The PRESIDENT then delivered his

Inaugural Address.

TWENTY-FOUR years have passed since the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society met in Bath. It was the fourth annual meeting—the first having been held at Taunton, in 1849, the second at Wells, and the third at Weston-super-Mare. In the interval all the principal towns of Somersetshire have been visited, three of them twice, and on two occasions the borders of the county have been crossed that meetings might be held at Bristol and Sherborne.

My first duty, a very pleasant one, is to offer the Society a most hearty welcome on its return to this ancient city. It is true that to those of us who were present in 1852 there are some shadows of painful remembrance in connection with the departure of many who then took a prominent part. The president on that occasion was the late Mr. William Gore-Langton, who was supported by Mr. Markland, Mr. Britton, Mr. Baker (of Bridgwater), the Rev. Henry Street, and the Rev. F. Warre, all of whom have passed away. But I see around me some valued associates, who have been spared from that time to this, with what signal advantage to Archæological Science our records amply testify; and who have been joined by others able and willing to carry on the work when another generation have crossed the great border.

So long a time has elapsed since the last meeting in Bath, that the Committee might have been pardoned if they had proposed to traverse, in the excursions, again exactly the same ground. Even the survivors of the party who visited our city under the guidance I have mentioned, would not have regretted to refresh their memories at Hinton Abbey, and Farleigh Castle and Wellow. Part of the old programme we do re-introduce: the journey to Keynsham and Bitton, on Thursday, will be by Englishcombe and Newton St. Loe, remembered in connection with the hospitality of Newton Park in 1852; and we begin

our visitations on this the first day, as we did before in the old city itself. Not only has the Abbey Church lost none of its interest; we hope it will be acknowledged to have gained greater glory and beauty, and that while in some minor matters there may be the imperfections which marks all earthly things, yet the great object of its munificent benefactor, the echoes of whose voice still seem to linger there, has been most worthily accomplished.[1] Nor has the Museum of the Literary and Scientific Institution remained in a dormant condition since the last meeting; for while the Roman remains are still some of the grandest and most instructive in the kingdom, the geological collection has year by year shewn greater proofs of the industry, and realised more completely the aspirations of its eminent founder; and other collections have been formed, which may prove interesting to those who value the Natural History department of our objects.

The new ground to be visited includes Bathampton, Bradford-on-Avon, South Wraxall, and, if possible, Monckton Farleigh. Several gentlemen well qualified—some by their knowledge of the works of our pre-historic forefathers, others by their knowledge of wondrous operations in the earth, anterior to even their existence, will accompany us on these excursions, and explain what we shall see. For myself, who ought only to have been a learner through the whole of the proceedings, except, indeed, that I am delighted to offer any amount of welcome, and to join in making whatever arrangements may be necessary; to me, however, has been allotted the honour of giving an introductory address. In all sincerity, I think my very first sentence should

(1). The Rev. Prebendary Kemble, Rector of Bath, died Nov. 18th, 1874. At his instigation the first steps for the restoration of Bath Abbey were taken at a public meeting, in April, 1864. Twelve years afterwards, in March, 1876, another meeting was held to wind up the accounts. In the interval upwards of £23,000 was contributed for the works by public subscription, and large additional sums, probably exceeding £7,000 altogether, were expended by Mr. Kemble, members of his family, and other individuals. Of the new work, the stone ceiling, the east window and other windows, and the reredos, are striking features, while one of the most interesting restorations is that of Prior Bird's chapel.

have stated with how much greater pleasure I should have accepted the presidency of the Society if I had felt that I had been in any degree worthy of it. Remembering, as I do, the learning, the industry, and the patient research manifest in the papers with which our volumes are filled; remembering, also, the high rank taken in the worlds of science and literature by not a few of our associates, I feel that the qualifications for the chair of the Society are higher than any I possess. But when I found that the Committee considered that I might be useful in rallying our members and friends, I applied myself to see whether I could not also bring together some historical facts, and fashion them into an offering suitable to the occasion. I considered that the subject of my address should, if possible, have three conditions: 1, That it should refer to something for which Bath had been remarkable; 2, that it should not have been treated previously in any of the Proceedings of the Society; and 3, that it could be compressed within reasonable limits as to time. These conditions appeared to be combined in an event in the early history of this city—the Coronation of King Edgar in Bath Abbey. To many of us, no doubt, much, if not all, that I have to say may be well known; Anglo-Saxon history and Anglo-Saxon literature ought to be especially familiar to Somersetshire archæologists; still, I am not aware that the sketch I now propose to give has been already given, and I trust it may be thought in some degree appropriate.

