

SCREENWORK IN THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK.

PART IV. SOUTHWOLD.

WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES ON REMAINS AT BARNINGHAM, SOUTH
ELMHAM ST. MARGARET AND RATTLESDEN.

By the REV. W. W. LILLIE, M.A.

The screenwork and paintings at Southwold were omitted from the earlier parts of this survey so that they might receive the more detailed treatment their splendour deserves. There are, however, certain notes to be added to supplement the account of the "Panels painted with Saints" in the Proceedings of last year. A fresh visit to *Barningham* was rewarded by the sight of considerable remains of painting on the panels. To the north of the doorway, traces of robes in gold, or edged with gold, could be seen, and in one of them flowers or grass of a foreground. To the south, the first panel is quite defaced, the third and fourth show only a foreground, but the second has remains of yellow and green, and contained a figure wearing a crown or chaplet, and perhaps a golden morse. Was this S. Dorothy? At a re-examination of the figures at *S. Elmham St. Margaret* the Rev. Christopher Woodforde convinced me that the Bishop described as "carrying what appears to be a boat" must be S. Hubert. The lines which looked like the shrouds of a boat are the ribbon or cord by which the huntsman's horn was hung about him. Representations of S. Hubert, the patron of hunters, are rare in East Anglia. On the screen at Litcham, in Norfolk, is shown the episode of his conversion. At *Rattlesden*, in the shadow of the modern sedilia, are eight 15th century panels with figures not quite obliterated. They may have formed part of an Apostle series. S. John the Evangelist, S. Philip with his basket of loaves, and a Bishop, vested, with crozier, and hand raised in benediction, can be made out. The other five figures are almost gone. The spandrels of the tracery at the head of the panels are delicately carved with roses, lilies, and geometrical designs, and have their original colouring.

Southwold is one of the greater churches of East Anglia, a building of light and space and colour. Bearing in mind the principles of design required in such an environment, allowing also for the loss of the crowning glory of the chancel screen in its loft and Rood, and for the mutilated condition of much else in the three screens facing the nave, the beholder must doubt whether a dozen churches in the whole of fifteenth century England could have shown so fine a sight.* These lofty screens, extending north and south the whole width of the church, served both as the sole structural division between nave and chancel, and as the focus and gateway of the people's worship.

*See Part I of this series, p. 11, Vol. xxii, part 2.

