THE COVENANTERS OF THE MERSE: THEIR HISTORY AND SUFFERINGS, AS FOUND IN THE RECORDS OF THAT TIME

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649557271

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PUBLISHED BY OLIPHANT ANDERSON & FERRIER 30 ST MARY STREET, EDINBURGH, AND 24 OLD BAILEY, LONDON 1893

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PREFACE.

SIN beginning his task the Author soon became aware that it had been undertaken at least half a century too late. The generation which has passed away still retained many traditional tales of Covenanting times which are now, it is to be feared, lost forever. This is a want which no care or industry can supply. The sense of it, however, has acted as a powerful incentive to him, not only in seeking and recording such traditions as still linger in the country, but also in exploring the original sources as these are to be found in the public records of the time. In this search he has been amply rewarded by the discovery of much new matter that has significance for the history of our Border Covenanters, and possibly of the kingdom at large. The rise of field meetings in the East of Scotland, the brilliant though brief campaign which gave the forces of the Covenant as decided an advantage on the Tweed as Drumclog had done in the West, the oppressive proceedings of the local Circuit Courts after Bothwell, and the last conventicle at the Greencleuch, all these and many other matters are now told, if not absolutely for the first time, yet with a fulness of detail which has not hitherto been attempted; and the Author would fain hope that these parts of his work may prove a real contribution to the history of the time.