

admittance. I had not expected to find there an official of so much education, and was greatly pleased when he put himself at my disposal as a guide.

The inclined passage had brought us into a small court, surrounded by massive buildings in a state of excellent preservation. On one side of it were two arched recesses, large enough each to shelter a couple of large waggons; opposite to them another incline led to some upper chambers; before us was a Gothic doorway, which admitted us into a shadowy hall; and through this we passed into the central court of the fortress. The general plan of the whole was now at once evident. Halls and chambers originally had extended all round it, touching the outer walls; but on two sides they were partly ruinous. The ruins, however, were of a very instructive kind, for they showed one a section of many of the old interiors. The whole of one side had been built in high compartments, with thick walls and heavily vaulted roofs, and each compartment had been divided by wooden floors into three stories. These, my guide told me, had been the mediæval barracks. I asked him if the place had been simply a place of strength. 'No,' he said, 'it was a palace also; and that stone staircase, which now leads to nothing, is said originally to have led to the queen's quarters.' When he said this we were on the ramparts, and the great court was below us. He pointed out to me some enormous subterranean cisterns, which a number of prisoners were clearing of