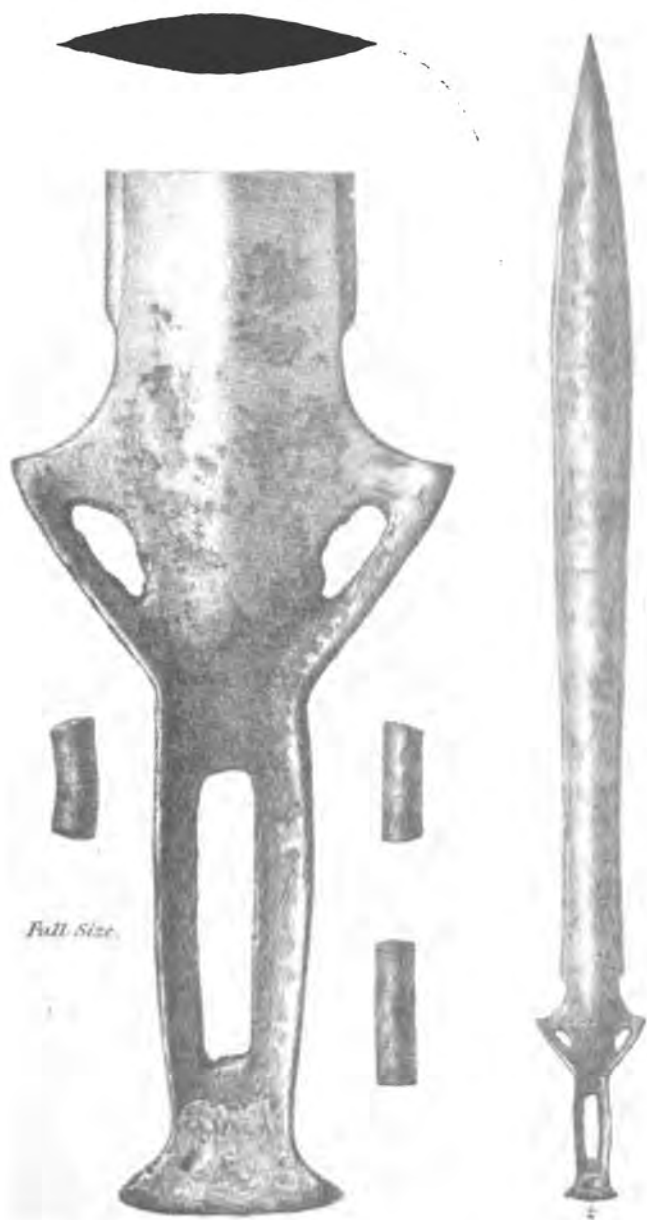


The Local Museum

contained few objects worthy of record, with two great exceptions. The first of these was the remarkable series of charters and other municipal documents belonging to the city, shown by the liberal-minded kindness of the Mayor and Corporation. These documents are illustrated by a paper read by the then Mayor of the city. It may perhaps here be allowed the Secretary to record the regret with which every one, who attended our Meeting at Bath, must have heard of the unexpected death of the Mayor, Vice-Admiral Paynter, who took such a lively and intelligent interest in our work, and who added much to our pleasure by his help and genial manners. Some further remarks on the charters will be found at the end of Part I. The other object of special interest was a Bronze Sword, exhibited by the Bishop of Clifton. The Rev. E. L. Barnwell has kindly supplied us with the following note, which will serve to illustrate the importance of this remarkably perfect specimen, of which a lithograph is given.

The Bronze Sword

here represented was exhibited at the Society's temporary Museum at Bath on July, 1876. It is simply described as having been found near Midsummer Norton, but whether it was found under peculiar circumstances or not, was not stated on the ticket attached to it. There is nothing remarkable about its form, which is that called by the late Sir W. R. Wilde the narrow leaf-shaped, and a very pure example of that class it is. It is singularly perfect and bears no signs of usage, as if it had been turned fresh out of the maker's hands—a circumstance which may induce one to suspect that other weapons of the same kind may been once in company with it, as more than



BRONZE SWORD FOUND NEAR MIDSOMER NORTON. 1873.

one instance is known of such finds which were in all probability the stock of some peripatetic dealer in, and repairer of, such articles. In some cases lumps of fused metal have been found, with perfect and broken weapons, which may either have been entrusted for repair to the tinker, if he may be called so, or taken in exchange for new weapons.

