



The Mock Mayor of the "The City" of Newbury.

By Walter Money, F.S.A.

THERE is a portion of the town adjacent to the ancient Hospital of St. Bartholomew, founded in the reign of King John, which for some reason or other assumes the privilege of having bestowed upon it the exalted title of "The City," an appellation to be found in some other country towns.

A possible explanation may be found in the circumstance that the early Norman and Plantagenet Kings, who occasionally came here for hunting, exalted Newbury to some importance by establishing a court in the town with Royal jurisdiction. The fact simply is, that in those days the King's Justices to the great inconvenience of suitors, and probably of themselves, followed the King in person; and when he was at Newbury, or elsewhere, legal business was transacted *Coram ipso Rege*. King John was frequently at Newbury, as shewn by his Itinerary, and divers Fines, &c. were passed here.

But it may also be suggested that the term "City" is a comparatively late name, and just possibly connected with the limits of the fair granted to the Hospital of St. Bartholomew, which Institution is within its precincts. This fair was granted to the Hospital by royal charter, dated at Cirencester the 7th of July, 1215, and has been continued ever since. It is held on the morrow and day of St. Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyr, and the profits are still divided between the brethren and sisters occupying King John's Almshouses attached to the Hospital. The fair is "opened" by the Town Clerk or his deputy with all the quaint and ancient formalities, but has much fallen off of late years.

From time out of mind it has been the custom to elect annually, with burlesque formalities a "Mayor of the City," or that part of the borough to which we have referred, which if not distinguished as an aristocratic quarter, its community have ever been pre-eminent for their individuality, and the influence they bring to bear on the occasion of the periodical turmoil of contested parliamentary and

municipal elections. This has been the case during many a severe struggle, and so unitedly did the "Citizens" stand shoulder to shoulder in support of the Conservative candidate, Mr. W. G. Mount, M.P., during the campaign of 1885, that on his return, the triumphal procession, by special request, went out of its way in order to pass through "The City"; when the honourable gentleman made an address to his supporters in this quarter, and pointedly alluded to their local patriotism. We mention this incident in no way from a political point of view, but merely as an indication of the clannish feeling which still survives in this locality.

The custom of electing the Mock Mayor is very exceptional and curious, and very little appears to be known either of the time and circumstances under which the titular name of "Mayor of the City" is supposed to have been instituted, or whether or no this functionary assumes his authority by virtue of royal charter or time-honoured prescription. Certain it is that the "ancient office" has existed, if erratically, for a very considerable period, "before the oldest man in the town can remember." For the last few years no fresh election has taken place, but the custom is not thought to be dead by the "Citizens," but only in a state of suspended animation.

The correct title of the worthy elected by the "Citizens," is "Mayor of Bartlemas" or Mayor of St. Bartholomew's,—from the dedicatory name of the adjacent hospital, and the election formerly took place on the first Monday after St. Anne's Day, the 26th of July. A "Justice" was also chosen at the same time, and after the official banquet, at which bacon and beans formed the principal dish, presided over by the newly-elected Mayor, a procession was formed, accompanied by a band of music, and the "lower officials" carrying an extemporised mace and other emblems of civic dignity.

Of late years the election has taken place at a public-house in "The City," on the 9th of November, and the procession has been dispensed with, but the dinner is still maintained in all its former plenitude.

This custom very probably had its origin in a body of the inhabitants of this part of the town banding themselves together to concert measures for repressing encroachments on their extensive common and other rights; each member agreeing to contribute some small sum in order to make up a purse for the defence of their collective interests. When a case of encroachment, or infringement of the "rights and privileges" of the community occurred, they applied to a neighbouring attorney, who brought an action

against the encroachers in the name of the president, or as they called him the "Mayor," and hence the title was perpetuated.

It was also customary in Newbury in former times to annually elect a "Mayor of Norcutt," whose jurisdiction was confined to the Lammas lands in Northcroft, and who was supposed to see that no person turned out but whose qualification was exceptional; his duties assimilating to those of a hayward, or keeper of the common rights.

Some Forms of the Cross, in its relation to Monumental Brasses,

*Being Notes from a Paper read before the Members and Friends of
the Oxford Ladies' Brass-rubbing Society, at the New Ash-
molean Museum, Oxford, 18th November, 1895, by the Rev.
Herbert W. Macklin, M.A.*

EXISTING brasses, in which the memorial takes the form of the Cross, are few in number, the total being only about 30 of all kinds. They are scattered over some fifteen counties, seven of them being assigned to Berks, Bucks and Oxon, where also there are a considerable number of the matrices of lost examples.

From the commencement of the 14th century to the reign of Henry VIII., when the cross-brass fell into disuse, its various forms fall naturally into four main divisions.

I. THE 14TH CENTURY, c. 1300—1325. Floriated crosses of considerable beauty, in which the distinguishing characteristic is that a head, bust, or demi-figure, is placed (*a*) either entirely above the cross, or (*b*) upon the intersection of the arms.

(*a*) This corresponds to the sculptural stone coffin-lid previously in use. No brasses are known to exist, but there are at least two matrices in Oxon alone, viz., at Dorchester and Garsington.