

Turvey & the Mordaunts.

On Thursday last about 40 Members and friends of the Architectural Excursions Club under the presidency of the Rev. R. M. Serjeantson F.S.A. journeyed to Turvey when an enjoyable and interesting afternoon was spent studying its beautiful Church and wandering about its delightful Park and Village.

Upon arrival at the Church a short account was given by Mr. T. Paine describing its growth from early times to the present day. Although the building--which is dedicated to All Saints--has been very thoroughly restored, it still retains evident traces of its great age, an age now approaching 1,000 years. The Saxon Church was, however, small, and without aisles, consisting of the lower part of the present western tower and the three western bays of the nave. The remains of this building are to be seen in the semi-circular headed window openings, on the south side of the nave arcade, and also in the blocked up opening in the east wall of the tower. In the twelfth century the Church was probably lengthened although no remains of this work exist, if we except the beautiful font. In the 13th. century -- the Early English period -- the Church was enlarged by the addition of the south aisle together with St. Mary's Chapel. Portions of this work are very fine, the south door with its rich continuous mouldings being particularly good. The contemporary ironwork upon the south door is also a very beautiful character as are also the triple sedilia and piscina in St. Mary's Chapel. The following century saw the north aisle erected, the tower raised, and the present east window in St. Mary's Chapel inserted, while to the Perpendicular period belong the clerestory and the battlements. This completed the building, and the Church then remained for a long time practically unaltered except for interior construction. When, however, the late Mr. Charles Longuet Higgins succeeded to the estate in the middle of the last century, it was his great desire to enlarge and beautify the Church, a desire that he was thoroughly well qualified to carry out. Amongst numerous improvements he built under the advice of Mr. Afterwards Sir Gilbert Scott, the chancel, lengthened the north aisle in order to provide an organ vestry, and thoroughly restored the whole building. The foundations of the nave columns were found to be insecure and so were rebuilt, though every care was

taken to preserve their original form.

Much of the interest attached to the Church centres around the series of beautiful tombs to the Mordaunts -- a family who held the estate for several centuries. Sir John Mordaunt, who with his wife lies in St. Mary's Chapel was a staunch adherent of the Lancastrian cause and fought at Barnet, where he was wounded, and also at Bosworth Field, when he helped to wrest the crown from the usurper Richard, and again at Stoke, where he was instrumental in defeating the supporters of ~~him~~ Lambert Simnel. Sir John died in 1504 and in his will desired to be buried in St. Mary's Chapel and he founded a chantry in the said Chapel for two priests who were to live in Turvey, and besides singing mass, they were to teach grammar to the boys of the village. This stipulation that the chantry priest was to act as a schoolmaster was quite an ordinary and regular arrangement, and the idea that he did nothing but sing masses for the souls of the departed is quite an erroneous one. The effigies of the knight and his lady are very fine and in splendid preservation, the former wearing the collar of SS, a Lancastrian Badge, the meaning of the letters upon which is unknown, although it is clearly a livery collar worn in contra-distinction to the Collar of the Suns and Roses of York.

Monuments to John the first Baron Mordaunt, son of the foregoing and Elizabeth Vere of Addington his wife, lie close by. This Mordaunt lived through the troubled times of Henry VIII to Elizabeth and died in 1562, having added greatly to the family estates by his marriage with the heiress of Drayton. Monuments to the second Baron and his two wives are in the north aisle, as is also a plain black marble tomb to the third Baron, who was one of the judges of Mary Queen of Scots "In whose sentence he did most unwillingly concur". Many others of the family are also interred beneath Turvey's consecrated roof, but nothing marks the place of their sepulture, the most famous of these being Charles, 6th. Baron Mordaunt and third Earl of Peterborough, who was the hero of the war of the Spanish succession, and who died at Lisbon in 1735.

Three at least of the Rectors of Turvey acquired fame far beyond the limits of their Parish and indeed the whole place teems with interesting memories of the past, and like most villages the more we know of them the more we find how closely each is connected with the nation's story and

"We never tread upon them but we set

Our foote upon some reverend historie".