

WESTWOOD PARK, WORCESTERSHIRE.

WESTWOOD PARK stands something less than two miles to the west of Droitwich, in Worcestershire, in a very fine situation, upon an eminence commanding very beautiful prospects, and with a park remarkable for being laid out in "rays of planting." Here, in ancient times, was a small priory of Benedictine nuns, subject to the Abbey of Fontevraud, the site of which appears to have been upon the slope of the bank above the present fish-ponds. After the Dissolution the place was granted by Henry VIII. to Sir John Pakington, a serjeant-at-law, who was given many judicial offices, chiefly in Wales, but whose family seat was at Hampton Lovett, in Worcestershire. The bluff King, whose portrait is enframed in the magnificent carving over the chimney-piece in the Long Gallery at

Westwood, enriched Sir John with not a few grants, for he stood high in the Royal favour, and knighted him after the return from Boulogne in 1545. When he died the greater part of his estate passed to his nephew, Thomas Pakington, the son of his brother Robert, who was knighted by Queen Mary in 1553, and died in 1571.

It does not appear to be known with any certainty that a mansion house existed at Westwood at the time, and the central block of the existing structure dates from the possession of Sir John Pakington, who succeeded on the death of his father, Sir Thomas. Queen Elizabeth visited Worcestershire in August, 1578, and seems to have been attracted by the wit and the handsome person of the squire of Hampton Lovett. She invited him to Court, where he was received with great favour, and



THE GATE-HOUSE.