

to be seen of artificial channels by which it was carried round the entire building. Though thus somewhat elevated in site, it is commanded on both sides by much higher ridges, having an open prospect only to the north and east. The mansion is composed of structures dating to very different periods, from 600 years ago, till the present time. It was generally supposed that the oldest remains traceable were the arched tower occupying the south-east, or Ruberslaw side of the great square of building, until a few months ago, when in the course of investigation, the present Mr Douglas made a very interesting discovery, throwing light upon the antiquity of the erection. In the course of an examination of the arch or vault which supports this—the oldest part of the building—he found that it was built upon, and rested (as geologists would say) *unconformably* upon the remains of an earlier structure, distinguished partly by the character of the masonry, but more by the base of an ancient window or door-way, ascending by a series of terraced steps, evidently a part of the ancient castle, but which at the building of the existing tower, had been roughly built up and squared with the rest of the wall. These remains are understood to be all that is left of the Cavers of the Baliols, and the old days of the Scottish prosperity before the wars of independence. They form too narrow data from which to restore the extent or the magnificence of the Cavers of 6 and 7 centuries ago; but as Scotland at that time possessed a prosperity far above what she had for many succeeding ages, and as contemporary historians found her in arts, learning, and social comforts far before the England of the time, we can conceive of the Cavers of the Baliols as a fitting residence for one of the greatest of the Scottish Magnates, and most important men of the kingdom. During the war the lords of Cavers having as we have seen, changed sides, and eventually attached themselves to the English interests, their border castle was destroyed and lay a heap of ruins, till peace and freedom again visited the country. In this ruinous state it is supposed to have lain, even after the barony came into possession of the Douglasses—that powerful family having larger and stronger castles in other parts of their domains—till about the time of the battle of Otterburn, when the succession of Sir Archibald to Cavers, and his appointment as Warden of the Marches, rendered it necessary to restore the ruined mansion, and dwell upon the estate. Thus rose, about the year 1400, the oldest part of the existing mansion—the Warden's Tower—that portion to the left of the visitor as he enters the front door and hall. It is a rectangle of about 18 feet by 35 within, with walls at the spring of the arch varying in different places from 6 to 9 feet in thickness—higher up the arches, of course, where the windows are sunk, the thickness is 15 or 18 feet. Unlike the smaller peels in the neighbourhood, the arched part is high enough to include two storeys, the upper row, supported on oaken beams now almost decayed, being on the level of the elevated ground to the north side, while the lower, which may have been used as dungeons, and which is reached by a rude descending stone stair, looks out upon the low

hollow once the moat. The ancient doorway of the Warden's Tower, with the bolt holes and hinge crooks, is still to be seen, though it no longer opens into the open air, but into the centre of the modern building. The only light possessed by the arched chamber was obtained from four small, wedge-shaped shafts—windows, I suppose, by courtesy—presenting a small orifice to the exterior, but widening on all sides inwardly. The two of these holes facing the wood have been, at a later date, widened into modern windows, the one at the south-west end of the tower extended into a doorway to the wing there added to the building, while that at the other end is concealed on the exterior by a re-casing of the wall, though it can be well seen from the inside, a quantity of rubbish with which it was stopped up having been recently taken out. The dungeon, or cellar floor underneath possesses two such windows, if one of them was not rather a door for the admission of cattle. In no part of the arched room is there a fire-place, and in modern times, it being nearly impossible to excavate one out of the wall, it has been *laid* against it. The present mansion shows three storeys above the vault in the Warden's Tower, but the upper of these, from the character of the masonry and other circumstances, is referred to a more recent period. Singular to say, there is no communication known between the vaulted ground floor and the rooms above. It would thus appear that they must have been reached by an outside staircase, or even, as has been suggested with regard to the arched houses in Hawick, by a trapdoor in the centre of the vault—a method, which, I have been told, is to be seen in Craigston Castle, in Banffshire. The roof of the vault in Cavers is thickly plastered, and it is not possible to tell, without examination, whether such a plan was resorted to here. In the upper floors the walls diminish in thickness with the height, but are still considerable enough to contain within them two small concealed chambers, having narrow slit windows. One of these had always been known to exist, and the slit or shot hole in the wall suggested the other, though it was actually discovered only a few years ago, in the course of some alterations on that part of the building. A number of the upper windows of the Warden's Tower have been enlarged at a recent date, though some still retain their original dimensions. On account of the thickness of the walls, the windows are sunk in recesses deep enough to form little closets or bowers, in which capacity it was customary to use them when they were separated from the room by the arras or tapestry with which its walls were hung. The Warden's Tower, of which the principal features have just been described, continued the dwelling of the barons of Cavers for several centuries—during which it often stood the dint of war in national strife or border foray. Thus, from the Acts of the Scots Parliament, we learn that Cavers and Denholm were burnt in 1542, and the town of Cavers again laid waste in 1596, on which occasion, though the baronial tower withstood the foemen, it no doubt suffered in some degree from their attacks.