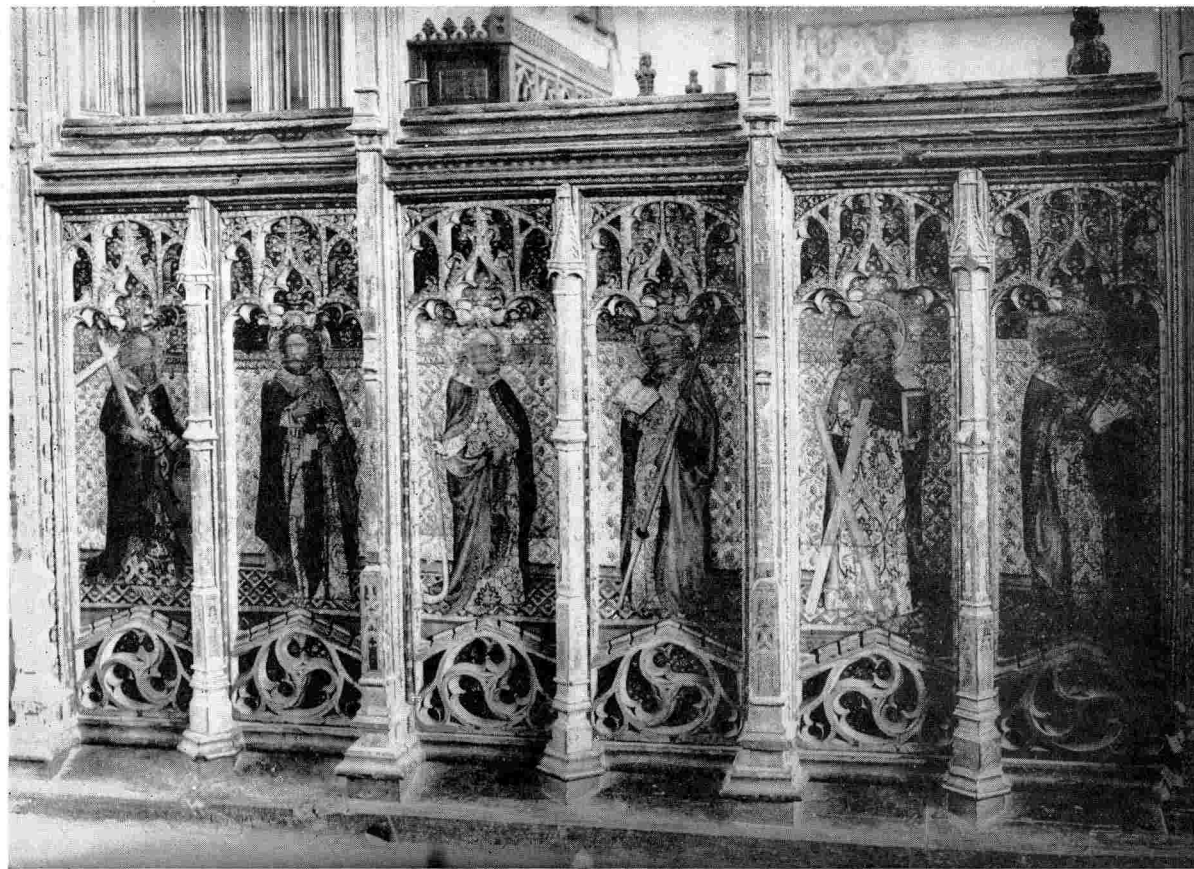


PLATE I. The North Panels of the Roodscreen.
The Apostle Series,

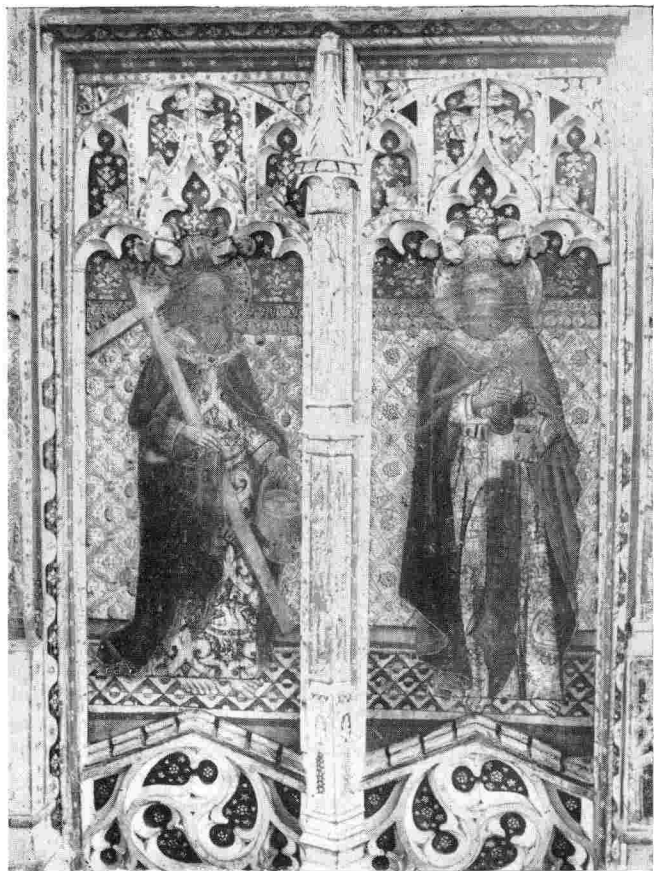


PLATE II. A. S. Philip and S. Matthew.



PLATE II. B. S. Paul and S. John.

