

WALES AND THE CONQUEST

understand that it was originally founded by a Crusader. It is a fine ruin, just sufficiently dilapidated to have the solemnity of all dead things. The magic setting of a past life it renders imperishable, its very presence is like a demand made upon one to resuscitate its bygone story. In this way history constantly gives us outlines which our own imagination must fill in—laying bare only sufficient glimpses of the past to constitute the framework of the dreams we choose to weave about them.

But at Carnarvon dreams pass into actual realisation. It is not a castle, it is not a fortress, it is not a citadel. Carnarvon is the impersonification of conquest. It is conquest materialised and embodied—it is the will of the conqueror laid visibly and heavily upon the soil of a stricken people. Its huge proportions have the inflexibility of a curse, as if to impose upon the conquered nation eternal silence and immobility. Its high and menacing walls are like a decree of Destiny: they are absolutely bare, and without windows, expressing a mind closed to all entreaty. Against its tyranny every effort and every hope would beat in vain; to the cries of servitude and the murmurings of revolt it would merely