

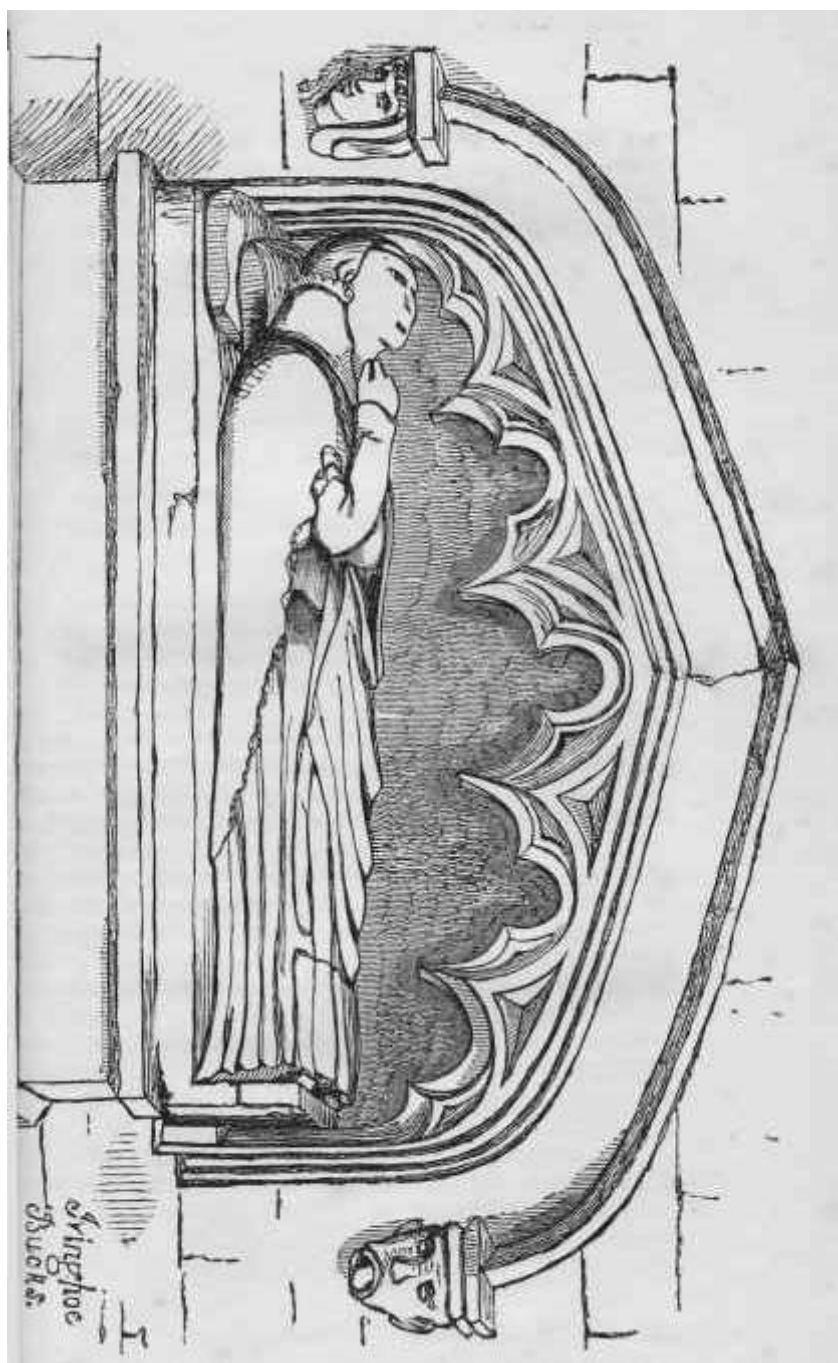
THE MONUMENT IN IVINGHOE CHURCH, SUPPOSED
TO COMMEMORATE HENRY DE BLOIS,
BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

The County of Buckingham abounds in sepulchral brasses, many of which are of an interesting character, but, owing probably to its deficiency in suitable stone, it possesses only few sculptured monuments deserving of notice. Among the latter is an ancient stone effigy in the Parish Church of Ivinghoe, which lies in a trefoil-headed recess in the north wall of the chancel. It is habited in the common Eucharistic robes of a priest, consisting of chasuble, amice, stole, maniple, and girded albe. The head, which shews the usual tonsure, rests on a double cushion. The effigy, together with the cushions and slab on which it rests, are wrought out of one stone, which at the feet is left solid nearly as high as the effigy itself.

	ft.	in.
Length of the effigy.....	6	2½
----- of the whole slab.....	6	8½
Width at the head.....	2	0
----- at the feet.....	2	2

The under work has some resemblance to an altar-tomb, but it is either modern, or has been so much modernised as to have lost its original character.

Local tradition assigns this monument to no less a personage than Henry de Blois, brother of King Stephen, and Bishop of Winchester; and Browne Willis, in his History of the Mitred Abbies, has corroborated this tradition. Speaking of Glastonbury, he says — "Henry de Blois, brother to King Stephen, was made Abbot of this place, which he held for the space of forty-five years. He died A^o 1171, and lies buried in Ivinghoe Church, in the County of Bucks, in which parish he founded a Nunnery, the manor thereof belonging to the See of Winchester." Having been thus assigned to so distinguished a prelate, this monument has become invested with an interest and importance which it would not otherwise have demanded. It will, therefore, be the



object of this paper to endeavour to remove all doubts on the subject.

