

S. GREGORY'S CHURCH, SUDBURY.

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The town of Sud, or South Bury, was the principal borough of south-east Anglia as far back as A.D. 797, when "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" mentions the death of Bishop Alfrin, at Sudbury. About the year 970 Atherie founded a hospital, giving a moiety of Northoo to S. Edmund's, Bury, and the other to S. Gregory's, Sudbury. Not long after this the lady Ethelfleda, widow of Bethnoth, Duke of East Anglia, bequeathed the land at Weadinga Felder (Waldingfield) to S. Gregory's church, Suthbyngensis (Sudbury), as her sister had desired on her death-bed. This Count Be(r)thnoth most bravely resisted the Danish invaders, and was killed in battle at Maldon, in Essex, and buried at Ely Abbey. His widow also helped to found the Abbey at Ely, and gave a fine piece of Tapestry, on which she had worked her husband's exploits. In Domesday Survey, S. Gregory's is said to possess 50 acres of land and 50 of meadow. The manor of Sudbury, with many others, was conferred by William I. on Richard de Clare, afterwards Earl of Gloucester and Hereford. Its first charters were granted by this powerful family. In the reign of King John, Amicia, Countess of Clare, gave this church and its property to the Prioress of Eaton, which grant was ratified by Henry II.

Coming down to the latter half of the 14th century we are, probably, contemporary with the present building, for it was purchased from the Nuns of Eaton, by Simon de Sudbury, afterwards Lord High Chancellor of England and Archbishop of Canterbury, and finally beheaded by the rabble of Wat Tyler's rebellion in 1381.

The present church is mostly in the Early Perpendicular style, and has a very fine tower, with a peal of eight bells. It underwent large alterations in pre-Reformation times. The chancel arch is of an earlier date than the piers which support it, and has been spread open to suit its present position. Simon raised the roof of the nave and built the clerestory. The north arcade belongs to A.D. 1350, and the south may be as late as 1530. The fine chancel, with its lofty Perpendicular windows, is 62 feet long by 21 feet wide. Its size and length and noble altar, may be due to the fact that Simon of Sudbury established close by the church a College of Secular Priests, on the ground where his father's house stood, now occupied by the Union House. The 20 oaken "Miserere" stalls still retain their original position. The church contains a remarkably fine font-cover of rich tracery and tabernacle work, over 12 feet high, richly painted. This church had fallen into very serious decay, and 30 years ago was closed as being dangerous, but it has been gradually restored to something like its pristine glory, under the guidance of Mr. Butterfield, freely and generously given.

In the *Builder* (October, 1887) may be found a sheet of ink-photo drawings of six frescoes, for the walls of S. Gregory's church. The figures, which are full length and life size, represent SS. Peter, James, John, John Baptist, also Elijah and Moses. The designs are the work of Mr. Aveling Green, brother of the Rector.