



Engraving of Sir Roger de Hillary.

MONUMENTAL EFFIGY OF SIR ROGER DE HILLARY: TIME  
OF RICHARD II.

By JOHN HEWITT.

SOME years ago Mr. Albert Way called my attention to the existence of a curious knightly effigy, fixed, or which had been fixed, in Walsall Church, Staffordshire. Accordingly, accompanied by my late friend, Canon Parke, a sterling and cheery archæologist, I set out in quest. Arrived at Walsall, we proceeded to the church and interrogated the clerk, who, of course, knew nothing about the matter; modestly intimating his belief that no such statue had ever existed. At the zero of despondency, up came a second official, well stricken in years and of benign aspect.

“A sexton was he sothely as I guesse.”

He *did* remember such a figure, but knew not what had become of it. On being pressed, however, he thought it had been taken to Mr. So-and-so's, the banker. Hope reviving, we forthwith repaired to the banker's, but only to learn that he was from home. More zero. However, archæologists are not easily disheartened, so we determined to try the bank itself. In we went, and the effect on the clerks when, looking forward to a good order for 3 per cents., or a lucrative transfer of shares in the Grand Junction Canal, they learned that our transaction was limited to a knight of the fourteenth century, cut in stone, and long ago escaped from Walsall Church, may be readily imagined. The old Managing Clerk, observing from his higher-desk-than-the-rest the amount of tittering going on, amiably stepped forward. Dear old man! nothing could be more kind and considerate. He was of the usual type of old Managing Clerk, evidently so wearied and disgusted with tottling up pen-and-ink thousands in his daily ledger, that to return at four o'clock to his real poverty was quite a relief. Perhaps, too, after four o'clock the old gentleman indulged in archæology. At all events, he was no stranger to Sir Roger de

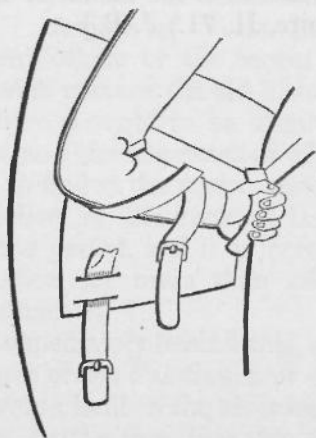
Hillary and his doings ; and, for the effigy, it was repositied in the grounds of his principal, the banker, at his private residence. Thither we sped, but again to learn that the proprietor was from home. However, by intervention of an amiable gardener, we were allowed to see the figure. Why gardener ? why, because Sir Roger de Hillary was located in the garden ; where, with divers lumps of *Silurian* from Dudley and *Greenstone* from Rowley, he helped to form a monticule of rock-work at the end of a shrubbery. I was permitted to make a drawing of the effigy, which is now before us. Fifteen or twenty years have since elapsed. Of the adventures of De Hillary in the meantime I know nothing ; but in the spring of this year (1874), I met my old friend snugly ensconced beneath the gateway of Rushall Castle. I recognised him in a moment—albeit he has suffered much disparagement in the interim from wind and weather. As he is now evidently on his last legs (what remains of 'em) I venture to offer his *vera effigies* as it formerly presented itself, for the pages of the Archæological Journal.

Sir Roger de Hillary flourished at the end of the fourteenth century. From Shaw's History of Staffordshire we learn that Richard II. granted a licence in the fifteenth of his reign to Roger Hillary, knight, to found a chantry for a chaplain to celebrate daily mass, &c., in the Church of All Saints, Walsall, for the health of the said Roger while living, for his soul after death, and for the souls of his ancestors and all the faithful deceased (Shaw, vol. ii. p. 76).

Shaw further tells us : "The following description is by Wirley in his Church Notes, 1597, and Dugdale in his MS., c. xxxvi. p. 32, in the College of Arms: "In this church, towards the south part, resteth a fayre and curious monument with a figure of one of the Hilaries, leaning his head on one of his hands, as if he were half rising, with one of his legs rising answerable ; his shield on his left arm, and upon his body wrought flower de lyces and cross-crosslets very exactly." (Shaw, vol. ii. p. 78.) The arms, formerly in the windows of the church, are thus blazoned in the same History : "In a plain bordure three fleurs de lys between six cross-crosslets fitchée" (p. 78).

How the knight lost his face is a mystery ; perhaps, the original feature having been demolished, a restoration was

made, and on the removal of the effigy from the church, the appended piece became detached and was lost. The arming of the knight is well made out: on the body a hauberk of mail, nearly covered by a sleeveless surcoat laced down the side: the arms and legs have defences of plate; on the head a bassinet with camail attached, and beneath the head a helm with mantling and cap-of-maintenance. The military belt carries a purse with dagger, an unusual feature in English monuments. A second belt carries the sword. Three chains proceed from beneath the camail: one is attached to the pommel of the dagger, another was fixed to that of the sword, the third (not seen in our sketch) passes over the right shoulder, and was no doubt fastened to the helm. The shield is slung over the shoulder by a long strap or guige. The *enarmes*, or gear for holding the shield, are well shown, and it was to this particular that Mr. Way specially called our attention. We therefore make no apology for giving a second engraving, showing this arrangement as viewed from beneath. The broken strap to the left is that seen in the front view, passing under the left arm.



The figure is of life size, and has been carefully wrought. As we have already learned from Shaw's History, the surcoat was formerly "embellished with flower de lyces and cross-crosslets," and similar bearings no doubt appeared upon the shield. What may be implied by the attitude as described above by Wirley, "leaning his head on one of his hands as

if he were half rising, with one of his legs rising answerable," I know not. And I cannot call to mind a similar example. The puzzling torso on the bouche corner of the shield is a headless Ministering Angel. It is of the nature of Ministering Angels to be without their heads.

[SEE Arch. Journ. xx. p. 139, for a memoir "on an inscribed stone coffin-lid in the ancient cemetery of the Temple Church, London," by W. S. Walford. The monument there discussed is assumed to be to "Philippus de Sancto Hilario," and some interesting particulars are given in the memoir of the family to which the monument is presumed to belong, and of which the object of the present notice may have been a member.

In 34 Edwd. I., William Hillary was witness to a Deed by which Roger de Morteyn, Lord of Walshale, grants two mills, a water-mill and a windmill, to Henry de Prestwode and his son, &c. In 19 Edwd. II. Roger Hillory, Rector of the church of Allerwich, makes an agreement with Thomas le Rous, knight, touching his rent of 15s. 4d. for lands and tenements held of him as of the manor of Walshall. (Shaw's Hist. of Staffordshire, II. 71.) J. B.]