if I may so call ourselves, point out to what the attention of our visitors in this country had best be directed, and when they, after the long journeys they contemplate making, are wearied with following our lead, that they will draw us aside from local lore to the world-wide fields which Archæology seeks to till.

What is the Archæology that my present audience is seeking for? Is it ecclesiastical architecture of any period? We have it of all periods from the rude and early Saxon at Deerhurst to the most

[1] Delivered August 12th, 1890.

modern and successful church at Highnam, and in the Cathedral close by, we see how each generation of men has appropriated the materials, and adapted the forms of preceding generations to what they themselves desired, and which desires they doubtless described at the time, and fully believed to be, the highest and most successful efforts of good taste.

The small low church, perhaps the present crypt, the kernel of the Abbey, built on the vacant grounds just within the city bounds, gradually extends itself westward, and, wanting room, crosses over and appropriates the Roman walls, and rears its lofty columns with the stones cut by the Roman masons eight hundred years before. Massive solidity is the dominant style, which gradually passes onwards into lighter forms, until, at last, the Church becoming the last resting-place of a murdered king, wealth beyond count is poured into the Cathedral treasury by countless pilgrims to the shrine, and the, to the then taste, too solid walls and columns are shaved down to fit the network of exuberant tracery which was thrown over them as a veil, and the lofty tower sprung to the sky crowned by such battlements and pinnacles as are scarcely to be seen elsewhere. I will not attempt to give an architectural history of the Abbey Church. That is, or should be, a subject for itself, and with these few words I leave this splendid monument of the past to the leisured criticism of the society.

Is it the history of our land as shown by its houses, by its castles, by its forts? We have a rich mine for you to draw upon. Nowhere in England that I know of is there such an abundance of small houses, such as the freeholders and gentry of the Jacobean, Elizabethan, Tudor, and earlier times lived in, strong in the excellent stone with which they were both built and roofed, picturesque in their outlines and perfectly adaptable to modern use. Prinknash, The Court House, Painswick, Moor Hall, Througham, Upper Slaughter, Catswood, Middle Lypiatt, Chavenage, Owlpen, and, I may add, my own house are well-known examples.

In this city very numerous half-timbered houses will attract your attention, amongst which not the least remarkable is the New Inn, still the New Inn, al-

though built in 1450. A parchment roll belonging to the Corporation of Gloucester, enumerating the houses in the town in 1455, states that in Northgate Street, next to the house owned by Sibilla Hariet, and occupied by Matilda Perkin, butcher, "The Abbot of St. Peter of Gloucester holds in fee a great and new inn called the New Inn, lately built from the foundations by the praiseworthy man John Twinning, monk of the same place, for the great emolument and profit of the same and of their successors." This house is nearly of the date when Chaucer describes his party setting out from the old Tabard, and when the members of this society visit it, as no doubt they will, the old welcome might not come amiss :—

Now lordlings truly
Ye be to me welcome right heartily;
For by my troth, if that I shall not lie,
I saw not this yeare such a compagny
At once in this hostelrie as is now.
Fain would I do you mirth, an I knew how.

And then the landlord throws out the suggestion to this party about to set out on a pilgrimage, just as we are going to begin a pilgrimage to-morrow round Gloucestershire :—

"This is the point to speke it plat and plain,
That each of you to shorten with your ways
In thisen voyage shall tallen tales twa,
And which of you shall bear him best of alle
Shall have a supper at your aller cost
Here, in this place sitting by this post."

A wonderful survival of the past. Even the post is there. No change in name, no change in use, the only change, the change inevitable to all and incessantly going on is the constant change and renewal of the individuals by whom the business of life is carried on. You will notice the picturesque court with open galleries running round. The doors opening into the bedchambers lead directly from these galleries. Each guest may be said to have his own front door, and twining creepers would almost lead one to believe that sunnier climes than ours favoured the sojourners beneath its roofs.

Were such inns modelled on a foreign form or were our ancestors a hardier race? It is probable that this New Inn was in its architecture no exception

to the general form, for in an old drawing of Hogarth's I have seen the same galleries represented surrounding the courtyard of the formerly well-known Ram Inn, at Cirencester, once one of the great posting-houses of the county, but now passed away; long ago, however, remodelled from the aspect which Hogarth has preserved to us into a more prosaic form. Perhaps some enquiry might show us in other places some few lingering types of this New and yet old English Inn.

I have alluded to a parchment roll, and given from it the names of the adjacent occupiers to this Inn, in 1455, and it may be worth while to direct further attention to this most curious document, which has been permitted to be published by the Corporation of Gloucester, and has just been issued to the subscribers.

It professes to be a Rental of all the houses in Gloucester, compiled by Robert Cole, a Canon of Llanthony, who described himself as a "Renter" of Gloucester. What this means is not quite clear; whatever he was, here is preserved to us the names of the occupants and owners of each house in each street in Gloucester, in regular order, like a modern street list, starting from the cross and going sometimes down one side and back the other, and sometimes taking the two sides in parallel columns, the houses facing as it were one another.