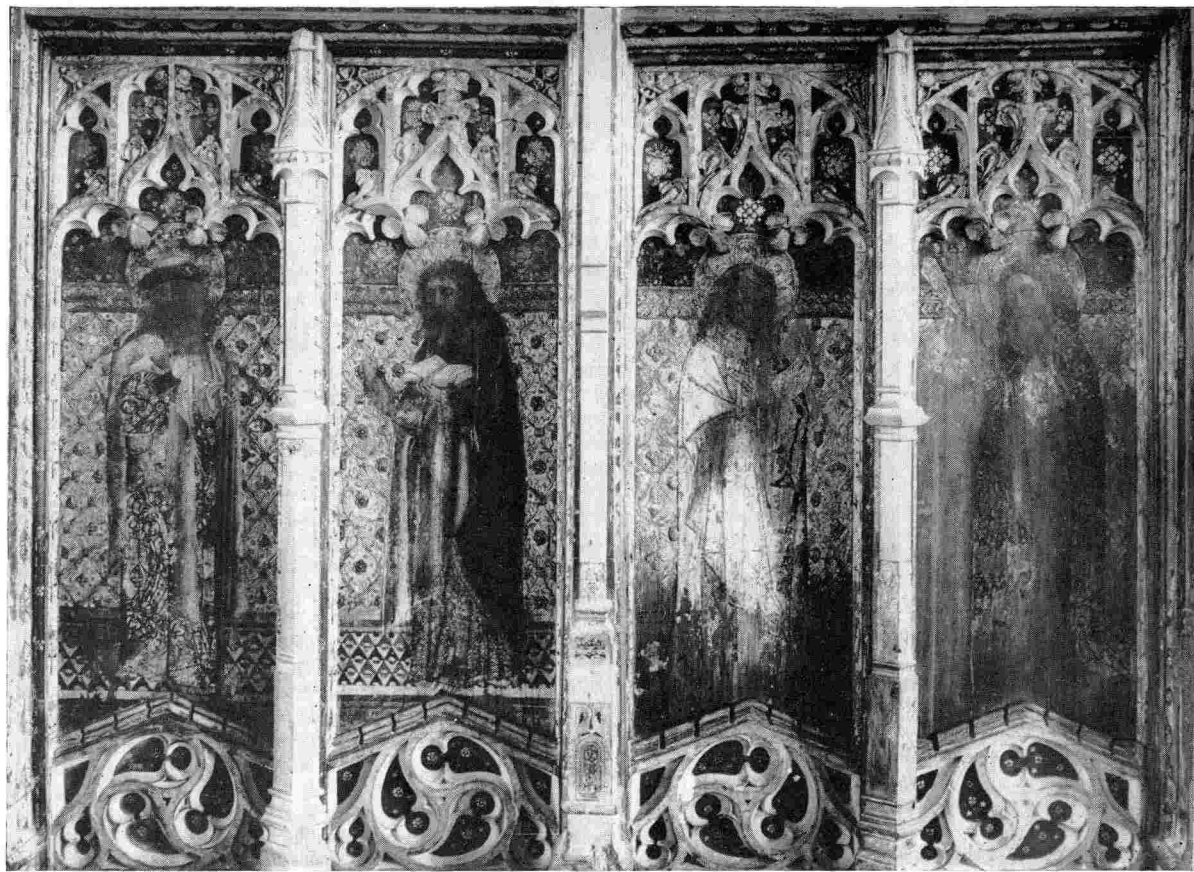


PLATE III. The Roodscreen Panels.
SS. James the Great, Bartholomew, Jude and Simon.



PLATE IV. The Orders of Angels.
A. Seraphim, Thrones, Principalities.



PLATE IV. The Orders of Angels.
B. Virtues, Angels, "the Church."

The parclose screen between the choir and its aisles is an unusual example of later Perpendicular style. The loft especially, one of the few surviving in the eastern counties, emphasises the almost Renaissance feeling of the choir woodwork† at Southwold. But the rood and aisle screens, with their deep and richly-moulded framing, their elaborate buttresses, their rich colour, and the tendril-like clusters of tracery under the arches, are in the very height of the older tradition of Norwich and the Broads. The loft of the roodscreen appears to have had a second and smaller vaulted canopy above the first, even richer than that at Eye.

