

through their exercises, in their uniforms of red and blue. Most of them — old, gray-headed veterans, with medals dangling at their breasts, and considerably stiffened by years — seemed to perform their work with the leisurely air of men quite aware that it was not of the greatest possible importance. The broken ruins lay around them, rough with the scars of conflict and conflagration; and the old time-worn fortress harmonized well with the old time-worn soldiery.

It must be a dull imagination that a scene so imposing as that presented by the old castle does not set in motion: its gloomy vaults and vast halls, — its huge kitchen and roomy chapel, — its deep fosse and tall rampart, — its strong portcullised gateway and battered keep, — are all suggestive of the past, — of many a picturesque group of human creatures, impressed, like the building in which they fed and fought, worshipped and made merry, with the character of a bygone age. The deserted apartments, as one saunters through them, become crowded with life; the gray, cold, evanished centuries assume warmth and color. In Dudley, however, the imagination receives more help in its restorations than in most other ruins in a state of equal dilapidation. The building owes much to a garrulous serving-maid, that followed her mistress, about a hundred and twenty years ago, to one of its high festivals, — a vast deal more, at least, than to all the great lords and ladies that ever shared in its hospitality. The grandmother of that Mrs. Sherwood of whom, I daresay, most of my readers retain some recollection since their good-boy or good-girl days, as a pleasing writer for the young, was a ladies' maid, some time early in the last century, in a family of distinction that used to visit at the castle; and the authoress has embodied in her writings one of her grandmother's descriptions of its vanished glories, as communicated to her by the old