

A little farther north stands Lambton Hall, the seat of the Earl of Durham. It is a modern edifice situated on an elevated position on the North bank of the Wear. One of the most remarkable things about Lambton is the Legend of the worm. The heir of Lambton, fishing in the Wear on Sunday, hooked a small worm, which he carelessly threw into a well. The worm grew till it was too large for the well, and issuing forth betook itself to the Wear, where it usually lay a part of the day coiled round a crag in the middle of the water; it also frequented a green mound near the well, called thence "the worm hill." It became the terror of the country; and levied a daily contribution of nine cows' milk. Young Lambton having, totally repented of his former life, had bathed himself in holy water, taken the sign of the cross and joined the crusaders. On his return home, he was extremely shocked at witnessing the effects of his youthful imprudence, and immediately undertook to destroy the worm, but the crusader was foiled by his enemy's power of self-union, at length he consulted a witch. By her advice he armed himself in a coat of mail studded with blades, and placed himself on the crag. At the usual time the worm came to the rock, and wound himself with great fury round the armed knight, and cut himself to pieces with his own efforts. The witch had promised Lambton success upon condition that he would slay the first living creature he met after his victory, he met his father, but instead of fulfilling the condition he again repaired to the witch, who pronounced as