The two chief questions to be dealt with are—the reality of the event, and how it came to be at Bath. That King Edgar *was* crowned at Bath, on Whitsunday, in the year 973, by St. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, is stated by many historians. William of Malmesbury, writing in the twelfth century, says, "From the sixteenth of his years, when he was appointed King, till the thirtieth he reigned without the insignia of royalty, but at that time the princes and men of every order assembling generally, he was crowned with great pomp at Bath."[2]

(2). Britton's *History and Antiquities of Bath Abbey*, p. 16.

Camden, four hundred years later, after speaking in his *Britannia* of the nunnery in the city, says, "King Offa built another church ; both were destroyed in the Danish wars ;" and adds, "From their ruins afterwards arose a new church dedicated to Saint Peter in which Eadgar the Peaceable was crowned."[3] These historians derived their information from the Saxon Chronicle, where various circumstances, including the date of the ceremony and the age of the King, are commemorated in one of those poems, or ballads, in which important historical events were often set forth at that time. The Anglo-Saxon literature of the tenth century is especially remarkable for its outburst of song. Not only the coronation of Eadgar, but his death, and the death of Eadward, were described by poets of the period.[4] There is a noble poem—"The Fall of Byrthnoth" —a hero resisting the Danes in the battle of Maldon, in Essex. But more grand than any is the song of the battle of Brunanburgh, the great northern fight, A.D. 938, between Æthelstan and Anlaf the Dane, which secured England to the English. Some of the events thus immortalised give a peculiar significance to the ceremony in the Abbey of Bath, where Eadgar the Peaceable was assured of the possession of an undivided sovereignty. I find both the original and a translation of the poem on the coronation, in Arthur Taylor's *Glory of Regality, an Historical Treatise on the Anointing and Crowning of the Kings and Queens of England.* Reduced to prose, the lines set forth that Eadgar was crowned with "mickle pomp in the old borough of Achemannescestre, named by those who dwelt in it Bath," that "there was mickle rejoicing on that happy day, inasmuch as it was to the sons of men the day of Pentecost," that "there were of Priests a heap, of monks a crowd, of wise men a great gathering." Then the year of the Christian era was specified : "seven and twenty winters more and the

(3). Britton, p. 13.

(4). See *Catalogue of Extant Relics of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* in Conybeare's *Illustrations*, p. 71.

world would have seen a thousand winters since the birth of the Lord of Light;" and, lastly, the age of Eadgar: he had seen "nine and twenty winters," or, in other words, was in his thirtieth year when he was hallowed to king.[5]

Though Dunstan is not mentioned either in the poem, or the histories from which I have quoted, there can be no doubt that he officiated at the ceremony. Not only was he Archbishop of Canterbury at the time, but from the period of Eadgar's accession he was his chief adviser in the Government. Having been unable to obtain sufficient ascendancy over the last sovereign; having been in truth banished the kingdom for his boldness, he was no sooner recalled than his influence was largely felt. It was Dunstan who initiated the great ecclesiastical changes of the time, replacing the secular clergy with Benedictine Monks and filling the nation with Benedictine institutions, a policy nowhere enforced more vigorously than in Somersetshire. May not this be some explanation, however imperfect, of what the author of the *History of the Norman Conquest* speaks of as one of the most puzzling things he had met with—the Coronation of Eadgar so long after he began to reign?[6] May not the ceremony, which had been for various reasons, important or unimportant, postponed through fourteen years, have been at length fixed upon partly as a means of celebrating the triumph and establishing the power of the new order of things? When we consider what Monastic Life was intended by Dunstan to be, and actually soon became, identified with the National Life; when we consider how closely it was to bind the church and the people of England to Rome, how largely it was to monopolise not only the government but the property of the country, the suggestion I have made may not be deemed worthless. Eadgar took so much pride in the Benedictine scheme that in 964 he boasted of having founded forty-seven monasteries, and declared his intention to increase them to fifty.[7]

(5). Taylor's *Glory of Regality*, p. 238.
(6). Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, vol. I., p. 626.
(7). Sharon Turner, vol. II., p. 166. Paris Ed. 1840.

