

IX.

NOTE ON THE BLUIDY BANNER OR HAUGHHEAD BANNER.

BY MISS E. M. MEIN, B.L., F.S.A.ScOT.

In a notice of "The Bluidy Banner" of Drumclog and Bothwell Brig contributed to the *Proceedings*, vol. iii. (1858-59), p. 253, Mr James Drummond gave the history of the flag as he had understood it when recounted by its then possessors, Mr and Miss Raeburn, Dunbar. Mr Drummond recorded that the flag had "belonged to Hall of Haughhead, a zealous Covenanter. . . . Hall's son, while on his death-bed, 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 the 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." Mr Drummond also referred to a chest of arms said to have been used in Covenanting times which had been given away, excepting two swords.

The banner is one of the well-known Covenanting banners, and the sentiments of the inscription on it, "No quarters for ye active enimies of ye Covenant," have caused it to be quoted frequently in support of the blood-thirsty intentions of the Covenanters at Bothwell Brig. It has continued to receive the name given to it by Mr Drummond in 1859, although it has also sometimes been called the Haughhead banner. Andrew Lang¹ thought the provenance and pedigree fairly probable in itself; and Sheriff Mark Napier, whose critical faculties, like those of Andrew Lang, were more often roused and exercised on evidence which tells against the Royalists, accepted the story and used the coloured reproduction of the flag in his Memorials of Claverhouse. It has subsequently been referred to by other writers.

The tradition has been challenged by Dr D. Hay Fleming, as referred to later, but otherwise the story as recounted by Mr Drummond does not seem to have been examined.

Henry Hall, the Covenanter, who died near Queensferry in 1680, and whose name is coupled with that of the Rev. Donald Cargill as one of the authors of the Queensferry Paper, discovered when he was seized, was the "onlie lawful son"² of Robert Hall of Haughhead (died *circa* 1661) by his

¹ *History of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 353.

² Reg. of Deeds (Mackenzie Office), vol. ii. p. 591.

first wife, Helen Scott, who died in 1652. Henry had a son, Samuel, "*unicus filius legitimus*."¹ This only son, Samuel, by his second wife, Janet Pringle, had two sons, Henry, "son and nearest heir,"² who succeeded his father in Haughhead and who was alive in Jedburgh in 1796, and James,³ ordained by the Reformed Presbytery, otherwise the Cameronians or Macmillanites, in 1750, during his father's lifetime. James played a leading part in the troubles of this Presbytery in the April before his father died in 1753.⁴ He died in 1781, aged fifty-five, and is commemorated by a stone immediately to the north of the Martyrs' Monument in Old Greyfriars Kirkyard. Thus the only ordained grandson of Henry Hall was ordained in a church acceptable to the irreconcilables. Samuel Hall was a follower of Mr Macmillan judging from the reference to him in Boston's *Memoirs* (Morrison's edition, 1899, p. 216), where he is mentioned by the initials "S. H. of H." as accompanying Mr Macmillan. James Hall, his second son, was therefore an eminently suitable custodian of the banner, even had his elder brother, Henry, been considered a backslider in the eyes of his father, of which there is no evidence. The touching death-bed scene of Mr Drummond's story, if it had occurred, would have taken place between two nonagenarians, Samuel dying in July 1753 in his ninety-second year,⁵ and the Raeburns' great-grandfather would have required to have been a contemporary in order to have been an active Covenanter. The banner probably passed from the Halls to the Cochranes, but not in the way nor for the reason given by Mr Drummond.

The "conformist" grandson of Henry Hall has been identified as the Rev. George Hall (1680?-1740), minister of Linton, Roxburghshire.⁶ George Hall is described in Scott's *Fasti* (1917 ed.) as "son of Robert Hall of Haughhead and grandson of Henry Hall the Covenanter." This is plainly incorrect in view of the foregoing facts, but he may have been the son of a half brother of Henry Hall, and a grandson of Robert by the latter's second marriage to Margaret Davidson or Young.⁷ It is true that the Rev. George Hall died (1740) before Samuel (1753), but he could not have been a son of Samuel by an earlier marriage. The Rev. George Hall left four sons and a daughter. John, his eldest son, not mentioned in the *Fasti*, may have been dead by 1753, but he had a son, George, "Mariner at Plymouth," who was alive in 1782,⁸ and who would have been heir to Haughhead had his grandfather George been Samuel's eldest son and heir. This disposes of the possibility of the Rev. George Hall having been the "conformist" grandson of Henry Hall.

¹ Part. Reg. Sasines, Roxburghshire, vol. vi., second series, p. 128.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xvii. p. 5.

³ Reg. of Services of Heirs, 7th December 1782.

⁴ A Breach in the Reformed Presbytery, 1753 (*Scottish Church History Society*, vol. i. p. 1).

⁵ *Tombstone*, and *Sheriff Court Books, Roxburgh*, 1753, p. 191.

⁶ *Berwickshire Nat. Club.*, vol. xxvi. p. 376.

⁷ Reg. of Deeds (Mackenzie Office), vol. ii. p. 591.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. ccxxxii. p. 477.

These are errors in the hitherto accepted story of the banner, but to leave the facts here would tend to discredit the whole tradition. It remains therefore to construct, as far as possible, the real history.

Miss Catharine Raeburn, who showed the flag to Mr Drummond, died, the last survivor of the family, on 3rd December 1868, said to be aged seventy-three, but possibly she was older. Her eldest brother, William, was ordained in the Original Secession Church, the "Old Lights," in 1804. He demitted his charge in 1837 and joined the Church of Scotland in 1839. In 1844 he sought re-admission to the Original Secession Church, but by that time his father was dead.¹ Thus it would appear that it was James Raeburn, Miss Raeburn's father, who left the banner past his son William, because he had turned "conformist clergyman."