The iconography of these screens was no less elaborate than the woodcarving. In the centre, under the Rood, were represented the Apostles, in gorgeous robes, brilliantly set off by the gilding of the backgrounds and the deep carving of the frames. To the south, twelve of the ancient Prophets were displayed. On the north, twelve more panels bore symbolic pictures of those angelic hosts who share the attributes and serve the will of the Creator. To-day the faces on the lesser screens are scored and damaged, and those of the Apostles on the roodscreen are partly repainted, with a Tennysonian air of solemnity, by Richmond; but the grand scheme remains unchanged.‡ It is to be noted that the Prophets, a favourite subject for the roodscreens of the Midland churches, are found but seldom in Norfolk and Suffolk. The Orders of Angels, on the other hand, are to be found in these counties alone.§

The three groups of paintings may be described in turn, starting from the north side of the church.

THE ORDERS OF ANGELS. In the north screen it was necessary to compromise between the comparatively narrow width of the aisle and the great scale and rich character of the roodscreen. As a result of this, the panels on which the Orders are painted are tall and narrow, and deep-set between heavy buttresses. The shape of the panels emphasises the tall, graceful figures in which the Norfolk painters delighted, and gives room for the starry canopy above, and the space of flowered foreground below. At the bottom of each panel there is also a short scroll, with pleasantly decorated inscription in black-letter. The depth of these panels within their frame causes shadows which would have obscured more normal colouring, but gives to the scheme of white and gold, so happily chosen, a peculiar richness of effect. This simple design, of golden figures, white cusping, and uniform background of green, powdered with gold, admirably sets off the elaborate variety of the main screen, and has a satisfying beauty of its own.

This screen invites comparison with the roodscreen at Barton Turf. In both screens the figures have that last light of medieval spirituality

†C.f. the aisle and chantry screens at Lavenham.

‡The lower part of the screen has lately been refreshed, by the skilful hand of Professor Tristram.

§Barton Turf (Nor) keeps to the traditional nine. Angels of the Shepherds are found at Yarbrough (Nor), and of the Passion at Blundeston and Hitcham (Suff).

which was almost quenched in an age of commerce. There are also close parallels in the details of these two Orders of Angels. They have the same conventional, decorative beauty. The treatment of robes and head-dresses and wings is so alike as to argue at least a common stock of tradition. It is possible that the "Powers" at Southwold and at Barton were actually derived from the same cartoon, reversed; the position of the feet, the manner in which the scourge is held behind the head, the shape and type of the armour, are all alike. The face of the "Dominions" on the Southwold screen, the only one now clearly visible, is remarkably like that of the Barton figures. The screens themselves may well have been carved in the same workshop. Both of them have, in the upper part, that slender fringe of tracery so often seen round about Norwich, and, in the lower, tall narrow panels with a peculiar type of cusping.*

The Angels of the two screens are, however, by no means alike in their order. At Barton Turf, as Dr. James points out, even the normal sequence of "Thrones" after "Cherubim" and "Seraphim" is broken. To make up the twelve, Southwold adds Gabriel (the Angel of the Annunciation) and angels holding respectively a Shield of the Holy Trinity and a Shield of the Church. Going from north to south we have:—

(i) *Angel with Shield of the Trinity*. The figure is clad in amice, albe, and stole. On the scroll below is the inscription, "Orate p aiahs. Iohne . . ." [Guman and his wife Catherine, the donors of the screen.]

(ii) *Gabriel* (inscribed "Gawbriel"). The Messenger wears a cloak with ermine tippet and morse, and bears the sceptre of God's authority. At his waist is a shield, bearing a cross in outline.

(iii) *Archangels* ("Arkeangelus"). Wears a rich coronet, and a short embroidered cloak with low belt. He holds the sword of war† in his right hand, and the scales for the weighing of souls in his left. At Barton Turf he stands in the citadel of Heaven, but the scales are transferred to "Thrones."