Undoubtedly some other reasons for the Coronation at that particular time are apparent. The King may have regained the moral status which he is said to have lost by youthful folly or crime, though the best historians doubt whether this had really anything to do with it.[8] Or he may have been anxious that his son Eadward, born before 973, should have such additional right to the Crown as would be conferred by the performance of the ceremony; and it is remarkable that after Eadgar's death Eadward was objected to because he was not the son of a crowned lord and lady. But of this class of reasons the strongest appears to be that the temporal dominions of Eadgar had become so consolidated that this formal recognition of his rule may have been deemed politic. That he himself was proud of his augmented sovereignty is shewn by stories like that of his sailing with a great fleet to Chester on the Dee, and commanding eight tributary kings from Scotland and Wales to come and do him homage—nay to take the seats of the watermen and row him down the river.[9] The author to whom I have just referred has a striking passage illustrative of the point we are considering. Speaking, not of Eadgar in particular but of the early sovereigns generally, he says, "The King's power and dignity gradually grew. They grew by the mere extension of his dominions. The larger a prince's territory becomes, the greater is the distance at which he finds himself from the mass of his subjects. He becomes more and more clothed with a sort of mysterious dignity; becomes to be more and more looked upon as something different from ordinary men, even from ordinary civil magistrates and military leaders." . . . . . "A King who reigns over all Wessex is in the nature of things more of a King than one who reigns only over the Isle of Wight, and a King who reigns over all England is more of a

(8). "I should have taken it to be, according to one story, a mere resumption of the Crown after the penance for the matter of Wulfthyrth; only the Chronicles which have hitherto freely called Eadgar King, in recording the Coronation pointedly call him Ætheling." Freeman, I. 626.

(9). Sharon Turner, II. 166.

King than one who only reigns over Wessex."[10] Looked at in this light the ceremony in Bath Abbey, after the acquisition of so much additional territory, certainly appears to have great significance.

Still we have not fully considered the question: why was Eadgar "hallowed to King" at Bath? Other towns, even at that time, were of considerable importance, and some of them had been the scenes of similar ceremonies on the accession of former sovereigns. No doubt, going a hundred and twenty years further back we find that Eadmund, King of East Anglia, was crowned at a small village—Bures, near Sudbury in Suffolk, where he happened to have a palace. But the next coronation, that of Ælfred the Great, was at Winchester, and four of his successors, Eadward the Elder, Æthelstan, Eadmund I and Eadred, all received consecration at Kingston-on-Thames.[11] Then there was Glastonbury, Dunstan's favourite place, with its noble ecclesiastical buildings and its innumerable personal associations, the town where he was born and educated, where he built his little hermitage, and caught his earliest aspirations; not far, moreover, from the royal palace of Cheddar. For preferring Bath, therefore, Eadgar must have had some special reasons, of which, if we will carry ourselves back to the circumstances of our city, of the West of England generally, and of the life of the nation nine hundred years ago, we may probably be able to form some idea.

We turn again, then, to those ecclesiastical considerations which were always foremost. I have suggested that the *time* of the coronation was chosen in reference to them; may they not also have been powerful with regard to the *place*? From an early period the hot springs which had caused the Roman settlement, and which continued to flow century after century, unaffected by political changes, attracted also religious institutions. Scarcely a hundred years had passed after the capture of Bath

(10). Freeman, I. 78.

(11). Taylor's *Glory of Regality*, p. 235.

by the English, following closely upon the battle of Deorham, in 577, when Osric, King of the Huicii, with the consent of Kentwin, King of Wessex, founded a nunnery close to the springs.[12] There is an idea, probably as true as it is pleasant, concerning the origin of this nunnery. Pious and benevolent women are supposed to have come in considerable numbers, to tend upon the sick and infirm who needed the waters, and were thus enabled not only to give a more constant attendance, but also to join in regular religious services. Very much what the Mineral Water Hospital and its interesting chapel are to patients and their nurses in the nineteenth century, were the adjuncts of the springs to the suffering Saxon poor and the "honourable women not a few," thirteen hundred years ago.

