

thick and massy, with broad-headed, champer-edged rybats, and ponderous soles and lintels, selvaging the opening; whereas the wood-work of the interior is almost always slight and fragile, formed of spongy deal or moth-hollowed fir rafters. After the lapse of little more than a century, there are few of our Scotch floors on which it is particularly safe to tread. In the older English dwellings we generally find a reverse condition of things: the outsides, constructed of slim brick-work, have a toy-like fragility about them: whereas inside we find strong oaken beams, and long-enduring floors and stairs of glossy wainscot. We of course at once recognize the great scarcity of good building-stone in the one country, and of well-grown forest-wood in the other, as the original and adequate cause of the peculiarity. Their dwelling-houses seem to have had different starting points; those of the one being true lineal descendants of the old Pict's house, complete from foundation to summit without wood, — those of the other, lineal descendants of the old forest-dwellings of the Saxon, formed ship-like in their unwieldy oaken strength, without stone. Wood to the one class was a mere subordinate accident, of late introduction, — stone to the other; and were I sent to seek out the half-way representatives of each, I would find those of England in its ancient beam-formed houses of the days of Elizabeth, in which only angular interstices in the walls are occupied by brick, and those of Scotland in its time-shattered fortalices of the type of the old castle of Craig-house, in Ross-shire, where floor rises above floor in solid masonry, or of the type of Borthwick-castle, near Edinburgh, stone from foundation to ridge.

I spent some time next morning in sauntering among the cross lanes of Hales Owen, now and then casting vague guesses, from the appearance of the humbler houses, — for what else lies within reach of the passing traveller? — regarding the character