(iv) *Powers* ("Potestates"). Clad in helmet and armour, a scourge lifted above his head, and a chained dragon below him. The probably close connection with the Barton "Powers" has been pointed out above, but at Barton the chained monster is a devil.

(v) *Dominions* ("Dominaciones"). Vested, and standing above a church, with triple crown, chalice and host, and sceptre. This is the best preserved of the Angel figures, graceful but impersonal, the head beautifully poised.

(vi) *Cherubim* ("Cherubyn"). The wings and feathered body are uncovered, but there is a morse at the neck, and jewelled clasps at the shoulders, and a cincture. The figure stands on the wheel of Eternity, the hands crossed upon the breast in adoration.

*Dr. James evidently makes a slip in calling the roodscreen at Barton "late fourteenth century"; it can be very little earlier than the Southwold screen.

†Rev. XII, 7.

(vii) *Seraphim* ("Sárafyn"). Like Cherubim, but with face and limbs fiery red, and a scroll in the hand, "See. See. See."†

The chaplet of roses round the coronet forms yet another link with Barton Turf and the Norwich school of painting. A similar chaplet is worn by "Thrones" and "Archangels" at Barton Turf, by Gabriel in an annunciation scene from a reredos in the church of S. Michael at Plea, Norwich. This was noted by the Rev. C. Woodforde, who found another such chaplet worn by a lay figure in a fifteenth century panel in the east window of S. Peter Mancroft, Norwich. *The Medieval Glass of S. Peter Mancroft, Norwich*, 1934.

At Barton the Cherubim have wings full of eyes, and the Seraphim, instead of fiery face and limbs, a girdle and ? coronet of fire.

(viii) *Thrones* (Troni). A graceful figure, with a quaint and lively appearance of movement, clad in a fringed tunic, with jewelled collar and belt, and carrying a ciborium. At Barton "Troni" carries a church, and the scales which are given, at Southwold, to "Arkeangelus."

(ix) *Principalities* ("Principatus"). Has a long royal robe with ermine tippet, crown and sceptre, and stands upon a fortress.

(x) *Virtues*. The figure is vested, and crowned, the symbols being a vessel of fire and a second crown held in the hands.

(xi) *Angels* ("Angelus"). In amice, albe, and stole, looking down upon human souls held in a cloth before him. It is interesting to compare this with the Angel panel at Barton, where two naked figures kneel upon a rock at the angel's feet, and the angel carries a spear in his hand, and has an alms box at his girdle.

(xii) *Angel with Shield of the Church*. An angel, with ermine tippet and rich collar, carries the Shield with triple chalice and host.*

THE APOSTLES. The roodscreen is one of those works which refutes, by the richness and accuracy of its carving, the accusation that the later medieval craftsman had forgotten the skill and care of his predecessors. The designs at the head and foot of the panels below the rail, for example, are beautifully cut, and admirably fill their place in the composition of the screen as a whole. But the carving is planned to be seen in colour, and it is in its colour-decoration that this screen excels. Every fillet and moulding makes its contribution and contrast of colour, whilst the gilded patterns of gesso are extended from the dado, against which the figures are painted, to the tracery above, to the buttresses, and even to the mouldings of the rail. Not even the screen at Cawston can outdo this one in the brilliance of its decoration. (See illustration of the panel-head above S. Paul, in part ii of this series; and plates VI. (A and B), and VII., of the present article) and compare "*Bramfield*, detail of decoration," again in part ii). The figures, however, are not overwhelmed by their rich environment, but stand in bold and dignified relief. This is due, partly to the effect of depth

†Rev. IV, 8.

*The Orders of Angels will, no doubt, be fully discussed by Mr. G. McN. Rashforth in his forthcoming book, *English Medieval Imagery*.

in the gilded backgrounds, partly to the subtle counterchange of the principal colours in both robes and decoration, and not a little to the white cusping, with its stencilled flowers, which borders the panels. The depth of the backgrounds is obtained by the use, as at Ranworth, and elsewhere, of a tiled platform (patterned in red and green), then of a brilliant hanging, as of gold damask, richly trimmed along the top, and with a deep border at the bottom, standing almost as high as the figures themselves. Above this, the wall against which they stand, and the traceried heads of the panels, are counterchanged in red and green, and the lower tracery of the panels likewise. The mantles upon the figures are usually contrasted with the gold brocade of the robes beneath, with the gilded backgrounds, and also with the flowered field of red or green above the dado. They are painted in colours which must have been from the beginning full and brilliant, but never glaring.