Wishing to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the exact site of the earliest monastic buildings, I have written to an authority, probably better qualified than any one to give the information, and who is always as kind as he is able—I mean Mr. Irvine, the very efficient agent of Sir Gilbert Scott in carrying out the restoration of the building. In reply, he says, "I have been led to suspect that the site of the original buildings covered no part of the present site of the Abbey Church, but may rather have been where St. John's Hospital stands, thus agreeing with the old description of being Æt Hatum Bathan, which term, when locally used down to a very recent peried referred *par excellence* to the Hot Bath Spring and its neighbourhood." But though this, as Mr. Irvine admits, is only conjecture as far as the exact site of the original buildings is concerned, it is yet certain that in Saxon as in Roman times and in these latter days, the wonderful fountain of health attracted distinguished personages, and in other ways gave celebrity to the place. Hence the nunnery became richly endowed ; hence after it was destroyed by the Danes, King Offa rebuilt the Church of St. Peter and placed secular canons therein ; hence successive sovereigns granted valuable lands to the Abbey, Eadgar himself

(12). Warner's *History of Bath*, p. 45.

following their example in the years 956, 970, and 972, and thus shewing the interest he felt in the place where he was soon afterwards to be crowned.[13] If I did not wish to confine myself to the period of which this paper treats, I might mention many events illustrative of the connection between the hot springs and the ecclesiastical history of the city. I will only remark in passing that the great rebuilder of the monastery and church in the eleventh century, John de Villula, who came to England in the train of the Conqueror, found his way hither as a physician to patients who needed the waters; that having thus acquired wealth, and being an extremely able man, he became an ecclesiastic of considerable influence; that he was first elevated to the bishopric of Wells, where his fame and usefulness increased; and that finally he removed back to Bath, bought of the King the ancient royal ferm of the city, caused it to be made the seat of the bishopric and himself to be appointed the first bishop.[14]

A very remarkable man lived and laboured near those springs

(13). Particulars of these and other gifts are stated in Earle's *Guide to the Knowledge of Bath*, p. 58. A valuable catalogue of twenty-three deeds and charters extending from the time of Osric, A.D. 676, to that of Ælfwig, 1066, is introduced with the following passage: "The city of Bath occupies not a small pigeon hole in the Rolls and Records of Saxendom. There is a manuscript volume in the Library of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge filled with documents of the Saxon age, some in Saxon and some in Latin, most of them relating to Bath. Leland, in his *Itinerary*, appeals to a volume which he calls *The Book of the Antiquitie of the Abbay of Bath*, meaning, in all probability, this very manuscript. Besides this collection there are also other scattered parchments of the same period touching our city. Some of these papers were not written exactly at the date which they bear, and in this respect they may be called spurious. But this seldom destroys their value, as they represent traditions of which their custodians were proud, and of which outsiders were more or less cognizant. It is a high distinction for any locality to stand recorded in muniments of the time before the Norman Conquest."

(14). "William af Malmesbury who has written his life speaks of him as being *Medicus probatus usu non literis*. But he also speaks of him as an encourager to literature." "At his death in 1122 he was buried in the church of the monastery, where his tomb was still to be seen in the time of Leland. It was then fast going to decay. Weeds were springing about it, and the church was unroofed. It was the old church built by himself, superseded by the present structure." Hunter's *Connection of Bath with the Literature and Science of England.*

