

when Sir Christopher Wren was in the full tide of his work. It was the period in which St. Paul's was being built, and in which the churches of St. Andrew, Holborn, St. Mary, Lothbury, and St. Mary Abchurch were erected. We cannot withhold admiration from its dignified simplicity of aspect, and there is a great deal in the detail both externally and internally to admire.

Sir John Brownlow, who was visited at Belton by William III. during his northern progress after the death of Queen Mary, spared little in the beautifying of his mansion; but

who dwelt near by at Sayes Court, and who introduced him to Sir Christopher Wren. He was discovered reproducing in wood Tintoretto's great picture of the Crucifixion, at Venice, and Evelyn was so impressed with what he saw, that he invited his friends Wren and Pepys to examine the work. He procured permission for it to be shown to the King, and what, perhaps, was of more practical value, he procured from Wren a promise that the young artist should be employed. The promise was fulfilled, and in St. Paul's, and almost wherever Wren worked, Grinling Gibbons worked also. Thus it was



*THE EAST END OF THE DRAWING-ROOM.*

nothing, perhaps, that it contains is so interesting as the famous carvings by Grinling Gibbons. There are no finer examples of the work of the great wood-carver in England, and his masterpieces at Belton have had the advantage of being subjected to restoration by that eminent artist, who followed so much in his footsteps, the late W. G. Rogers. When Gibbons wished to devote himself to practising, uninterruptedly, the art he loved, he withdrew from La Belle Sauvage Yard, where he had lived, to a lonely house at Deptford, which had the unexpected advantage of bringing him into touch with John Evelyn,

that Belton House was adorned with truly marvellous illustrations of the extraordinary skill of the great wood-carver, whose work is spread so broadly throughout England.

The exquisite delicacy of the carvings at Belton enables us to give credence to the legend related of Gibbons that when he lived in the vicinity of Ludgate Hill, he placed above his door a bunch of corn so naturally carved in wood that it waved in the breeze and trembled when vehicles passed by. There is a lightness of touch and a truth to Nature that are not surpassed anywhere. The ears of wheat, the