

LEVENS HALL, WESTMORLAND.

FEW old English homes present a more perfect specimen of the style of Elizabethan and Jacobean interior decoration than does Levens Hall. Beginning as a border pele tower of the early part of the fourteenth century, Levens was transformed into the present stately mansion during the reign of Elizabeth. The exterior of the house as approached from the north is remarkable for its extreme simplicity as compared with the wealth of decoration that has been lavished on the interior. With the exception of some additions of the eighteenth century, this work remains to the present day in perfect preservation, and as one of the most perfect specimens of interior decoration in the country ought certainly to be carefully cherished.

The earliest possessors of Levens of whom

there is any definite record were the Redman family, one of whom, Henry de Redman, bought the manor of Levens from Ketel, third Baron of Kendal, in 1188. Under a glass case in the small drawing-room, which is one of the subjects of our illustrations, may still be seen the original deed of purchase, together with another under the seal of Richard I., exempting the owner of Levens from the payment of nutgeld. For 300 years the Redmans held unbroken possession. Several members of the family represented Westmorland in Parliament, the earliest of whom was Simon Redman of Levens, Knight of the Shire in 1312. At a later date, Richard, son of Sir Matthew de Redman, who himself had been a member of Parliament, and had served in Spain and France under John of Gaunt, was Speaker of the short



THE SCREEN IN THE HALL, NORTH-EAST END.