Miss Raeburn's grandparents, John Cochrane and Elizabeth Air, were married in Coldstream in 1750, and Mary, her mother, their eldest child, was baptised 27th November 1752. A Hector Aire was in company with Henry Hall in Northumberland in 1678.² In all likelihood this was the Hector, described as eldest son of Thomas Air, Coldstream Mill,³ and it is probable that the Raeburns were descended from Henry Hall through Elizabeth Air's parents, her mother's mother mentioned later. Mary married James Raeburn and died, aged ninety-two, on 6th April 1844. The notice of her death in the *Scotsman* says: "Mrs R. (*sic*) was a most rigid Cameronian, and retained in her possession the flag of the Covenant, which was borne by her grandfather at the battle of Bothwell Brig. Although somewhat tattered, still all the emblems and inscriptions are perfectly legible. The old lady prized it beyond rubies, and has transmitted it as an heirloom in her family."

She had been born eight months before the death of Samuel Hall, and their two lives covered the span of one hundred and eighty-three years, so there is every reason to believe that Mrs Raeburn had been told by excellent authorities the story of the banner and other relics. She cannot be held accountable, however, for the accuracy or otherwise of the obituary notice.

Her daughter, Miss Raeburn, bequeathed the banner and a sword to Mr William Sinclair, a native of Dunbar, who was ultimately senior teller of the City of Glasgow Bank, and retired to Moffat. He carefully recorded in writing the information he had been given by Miss Raeburn and some other particulars. This statement says that Miss Raeburn said that the banner and the sword had belonged to Colonel Cleland, "that is the sword had been his and worn by him at the battle of Bothwell Brig in 1679. The flag had been there also, and had been carried off by him to preserve it from the enemy. Colonel Cleland had given these to his friend Henry Hall of Haugh-

¹ Services of Heirs, 28th October 1840; Scott's *Fasti* (Bannockburn, Old Burgher).

² *Archæologia Æliana*, 4th series, vol. ix. p. 38.

³ Lauder Testaments, vol. i. (1st June 1675).

head, near Hawick, who was progenitor of the said Catherine. . . . She herself is said to have been, when young, a tall and handsome woman. In her latter days she had a deep masculine voice and she was a good reader and evidently she was one who had received a good education. . . . In giving these relics into the care of Miss Raeburn's ancestor Colonel Cleland had stipulated that they were not to be given up save to some lineal descendant or representative of Cleland's own family." Mr Sinclair also recorded that an intimate friend of Miss Raeburn's, Mrs Angus, said that Mr Raeburn had been a well-to-do joiner and that the flag had come to Miss Raeburn from her mother's mother.

William Cleland, who was about eighteen years of age in 1679, and Henry Hall, his senior both in age and rank among the Covenanters, were both fugitives after the battle of Bothwell Brig. Hall was killed the following year, but the two young contemporaries Samuel Hall and William Cleland were passing to and fro in Scotland between 1680 and 1688. Samuel was at times with James Renwick. Indeed it seems a logical deduction from a Petition¹ to the Privy Council by "Mr Alexander Scheills, preacher of the Gospell, Samuell Hall, sone to the deceast Henry Hall of Haughhead, and John Luckup, merchant in Edinburgh," that it was Samuel Hall along with Alexander Shields who were the two friends with James Renwick when he was surprised in John Luckup's house in the Castlehill, a fact which seems to have escaped notice hitherto. Thus Samuel Hall and William Cleland were associated not only through the banner but by both being concerned in closing events of the Covenanting struggle, the capture of the last martyr publicly hanged and the last battle. William Cleland during this period is mentioned as being in company with the Rev. Alexander Peden. There were also the months between the Revolution and Colonel Cleland's death at Dunkeld when the relics could have been returned or recovered. According to the story, Cleland placed great store on the banner and sword, and it can only be wondered why he did not recover them during these ten years.

Dr Hay Fleming has drawn attention to a close similarity between this banner and a banner belonging to a party of dissidents from the United Societies in the early eighteenth century. The mottoes of this eighteenth-century banner were thought sufficiently extraordinary by the United Societies to be worth quoting in a pamphlet in confutation of a Manifesto issued by this insignificant party. Dr Hay Fleming considered that there could be no reasonable doubt of the identity of this banner with the Bluidy Banner.²

To return to the recent pedigree of the banner and sword. On the death of Mr W. Sinclair the relics passed to Mr William Speirs, who framed the flag for preservation, and left them to his stepdaughter, Miss Hannah Piers (Macckenzie) Speirs. The banner was lent by her and exhibited at the Scottish

¹ Laing MSS., vol. 350, No. 250.

² *Six Saints of the Covenant*, vol. ii. p. 216.

Historical Exhibition, Glasgow, 1911. On her death the relics were left to Mr William B. Speirs and his brother Mr George R. Speirs, her nephews, to whom thanks are due for a copy of the notes made by Mr Sinclair. They presented them on 12th May 1946 to the Cameronian Regiment (Scottish Rifles).

The other sword, mentioned by Mr Drummond, and a flintlock musket, both of which had belonged to Miss Raeburn, came into the possession of John Sinclair, Esq., Solicitor, Dunbar, a nephew of Mr William Sinclair. They are said to have belonged to Henry Hall himself. The sword, an Andrea Ferrara rapier blade without the hilt, and musket, were exhibited at the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1901. Both are now in the possession of the widow of Mr Sinclair in Edinburgh.

The authenticity of the banner as a Covenanting relic will be considered by some to be sufficiently vouched for on the balance of evidence, and by others to remain an open question.