

## THE TUDOR BATTLE FLAG OF ENGLAND.

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The "Standards and Colours of the Army" is a subject which has received attention from various writers, but as is natural; those who have written about this interesting part of military equipment have limited their notices to the period which witnessed the rise and development of the standing army as an institution. Mr. Samuel M. Milne in his handsome volume published in 1893, of which, unfortunately for the general reader, only 200 copies were printed, has dealt most fully with the subject between the years 1661 and 1881, devoting also one short chapter to the "ordering and arrangement of regimental flags during the Civil War." It may therefore be of interest to some to consider the battle flags carried by English armies before 1642.

Sir Harris Nicolas in his valuable work on the battle of Agincourt, published in 1827, presents as a frontispiece the banners borne at that battle. Of these the English carried those of St. George, St. Edward, St. Edmund and the Trinity, and the royal standard of Henry V. Some of these banners were probably seen in France in the wars of Edward III. As to the flags carried in Tudor times we must refer to the engravings of the pictures unfortunately destroyed by fire at Cowdray House in 1793. Luckily we have in these engravings<sup>1</sup> plenty of authorities for the subject. Most of the pictures were engraved in outline only, and we there get only the designs of the flags, but in one picture representing the encampment of the English forces near Portsmouth, July 19th, 1545, the engraver has, by the system of heraldic drawing adopted by Peter Sancta, preserved for us the colours of some of the flags. Allowance must be made in this, as in the engraving of the Hampton Court picture of the embarkation of Henry VIII. at Dover, for

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1788 by the Society of Antiquaries.

the change which time and varnish have effected in some of the flags shown. Whites have turned to yellows and have been rendered as such by the engraver, who evidently did not regard the subjects he was dealing with very intelligently.

In the picture of the siege of Boulogne are many representations of battle flags. Reading these from left to right we have the following: In the upper part are cavalry issuing from "S<sup>r</sup>. Anthony Browne's camp": a horseman carries a two-tailed flag apparently barré of red and white, and on the part next to the staff is a stag trippant within the garter.<sup>1</sup> The infantry carry a flag with a St. George's cross. Another small body of infantry also have the St. George's flag. Below these a man waves a flag having St. George's cross next the staff and the rest barré of white and green, three of each. Below these are the Irish troops with "a prey of cattle," preceded by a bagpiper, but without a flag. Further to the right, and just outside the "monte," the latter flag is again seen. Near the gallows, a clump of men bear a flag barré of green and white but without St. George's cross in the chief. Below this again is a body of cavalry with three flags, the first a square one with St. George's cross and a fimbriation, the second a square flag with a figure of St. George riding over the dragon, and the third a standard fringed and slit, on which is a lion passant and crowned, with fleurs-de-lis on the field. The St. George banner has a sort of bordure or fringe. Next, in the trench is displayed a plain cross of St. George, and this is repeated further on. Below and in front of the artillery is a flag with St. George's cross with double fimbriation.

In the picture of the embarkation of Henry VIII. at Dover, we have in the foreground the two forts, Archcliff to the west and the Black Bulwark to the east. From each of these forts are displayed flags. For our present purpose we may omit the flags borne by the ships and, with one exception, by the boats. The flag on the Archcliff fort is shown as composed of barré, white, green, red, white, green. It is probable that the red represents the

<sup>1</sup> A stag trippant ducally gorged and chained or, a Montagu crest.

two horizontal arms of a St. George's cross, the vertical arms being hidden by the folds of the flag. The boat close to this fort has in it besides four men, a fifth bearing a flag similar to that on the fort, and, as in that one, the vertical limbs of St. George's cross are hidden. The flag displayed on the Black Bulwark is a plain St. George's cross.

In the Cottonian manuscript, Aug. iii., f. 4, is a representation of the army of Henry VIII. in conflict with another. The latter bears flags having a white cross on a coloured ground, while Henry's army displays five flags, each with a St. George's cross.