at the time of the Coronation. I allude to Ælphege, born in the neighbouring village of Weston, and known at first as the Monk of Deorhurst. Belonging to a good family, he gave up his paternal inheritance in order to devote himself to the service of God and his fellow creatures. Akin spiritually to Dunstan and living within the immediate sphere of his influence, Ælphege had a model for the entire course of his public life. Like the Glastonbury apostle, he built for himself a small house where he lived as an anchorite, and whither a large number of persons, including the nobility of Somersetshire and the adjoining counties, resorted for spiritual advice.[15] It was natural that such a man should be appointed abbot of the monastery which was to receive King Eadgar on his visit to Bath. Nay what is more probable than that to his influence in bringing together "monks and wise men," the city was to some extent indebted for the honour of the Coronation? Dunstan must have been thankful to have had as an ally one who gave all the offerings of his numerous visitors to the erection of a spacious dwelling for the brethren of his order, styled in the Golden Legend "the fayr abbacy at Bath." We can imagine also the additional pleasure Eadgar would feel in being crowned in a church presided over by a man of great ability and high character, intent on advancing all his ecclesiastical plans. What Ælphege was in after life, how he quitted the monastery he had founded near the springs to become Bishop of Wilton; how he rose to govern successively the Sees of Winchester and Canterbury, and how as primate of England he was massacred by the Danes at Greenwich,—all this is told in the records of the period. What he did for Bath besides founding its monastery we can do little more than conjecture. Probably he himself had no idea how largely in future years—even now at the end of nine centuries—mankind would be benefitted. He only saw the good that would accrue to his favourite institution by the generous benefactions placed at his disposal. For my own part I like to think that to Ælphege and men like him we owe at least in-

(15). Warner's *History of Bath*, p. 105. Osbern "De Vita S. Ælphegi."

directly the broad lands around our city now kept open for the health and enjoyment of all classes. I like to associate not merely the dissolution of monasteries but the munificence of those Saxon and Norman times, with the vast amount of happiness which light and air and exercise and the sight of beautiful country, unobstructed by buildings, give to thousands in the present day. This Society is intended to promote Natural History as well as Archæology. Its Members therefore will be pleased to know that botany may be studied on ground formerly belonging to the monastery of Bath. In our Victoria Park we have trees and shrubs labelled with their scientific names, the countries from which they came, and the date of their introduction into England. There, three years ago, the Royal Horticultural Society of Great Britain brought together its annual collection of rare and beautiful plants, and we know enough of the monks who once owned the site to be sure that they would not have considered it desecrated by that magnificent exhibition.

The size and importance of Bath at the time of Eadgar's coronation may be inferred from the statement in *Domesday Book*. Though the actual date of the survey recorded there is about a century later, it is yet sufficiently near for our purpose. From other sources we learn that Bath had been long previously constituted a burgh, possessed of privileges and immunities peculiar to towns of that class. Even so far back as the time of Æthelstan it was one of the few towns allowed to coin money, in accordance with the law made in his reign, that there should be one kind of money throughout the whole realm, and that no one should coin but in a town.[16] There are some Bath coins extant of the times, both of Æthelstan and Eadgar, and many struck in reigns immediately succeeding, preserved at Stockholm, where there is a large collection of Anglo-Saxon money, the ancient spoils of the Scandinavian Vikings.[17] With regard to

(16). "We learn that Eadgar called in the old and issued a new coinage in the year 975, because it had become so clipped as to fall short of the standard weight; and in the *Domesday* record the dues payable to the King on each change of die are noticed." Kemble's *Saxons in England*, vol. II., p. 68.

(17). Earle's *Guide*, p. 67. Warner, p. 48.

the evidence of the *Domesday Book*, the number of persons who owned houses in the year 1080 was 178, and consisted of three classes :—64 were of a superior order, having larger property, and being under the immediate protection of the monarchy ; 90 belonged to certain feudatories of the crown ; and 24 were attached to the church of St. Peter. Warner calculates that the total population at this time was about 890.[18] Writing of Bath, as it was seven hundred years afterwards, Macaulay describes it as a small, cramped, dirty town; a maze of only four or five hundred houses, crowded within an old wall, in the vicinity of the Avon.[19] No doubt the accommodation when Eadgar and Dunstan sojourned there was even better for them than it would have been in the seventeenth century, inasmuch as they had a hospitable monastery to receive them, while the neighbourhood, as well as the town, would welcome the crowd of monks and wise men.[20] Few as are the traces of the buildings of that period, scanty as are the records of its royal receptions, we have enough of both to believe that "the fayr Abbacy of Bath" was equal even then to the demands upon it; we can imagine with some accuracy how, as party after party arrived from distant places, they were all provided for according to their respective degrees, and that such a Whitsuntide had never dawned upon the favoured city as that which brightened King Eadgar's Coronation. How long the remembrance of it lingered in the Valley of the Avon is shewn by Leland, who travelled hither.

(18.) Warner's *History*, p. 164.

