

But with the accession of James VI. to the English crown, and subsequent union of the two kingdoms, the fortified peels, which had probably already become uncomfortable enough for their occupiers, ceased to be necessary, and were abandoned; a more commodious mansion, more suited in comforts and conveniences to the tastes of the age, being either erected out of their remains, or in close contiguity to their ruined pile. Thus it fared with Cavers. The Warden's Tower, which had stood the dint of foe and the tooth of time for several centuries, being most probably in a ruinous condition, was abandoned, and a more modern construction erected parallel with it, and abutting against it like the lower limb of the letter L. This, which we may designate for distinction's sake, the Sheriff's mansion (that more peaceful office having now displaced the Wardenship of the Marches), still exists as the part of the present building nearest the old church and churchyard. What was its front door is now to be seen as a window, the lobby being formed into a closet, while the dining-hall of the Sheriff's has become the kitchen of the present day. Such was Cavers House at the year 1700, and probably for a quarter of a century previous, and 50 years after that date; the inhabited portion being about one-third of the present square of building, while the old Tower adjacent was left as a sanctuary for owls and bats. That it was in a state of considerable delapidation is proved by the fact that, where another storey has been added to the top, the old wall does not present a level surface, but a jagged and broken outline—while, within the building, in places where the plaster is removed, the stones are seen spotted and encrusted with those lichens which grow on surfaces exposed to air and weather. About 1750 another change was made, the then proprietor of Cavers being resolved to repair and extend the mansion, and, having acquired Italian tastes from travelling in that country, formed and executed the project of connecting both the parts already described by building up the intervening space, and forming the whole into a compact square block. The connecting wall on the east side projects in a semicircular form, and in this was made the principal entrance to the mansion, so that what is now the front is composed of the end of the two structures which we have called the Warden's Tower and the Sheriff's mansion. At the same time, these ends were cased up in a new facing, it is presumed to make them harmonise with the new parts of the structure, a storey was added to the top, and the house assumed the appearance still borne at the present day. About the commencement of the present century, the wing to the south-west of lower elevation was commenced by the Lady Grace Stuart, and completed by her son, the late Mr Douglas, who likewise erected the present court-yard and offices, on the site of a series of rambling old barns and outhouses.

Thus Cavers House presents the remains of five different periods of building; the few traces of the Cavers of the Baliols, the tower of the Wardens of the middle marches, the mansion of the Sheriffs at the time of the Union, the Italianized composition of a century ago, and

extensions of a later date. It is understood that the castle of the Wardens was furnished with turrets and battlements, and it is to be regretted that these were not restored in the repairs of last century, and, indeed, that the whole was not completed in the baronial style in which the more ancient portion has been built.

Within the mansion a special object of interest is the double staircase, an architectural curiosity, paralleled only in the Chateau de Chambord, the residence of French royalty before Versailles, which gives a title to the heir of the forlorn hopes of the Bourbons. The staircase of Chambord is thus described in Murray's Guide, "The tower is filled with a very beautiful double staircase, an architectural curiosity, so contrived that two parties may pass up or down at the same time without meeting or scarcely seeing each other."

The double staircase of Cavers House, occupies nearly the centre of the great building, in that limb of the 17th century mansion which abutted against the Warden's Tower, and its origin is no doubt to be found in the fact that the original spiral staircase was found in the repairs of last century to be too narrow, tortuous, and steep for the enlarged size of the mansion, and a broad and spacious square one was accordingly wound round it leaving it as a private means of communication. The lofty and spacious dining-room deserves attention. It is situated in the North-West or 17th century part of the building, two of the original storeys of which it occupies in height. It is adorned with several gems of art, including an original "St Peter" by Rubens, and some fine family portraits. From the flat top of the house a magnificent prospect is obtained to the north and east, where the "plain of pleasant Tividale" is seen stretching in fertile beauty for many miles, encircling with its varied ocean of wood, meadow, and field, the islet-like eminences of Minto Hills and Craggs, Penielheugh, the Dunion and Lanton Hill, while the grim and heath-clad Ruberslaw, where the old Wardens of the Marches held the "weapenshaw," rises in Alpine grandeur to the east.

The ancestral relics preserved in Cavers House, include the Otterburn trophies already referred to, an ancient square flag of the barons of Cavers bearing the cognizance of the Douglas—

"Vails not to tell each hardy clan  
From the fair Middle Marches came;  
The bloody heart blazed in the van  
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!"

and from the time of the covenanting struggle, the Teviotdale copy of the Confession of Faith and Bond of Union, subscribed in 1638. (See appendix.)

The very few specimens of old armour preserved is surprising, when we recall the warlike habits of the Lords of Cavers. Popular opinion, believing that there must be many relics of this kind, has not been slow to declare that there are; thus, in a work recently published, we find the statement:—"It is understood that Earl Douglas's armour is carefully preserved at Cavers along with other relics; and the writer has been credibly in-