

I.

NOTICE OF "THE BLUIDY BANNER" OF DRUMCLOG AND BOTH-
WELL BRIG, PRESERVED AT DUNBAR. By JAMES DRUMMOND, Esq.
R.S.A. & F.S.A. Scot.

From our Scottish education and early prejudices, some members of
this Society will no doubt be surprised and astonished at the name I have
chosen for a flag used by the Covenanters at the battles of Drumclog and

x Now (1886) in possession of Mr. J. Sinclair, Moffat.

Bothwell Brig. The few remarks I have to make on the subject will readily explain why such a title has been selected.

In the accounts of that troubled period of our national history, tradition and facts are sometimes strangely mingled. I will only mention one or two instances illustrating my subject. At the battle of *Bothwell Brig*, *Hamilton of Preston*, who was general of the Covenanters on that occasion, gave out the word for the day, "That no quarter was to be given." This is denied by *Wodrow*; and *Dr M'Crie*, after a somewhat curious fashion, follows him, evasively denying it, although *Hamilton*, in his "*Vindication*," rather boastfully states the fact, "blessing God for it, and desiring to bless his holy name, that since He helped me to set my face to his work, I never had nor would take a favour from mine enemies, either on the right or left hand, and desire to give as few." It is also stated, that there was found in the Covenanters' camp, after their defeat at *Bothwell Brig*, a great gallows, with a supply of new ropes. It is needless to say for what purpose this must have been erected. This statement has also been denied; yet *Creighton*, who wrote his account at the period, says, that "the Covenanters had set up a very large gallows in the midst of their camp at *Bothwell Brig*, and had prepared a cartful of new ropes at the foot of it, in order to hang up the king's soldiers, whom they already looked upon as vanquished, and at their mercy; and it happened that the pursuers in the royal army, returning back with their prisoners, chose this place where the gallows stood to guard them at, without offering to hang one of them," &c. The same is also mentioned by *Guild* in his "*Bellum Bothwellianum*." In a poem published at *Edinburgh* in 1681, a similar allusion is also made:—

They were committed to the guard,
Expecting but a bad reward;
The gallows which themselves prepared
Their captives on to hing:
To that same gallows were they brought,
Where all of them expected nought
But *Haman*-like up to be caught,—
A punishment condign.

And in the "*Memoirs of the Rev. Mr Blackadder*," the prisoners are likewise said to have been "all gathered about a gallows which stood

יְהוָה יִשְׁמַע

FOR CHRIST & HIS TRUTHS.

NO QUARTERS FOR Y: ACTIVE ENIMIES OF Y: COVENANT.

Size of the Original 405 x 315

Chromo Litho by W & A F Johnston

THE BLUIDIE BANNER CARRIED AT DRUMCLOG AND ROTHWELL BRIC 1678

Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland



Cromie Lithog by W & A K Johnston

COVENANTERS FLAG CARRIED AT BOTHWELL BRIC 1678

there." Now all this seems circumstantial enough, and under ordinary circumstances would be considered conclusive. But why deny such contemporary statements? Would it not be much better honestly to allow all to have happened under the excitement caused by persecution? For it should be borne in mind, that during civil war, but more especially if that war partakes of a religious character, everything like fair play and generosity seems to be effaced from men's minds, and crimes and cruelties are often perpetrated, and opinions avowed, which the same persons would shudder to think of in their more rational and sober moments; and we should look upon this period of our national history "not as a war time of saints and martyrs on the one side, and that of heathen persecutors on the other, but that of two fierce contending factions in a half civilized country, who alternately tyrannized over each other's persons and consciences,—one in the abused name of gospel freedom and civil liberty, the other under the no less misplaced watchwords of civil order and loyalty;" the fact is, neither side played a very creditable part during this tumultuous period.

I shall now call the attention of the Society to what I would term a tangible fact, bearing on the points at issue. Some years ago I was informed that, somewhere in East Lothian, there existed a Covenanters' Flag and other relics. I made no inquiry after them at the time, taking it for granted that the flag would be similar to the one in our Museum, or to the more perfect one belonging to my friend Mr W. B. Johnston, namely, with the Scottish Saltier Argent, and the motto, "Covenants, Religion, Crown, and Kingdoms." I have given illustrations of these and a few others. (See Plates XXVII. to XXIX.) Some months since, however, being told by a friend from Dunbar that he was acquainted with Mr and Miss Raeburn, who were in possession of this flag or banner, I accompanied him to their residence, while on a visit in that neighbourhood, and after much persuasion, was allowed to see and make a drawing of it. On asking the old lady why she objected to show it to strangers, she said, "It's the Bluidy Banner, ye ken; and what would the Roman Catholics say if they kenned that our forbears had fought under such a bluidy banner?"—Roman Catholics, I have no doubt, being a generic term, by which she called all who differed from her in religion. It is of blue silk, here and there a little faded; but having been treasured as

