

Darley Abbey, Derbyshire : Proposed Repairs.

DARLEY ABBEY was the most important and the richest of the Derbyshire abbeys, but unfortunately, the building now under consideration is the only structural evidence remaining. The building is a mediæval hall with undercroft, massively built in stone, and apparently forming a complete structure. But whether it was a Guest Hall, Refectory, Infirmary or other accessory building it is impossible to say, as the plan of the monastery is lost.

The undercroft contains an ancient ingle-nook, but the windows have been mutilated, as also the original entrance. The large hall above, which runs through the full length of the building, contains traces of a large and well-proportioned Gothic window in the south wall, and the side windows still show evidence of Gothic tracery. The roof is a good example of old-English work and is capable of being effectively restored. This old structure has been a familiar feature of the village for many years past. It has been strengthened in later times by a large buttress (now fairly ancient), but in many ways its exterior is still consistent with its ancient character and the walls are capable of being made sound and secure in perpetuity.

The ground floor, or undercroft, as well as the hall above, have been disfigured by alterations for domestic and other secular purposes, but the building now stands empty and has narrowly escaped demolition by order of the local authority.

The Society has purchased the building and has, so far, saved it from such demolition, but is now faced with

the expenditure necessary to ensure its preservation and to bring back some adequate measure of its old-time dignity.

It is probable that the ultimate cost of repairing and refitting the building will be near upon £1,200, but the immediate need is the expenditure of a sum of about £250, for overhauling and strengthening the structure to avoid a demolition order.

The Society believes it will be fulfilling the wishes of numerous people in the county by this enterprise, and ventures to appeal for early and substantial support from its many members and friends.

The extent of the work undertaken will be governed by the response to this appeal as the funds of the Society are quite inadequate to meet such a claim in addition to its ordinary work.

It seems appropriate to mention here that the mediæval cartulary or chronicle of the Abbey, covering several centuries, is about to be published by the Society at considerable expense. The document will throw much new light on local history. This being so, the Council feel they have further grounds for making this effort so as to preserve this picturesque structure, not only for its own sake, but as a perpetual commentary upon valuable records.

We therefore appeal to you for a contribution towards the scheme, as our object is to undertake, at once, as much of the work as possible to enable the building to be devoted to some useful purpose in village amenities, and also provide a revenue for its upkeep.

Contributions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer of the Society—Mr. D. E. Bower, Wood Bank, Crich, near Matlock, or to the Hon. Treasurer for the Undertaking—Mr. W. H. Milnes Marsden, "Northcliffe House," Derby. General enquires should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary for the Undertaking, Mr. T. L. Tudor, 80, Osmaston Road, Derby.