The drawing of the Southwold *Apostles* is, without doubt, the work of the late Norwich school which made the famous series at Ranworth. A general resemblance is to be observed in the pose of the figures, in the heads, in the folding of the mantles, in the brocaded silks of the robes. But there are details which show that the resemblance is due to the use of some of the very same cartoons. The *S. Paul* of the two screens not only carries a sword and book of the same pattern, upon a mantle draped and bordered in the same way, but has a robe with a brocade of identical design. Lesser details of resemblance are the scimitar of *S. Matthew*, the stand-basket of *S. Philip*, and the chalice, especially the base of the chalice, of *S. John*.

The figures, starting from the north side, are:—

I. *S. Philip*: His robe has a very large pattern of brocade; his mantle is of a dark green lined with brown; a cross leans against his shoulder; and a basket of loaves is in his hand.

II. *S. Matthew*. (Dr. James leaves it undecided whether this is *S. Matthew* or *S. Simon*, and whether the last figure is *S. Simon* with an oar or *S. Matthew* with a halbert; but the symbols and inscriptions at Ranworth decide for us). This is a noble figure, with the crimson mantle, lined with green, and the huge scimitar with its gilded hilt.

III. *James the Less* has a dull green mantle held in graceful folds about him, and a fuller's club.

IV. *S. Thomas*, with a spear and an open book—a figure with a distinctly "medieval" pose about it.

V. *S. Andrew*, with saltire cross. He parts his cloak of red lined with blue, with the hand in which he holds the book.

VI. *S. Peter*, in a blue mantle lined with green, and embroidered at the edge, which hangs in fine folds over the brocaded robe. Upon the mantle lies his book, and in the right hand he holds the "massy keys."

VII. *S. Paul* (see above), in a red robe, with sword, and book covered in blue.



PLATE V. The Prophets, with S. Edmund.
A. Baruk and Hoseah.

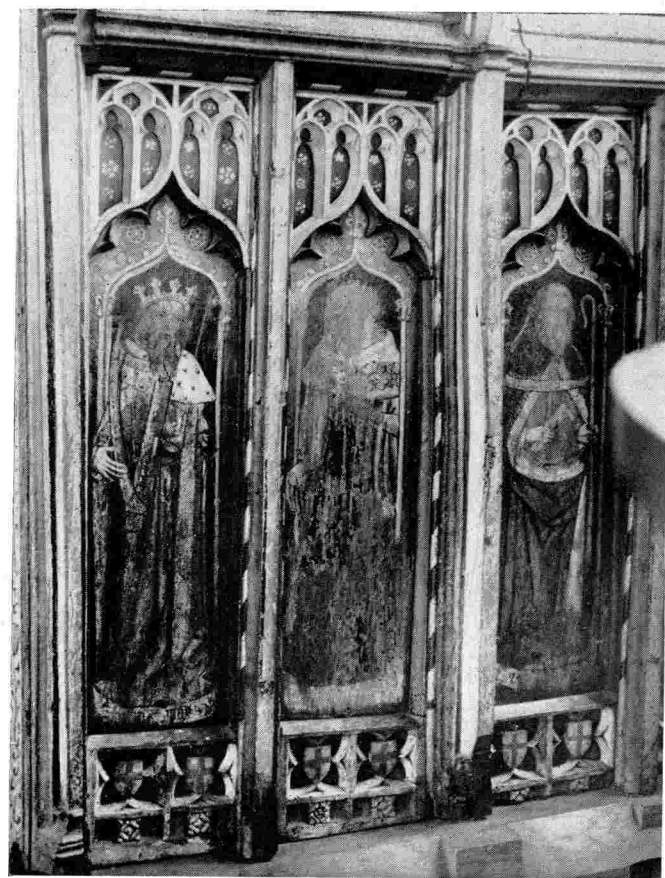


PLATE V. The Prophets, with S. Edmund.
B. David, Edmund, Amos.



