



*THE WEST SCREEN OF THE MARBLE HALL.*

1556, he organised a great masque for her entertainment, with pageants "marvellously furnished," and the play of "Holophernes." But Queen Mary greatly disliked what she described as "these folleries," and so they came to an end. It is stated that Elizabeth, on a dark day in November, was seated beneath an oak—now shorn of its splendour, but still putting

forth its green, and of which Queen Victoria is said to have brought away the last acorn—when news was brought to her of Mary's death. The leading men in the country immediately gathered about her, and, with Cecil as her principal secretary, she held her first Privy Council at Hatfield, and three days afterwards set out for London with 1,000 gentlemen for her escort.