a valuable heirloom, is in very fair preservation, and is inscribed in Hebrew characters (gilded) "Jehovah-Nissi,"¹—The Lord is my Banner. From some cause or other, the cloth has given way where many of these letters are painted, and what remain are so tender that they will scarcely bear touching. The next line is painted in white,—“For Christ and his Truths:” and then come the words from which it has received the name Bluidy Banner,—“No quarters to ye active enemies of ye Covenant.” This seems to have been first painted in a light colour, and afterwards repainted in a dull, faded-looking red, in fact quite a bloody colour. It is 4 feet 5½ inches × 3 feet 5½ inches. I may remark, that if this flag or banner had been shown to me as a mere relic, without any history attached to it, I would not for a moment have doubted its authenticity. Its history, as given by the proprietors, is as follows:—It belonged to Hall of Haughead, a zealous Covenanter, and one of the leaders at Drumclog and Bothwell Brig, from the latter of which engagements he escaped and fled to Holland, but shortly returned. While lurking near Queensferry, an attempt was made to seize him by the governor of Blackness Castle; Hall, being mortally wounded in the struggle, died on his way to Edinburgh as a prisoner. On his person was found an unsubscribed document, afterwards called the Queensferry Paper. Hall's son, while on his deathbed, gave the banner to a zealous covenanting friend, of the name of Cochrane. His own son, having turned conformist clergyman, was considered unworthy to be custodier of such a precious relic. This Cochrane, after wandering about from place to place, settled in Coldstream; his son, again, bequeathed the banner to his youngest daughter Mary, who married Mr Raeburn of Dunbar, the father of the present proprietors, Mr and Miss Raeburn, now a very aged couple. Along with the banner, there was a chest of arms, which had been used in covenanting times; these, however, have been gradually given away to friends, excepting two swords. I chose the name of the “Bluidy Banner,” because Miss Raeburn so designated it;

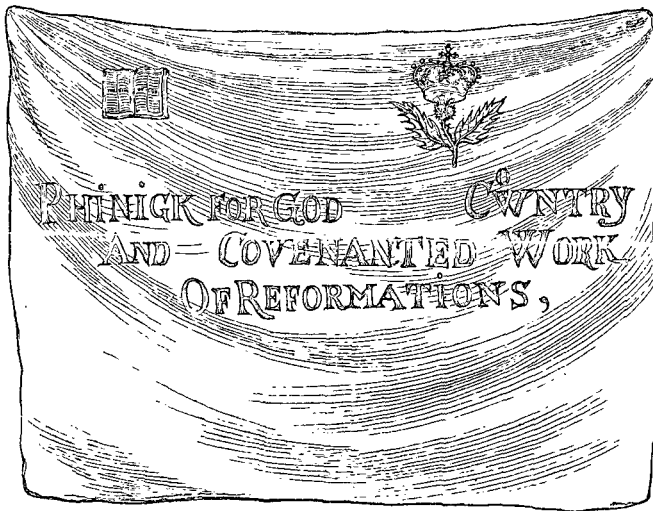
¹ Exod. xvii. 14. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 15. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-Nissi. 16. For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn, that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.



Crown-Lithog. by V & A E Johnston

COVENANTERS' FLAGS CARRIED AT BOTHWELL BRIG 1678.

who, although proud of being the proprietor of such a relic, seemed at the same time heartily ashamed of the device. The existence of this banner I conceive, throws an unexpected ray of light on the history of this period; and we may cease to be astonished at the "Great Gallows and Cartload of new ropes," which stood in the midst of the covenanting camp at Bothwell Brig. And during these engagements, if Claverhouse's troopers were a little sharp in their practice, who can now be astonished at it, when constantly before their eyes was wafted this, or, perhaps, many such similar banners, proclaiming that, if vanquished, no mercy was to be shown them? While, on the other hand, we must not forget, that confiscation and imprisonments, with punishments and tortures of the "Boots and Thumikins" kind, were a sore provocation to extreme measures, and, to say the least of it, their application but a bad school in which to acquire habits of charity and Christian forbearance.



In the annexed Plates I have given sketches of various banners borne by the Covenanters.

The Fenwick District Flag is represented in the above woodcut. It

has a very doubtful appearance, being in every respect quite perfect, and suspiciously modern looking. It is of white linen; the letters very rudely painted in red.

Plate XXVII. is the Bloody Banner.

Plate XXVIII., No. 1, was carried by the Covenanters of the district of East Monkland, and was used at Bothwell Brig in June 1679.

Plate XXVIII., No. 2, was also used at Bothwell Brig, and carried by a corps of Burgher Seceders, associated as a regiment of volunteers, who were posted at the College, when the Highland army entered Edinburgh in 1745. It is preserved in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries.

Plate XXIX., No. 3, belonged to Covenanters of the district of Avondale, who were at the battle of Bothwell Brig.

Plate XXIX., No. 4, is the property of Mr W. B. Johnston, R.S.A. It is said to have been carried by Stewart of Garscube at the battle of Worcester, and was afterwards used at the battle of Bothwell Brig. It is in good condition; and although now faded to a weak green and dull orange colour, seems originally to have been pink and blue.