It is however the arrangement by which the wooden or bone handle was secured that gives additional interest to this weapon, for though the longer aperture frequently occurs in swords of this kind, yet the two small oblique ones are extremely rare. The nearest approach to it is to be seen in Fig. 332, p. 452 of the *Catalogue of Animal Materials and Bronze Implements* in the Royal Irish Academy. In that instance, however, two small circular rivet holes have been added, while the shape of the apertures is different, as far as can be judged from the illustration given on so small a scale. As a rule, however, sword handles having these oblong apertures are much more uncommon than those which are secured by pins of metal, varying from two to eight in number.

Swords of this shape are of two kinds—the broad and narrow leaf-shaped, to which latter division, as stated above, the Midsummer Norton sword is to be referred. Its length is very nearly twenty-four inches, which seems to be a medium size of such swords. One or two are about thirty inches long, but the normal length seems to be twenty-two or twenty-three inches.

There is a marked difference between the modes of forming the handles of these early weapons. Originally the blade only was cast, and the handle, probably a solid one of bone or wood, was fixed to it by pins. The next stage seems to have been the terminating the shoulder of the blade with a straight T-like tang. This was subsequently fitted with plates of some material, secured originally by pins riveted through the holes formed either in the casting or by the drill. The next alteration was that of the oblong apertures in addition to the riveted pins, as in the handle referred to above in the Dublin

collection. Subsequently it would seem these pins were done away with, as if sufficient security could be obtained by the more simple arrangements of the Somersetshire sword. In the Museum at Copenhagen is an immense number of Scandinavian swords, but among them there are very few examples of leaf-shape blades with flat handle-plates, and these according to Wilde are in all probability Irish. Instead of this flat handle-plate the blade ended in a long narrow stem or tang, to which the handle proper was fitted in more than one manner.

The handle of this and other swords of the same type and period are remarkable for their smallness, as if the men who used them were a smaller and a lighter-built race than that which at present inhabits this part of Europe. But this is not the correct explanation of these small handles, the fact being that the swords were not intended or adapted for cutting, but simply for thrusting, and were not grasped as the ordinary sabre of our cavalry. The bevelled edges of such swords are almost always so fine and thin that a heavy blow on a hard substance would shiver or destroy them, while the finer and sharper the edge the more easy and effectual would be the thrust. The early Saxon and Scandinavian swords on the other hand were more for cutting, are longer and heavier and furnished with handles which admitted of being used with the closed hand.

As the Somersetshire sword is decidedly Irish in character, if it is permitted to offer a very bold conjecture, one might suggest not that it found its way into Somersetshire from Ireland, although we have no traditions of the Irish Gael invading that county, however frequent their descents on the Welsh coast.

May our sword then be a relic of the same Gaelic race before they were swept northward and westward by Belgic or other invaders, until they found a resting place in Ireland and the western Highlands. But however it may have found its way into Somersetshire, there will probably be little difference of opinion that it should not leave the county, but by the generosity of its owner secure its final resting place in the Taunton Museum.

*The Early Royal Charters of Bath.*BY W. HUNT, *Hon. Sec.*

When the Society visited Bath in July, the Mayor and Corporation kindly exhibited their charters and deeds. The Mayor, the late Admiral Paynter, made this collection of documents the subject of a paper, which is printed in the present Volume of Proceedings. The manuscripts generally, and especially the charters drew to themselves general and well deserved attention, and the paper of the Mayor was heard with more than ordinary interest. My duties during the Meeting did not allow me to give to these documents the time and thought, which I would otherwise have willingly devoted to them. I was forced to leave them with almost a cursory glance. The kindness of the Mayor Mr. Jerom Murch, our President, and of the Town Clerk, Mr. Stone, has enabled me to have another sight of some of these. As it is, other engagements have only allowed me to make a flying visit to the treasures contained in the Guildhall. When I was there this year, some of the documents were in London under the care of Mr. Riley and for his examination. Under the circumstances I thought that the best thing which could be done was to copy the exact words of two or three of the early royal charters, filling up the many contractions which, if printed, would only perplex and annoy the reader, and at the same time would fail to bring before the mind any idea of what the originals are really like. I have ventured to add a few notes on the early history of Bath, so far as it is connected with these charters.

