

## NOTES ON THE EFFIGY OF JOHN CAPERON, RECTOR OF RENDLESHAM.<sup>1</sup>

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The church of St. Gregory the Great at Rendlesham, Suffolk, is a small ancient building of flint with stone dressings consisting of chancel, nave, south porch and western embattled tower.

In the south wall of the chancel is a recess possessing a fine ogee cinquefoiled arch, 7 feet 5 inches high and 6 feet 9 inches wide. The spandrels, which are formed by cusps having terminals of fine double petalled flowers, are filled with well-carved conventional foliage. The ogee arch is decorated with richly sculptured crochets of conventional design and 7 inches in width, which terminate in a beautiful finial 1 foot 2 inches wide. Each side of the wall recess is flanked by a tall buttress carried up to the same height as the finial on the top of the ogee arch. The lower portion of the easternmost buttress is ornamented with nine roses, while the western buttress has only eight. The upper stage of each buttress is decorated with eleven small roses, and the buttresses terminate in an embattled tower, from which rises a well-carved pinnacle. (Fig. 1.)

The recumbent effigy is sculptured on a stone slab 6 feet 6 inches long and 2 inches deep, and the head rests on two cushions; the lower one is square, the upper one is lozenge-shaped. On each side is an angel with well-sculptured wings. Their hands are most delicately executed and hold the edge of the cushion. The angel on the right has a band round the head and forehead. The feet of the figure are placed on a large maned lion, couchant, with the head turned towards the north.

The effigy represents a priest in Eucharistic vestments. The head shows a well-defined tonsure, and the hair falls

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Meeting of the Institute on 7th November, 1906.

to the ears while the nose is somewhat flattened. The vestments consist of alb gathered at the waist over the girdle, the amice, maniple over the left arm showing both ends, and long plain oval-shaped chasuble ending somewhat in a point. Each foot is encased in a chassure. (Fig. 2.)

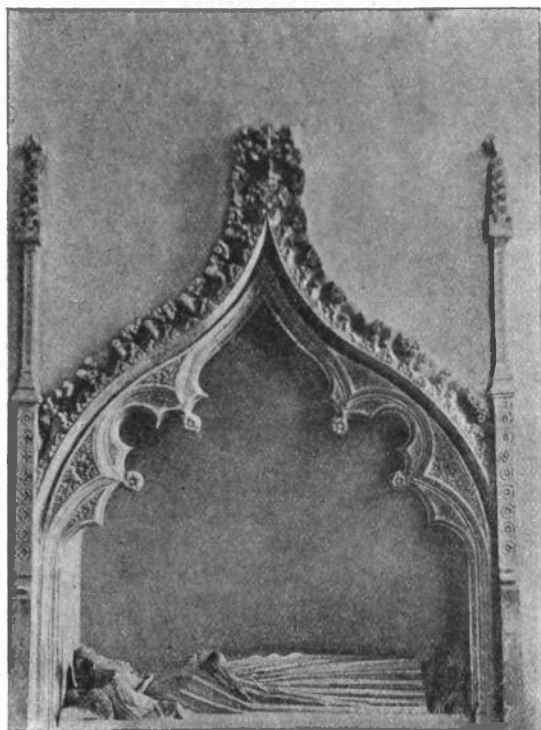


FIG 1.—TOMB OF JOHN CAPERON, RECTOR OF RENDLESHAM, 1349-1375.

In Kelly's *County Directory of Suffolk* this effigy is thus described: "In a recess of the wall on the north side of the chancel there is a monument of considerable antiquity with recumbent figure in stone of a lady with a lion at her feet and a child at each side of her." On examination of the tomb it is found that the effigy is that of a priest, not of a woman, and the children at the side are angels with well-sculptured wings.

The effigy is now painted white, but at one time it was doubtless richly painted in gold and appropriate colours. It would appear that this effigy represents John Caperon,<sup>1</sup> Rector of Rendlesham, who was instituted on the 22nd of April, 1349, and died in the year 1375. Sir Thomas



FIG. 2.—EFFIGY OF JOHN CAPERON, RECTOR OF RENDLESHAM, 1349-1375.

de Holebrook was patron of Rendlesham and presented John Caperon to the living. This rector was either much respected or he belonged to a good family, as he was buried in so fine a tomb, or it may be that he prepared his final resting-place himself during the twenty-six years he was Rector of Rendlesham.

<sup>1</sup> John Caperon is evidently the Rector of Rendlesham mentioned in this reference:—

Suff: *Feet of Fines*, No. 10. 27 Ed. III. (1354).

Thos. de Holebrook, chevalier, v. *John*

*Caperon*, parson of Tatygston church and Henry White of Tatygstone of the manors of Cowlawe, Foxhole, Langeston, and Rendlesham, and advowson of the churches of Rendlesham, Buklesham, Brendwenham, and Holton.