A bare inspection of the monument is amply sufficient to refute the tradition. The effigy, though doubtless of an early date, is too elaborately and perfectly worked out to belong to the twelfth century. It is, moreover, habited in the robes, not of a bishop, but, as already mentioned, of an ordinary priest. Henry de Blois was a personage far too important to have been buried in obscurity. He was nephew to King Henry I., and brother to Stephen, Abbot of Glastonbury, and Bishop of Winchester, to which ecclesiastical and powerful Baronies he had been appointed, not by the Pope or by any ecclesiastical body, but by his uncle, the reigning Sovereign. He was likewise Legate to the Pope; and although he had been educated from infancy among the Cluniac monks, from whom he had acquired the art of assuming at pleasure a meek and humble deportment, he was, nevertheless, a warlike and imperious character, and perhaps chiefly memorable for his military proceedings. Having taken umbrage at Stephen's conduct towards the Church, he became for a time one of his most formidable opponents; so that on his leaving the kingdom for a season, Stephen razed to the ground no less than six of his fortified castles, giving no other reason than that he had left England without the king's licence. After his return to England his chief residence was at his Castle-palace, at Winchester, where he lived in princely power and grandeur; and though he took such an active part in the warlike affairs of the time, that on one occasion he ejected combustible missiles on his own citizens for disobeying his orders, and plundered sacred images of their gold and jewels to requite his soldiers, yet he was a great favourite, and extremely popular with the ecclesiastics.* Such a man was not likely to be buried without due honour. We naturally then expect to find him interred with becoming state and dignity in his own Cathedral Church; and, on looking into Thomas Ruborne's "Historia Major Wintoniensis," we find the following notice:— "Iste Henricus sedit annis xliii., et sepultus est in Ecclesia sua coram summo altari." This

* See William of Malmesbury's Chronicle.

is just where we should expect his interment. We have yet a further notice of him. Gough, in his "Sepulchral Monuments" (vol. i. part 1, page 28), relates an account of the discovery of his body at Winchester, A.D. 1761, and says that "it was wrapt in a brown and gold mantle, with traces of gold round the temples: a wooden cross, about two yards long, and the size of a common walking-stick, lay beside it; and a large gold ring, with a stone of great value, which was lodged in the treasury." This is conclusive as to the place of his sepulture, and completely refutes the statement of Willis, who probably formed his opinion from the idea that he founded the nunnery of St. Margaret's, at Ivinghoe; but in this he was also mistaken. The nunnery was founded by William Giffard, Bishop of Winchester; and Henry, his successor in the See, only confirmed the original grant. Lipscomb, in his "History of Bucks" (vol. iii. page 399), gives a copy of a deed in which this fact is expressly stated. Henry de Blois apparently had no connexion with Ivinghoe till, as Bishop of Winchester, he became lord of a certain manor in the parish which belonged to that See. Had the monument been designed to commemorate him, or any other bishop, it would undoubtedly have possessed some insignia of the episcopal order. From the absence of these, from the apparent date of the monument, and from the notices now given of Henry, the brother of King Stephen, we must, I think, unhesitatingly conclude that it was not designed to commemorate him. It appears, indeed, that Browne Willis, after the publication of his "Mitred Abbeys," had made some discovery which changed his opinion respecting the burial-place of Henry de Blois. For, in his manuscript account of Ivinghoe, a copy of which may be seen in the Library of the British Museum, he assigns this monument to Peter de Chaceport, Rector of Ivinghoe from A.D. 1241 to A.D. 1254, the advowson then being in the patronage of the Crown, and Peter de Chaceport being Keeper of the King's Wardrobe, Archdeacon of Wells, and Lord of the Manor of Ravenstone, in Bucks, where he founded a Priory for Augustine Monks. Being a wealthy man, and having, as a contemporary historian remarks, "ended his life gloriously, and made a noble will," it is extremely probable that he devoted a portion of his wealth to the improvement of the Church of which

he was Rector, the nave and chancel of which correspond with the apparent date of the monument. It is, therefore, no improbable conjecture that these portions of the Church were built by him, either in his lifetime or under the directions of his "noble will." This, too, would account for the situation of the monument. When, therefore, we consider the exalted position of Peter de Chaceport, his prosperous circumstances, his benevolent character, the period of his incumbency, the official vestments of the effigy, the situation it occupies, and its apparent date corresponding with that of the earlier portions of the Church, we have strong evidence for supposing the monument was designed to commemorate Peter de Chaceport.

While speaking of this distinguished ecclesiastic, it may be useful to point out a curious contradiction in Lipscomb's notice of him. In vol. iv. page 311, in his account of Ravenstone manor, he says— "Peter de Chaceport being a clergyman, had no issue; and, therefore, conveyed this manor before his death to the King to found a Priory here." At page 314 of the same volume, he says— "Peter de Chaceport, Keeper of the Wardrobe to King Henry III., having purchased the manor, advowson, &c they descended, at the decease of the said Peter, to Hugh de Chaceport, his son and heir;" and in the course of a few more lines Hugh is twice again mentioned as the son of Peter de Chaceport. That Peter de Chaceport was a Priest and Rector of Ivinghoe, we have abundant proof in Rymer's "Foedera," and other contemporary records; but whether or not he was married, and had a son Hugh, I must leave for others to decide.

For the illustration, and some assistance in the preparation of this paper, I am indebted to the Rev. George Rowe, of Swineshead, Huntingdon.