The picture, No. 331 at Hampton Court, of the meeting of Henry VIII. and the emperor Maximilian at the siege of Terrouenne, or Tervane as it is called in the picture, shows in the upper part of it, not as described in the guide to Hampton Court, "the grand tournament," but the battle of Guinegate, known to us as the battle of the spurs, from the use made of them by the French in their overthrow. The flags shown are triangular banners, the English bearing St. George's cross, the French a white cross on a blue field. In the lower part of the picture the English standard-bearer displays St. George's cross, while the emperor's holds the Burgundian cross ragule! This meeting took place on August 9th, 1513. In the large picture of the Field of Cloth of Gold, also at Hampton Court, no banners nor standards are shown.

The best documentary evidence that we have with regard to the Tudor flag is in connection with Calais. We know that the town was taken on January 7th, 1558, and the whole Pale was for ever lost to the English crown by January 22nd when Guines had been captured and Hammes abandoned. Too late, Mary set about repairing this loss, and her chief idea seems to have been to attempt the recapture of this lost possession by the aid of foreign mercenaries. For this purpose negotiations were commenced through the famous Sir Thomas Gresham, and in May the queen writes to him that, understanding from Sir William Pickering that the colonel of the Germans, to be provided for her service, requires to have ten ensigns or banners provided against the musters, Gresham is to confer with Sir William Pickering therein

whether these ensigns have been accustomed to be allowed by other princes in like cases. If so, Gresham is to cause them to be provided after such sort as is customary in the country, saving that she wishes them to have thereon her colour, namely, white and green with red crosses.

In explanation of the foregoing, it must be noted that Philip and Mary mutually appointed one Sir William Wallerthum to be colonel of ten ensigns of German infantry consisting of 3,000 men brought from Saxony and Eastland for the defence of England during the next six months, in consequence of the war with France.

The pay of the soldiers was to be four Rhenish guilders per month, the chirurgeon to have thirty-two and the hangman sixteen florins per month.<sup>1</sup>

Each ensign or company was to consist of 400 foot, of which 150 were to be armed pikes, 150 pikes and 100 gunners. The cost of entertainment of 3,200 men with their officers and colours amounted in all to £4,680 16s. 8d. A little later Sir Thomas Gresham informs the queen that the colours will cost one with another seven pounds each.

Henry VIII. had at times in his employ several Spanish captains and Edward VI. had in the Scottish campaign some Italian troops, but we can find no mention of any of these having colours. As the negotiations with Colonel Wallerthum came to nothing, it is probable that these colours were never made, and Mary's death on November 17th closes the incident.

However, this Calais affair shows that the Tudor white and green of Henry VIII.'s time continued at least to the date of Elizabeth's succession to the throne.

In Derricke's *Image of Ireland*, written in 1578, but published in 1581, we have a valuable set of drawings which vary in merit from rude representations of the Irish, amounting almost to caricatures, up to a very well-drawn plate showing an English army on the march (see plate facing page 280). Yet these drawings still afford some information concerning the military flags of the period. These plates, twelve in number, were reproduced in fac-

<sup>1</sup> The florin of the Rhine was worth 4s. 2d.

simile in 1883 from a copy of the work in the Drummond Collection in the library of Edinburgh University. Sir Walter Scott, in editing the book in vol. i of Lord Somers' Tracts in 1809, reproduced eight of these plates, but among those omitted was the eighth, on which a few notes may be of interest. Here we see the main body of cavalry preceded by three pennons, each bearing a cross of St. George, with the fly split into two parts for about half its length. The infantry flags are quite plain, but the omission of St. George's cross from them is no doubt due to the engraver. In the ninth plate the one cavalry pennon is shown as in the preceding drawing, but the infantry flag with its short staff, as usual in those days, bears St. George's cross. The seventh plate shows the cavalry pennons and the infantry flags, in this case with long staves, all with the cross. There is no indication in this work of the colours, but it is quite clear that the Tudor green was absent from them.