

bly more than equal in area to most of our north-country fortalices. It was remarkable at one time for containing, says Dr. Plott, an oak table, composed of a single plank, three feet in breadth, that extended from end to end of the apartment. The great hall must have presented a gay scene when seen by the grandmother of Mrs. Sherwood. "Three doors opened into it from the gallery above. At one of these," says the garrulous old woman, "all the servant-maids were standing, and I took my place among them. I can hardly tell how to describe this hall to you, unless by saying that the roof was arched or groined, not unlike that of some ancient church which you may have seen; and it had large and lofty windows, painted and carved in the fashion called Gothic. It was illuminated with many candles, in sconces of brass hanging from the ceiling; and every corner of it, wide as it was, was bright as the day. There was a gallery at the further end of it, filled with musicians; and the first and foremost among them was an old harper from Wales, who used, in those days, to travel the country with his harp on his back, ever presenting himself at the doors of the houses where feasts and merry-makings might be expected. The dresses of the time were very splendid; the ladies shone with glossy silks and jewels, and the gentlemen with embroidery and gold and silver lace; and I have still before me the figures of that gay and distinguished company, for it consisted of the noble of the land, with their families. It may be fancy; but I do not think I ever in these days see faces so fair as some of those which shone that night in the old castle-hall." Such were some of the reminiscences of the ancient serving-maid. A few years after the merry-making which she records, the castle was deserted by the inmates for a more modern building; and in 1750 it was reduced by fire to a blackened group of skeleton walls. A