(19). Macaulay's *History of England*, Ed. 1858, p. 361.

(20). In the catalogue of Saxon charters before referred to, Mr. Earle says, "Another instrument by Eadwig, dated 957, is remarkable for a passing eulogy which it confers on the architecture of St. Peter's at Bath. Nay, if one may press the words to have an exact meaning, 'quod in Bathonia mira fabrica constructum cognoscitur,' it amounts to this, that our monastery was known and noted as an extraordinary specimen of architecture. The ecclesiastical buildings of that time were commonly timber, except where peculiar facilities presented themselves for building in stone. This we may be sure was the case in Bath." "In all probability the architectural celebrity of Bath Minster was due to the decay of the place after its Roman splendour, and to the ready supply of squared stone from the ruined buildings, and from the sepulchres along the Akeman Street." Earle's *Guide*, p. 56.

Writing of the gratitude of the inhabitants six hundred years afterwards, he says it was still their custom to elect a king at Whitsuntide, and treat him with a banquet, in commemoration of the pageant of 973. Leland's words are, "They pray in all the ceremonies for his soule, and at Whitsunday-tide, at the which time men say that Eadgar ther was crownid, there is a king elected at Bath every yere of the townesmen in joyful remembrance of King Eadgar and the privileges given to the town by him. This king is fested and his adherents by the richest man of the toune."[21] Mr. Earle adds to the quotation, "This ancient custom was pleaded in the eighteenth century in support of 'King Nash' the idol of fashionable complacency." Mr. Britton states that in commemoration of the ceremony of 973, a statue of the Saxon monarch was erected in front of the Guildhall. This statue probably vanished with the old building.[22] The only tangible memorial with which I am acquainted is a statuette of Eadgar over the north door of the Abbey, corresponding to one of Osric, the founder of the nunnery, over the south door.

There was a reason for selecting Bath as the scene of the coronation which I have thus far omitted to mention, but which doubtless had considerable weight in such an age: the Abbey possessed a very large and very precious collection of relics. In the *Corpus Christi* manuscript long lists of those relics are given, shewing that all the places in the world, most sacred in the eyes of those interested in the event, had contributed to this special enrichment of the monastery. What importance the collection had obtained at the exact period in question we are not informed, but there is no doubt that men like Eadgar and Dunstan, and Ælphege, would believe strongly in the additional sanctity conferred by even a portion of the relics which are described.[23] I am reminded, however, of another circumstance on which we may prefer to dwell on this occasion,

(21). Earle's *Guide*, p. 64. (22). Britton's *Bath Abbey*, p. 16.
(23). Britton's *Bath Abbey*, p. 17.

because it relates to secular rather than religious considerations, and was really of great practical value to the crowds who came from long distances—the convenience of Bath with regard to roads. This has been suggested to me by a pleasant narrative, for which the Bath Literary Club is indebted to its late president—the High Sheriff of Somersetshire. The narrative has been printed, it is entitled "*A sketch of the early history of Bathford and its neighbourhood,*" and is one of those useful contributions to a future history of Somersetshire which the studies of our Society have promoted. Mr. Skrine shews that the name of the village was originally Forde, derived from a very ancient road known as the Foss Way of the Romans, leading directly from Cornwall to Lincolnshire; and he remarks, "Along this road passed a great part of the clergy and nobility of England following the procession of Eadgar to his Coronation in Bath." It is worthy of remark that the Manor of Forde was granted to the Abbey of Bath, A.D. 957, sixteen years before the coronation, and that from several Saxon churches in the neighbourhood—one of them being the extremely interesting Ecclesiola at Bradford-on-Avon, which we hope to visit and have expounded to us to-morrow—men and women probably came to see the ceremony. But the road from which Forde took its name was only one of the great thoroughfares piercing the old forests of Wessex, and connecting the entire country with Bath. There was the Via Julia from South Wales, by the Aust passage to the military station of Cunetio, near Marlborough; and, more important than any, there was the Akeman Street—so called from our city itself,—the great Roman road to London through Oxfordshire.[24] Aware of these means of communication, we

