

formed that, some fifty or sixty years since, a gentleman rather below than above the middle size, was curious enough to embrace an opportunity of trying how the said armour fitted him; but scarcely had he got all its clasps and rivets secured, when he found himself more tightly encased than was at all agreeable, and was never so glad in his life as when he got himself unshelled again. Another anecdote of a more remote date is told of a domestic who donned the Earl's armour for the purpose of riding in a procession either to or in Edinburgh, and, owing to the tightness of its fit and the heat of the weather, he got what he never overput, or, according to the vernacular phrase, 'he never did mair guid.' If dependence could be placed on these anecdotes, they completely disprove what some chroniclers have written about the gigantic stature of the victor of Otterburn."

Unfortunately, for any deductions built on such stories, they are pure myths or inventions, and a specimen of many the speaker has personally heard, but are entirely without foundation, there being preserved at Cavers not only no armour of Earl Douglas, but not even any of his descendants, with the exception of a few visored helmets, and breastplates of the epoch of the Commonwealth. Tradition has accounted for the loss of the Earl's armour by the statement that, at his funeral at Melrose, it was borne, as customary on such occasions, by his serving men, who, becoming intoxicated, lost it along with their lives in crossing the Tweed. A more likely cause for the total disappearance of all ancient armour from Cavers House is to be found in the strict laws against retaining weapons in the Covenanting times, when the Cavers family, being peculiarly obnoxious to the Government, it is probable that the statute was executed against them with the utmost rigour, especially when the death of Sir William Douglas, and the subsequent persecution and imprisonment of the Good Lady Cavers, allowed the oppressors and their hirelings full scope to ransack the ancestral mansion.

It has been stated that the line of the old castle moat is still to be seen, connected with a small loch, known as the Allerlee bog. On the level to the north-east or front of the present mansion, two spots bear the names of the Court Knowe and the Castle Knowe, at the latter of which, the late William Thomson, remembered of a ruin standing in his youth. It is probable that this was the watch tower as it occupied the eastern extremity of the ridge which bears the house. The Court Knowe may have been connected with the courtyard, or it may have been a sort of mote-hill, where the wardens and sheriffs were wont to hold their courts, and administer justice.

The arms of Earl Douglas are not the only subject on which mysterious legends float among the surrounding peasantry. A haunted room is, of course, a legitimate phenomenon in a building so old, and connected with deeds of blood. This, however, has the foundation in fact that, in one of the rooms, with a certain wind blowing, and particular doors open, a portion of the panelling is caused to vibrate and send forth a loud and plaintive note like

that of a piano, which might well, in a less matter-of-fact age, be listened to with horror as the wail of some restless spirit. The legend of the subterranean passage from the Warden's Tower to the vicinity of a colossal ash-tree, some distance down the walk, whose age is supposed to date to the time of the Stuarts, is another of the firmly believed opinions of those around. It is said that many persons, only lately dead, remembered an opening reputed to be the termination of this passage, though now lost. When the workmen engaged in the recent investigations in the vaulted chamber came upon the old window or bole, already alluded to, and roughly blocked up with loose building, they felt that they had at length discovered the entrance of the secret passage, and great was their disappointment when, on clearing it out, its real nature was revealed to them. Finally, the mythic history of Cavers House would be incomplete without its Cromwell legend—that ubiquitous legend of destruction, whose universal prevalence we can only account for by considering Cromwell as a personified metamorphosis of "Crumble." A spoiled or unfinished portion of the eastern corner is set down to the credit of the great destroyer, who is currently reported to have planted his guns on Ruberslaw to make sure his aim on the old fortress. Apart from the facts that Cromwell never was in the district, and that the Douglasses of Cavers were ever on the side of the Commonwealth, the appearance in question receives the harmless explanation that it is a small part of the wall which was not eased, like the rest, with a new surface, in the restorations of last century.

The old church of Cavers stands a short distance to the north-west of the mansion. Its age is not known, a date (1663) above one of the doorways marking only the epoch of some repairs. It is considered to have stood since previous to the Reformation, being built in the form of a Latin cross, of which the base is formed by the sepulchral vaults of the Cavers family, while the arms or transepts consisted of the aisles of Stobs and Gladstaines. But when the latter family became extinct, in the course of the last century, the heritors unfortunately pulled down their aisle, thus destroying the original symmetry of the building, as well as robbing it off its ancestral memories. The adjacent churchyard contains several tombstones of considerable age, but the object of greatest interest in it is a grave near the gate, covered with a horizontal stone, and lying exactly transverse to the rest of the graves. It is often called the Priest's Grave, in allusion to the fact, that in Roman Catholic countries—as may be seen in the churchyards of Ireland—the priest is buried with his head in opposite direction to those of his flock, because, say they, he must at the resurrection face towards, and answer for the people. In this present instance, however, it is not simply a reversal of the position, but the formation of the grave directly across the general line. By others it has been attributed to a Knight Templar. The pounding of sand upon the flat top "from time immemorial"—the same process which destroyed the lineaments of the sundial of the Gladstaines, lately presented to the museum—has effaced all marks except a date