EASTNOR CASTLE,

HEREFORDSHIRE.

THE castellated mansion of Lady Henry Somerset occupies a very fine position near Ledbury, within sight of the Malvern Hills, and in the midst of most attractive and varied scenery, commanding a great outlook from its position of vantage upon the slope of a sylvan hill. The district, moreover, is full of history. The estate came to Lady Henry Somerset from her father, the third and last Earl Somers, who died in 1883, when the barony of Somers passed to a cousin. The present possessor of the estate is the eleventh in descent from Richard Cocks, the first of the family who settled in the place. John Somers, Lord High Chancellor, was the man of whom Walpole said that he was "the model of Addison and the touchstone of Swift," while Macaulay described him as "the greatest man of that age," and the family has given other men of note to the country.

On an island in the lake, now marked by a clump of trees, stood the ancient manor house in which the ancestors of Earl Somers lived from the sixteenth century to 1812, when the first Earl built Eastnor Castle from the designs of Sir Robert Smirke, R.A., in a style which that prominent architect considered to be Norman, and there are round machicolated towers, curtain walls, and embattlements. The castle is beautiful in its surroundings, and owes its inner harmony and attractions mainly to the artistic and elevated tastes of the late Earl Somers. It is approached by a broad flight of stone steps leading up to the principal entrance. The Entrance Hall, which has an imposing character, with columns and arches of precious marble, richly inlaid, is the storehouse of much very beautiful and interesting ancient armour and arms. Among the latter are a Venetian halberd, dated 1525, a tournament tilting lance of the



VISCONTI PLATE ARMOUR IN THE HALL.