(24). Mr. Earle thinks (p. 42) that the Sul or Solis, in the Roman name of the city Aquæ Solis, was dropped when Heathen deities were no longer worshipped, and that from the remaining word Aquæ came Ake, in the British designation Caer Akeman, the syllable man signifying place, and the prefix Caer a fenced city. This the Saxon conquerors amplified into Akemanneceastre, while the inhabitants, as we learn from the Coronation ode, also called the city Bathan, a name nearly resembling the German Baden, and easily reduced to Bath.

fail to be surprised, either at the troops of monks and wise men who came from distant monasteries at the time to which I refer, or at the great interest at Bath then existing far and wide, as shewn by the ancient MSS. still found at Cambridge and elsewhere. Touching convenience of access and facilities of communication, modern times are linked with ancient times by events worthy of passing notice. To these same great roads through Bath, the country, in the last century, owed in a large degree the postal reform and extension effected by two public-spirited men of the old city. It was the Foss Way, and the Via Julia, and the Akeman Street, which, under other names, enabled Ralph Allen of Bath and John Palmer of Bath to originate and carry out their beneficent schemes for quickening the intercourse of the country. Thus is the true thread of history maintained. In the life of nations, like that of individuals, as is the germ so is the development. Great deeds for the benefit of mankind in one age, bring forth richer fruit, often unexpectedly, in subsequent ages. And through all there is a plan, if we could but see it, a Divine, all-pervading plan, harmonising schemes, apparently adverse, and conducing to the general good.

Before I conclude, let me add a few words on a point which I may have failed to make sufficiently clear. My purpose in choosing the subject of this address was not merely to magnify the city which the Society honours with its visit. I endeavour to bear in mind, that in proportion to our attachment to a place should be our desire to guard against one-sided or exaggerated ideas respecting it. I confess I have very little taste for the narrower range of Archæological inquiries; I have very little sympathy with the student who would expatiate on a corbel, or a window, or a clerestory, or even an entire church, on mere grounds of local or technical interest, with no reference to large questions in science or history. Surely, if our pursuits are to have any real value, they should always lead from small to great objects. Be as accurate and pains-taking as possible; spare no time in sifting facts and establishing proofs, but always keep in

view the higher purposes of investigation. Rise as often as you can from minute things pertaining to a particular place or a particular period, to the vast comprehensive sequence, moral and material, so wonderfully developed in successive periods of the history of the world.

With feelings like these I have wished to regard the Coronation of King Eadgar in Bath Abbey. If we are only interested in the event because it occurred in this city, we have no sufficient ground for considering it here to day. But if we look at it as a central point, to which many historical lines converge, lines of permanent importance, far beyond Bath, far beyond Somersetshire, then our anniversary is well employed. We are thus enabled to see that the place chosen for the ceremony, insignificant as it may have been, compared with many places of the present day, had yet been known a thousand years ; the old old borough, the far-famed Aquæ Solis, where the greatest people in the world had had grand temples, and luxurious villas, and stately monuments. We are thus enabled to see that when those temples and villas and monuments were deserted, the altars of heathen deities became replaced, through a century and half, by simple British churches, and these in their turn by Saxon monasteries ; an unmistakeable proof that the highest interests of mankind were always cared for. We are not surprised that when the King and the Archbishop conferred as to the place of the solemn inauguration they should have fixed on one of the three great Roman towns,[25] which had been gained by the battle of Deorham—a battle not only making the land of the Somersætas the first English settlement, not only adding this and the adjoining county of Gloucester to the conqueror's territory, but deciding the fate of Britain for ever. Quite as ample, I think, is the field of thought opened out by the particular *time* of the Coronation. To confine ourselves to the tales about the termination of the penance for the young King's transgressions would be almost puerile. When Dunstan placed

(25). Bath, Glouccster, and Cirencester.

the crown on the head of Eadgar he celebrated the establishment of peace; he glorified the fact that, whereas there had been cruel wars and divided territory, there was now universal tranquility and a united England. When he gathered together "the monks and wise men" from so many places far and near, it was because the time had come, in his opinion at least (and he was worthy of the name of statesman as well as prelate), it was because he believed the time had come to declare with no faltering voice what should be the future ecclesiastical policy of the realm, and how the true welfare of the people could best be promoted. Whether he was right or wrong, is a question, of course, into which I have not entered; his point of view was very different from our's; and if our studies have no other tendency they ought to have this—to lead us to judge of men and things rather by the circumstances which made them what they were, than by those in which we are placed.[26]