The chief documents which treat of the early history of Bath are to be found in the Library of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge, in the Record Office, in the office of the Chapter Clerk at Wells, and in the Guildhall of the city itself. The C.C.C. manuscripts were accepted as genuine by Dugdale and by Warner. Many of them are to be found in the Monasticon, where a list of them is given, and a number are also printed

in Warner's History of Bath. Though these documents are undoubtedly very ancient, yet their genuineness is, to say the least, open to suspicion, and there are few who would like to affirm that the writing is of the same period as any of the matters treated. They form in fact what is generally called a Cartulary of the Abbey, and their authority is neither more nor less than is to be given to such collections. Each entry must stand or fall by itself. Some of the Wells Chapter documents and the Tower MSS. are to be found in the Monasticon and in Warner. The charters and deeds kept at the Guildhall are for the most part unpublished. In old days the corporations of cities kept such things jealously guarded from all eyes. The unenlightened spirit which dictated such a course has passed away as far as Bath is concerned, greatly to the honour of her present civic rulers, and to the pleasure and profit of the student of municipal history.

In speaking of the early history of an English city all the old doctrines of Roman origin should be put out of the mind—the institutions, the customs, the very character and being of such a city are English, and nothing else. If likenesses to them are to be sought across the water, they are to be found rather in the cities of our Low Dutch kinsfolk, than in those of Italy or Gaul. In the case of most cities this warning might perhaps be considered impertinent; it can scarcely be so regarded when Bath is spoken of, where the traces of Roman occupation are so many and so noteworthy. The invasion of Ceawlin probably ended the municipal history of Aquæ Solis. The imitations of the mother city on the Tiber, which must have been seen in every street, in every institution of this far off daughter on the Avon, came to a sudden end. The city of Bath grew up on the ruins of Aquæ Solis. Like many another English town it grew up around a religious house. At the same time it is not to be classed along with such towns as Glastonbury. They probably would never have been at all, had it not been for the monastery in their midst. The extent

and splendour of the ruins of *Aquæ Solis*, and above all the hot mineral springs would have made Bath, even without the presence of its Abbey. The municipal history of Bath is therefore quite distinct from that of towns like Glastonbury or Wells. The city was affected by the presence of the Abbey, still it was not swamped by it. The Abbot had his tenants, but these did not include the whole of the freeholders, and when a Prior, instead of an Abbot, ruled the Church of S. Peter and S. Paul, the influence of the Religious House grew less within the city.

Whatever may be the truth about the story which tells how Oaric, King of the Hwiccas, founded a nunnery in Bath, the assertion that Eadgar turned out secular Canons and filled their places with Benedictine Monks, if it cannot exactly be proved, is at least what one might look for. The city which was so favoured by Eadgar as to be made the scene of his coronation, formed part of the royal demesne of later times. A mint was established there by King Eadward, and many coins have been discovered which were struck there. We have one of these, of the time of Æthelred II, in our Museum at Taunton. In the time of the Confessor the city was held by Queen Eadygth. The larger part of the freeholders held of the Crown, though the Church of S. Peter had twenty-four burgesses, a mill and 12 acres of meadow land. When the see of the Somersetshire Bishoprick was changed, William II gave Bishop John all that had belonged to the Abbot; in fact the Bishop became Abbot and succeeded to all the rights of his predecessors. Besides these, the King gave him the whole of the city, with its mint and all things there. Thus Bath ceased to be a Kings town and became a Bishops town. All the profit and revenues of the city were devoted by Bishop John "to carry out the work which he had begun." This work was the rebuilding of the Church of S. Peter, for the old Abbey Church had been burned. All the burgesses of Bath now held of the Bishop and Abbot of the Church. This change did not probably make much

difference to the freeholders of the city. They simply paid their service to the Bishop, instead of to the Kings reeve, and the profits of their courts, and all other revenues were brought into the episcopal, instead of into the royal treasury. Meanwhile a change was taking place in their position. The citizens were no longer merely so many tenants of the King or the Bishop. They began to combine together for the common good; to form, it may be, different voluntary associations among themselves, to belong, we know, to one great union, which from the character of its members or of its objects, was called the Gild Merchant. It was in this way that the liberties and privileges of the city first arose; and the recognition of this Gild by royal charter may be fairly considered as the beginning of the modern municipal history of Bath. This charter was granted by King Richard in 1089, the first year of his reign. It seems worthy of notice that, though Bath was part of the possessions of the Bishop, yet all the early charters of the city were granted by the Crown. This is by no means the case with Wells. There the liberties and rights of the city depended chiefly on the charters of Bishops Robert, Reginald, and Savaric. This difference may point to the fact that the Bishop was by no means so great a man at Bath as he was at Wells. In order to combine the double characters of Bishop and Abbot, it was needful to appoint a Prior to rule the monastery. As long as Bishop John lived, this new appointment could not have made much difference. It became of importance when, first Bishop Godfrey, and next, and in a more marked degree, Bishop Robert began to undo some of the injustice from which Wells had suffered. Then the Prior became a great man, and, as his influence grew greater, the influence of the Bishop grew less. On the death of Robert, the see was kept vacant for nine years, and during this time all the revenues of the city, as well as of the rest of the possessions of the Bishoprick, were paid into the royal exchequer. Meanwhile, during this vacancy, the succession of the Priors was uninterrupted. Then Reginald Fitz

