

was given by Queen Elizabeth to her favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Its most illustrious tenant was that Earl of Dorset, of whom Spenser writes :—

“ Whose learned muse hath writ her own record  
In golden verse, worthy immortal fame.”

He was the author of the earliest English tragedy in blank verse, “Gordubuc,” praised by Sidney for its “notable moralitie,” and believed to have given rise to the “Faerie Queene.” The corridors are hung with the portraits of all these famous men—those “unsceptred sovereigns who still rule our spirits from their urns.”

The house is of many different ages. Its history is written in its varied styles of architecture, from the stern strength of its ancient feudal towers, to the elegance and luxury of its more modern apartments. Its most characteristic features are its quaint old low-roofed corridors, one of which, the Retainers' Gallery, we present on page 101. It runs the whole length of the house, and is strikingly picturesque. The paneled roof, the old portraits on the wall, and mullioned window will be observed; also the steel cuirasses, the helmets, and gaunlets of some grim warrior, who, perchance, has wielded on the field of battle the huge basket-hilted sword which we see. The walls of the adjacent armory—for the old house, by the help of its retainers, withstood more than one stout siege, and had a good store of arms—are lined with old flint and steel muskets of formidable bore, cutlasses, iron skull-caps, fine halberds, and the like. The walls were also loop-holed for archers and musketeers. After a sharp assault, Cromwell captured Knoles and carried off several waggon-loads of arms. The house is full of quaint carved furniture, fine wrought metal fire-dogs, old oaken chests, such as that in the cut, and frayed and moth-eaten tapestry—wrought by fair fingers long since turned to dust. The great banquet-hall, with its huge fireplace, its solid oaken table, and minstrels' gallery, suggest the Christmas wassailing of the olden time. The private chapel is of stately proportions, flooded with golden light from the old stained-glass windows. The Bible texts on the walls serve to show that it is Protestant and not Catholic service that is celebrated. The King's Room, with its huge state-bed,