By this we learn that where our County Shirehall now stands Thomas Butler holds the next tenement with appurtenances towards the Bothal (*sic*), where John Furber and William Granger dwell, which Hugh, of King's Hall, held in the reign of Henry III., Edward the Taverner, in the time of Edward I., and Edward Taverner, jun., in the time of Edward II. And he renders for land gavel 4s. 6¾d. Also that the community of Gloucester hold a tenement called the Bothalle (*sic*) or the Gildhall for holding the pleas of our Lord the King; and there is an inn which Philip Fleet, draper, holds there by deed, for which tenement called the Bothalle they rendered in the times of Henry III. and Edward I. 31½d. There is an inn there now. The pleas of the Crown were held in the Booth Hall down to 1828, when the present Shirehall was built, and this ancient place of public meeting

remains a large public-room attached to the inn, which still remains as a licensed house.

I began by attempting to indicate what of interest you might find in this county, and I must not linger longer within the walls of this fair city. The hills which surround it and look down upon it are full of history, the history of races which in succession have been dominant in this district. This history must be dug for, sought for with intelligence and perseverance. But given this care and intelligence we may, by some exercise of our imagination, fill up the gaps and realise in some manner that history to which too often we only give names and dates and nothing more.

The earliest condition of the county that we can realise is an upland district, not too heavily timbered to be habitable, but sufficiently so to provide firing and shelter, and having a soil suited for pasturage, and over which it was always possible to travel in those roadless days.

Consequently we find over the Cotswolds abundant traces of the ancient races. The long-headed and the round-headed men have studded our hills with their tombs, pitted the surface with their hut dwellings, strewn the ground with their flint implements, and perhaps crowned the crests with their forts. None of these traces are found in the vale. Why? The space between the hills and the Severn was soft land, impassable without well-made roads, cut up by streams descending from the hills, which, dammed up and blocked by fallen timber, formed wide morasses, and rendered the whole vale country unfit for habitation. Along the edge of the Severn some fishermen probably found a livelihood, and Glevum, the predecessor of Gloucester, lying in flat ground below the hillock on which Gloucester now stands, was probably mainly a fishing village, possessing also the advantage of the first easy ferry over Severn. How unsuited it was for permament occupation is, I think, proved by its disappearance and the removal of the city to another site. The Romans, however, found it of sufficient importance to make it the point of direction for their great road from Cirencester, which, descending from the hills, may be seen running straight as an arrow for some six miles to apparently no place at all, and then, turning at a right angle for about half a mile, reaches the

modern city—the little mound of rising ground which the Romans took for their camp, outside of which Glevum was situated, about the district now called Kingsholm, on the north of the present Gloucester.

The camp of Glevum absorbed the old town and became the outpost of the Roman line, supported by the chain of posts on almost every headland of the Cotswolds which looks down upon it. Cirencester was the headquarter station, and there and in the surrounding country Roman civilisation safely developed itself, and later on when the Roman posts were advanced to Caerleon, Chepstow, and the Wye, Gloucester itself became the headquarter military station and Cirencester the more purely civil town.

It is difficult for us now, separated by so many centuries from that period, and perhaps still more divided from it by the sweeping devastation caused by the invasion of the West Saxons in A.D. 577, in which Bath and probably Cirencester also disappeared for a time as inhabited towns, to realise the height of civilisation which this country had reached then. If we put aside the advantages we now have resulting from the modern use of steam and electricity, there is nothing we enjoy which the inhabitants of that period did not possess. Towns splendidly built, houses richly adorned, country society as plentiful as now; the mansions of the rich at least as large as the largest which now exists; good roads linking all-parts of the country together—such indications as these cannot fail to lead us to believe that a condition of society must have prevailed for some two hundred years, and perhaps for more, at least as active and cultivated as that which now exists. The amphitheatre at Cirencester, the ranges of stables at Chedworth, the vast area of the great hall at Woodchester, the charming situations selected for such villas as Witcomb and many others must force upon our attention the fact that centuries ago, when we were Roman, we lived and consorted together in much the same sort of way that we do now, and perhaps we had even a greater idea of our importance in the body politic than we have now, and not without some reason, considering the leading importance of such towns as Bath, Cirencester, and Gloucester at that time.

A few years ago I was able to bring to the notice

of our county society a singular proof of the desolation caused by the Saxon invasion in the shape of a charter of Æthelbald's, A.D. 740, granting to the monks of Worcester the ground about Woodchester, describing it as a forest, and giving boundaries which can at least in part be identified. These boundaries include the site of the Woodchester Villa, which at that time, 170 years after the battle of Dyrham, had ceased apparently to be known, and had been absorbed in the natural growth of forest. We can hardly imagine now such a disappearance of one of our largest country mansions, except by intentional demolition, which certainly was not the end of the Roman houses, for the relics found, the pavements, the furniture, the money, forbid the forming of any other idea than that of sudden disaster, and the removal and destruction of the population to whom they belonged. Twenty-four Roman villas have been described with more or less particularity as existing in Gloucestershire, exclusive of such houses as have been found in the towns of Cirencester and Gloucester, where remains are numerous. How many more there may be buried beneath the ground waiting the lucky chance, as at Chedworth, of a lost ferret, and the consequent digging for him by his owner, the rabbiter, for its discovery, who can tell? One hundred and twelve camps, not all however Roman, nineteen distinct main roads, make up a goodly catalogue of relics of a past civilization.