Joscelin was made Bishop, and it was in his time that Richard gave this charter to Bath. Now this Bishop Reginald confirmed the municipal rights which Bishop Robert gave to Wells, and, as we know that he was with King at least within a day or two of this charter being granted and almost certainly at the very time it was given, he no doubt approved it and perhaps asked for it. The charter is one which could only have been given by the King, because it grants privileges of trading within the Kings demesne. It seems strange that these privileges should be addressed to the members of the Gild Merchant, for this recognition of the Gild must have been the right of the lord of the city rather than of the King. It would have seemed more natural for the Bishop to have been the one to acknowledge this association of his own tenants, for this recognition of the Gild had the effect of giving it a legal existence. It made its members the acknowledged governing body in the city, the only men who enjoyed the full rights of citizenship. The Gild Brethren, the representatives of the older freehold tenants, had now become Merchant princes. They were collectively responsible for the civil burthens and enjoyed the honours and profits of ruling over their poorer neighbours. This charter is marked 1 in the collection at the Guildhall, and is doubtless the first charter granted to the citizens of Bath, as distinct from the monks of S. Peter. It was one of the many charters granted by this King, in return for the money which he greedily collected together for the expenses of the Crusade. It is as follows :—

Ricardus dei gratia Rex Angliæ, Dux Normanniæ
Aquitaniæ, Comes Andagaviæ, Justiciariis Vicecomitibus
Baronibus Præpositis Ministris et omnibus fidelibus suis
totius Angliæ et Portuum maris, salutem. Præcipimus
quod cives de Bathonia, qui sunt de Gilda eorum Mercatoria,
habeant in omnibus eandem quietacionem et Libertatem
de omnibus mercatis suis quocumque venerint, per terram
vel aquam, de theoloneo de passagio de lestagio et de

omnibus aliis consuetudinibus et occasionibus et rebus, quam plenius et liberius habent cives nostri Wintonenses de Gilda eorum Mercatoria. Et prohibemus ne super hoc aliquis eos disturbet vel infestet ipsos vel res ipsorum super decem librarum forisfacturam. Testibus, Hugone Dunelmensi et Hugone Cestrensi et Huberto Saresberienſi Episcopis. Willelmo Marescallo, Johanne frater suo, Galfrido filio Petri. Datum apud Doveram per mandatum Willelmi Eliensis Electi Cancellarii nostri, vii die Decembris, Regni nostri anno primo.

The seal is of light green wax and is much broken. The writing is fine, and the document in splendid preservation.

This charter then grants to the men of Bath the quiet enjoyment of their Gild Merchant. The burgesses or tenants, who held by a free holding of the lord of the borough, formed societies or brotherhoods amongst themselves, not only for religious or social purposes, but also to maintain their rights and forward the ministration of justice. The most important of these Gilds, either from age or wealth, naturally included as its members the principal burgesses, and was perhaps strengthened by the union with it of like associations of less importance in the borough. Its members were merchants, and the objects of its being were mercantile as well as political. From these associations arose the practice of granting a corporate existence to a borough by the recognition of its Gild Merchant, which thus became the governing body. It is then from this charter of Richard that the corporate existence of the borough is to be dated. It grants to the members of this Gild Merchant freedom from the many vexatious imposts which shackled trade in those days; they were to be free to buy or sell by land or by water, that is of course within the King's demesne, without payment of tolls due to him on bringing goods into one of his fairs or markets, or on conveying them along his roads or over his bridges, or on the last of leather exported. The Gild Merchant of Bath was in fine to enjoy the same privileges, as

