

## Communications on the West Front of Wells Cathedral.

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FROM MR. J. T. IRVINE AND MR. B. FERREY, F.S.A.

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ON March 23rd of this year, the Secretary in charge of the publishing work of this Society received the following letter from Mr. J. T. Irvine :—

“ While going over sundry old letters and note books relating to Wells Cathedral, I found a letter from Mr. B. Ferrey, the architect of the restoration. In this he expresses considerable doubt as to whether any pedestals to the lost figures, once placed in the two side niches on either hand of the centre niche, containing the figure of our Blessed Lord, at the top of the West Front, remained in 1874. As at some future time it may possibly be desired to replace these lost figures, and the shape and proportion of the pedestals will then become objects of much interest, tending to throw light on the arrangement originally adopted in the Perpendicular period (to which period all the work above the marble string belongs), the dimensions given in my old note book seem worthy of record in the Journal of the Somersetshire Archæological Society. While in the niche on the north side no pedestal remained, in that on the south side the old, long, narrow pedestal was found in fair preservation. The whole clear width of niche, from jamb to jamb, was 4 ft. 1½ in. The depth of niche, from wall face to back, was about 1 ft. 7 in. The pedestal, placed with a close joint to back wall, was only 8½ in. in width from back to front, but was 8½ in. high ; while its length was such as to leave clear between its north end and the jamb 1 ft. 3½ in., but at the south end a clear width of only 1 ft. 2 in.”

The Secretary has also received the following communication from Mr. B. Ferrey, F.S.A. :—

“ I have only to add to what Mr. Irvine has said, that it was generally supposed that the niches referred to contained angels with thuribles, censing the statue of our Lord in Glory—a very general arrangement,—but there was no evidence to the fact. At a meeting of the Restoration Committee, after long discussion, it was resolved to leave the niches empty, although the late Rev. F. Horner, and another Member of the Committee, offered to place the figures in them at their own cost, and models by an eminent sculptor were submitted for approval. This was, in my opinion, a wise decision of the Committee; for such are the incomparable dignity and beauty of the figures on the West Front, that no modern sculpture could bear comparison with them. Mr. Horner accompanied me to see several representations of the Lord’s ‘Majesty,’ but they did not accord with the simple grandeur of what remained, and it was therefore deemed wiser to abandon all thought of meddling with the ancient work.”

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