

the Queen to Otto, the Conqueror's half-brother, bishop of Bayeux. On the other hand, it is claimed—though with far less probability of truth—that Matilda the Empress, the daughter of King Henry I., superintended the work. To return, however, to the tapestry itself, which begins with Harold taking leave of King Edward the Confessor, and next appearing at Bosham church. He carries a hawk on his hand as an indication of his nobility, and dogs are running before him, for he was, it must be remembered, upon his own manor, and the inscription runs: IBI HAROLD DVX ANGLORUM ET SVI MILITES EQVITANT AD BOSHAM.

A church, the very church we are concerned with, is then represented, in front of which are two men, one of whom is about to enter, and above is the word ECCLESIA. One of these men is doubtless Harold, who was about to present himself before the altar and to pray for the success of his visit to Normandy. It is not, however, our object to describe the succeeding scenes depicted in this very interesting worked historical "document"; but we cannot help referring to the particular division of the scroll which represents a church in which are seen a priest and a woman, the description given showing that it was probably Adeliza, William's daughter, who was affianced to Harold. Harold's oath over the altar with the covered relics, the death of Edward the Confessor, and the coronation of Harold are all represented; and then comes the invasion of England and the fall of Harold at Hastings.

Here we are then in front of the little church from which Harold embarked, for the creek runs close up to it; and, as it is such a singularly interesting spot, we may confidently advise all who are seeking health and rest within easy reach of it, not to neglect a pilgrimage thither.

Bosham is such a quaint little hamlet, hardly English, more Flemish or Dutch, with the water and marsh land close up to its street. The church of the Holy Trinity stands on a green rising ground extending to the water's edge. The chancel arch is circular and unusually lofty, the pier-shafts being very high with moulded capitals; but the tower of the church seems to have more positive claims to be considered Saxon than the arch, for above a circular arch opening to the nave is a triangular headed window with long and short work, such as occurs at Jarrow, which is accepted as being Saxon. The windows of the church are of all dates, and may well afford an architectural puzzle to those who would attribute them to their respective periods. But we have not yet exhausted the treasures of this little spot, for a tile bearing a black raven on a gold ground was once placed over the burial place of a daughter of King Canute. You cannot stand for a moment in Bosham church without feeling that you are sharing the national history. The little Anglican church, "co-uniting," as Charles Lamb would have said, fierce Saxon society "with the feeling of solitude still absolute; noon-day revelations with the accidents of the dull grey" visions of the past; two stories with double time; separate, and harmonizing.

A Book of the Week.

"THE GRANDEE."*

MR. GOSSE, in an interesting preface to the English translation of *El Maestrante*, informs us that "a living novelist has declared that a person of good position in Madrid would rather spend his money on fire-works or on an orange than on a book"; and, therefore, great credit is due to Armando Palacio Valdés, who has at last conquered the unwilling Spanish public, and, without sacrificing style, has forced them to read his novels. The latest book which Valdés has published is *The Grandee*, and, like most of the interesting series of translations that Mr. Heinemann has produced for our edification, it is most valuable reading for English people because it lifts the veil from a phase of life of which they must naturally be absolutely ignorant, for we island people know so little of the lives led by men, women, and children in other countries of the world.

Some short time ago I wrote in these pages of Mathilde Serao's famous novel, *Farewell, Love!* which gave us such a remarkable insight into the life of modern Italian society. *The Grandee*, although a gloomy and towards the end a painful story, is characteristic of Spain, and is full of the local colour of that strange country where "primitive passions run riot under an imperturbable mask of Spanish etiquette and repression." "Lancia," in whose stately houses and sunny sleepy streets the plot of the story is laid, is a pseudonym for Oviedo, the capital of the Asturias. There, in the pompous palace of Don Pedro Quiñones, a left-hand love affair springs up between Amalia, Don Pedro's lovely wife, and the vacillating "Conde de Ondis." A little daughter, Josefina, is born, which the father, Ondis, leaves upon the doorsteps of the Quiñones Palace, where it is found during a party and is publicly adopted by its mother and her unsuspecting Grandee husband. Thus far all goes well with the guilty pair, and no uncomfortable discoveries take place; but the sins of the fathers are paid for by the children, and the ending of this story is so intensely sad, and yet at the same time so graphically and powerfully described, that its gloomy fascination has stayed with me for several days since closing its pages.

As the years go by, the Conde de Ondis' love wanes, and finally he transfers his affections to another woman to whom he had been betrothed before he met Amalia. His forsaken mistress revenges herself upon his child, and the inhuman and unnatural cruelty with which the fiendish mother tortures and persecutes her daughter seems almost impossible to English minds; but Spain is not England, and behind the windows of the sinister looking palace, where the light of day and public censure can never penetrate, Valdés contends that "such wickedness as is perpetrated upon Josefina is neither improbable or unprecedented." He thus describes the feelings of the infamous mother, after she had nearly killed her child with blows from a long whalebone, and tortured her by pricking her hands with a needle:—

"At such moments Amalia experienced a diabolical sensation of mingled pleasure and pain similar to that which is felt in scratching a boil. Her boil was that

* "The Grandee," a novel. By Valdés. Translated from the Spanish, by Rachel Challice. 2/6. (Heinemann, 1894.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)