far as such exemptions were concerned, as that of Winchester. The charter of Winchester, to which reference is here made, was also granted by Richard in the first year of his reign, and among the witnesses appears the name of Reginald, Bishop of Bath. The likeness however of these two charters to each other is only so far as concerns tolls, for in other respects the charter of Winchester grants privileges, which do not seem to have been enjoyed by Bath until 40 Hen. III. The actual date and place and witnesses of the charter are all illustrated by reference to the compilation made by Walter of Coventry. The first few days of December, 1189, were passed by King Richard at Canterbury, where he was engaged in settling affairs both of church and state, before he left on the crusade. In attendance on his court on 5th December was Reginald of Bath, though his name does not appear in the charter before us. On the 6th December the King and his court moved to Dover, whence he embarked on the 11th for Calais. The names of Hugh Pudsey, Hubert Walter, William the Marshal and his brother John, Geoffrey Fitz Peter, and William Longchamp are sufficiently famous. The Bishop of Chester was Hugh Novant. The see of Lichfield, first moved to Chester, was soon after moved to Coventry, and the Bishop became Abbot of the Benedictine Abbey there, just as our Somersetshire Bishop held the Abbey of Bath, yet the old title of Chester was still used. This Bishop was chiefly remarkable for the warfare he carried on against his monks at Coventry. William Longchamp, who seems to have been appointed Chancellor while the King was at Dover, was consecrated 31st December.

The second charter in the keeping of the Corporation is that granted 31 Hen. III. It is printed in Warners History of Bath from the duplicate which he found in the Tower. The copy in the Guildhall is on a very thin skin, with a fine seal attached.

For a short time it seemed that the city of Bath would return to the Crown. Bishop Savaric engaged to restore it, in exchange for the Abbey of Glastonbury. His successor, Bishop

Joscelin, in 1218, agreed to give up his claim on Glastonbury; and Bath, with a momentary exception, remained in the hands of the Church until the Dissolution. The liberties of the city were however gained not by grant of the Abbot-Bishop, but from the Crown. The next royal charter was also granted by Henry the Third, in the 40th year of his reign. It is as follows:—

Henricus dei gratia rex Angliæ, dominus Hiberniæ dux Normanniæ Aquitaniæ Comes Andagaviæ Archiepiscopis &c. Sciatis nos concessisse et hac carta nostra confirmasse omnibus nostris Bathoniæ quod ipsi et eorum heredes per totam terram et potestatem nostram in perpetuum habeant hanc libertatem, videlicet quod ipsi et eorum bona quocumque locorum in potestate nostra inventa non arestentur pro aliquo debito de quo fidejussores aut principales debitores non exstiterint, nisi forte ipsi debitores de eorum sint communæ et potestate habentes unde de debitis suis in toto vel in parte satisfacere possint et dicti cives creditoribus eorundem debitorum in justitia defuerint et hoc rationabiliter constare possit. Quare volumus et firmiter præcipimus pro nobis et heredibus nostris quod predicti cives et eorum heredes cives Bathoniæ per totam terram et potestatem nostram in perpetuum habeant libertatem, et ea de cetero libere et sine impedimento alicujus utantur, et prohibemus super forisfacturam nostram viginti librarum ne quis eos contra hanc libertatem et concessionem nostram molestare vel inquietare presumat. Hujus testibus, Guidone de Lezingan, Galfrido de Lezingan, Willelmo de Valentia, fratribus nostris, Johanne de Plessetis Comiti Warwik, Rogero de Thurkilby, Roberto Walerando, Walkelin de Arderen, Nicholo de S^o Mauro, Radulfo de Bakepitz (?), Bartholomeo le Bigot, Willelmo de S^o Ermino, Willelmo Gernum, et aliis. Data per manum nostram apud Gloucestram, vicesimo quarto die Julii, anno regni nostri quadragesimo.

This charter refers to the seizure of persons and goods by process of law. The citizen of any borough, who had been wronged by having to pay toll unjustly in another borough, might recover the amount of the damage from any member of the borough which had wronged him. It seems as though in like manner the creditor of a citizen of another borough claimed the right to attach the person and goods of any fellow-citizen of his debtor. This wide interpretation of what was in itself originally a valuable privilege must often have worked cruel injustice. This charter directs that the citizens of Bath should be exempt from such seizure, though if a debtor had no goods which could be seized within the city, and there was within the city some one who owed a debt to him, then that debt could be seized for payment. This freedom from arrest for the debts of others was granted to the city of Bristol by John, when he was as yet only Earl. This charter was perhaps granted by King Henry while on the march to Chester to meet the Welsh, who had risen in arms. His great need of money was no doubt the cause of its grant.

