

OLD HOUSE OF OVERHALL.

Many will be interested by their visit to Cavendish to learn that the place is famous as giving its name to one of the most ancient and illustrious families of Great Britain.

It appears that a branch of the Gernons, being seated in this village, of which they were lords, assumed the name of "de Cavendish." The first to render the family celebrated was Sir John Cavendish, who obtained the manor of Overhall by marriage.

A remnant only of the ancient mansion now remains. Enough, however, exists to testify its former importance, and it may be safely assumed that for several generations it was the home of the family of Cavendish.

Towards the end of the reign of Edward III., Sir John Cavendish was made Chief Justice of the Court of King's bench. Upon the accession of Richard II., heavy taxation was found necessary, and this resulted in the populace of England rising in rebellion against the King.

The great mover in this rising was Wat Tyler, who marched at the head of his followers to London, where they broke into the Tower and murdered Simon of Sudbury, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Whilst this rebellion was raging in London, many of the provinces were similarly disturbed. The populace in Suffolk were being led by one John Raw, a priest. The Chief Justice had been commissioned to quell the insurrection in other counties, but happening at this time to be in Suffolk the Judge was seized and dragged, together with the prior of Bury, to the market cross there, where the rabble beheaded them, their heads being set upon the pillory. This event occurred in this very month of June, 1381. The remains of the unfortunate Sir John Cavendish were interred in the chancel of Cavendish Church.

It is said that what exasperated the mob was the intelligence from London of the death of their chief, Tyler, by the hands of his son John. He appears to have been in attendance upon the King, and was witness to the insolence of Tyler towards the king's representative, when Sir William Walworth, then Lord Mayor, struck the traitor with a dagger. The blow, however, not proving fatal, Cavendish stepped forward and despatched him. For his loyalty and gallantry Walworth was knighted upon the spot, and the dagger is said to have been added to the city arms on account of the Lord Mayor having killed or wounded the rebel Tyler at Smithfield. Many have made their mark in history as politicians and soldiers, and others besides Sir John Cavendish have perished in the service of their country, one Charles being slain in the civil wars on the side of the king, and in quite recent times we remember how Lord Frederick Charles Cavendish, M.P. for the N. W. Riding of Yorkshire, fell by the hand of the assassin in Phoenix Park, Dublin, so lately as 1882.

Among those who have contributed to literature may be mentioned a descendant of the Judge's, namely, George Cavendish, a faithful attendant on Cardinal Wolsey, and author of the life of that prelate. Thus we see that many of the name have been celebrated in various ways, but it was not until the reign of James I. that William Cavendish was created Baron of Hardwick and Earl of Devonshire, a title which has ever since been enjoyed by that illustrious family.

Since the remote period to which reference has been made, the ancient House of Overhall has passed into several hands. During the reign of Elizabeth the mansion was partially demolished, and the remainder fitted up as a farm house, the present owner being the Vicar, Rev. R. G. Peter, through whose courtesy the members of the Suffolk Institute of Archæology have been permitted to examine the old home of the noble family of Cavendish.