PLATE VI. Carving and decoration.

A. Gesso backgrounds and one of the diagonal buttresses



PLATE VI. Carving and decoration.

B. One of the buttresses at the junction of muntin and rail.



PLATE VII. The base of one of the diagonal buttresses ; perhaps the symbol of S. John.



PLATE VIII. The "Donor" panels at S. Matthew's,
Ipswich. (See last year's Proceedings, p. 189).

VIII. *S. John*—another of these figures that show that the art of the fourteenth century was never quite forgotten in East Anglia. But the “devil” emerges from a tall, jewelled, cup-shaped chalice not at all of English pattern.

IX. *S. James the Great*. The rest of the Apostles are bare-headed; the patron of pilgrims has a hat with scallop-shell, staff, and leather wallet. He wears gauntlet cuffs, slit at the sides. The face is obliterated and the colours are faded.

X. *S. Bartholomew* has a trimmed mantle of a dull red, an open book in one hand, and what, from its shape, must have been a knife, in the other. (C.f. the Ranworth “Bartholomew”).

XI. *S. Jude*, in a white mantle, with his boat. The figure is badly defaced.

XII. *S. Simon*. The blade of his oar is visible; but the greater part of the figure is obliterated.

A word should be added on the gesso patterns of these figures, which for variety and charm are unequalled upon our screens. The first panel has a reticulated pattern of vine-stems and curling tendrils, the spaces between being filled alternately with leaves and bunches of fruit. The second panel has a “diamond” trellis filled with roses and small leaves. The third and fourth are variations of the first and second; the fifth and sixth likewise. The seventh is a more architectural design, with bosses and pointed quatrefoils; the eighth has a reticulated rose pattern; the ninth is like the seventh, but, being the panel of *S. James the Great*, with alternate scallop-shells. The tenth, eleventh and twelfth follow earlier designs.

A pleasant variety of leaf-trails and architectural patterns is used in the band at the top of the dado, with several shapes of cresting over all.

The painted niches and canopies at the base of the buttresses should be noted, as well as those carried out in gesso.

THE PROPHETS. In carving and construction the screen in the south aisle is like that in the north; but the decoration of the panels is not in the same style, and the paintings are neither so fine nor so well preserved. The shadow under the ogees is emphasised by the use of colour instead of white. Below this, the panels are treated as a niche, with painted canopy and carvings, and statuesque figures with their feet upon stone pedestals. Within an elaborate framing of wood, the effect is unsatisfactory. The figures, too, are stiff and formal as well as statuesque. Although taller and more graceful, they are in the same tradition as the West Suffolk and Midland “Prophets” and “Kings.” The caps, the flowing beards, the robes and ermine, the loose scrolls at their feet, remind one of the famous array of Prophets at North Crawley, in distant Buckinghamshire. The architectural detail of the canopies is in a degenerate style almost unknown in England in the 15th century, and the cartoons for these paintings would appear to have been taken from Continental works. Dr.

James gives a list of the Prophets as follows :—(1) Baruch ; (2) Ose(e) ; (3) Naum ; (4) Jeremias ; (5) (Helyas) ; (6) Moses ; (7) David ; (8-12) names mostly gone—Isaiah, Amos, *Jonas*, Ezekiel. But S. Edmund, Southwold's patron saint, was put into this gallery, and the name italicised by Dr. James may perhaps give place to that of the King.

The figures best preserved are *Baruch* ("Baruch Phā")—nearest the roodscreen—in loose white robe and hooded cloak, a wallet at his belt, and a crook'd staff in his hand ; *Hosiah* ("Ose Phā"), in a cap lined with ermine, long sleeves, trimmed with fur, and a long cloak with cape and open sides ; *David*, in royal robes, and his harp upon his arm ; and the shepherd *Amos*, with his crook.