



WOODEN EFFIGY OF A CANON, ALL SAINTS, DERBY.

Scale, $\frac{1}{12}$ linear.

On a Wooden Effigy and Tomb of a Secular Canon in the Church of All Saints, Derby.

By W. H. St. JOHN HOPE, M.A.

IN a county abounding in so many varieties of stone as does Derbyshire, it is a singular circumstance that a tomb and effigy should be constructed of oak, and especially when it is borne in mind that the favourite material for effigies, tombs, and slabs in medieval and even later days, viz., alabaster, was obtained both in the county and just beyond it.

About the year 1710, Bassano, a heraldic painter, visited the churches in Derbyshire for the purpose of recording the heraldry and inscriptions of the monuments.

Among those at All Saints, Derby, he noted the following :—

In the East end of the North Ile is a Tombe all of wood, ye side of tomb erected about 4 foot high, and upon it is the full proportion of a man in some sort of Priest's orders, In Rich Canonically Robes, supposed to be the Abbot of Derley, a dog at his feet, Coloured, and looking mournfully up at his master; upon the side of this tombe, cut on the wood, are the effigies of 13 monks in their habits in praying postures, and under this, cut on wood, lyeth a man on his left side wrapped up in his winding sheet, with a Cross Patee on his left brest.*

In 1723 the old church was, with the exception of its fine tower, demolished, and the present building erected, from the designs of James Gibbs.

Not only was the whole of the old work swept away, but nearly the whole of the monuments, including the wooden tomb described by Bassano, met the same fate.

* MS. College of Arms.

But though this tomb disappeared from the church as a monument, it fortunately was not utterly destroyed. The tomb itself was broken up, but the side with the figures on it was preserved—apparently because the other side and the two ends were not so elaborately carved. The effigy and cadaver also escaped destruction, though they found no place in the new church, being consigned to the damp and dirt of the “town vault,” beneath the north aisle, where they lay for over 150 years.

The carved side of the tomb was kept in the church as a curiosity, but what it was, and whence it came, seems to have been forgotten; for when the church was visited by Mr. Rawlins * in 1831, he found it hanging on the wall beneath the east window of the chancel. He states, however, that it was traditionally said to have formed the apex of the arch over the doorway of the south porch in the old church, though he did not accept this view himself; his opinion being that it had formed the upper part of a door leading into a confessional (!) The figures carved on it he considered to represent St. Paul and the twelve apostles. It was subsequently removed to the front of the consistory seat.

Some years ago, on reading the description of the monument in Glover's History of Derby, I was led to enquire what had become of it. A visit to the church only resulted in my finding the side of the tomb still affixed to the consistory seat. Of the effigy, nothing was to be seen. Hearing, however, that a “wooden man” lay in the town vault, I visited the place, and there found, not only the effigy, but the cadaver also, in a sadly mutilated and decayed state. I was unable then to take any steps for their removal and preservation, which was somewhat unfortunate, for shortly afterwards, taking advantage of the vault being open during repairs to the church, some evil-minded person stole the head of the effigy, which was loose.

At the meeting of the Council of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society in April, 1879, I brought forward the question of the removal of the figures and the restoration

* Rawlins MS., penes Miss Harrison of Lytham.

of the tomb to its former condition. A sub-committee was forthwith appointed to consult the authorities of the church, and take such steps as might be necessary. After some delay, during which, however, the figures were removed from the vault into the church, and I had the good fortune to recover the head, the consent of the vicar and churchwardens was obtained, and the figures sent to London to be hardened and partly restored. The work was entrusted to Mr. G. A. Rogers, of Madox Street, who subjected the decayed wood to a process of pickling, which apparently has been successful. While in London, the figures were exhibited before the Society of Antiquaries, who had the effigy engraved for their "Proceedings."*

During the past year (1885) the carved side of the tomb has been removed from the consistory seat and cleaned, and the whole memorial has been reconstructed on the old lines, with the figures replaced in their old relative positions, on a convenient site at the east end of the north aisle, as it was in Bassano's time. The work has been most excellently carried out for the Society by Mr. William Waddams, of Derby.

Such are the vicissitudes which this monument has undergone.

The principal figure is a little over six feet long, by two feet wide. It represents, not the abbot of Darley, but a secular canon in cassock, surplice, almuce, and cope. The head lies on a cushion, placed lozengewise with an oblong one beneath, and is supported by two angels, now much broken. The feet, which rested on a collared hound looking up at his master, were utterly destroyed, but have been conjecturally "restored"; the rest of the figure remains untouched in its mutilated condition, with the exception of some minor unimportant details. Traces of red and gold colouring were found by Mr. Rogers in the deep folds of the cope when the figure was cleaned after pickling.

The accompanying engraving of the figure, "unrestored," has been kindly lent by the Society of Antiquaries (Plate XVI.)

* Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, 2nd series, vol. x., p. 65.

It may be remarked that, as a *wooden* effigy of a canon, this figure is quite unique. It shows most admirably the tails forming the fringe of the tippet of the furred alnuce, and those on the pendants in front. The addition of the cope is an uncommon feature.

The lesser figure, or cadaver, has lost nearly one-third of its length, and is now only about 3 feet long. It shows the body enveloped in a shroud, fastened round the waist by a girdle, and which covers the head, but leaves the face visible. No trace can be found of the cross patée mentioned by Bassano. No attempt has been made at restoration.