It is a curious and rather puzzling fact that, there is another charter purporting to have been granted to Bath on the same day, at the same place, and before the same witnesses, as the charter conferring this freedom from arrest. This second charter of the 24th July, 40 Hen. III, is to be found in an *Inspeximus* charter of 6 Edward I. Two copies of this *Inspeximus* are to be seen in the Guildhall; they are exactly like each other, and are numbered 6 and 7 of the series of early charters. This charter recites one granted by Henry III, at Gloucester, before the same witnesses as the charter copied above. The contents of the two charters of 40 Hen. III are totally different. As this second charter is printed by Warner as part of an *Inspeximus* charter of 2 Henry V, it is not worth while to give it at length or in Latin. It provides that all exchequer summonses should be heard within the walls; that no royal officers should interfere in causes, except in case of default of the citizens or their bailiffs;

that no one should be impleaded outside the city in respect of any lands or tenements within the city, except in crown cases; that coroners should be chosen to hear pleas of the crown; that if any one die, testate or intestate, their goods should be to their heirs in full; that the men of Bath should enjoy the like liberties as the citizens of London. On the same day, at the same place, and before the same witnesses, King Henry also granted a charter to Bristol, empowering the burgesses to choose a coroner, &c.; promising that the rights of heirs should be protected as in the Bath charter, and also providing that the liberties of London should be the model of those at Bristol. It is strange that these three charters should be all so exactly contemporaneous that all three must, as I may say, have lain on the same table together. There is not, as far as I know, to be found any where the original of this second Bath charter of 24th July. Can it possibly be a forgery? The rights which are granted by this charter are large and important. Most of them were secured to London by the great charter of Henry the First. They were all of them such as might well have been granted to Bristol in the latter part of the reign of Henry the Third; indeed, there is no reason to doubt the genuineness of the Bristol charter. It is less to be expected that such rights should have been granted to Bath, for it was by no means so important a city. The strange point is, that on the same day, and in the same council, there should be granted two charters to Bath; one so much wider and more important than the other. Yet it does not seem likely that a forgery would be made the subject of an *Inspeximus* so soon after its date. There must have been many of the councillors of Henry the Third, who were alive in the sixth year of his son Edward. The amount of freedom enjoyed by a city must have been accurately known to the King's officers; it must above all have been known to the lords of the city, whose names, now at the ending of the thirteenth century, again appear in the Bath charters. In spite, then, of this strange fact that the two Bath charters and the Bristol charter, which is so

like in some of its provisions to the more suspicious of two, were all given at the same time; in spite also of the tenor of other charters of the time of Edward the First, which make it seem as though the position of Bath was by no means so high as this second charter of 40 Hen. III would lead us to expect; I am constrained to allow that it is almost impossible that larger charter should be a forgery.

The next two charters preserved at the Guildhall which I shall have to notice, mark a considerable difference in the position of the Bishop towards Bath. For this difference it seems to me possible to find a sufficient reason in the esteem in which the King held the Bishop. Edward, like his predecessor, the Confessor, assigned Bath to his Queen Eleanor. This must have been an invasion of the rights of the see. In 1275, Robert Burnell was consecrated Bishop of Bath and Wells. The new Bishop stood high in the favour of the King. He was learned and magnificent. He had been the Secretary and friend of Edward before he came to the throne, and on the death of Archbishop Boniface, Edward tried in vain to make the monks of Canterbury choose Robert to succeed him. When Edward became King he made Robert Chancellor and Treasurer. He was, after his royal master, the greatest statesman and the wisest man of his age, and throughout his life he enjoyed the confidence and esteem of the King. When he was consecrated Bishop, Edward restored Bath to the see; only keeping the manor of Barton in exchange for the patronage of Glastonbury. This grant was made in his third year, and is to be found printed in Dugdale. Later in the same year he granted the charter marked 4 in the Guildhall series, not to the men of Bath, but to the Bishop as their lord. As I cannot find out that it has ever been printed before, I give it here:—