Why do I mention these things? Not for the purpose of merely making a catalogue, but for the purpose of enabling such of my audience as have not considered the matter before, to realise that in gazing at any one of these relics of the past we are not dealing with an isolated curiosity but with a whole class, which remains to us as evidence that, in the making of Britain, it has not been all growth, but that there have been ebbs and flows in our progress.

The civilization of the Roman period was far superior, if we may trust the evidences we possess, to that which we have enjoyed at any subsequent period down to Elizabethan times. It was Roman in name and in style, but it was the civilization which they implanted in the people amongst whom the Romans came as a

dominant race. I do not believe that the soft inhabitant of Italian climes built or inhabited as his own the numerous houses that we find. The example was set no doubt by the chief officers of the armies that came here. The British provincial, in the long years between Julius Cæsar (55 B.C.), and the withdrawal of the Romans, a space of four hundred years, as long a time as now separates us from the reign of Henry VII., had become himself educated in all that knowledge and refinement which Rome could give him. The whole population had absorbed the same ideas, and the houses which we see, and the relics which we find are the houses and relics of our British predecessors in a long-past Elizabethan or even Georgian age.

Their literature, which they must have possessed, has been blotted out by the four hundred or even eight hundred years of comparative barbarism which followed, and so we know nothing of their ways and manners, and we are only too prone to imagine that this civilization was the civilization of an alien people instead of that of our own race.

One record alone we have, besides the brief notice in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, of how this civilization was wiped out. It is the ode of Llywarch Hen, called the Death Song of Kendelann, one of the three kings who perished at the battle of Dyrham. It is published in the Bardes Bretons of the Vicomte de la Villemarque, and from the fragments I have seen is very spirited. The verses describe how the army of the Franks had triumphed, and departs to carry elsewhere desolation and death.

Y dref wen yn y dyfrynt
Lawen y byddair wrth gynanrud kad;
Ei gwerin neur derynt?

The White City of the valley would rejoice at the termination of the fortunate fight (but) its inhabitants—are they returned?

The enemy gone, the night is come, then is seen among the ruins made a coffin in a roofless hall. Piercing cries reach the bard. The cries are the voice of the eagle of the mountain, red with the blood of Kendelann and with that of other warriors. The bard accompanies the body to

the grave, and there there are other victims from the city of White Walls; which is commonly identified with Sherston, on the borders of this county. The poet prepares to fly, knowing that the church will soon be given to the flames by the Saxon, whose lance he seems already to feel. He addresses the daughters of England, whom he summons to behold the country in flames:—"Oh, sister of Kendelann, what unhappiness, what anguish this night. They trampled not with impunity upon the cradle of Kendelann, he drew back not one footstep, his mother had not nursed a degenerate son. But henceforth for us there is no refuge than the cover of the thick woods, where hunger reduces us to the state of the wild boar, unearthing the roots of wild plants."

Such seems to have been the actual condition of the country, wasted and destroyed for about 200 years. Then we begin again to get scanty records, and some few fragments of architecture begin to appear in buildings which have lasted down to our day.

How far can we realize this long past history of our race, and re-produce in some intelligible form from the relics that we find our nation's life? Written records of the far-distant past do not exist. No British historians tell us how a Caractacus or a Boadicea summoned a nation to arms to resist the invader. But we know the command *was* obeyed, and how—and we may at least as archæologists assert this—that a people who could coin gold, and who could place in the field of battle such chariots, and in such numbers, as the Britons are stated by the Romans to have done, were no mere barbarians, such as too often in history they are represented to have been, but that they were far advanced in civilization, and an ancestry of whom we may be proud.

Ideas such as these may be the romance of archæology, but it must be the very end and aim of archæology to provide the materials to turn the romance into hard prosaic fact.

The desires of mankind have always been the same; the direction in which those desires sought their gratification have always depended on the opportunities which the degree of civilization mankind had attained to, afforded to them.

The archæologist, in the absence of written records, can alone supply to the historian the information which is necessary, and draw the proper inferences; and no such work as John Richard Green's "Making of England" was possible until the conditions under which men lived in early days had been disclosed by the pick and the shovel, by the patent deciphering of dusty records, and the diligent compiling of remote facts. It is for us to emulate the work of past discoverers, and, by raising higher the superstructure, the foundations of which they have laid broad and strong, to do our part in illustrating and elucidating the history of our race.