The old side of the tomb is somewhat remarkable in design. It is 5 feet 11 inches long, and about 2 feet high. It consists of a wide and almost flat Tudor arch, with characteristic roses in the spandrels; above which is a band, 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide, with thirteen figures of bedefolk carved in high relief, standing beneath singular pointed canopies, supported by twisted shafts.

These figures may be thus described :—

1.—A bearded man in a long gown and cloak and tippet, with the hood drawn over his head. In his hands a long scroll.

2.—A bearded man clothed similarly to the first, with his left hand uplifted, and in his right hand a crutched staff.

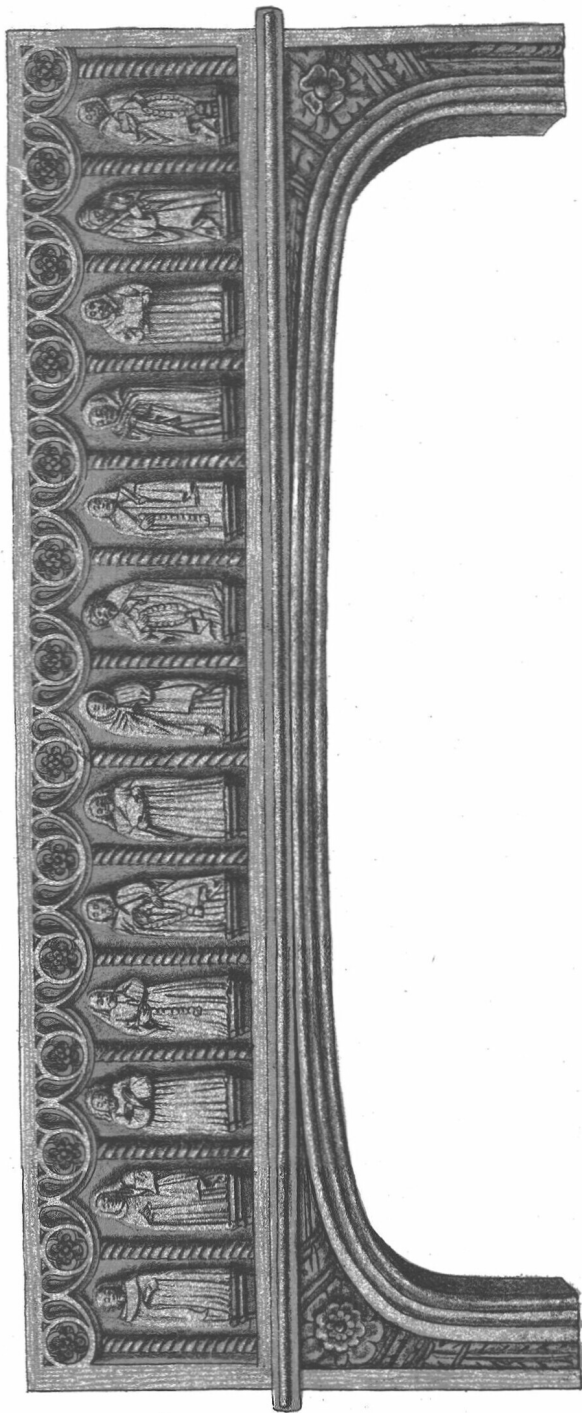
3.—A man with long curly hair and short beard, clad in a gown with short sleeves, and with his hands crossed over his breast.

4.—A man with long straight hair, in long gown, holding his beard with the left hand, and clasping a string of beads pendant from his girdle with the right.

5.—A bearded man in gown and cloak with drawn hood, holding a rosary in his hands.

6.—A beardless person with long curly hair, clad in a gown with ample sleeves and reaching to the feet, and holding in the hands a wedge-shaped board.

7.—A bearded man in gown and cloak with drawn hood, clasping his hands in prayer.



FRONT OF CARVED OAK TOMB OF A CANON IN ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, DERBY.

8.—A bearded man with curly hair, in gown and hoodless cloak, clasping the morse of the latter with his left hand, and holding a rosary in his right.

9.—A bearded man with long straight hair, in gown and hoodless cloak, holding in his right hand a rosary, in his left a clasped book.

10.—A bearded man in gown and cloak with drawn hood, reading from a book.

11.—A bearded man in gown and cloak with drawn hood, holding an open book on his breast.

12.—A bearded man with long hair, in gown and hoodless cloak, with his left hand uplifted, and a twisted scroll in his right.

13.—A bearded man in gown and cloak with drawn hood, holding a rosary in his left hand, and a clasped book in his right.

With the exception of one or two very trifling mutilations, this elaborate carving is quite perfect, and has gained much in effect now that it has been cleaned of an accumulation of coats of varnish. The two new ends of the tomb have been carved to correspond with it, but omitting the figures. The side next the wall is plainly panelled. By placing the whole on a simply molded base—all in oak—and mounting the figures on oak slabs, the monument has been re-erected of the same approximate height and appearance as when seen by Bassano.

With respect to the person it commemorates, as the church of All Saints Derby was formerly collegiate, with a sub-dean and seven canons—the dean of Lincoln being dean—there can be little doubt that this is the memorial of a former member of the college.

In the parish accounts for 1634, is an item of 1s. paid “for paynting Parson Johnson’s tomb.” Now the only “Parson Johnson” known to be connected with the church is Robert Johnson, who was sub-dean as late as 1527, and a great benefactor. The effigy bore evidence of repeated coats of whitewash, and there seems no reason to doubt that this was Johnson’s monument, especially as his date agrees well with the late character of the work.