Edwardus dei gratia rex Angliæ, dominus Hiberniæ et dux Aquitaniæ Archiepiscopis, &c. Sciatis nos concessisse et hac carta nostra confirmasse pro nobis et heredibus nostris venerabili patri Roberto Bathon. et Wellen. Epis-

copo quod omnes cives et omnes homines sui et successorum suorum de civitate sua Bathoniæ et ipsorum civium et hominum heredes quieti sint per totum regnum nostrum de theolonio et praestatione ejusdem theolonii in perpetuum. Quare volumus et firmiter praecipimus pro nobis et heredibus nostris quod omnes cives et omnes homines predicti Episcopi et successorum suorum de predicta civitate sua Bathoniæ et ipsorum civium et hominum heredes quieti sint per totum regnum nostrum de theolonio et praestatione theolonii in perpetuum sicut predictum est. Hujus testibus, Venerabilibus patribus Waltero Roffensi et Thoma Herefordensi Episcopis. Willelmo de Valencia avunculo nostro, Thoma de Clare, Rogero de Mortuo mari, Mauricio de Crediton (?) Ottone de Grandisono, Magistro Roberto de Mardeburg Archidiacono Estriding, Hugone filio Ottonis, Johanne de Seyton et aliis. Data per manum nostram apud Westmonasterium, duo decimo die Nov., anno regni nostri tertio.

The grant gives nothing but freedom from toll, which had already been granted by the charter of Richard. Though at first sight it may seem to have been of little value, it was probably needful for two reasons. The short time during which the city was taken from the see might have been held to have wiped out former privileges conferred by the Crown. The city was restored, but was it restored with all the rights as against the King which it formerly had, or had the time during it was in the hands of the Crown caused it to lose anything? Freedom from toll was the point on which such a question as this was most likely to arise. This charter then set this matter at rest. Besides this, the charter of Richard granted freedom from toll to the citizens who were of the Gild Merchant, while this charter of Edward is in favour of all the citizens and all the men of the Bishop. The citizens here spoken of no doubt all belonged to the Gild Merchant of King Richard's time. The great movement which ended in the admission of craftsmen to a

share in the full rights of citizenship, would scarcely yet have spread so far. The citizens of Bath were those freehold tenants who in ancient times formed themselves into one Gild, and who as Gild Brethren received the charter of Richard. They formed a burgher oligarchy. They kept all the government to themselves, and ruled supreme in all municipal and mercantile matters, to the exclusion of the unprivileged craftsmen, who were in their eyes as lewd fellows of the baser sort, the "*minutus populus*," "*fili diversarum matrum*." Besides these citizens, the men of the Bishop are also mentioned. These tenants of the see may, or may not have been of the Gild Merchant. The heirs of the twenty-four tenants of the Abbey, mentioned in Domesday, no doubt belonged to the dominant party in the city. There were, doubtless, many other tenants of the Bishop, who did not hold so good a position, yet, inasmuch as they held of the Bishop, they had equally with the ruling faction the rights secured by this charter. The Bishop of Rochester, whose name stands first among the witnesses to this document, was Walter of Merton, the founder of Merton College, Oxford. * The Bishop of Hereford was Thomas Cantilupe, a famous theologian, who received canonization on account of his learning and holiness.

The next charter, marked 5 in the Guildhall collection, calls for little remark. It was given on the first day of September, in the twelfth year of King Edward's reign, and was, like the one before, directed to Bishop Robert. It granted a fair to be held each year. The charter is dated at Aberconway. In this year Edward moved the Monastery of Conway to Maynan in Denbighshire, and made a castle on the old site to restrain the Welsh. He spent the greater part of that year in the northern part of Wales, and was engaged in enforcing the English law throughout the country. Among the witnesses appears the name of Robert de Brus. This Robert was the Lord of Annandale, who afterwards claimed the crown of Scotland. He was the father of the Earl of Carrick, and grandfather of Robert, who became king. The charters marked 6 and 7 are, as we have seen,

duplicates of the Inspeximus charter of 6 Edward I. I have not had time to examine more of the charters of this ancient city. These notes will serve to show the importance and interest of the series of documents exhibited at our Meeting. I have only tried to touch on points in the charters, which seemed to me to require comment. This has made these remarks somewhat unconnected. Still I shall have been successful in my attempt if any reader is led to see how worthy these and such like documents are of our most laborious attention, and if the Mayor and Corporation of Bath will accept these notes, as a proof that our Society appreciates the liberal-minded kindness which they showed by exhibiting their splendid civic muniments to us during our late visit to their city.