Let me be pardoned if I have said too much on the spirit with which my own subject in particular, and Archæological

(26). There is an historical question which I was unable to discuss in my address, but yet seems to deserve some thought: May not the Coronation at Bath, while justifiable and even desirable on some accounts, have yet been a display of unusual pageantry, and an assumption of territorial power, inconsistent with the popular traditions? Mr. Kemble, *Saxons in England*, vol. I., p. 152., says, "The king is in truth essentially one with the people; from among them he springs; by them and their power he reigns; from them he receives his name; but his land is like their's, private property; one estate does not owe allegiance to another as in the feudal system, and least of all is the monstrous fiction admitted even for a moment, that the king is owner of all the land in a country." M. Thierry, *History of the Norman Conquest*, London Ed. 1851, p. 29, writes of the period of the Coronation, though he does not expressly mention the event: "These Anglo-Saxon monarchs conceived an exaggerated opinion of themselves and their power. They surrounded themselves with a pomp before unknown and they ceased to be popular like their predecessors; who taking the people for their counsellor in all things found it always ready to perform that which it had itself decreed. (A.D. 975 to 980.) Thence arose great causes of national weakness in England. Great as she thenceforth appeared under chiefs to describe whose titles of honour filled many lines, she was in reality less capable of resisting an external enemy than when reduced to a small number of provinces, but governed without either ostentation or despotism, her national laws bore no other superscription than 'I, Alfred, King of the West Saxons.'" Whatever the statesman-like qualities of Dunstan may have been, he was probably unable to foresee this.

subjects generally should be considered. At the commencement of another meeting, before we again resume our pleasant tasks, I might have wished to recommend the application of the widening principle to *both* departments of the subjects which will engage our attention. But gladly escaping from my own imperfect attempts, I call to mind the powerful words on this vital point of a former President of the Society five years ago at the meeting at Crewkerne ; and I feel that I cannot possibly add anything to what was said on that occasion. I remember how Mr. Freeman pointed out to us that the labourers in the various fields of knowledge which are open to us "the political historian, the primæval antiquary, the palæontologist, and the geologist, all deal with successive acts of one great drama." I remember how he reminded us that "the revolutions of the earth which gave the land its present form did but call into being the theatre of the events of the seventh century and of the ninth, providing the fastnesses which in due time were to shelter the Briton against the English and the English against the Dane." I remember how he impressed upon us that even in our gropings into unrecorded times we were still "dealing with the history of man, the history of his earliest culture, the history of those rude strivings which grew into the useful and ornamental arts, of those rude stirrings of the mind which grew into philosophy and religion and political life." And, profiting I trust by teachings so wise, we shall now once more visit our churches and our hill sides, disposed to apply day by day the truth that "all these various objects, from the ancient rivers and the everlasting hills to the latest work of the craft of man's hand and the cunning of his heart, all come within the scope of our study, because all join to form one vast volume, in which is written in different tongues and in different characters, but in tongues and characters none of which fail to find an interpreter among us, the history of the land itself and of those who from the earliest times have dwelled within it."[27]

(27). *Somersetshire Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, vol xviii., p. 16.

The Earl of CORK moved a vote of thanks to the President for his interesting address. To many present the remarks of Mr. Murch must have thrown a new light upon the noble Abbey Church. He could not speak of that building without calling to mind the good work which had been done there by the skilful and patient labour of one, whom he had hoped to have seen there that day, who was well known and highly valued by that Society, Mr. J. Irvine.

Mr. FREEMAN seconded the vote of thanks to the President. The delay of the coronation of King Eadgar was a puzzle, and he considered that Mr. Murch had left this question still untouched; it was one upon which he could throw no light himself.

The vote of thanks was adopted unanimously.

The PRESIDENT, after thanking the mover and seconder of the resolution, begged, in the name of the Committee of the Literary and Scientific Institution, that all Members of the Society would consider the Institution free to them during their visit. In the name of the Mayor, Admiral Paynter, who was prevented by the duties of his office from being present, he invited the Members to lunch in an adjoining room.

The thanks of the Society were voted to the Mayor for his kind hospitality. The Members then visited