

# THE HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF CAVERS.

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This part of the Borderland is comparatively poor in architectural remains whose associations go back to early times. Numerous peels and towers are scattered over the district, but the greater part of these are comparatively modern, if not in their erection, at least in any associations which have brought their existence into notice. The associations by which Branhholme and Harden have been rendered famous, are all recent in comparison with buildings in the South of England and many parts of Scotland, whose almost unbroken story ascends the long avenue of ten centuries. Although historical notices of the town of Hawick can be traced back over the greater portion of a thousand years, the town contains no edifices which lay claim to an antiquity of more than a few centuries. The old keep, which formed the germ of that cluster of buildings, now constituting the Tower Hotel, is said to have been the only building in Hawick spared by Surrey after the battle of Flodden, and we have no notice of it of higher antiquity. The arched houses of which a few still remain in the town, are undoubtedly more recent than the battle of Flodden, perhaps they were constructed in the rebuilding of the town after the devastations which followed that event. Most of the surrounding peels, such as Goldielands, Allanhaugh, Burnhead, Minto Crags, etc., do not appear in history much further back, and, indeed, the families to whom they belonged rose into territorial importance only at the forfeiture of the elder branch of the Douglasses, in 1455, when their immense possessions throughout the whole South of Scotland were divided amongst the adherents of the royal cause, and forthwith Scotts, Elliots, and, indeed, most of the Border families now considered old rose upon their ruins. One of the few buildings which lay claim to a more remote antiquity, whose annals at least can be followed back to a more distant period, is Cavers House, connected with that older family just referred to as preceding the present territorial lord of the district.

## HISTORY OF CAVERS.

The early annals of Cavers owe their completeness at that epoch to its being the possession of lords of distinguished political and territorial importance. The earliest notices yet discovered represent it as possessed in the 12th and 13th centuries by the Norman family of the Baliols, who afterwards attained the Scottish crown. Barnard Baliol, Lord of

Harcourt and Barnard Castle, had immense possessions in England, Scotland, and France. His descendant, Hugh de Baliol, the heir of his vast domains, was, about the year 1200, one of the great magnates of Scotland, and, as such, swore to the due observance of the peace concluded in 1237 between King Alexander II. and Henry III. of England, and understood to have been signed at Cavers. On his death his estates were divided, and his second son, Sir Alexander Baliol, obtained Cavers as part of his inheritance, taking from it his title, repeatedly appearing as Alexander de Baliol de Cavers, in the Acts of Alexander III., the "guid kyng Alysandyr, wha Scotland led in luv and lee." In 1284, under the designation of Dominus de Cavers, he was one of the Magnates Scotiæ, who solemnly swore to receive as queen the Princess Margaret, Maid of Norway, in case of the King having no other issue; and the same year, as a baron of England, was summoned to attend King Edward in his Continental wars. Being employed in matters of State at the time by the Scottish king, that monarch wrote to the English king for a dispensation of his services, which was granted; the correspondence is preserved in Rymour's "Federa Angliæ." On King Alexander's death, in 1289, Sir Alexander Baliol de Cavers, dreading the loss of his estates, either in England or Scotland, in case of war, wrote, on behalf of himself, and other Scottish lords, to the King of England, proposing the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Maid of Norway—which happy event, had it not been frustrated by the death of the Princess, might have been so advantageous to both nations. But the Princess died, and the competition for the crown ensued. Edward declared for John Baliol, nephew of the Lord of Cavers, and the latter was himself appointed Great Chamberlain of Scotland. In this capacity he so zealously favoured the interests of the English usurper—having, indeed, greater English interests at stake than Scottish ones—as to render himself obnoxious to the Scotch, and to make it dangerous for him to retain his office of Chamberlain. He accordingly resigned in 1305. His son, Alexander, seems to have started in life with Scottish sympathies—for which he was confined by Edward II. in the Tower of London, and only liberated on security by his father and other nobles for his loyalty henceforth. This pledge he seems to have kept, and at the success of Robert the Bruce his Scottish estates were all forfeited, and the barony of