

AN EXCELLENT OLD BALLAD

DESCRIBING,

THE WOEFUL HUNTING

AND FAMOUS BATTLE ON

CHEVY-CHACE,

Fought between Earl Piercy with 2000
English: and Earl Douglas with 1500
Scots: in which both these Earls and
most of their men were slain.



STIRLING:

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CHEVY-CHACE.

God prosper long our noble king,
our lives and safeties all,
A woeful hunting once there did
In Chevy-Chace befall.
To drive the deer with hound and horn,
Earl Piercy took his way,
The child may rue that is unborn,
the hunting of that day.
The Earl of Northumberland,
a vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods,
three summers days to take,
The chiefest harts in Chevy-chace,
to kill and bear away ;
The tidings to Earl Douglas came,
in Scotland where he lay,
Who sent Earl Piercy present word,
he would prevent his sport :
The English earl not fearing this,
did to the woods resort.
With fifteen hundred bowmen bold,
all chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of need
to aim their shafts aright,
The greyhounds they full swiftly ran,
to chase the fallow deer :
On Monday they began to hunt,
when daylight did appear.
And long before high noon they had,
a hundred fat bucks slain ;
They having din'd the rever's went,

to rouse them up again.
 The bowmen muster'd on the hill,
 well able to endure,
 Their backsides all with special care,
 that day were guarded sure.
 The hounds ran swiftly thro' the woods
 the nimble deer to take,
 And with their cries the hills and dales
 an echo shrill did make.
 Lord Piercy to the quarry went,
 to view the tender deer,
 Quoth he Earl Douglas promised
 this day to meet me here;
 If that I thought he would not come,
 no longer would I stay,
 Then stept a brave young gentleman,
 and to the Earl did say,
 Lo! yonder cometh Earl Douglas,
 his men of armour bright;
 Full fifteen hundred Scottish spears,
 all marching in our fight,
 All men of pleasant Tiviotdale,
 fast by the river Tweed.
 Then cease your sport, Earl Piercy said,
 and take your bows with speed.
 And now with me, my countrymen,
 your courage forth advance,
 For never was there a champion yet,
 in Scotland or in France.
 That ever did on horseback come,
 but if my hap it were,
 I durst encounter man for man,
 with him to break a spear.

Earl Douglas on a milk white steed,
 much like a baron bold,
 Rode foremost of his company,
 whose armour shone like gold :
 Shew me, said he, whose men you be,
 that hunt so boldly here
 And without my consent do chace
 and kill my fallow deer ?
 The first that did an answer make,
 was Earl Piercy, he
 Did say we list not to declare,
 or shew whose men we be,
 Yet will we spend our dearest blood,
 the chiefest harts to slay.
 Then Douglas swore a solemn oath,
 and in a rage did say,
 Before I will out-braved be,
 one of us two shall die,
 I know thee well, an Earl thou art,
 Lord Piercy, so am I ;
 But trust me Piercy, I think it were,
 a great offence to kill
 Any of these our harmless men,
 for they have done no ill ;
 Let thou and I the battle try,
 and set our men aside,
 Accurst be he, Lord Piercy said,
 by whom this is deny'd.
 Then stept a gallant squire forth,
 Witherington by name,
 Who said, I would not have it told,
 to Henry our king for shame.
 That e'er my captain fought on foot,

and I stood looking on,
 You are two earls, said Witherington,
 and I a squire alone,
 I'll do the best that do I may,
 while I have power to stand,
 While I have strength to wield my sword
 I'll fight with heart and hand,
 The English archer bent their bows,
 their hearts were good and true :
 At the first flight of arrows sent,
 full threescore Scots they slew,
 To drive the deer with hound and horn,
 earl Douglas had been bent.
 The captains mov'd with muckle pride,
 their spears in shivers sent.
 They clos'd full fast on every side,
 no slackness could be found,
 Whilst many a gallant gentlemen,
 lay gasping on the ground.
 Oh, Christ ! it was a grief to see,
 and likewise for to hear,
 The groans of men lying in their gore,
 and scatter'd here and there,
 At last these two bold earls did meet,
 like captains of great might,
 Like lions mov'd they laid on blows,
 and made a bloody fight.
 They fought until they both did sweat,
 with swords of temper'd steel,
 Until the blood like drops of rain,
 they tickling down did feel ;
 Yield thee, Earl Piercy, Douglas said,
 in faith I will thee bring,

Where thou shalt high advanced be,
 by James our Scottish king,
 Thy ransom I will freely give,
 and thus report of thee,
 Thou art the most courageous knight,
 that ever I did see
 To the earl Douglas Piercy said,
 thy proffers I do scorn,
 I will not yield to any Scot,
 that ever yet was born.
 With that there came an arrow keen
 out of an English bow,
 Which struck Earl Douglas to the heart
 a deep and deadly blow.
 Who never spoke words more than these
 fight on my merry men all,
 For now my life is at an end,
 Lord Piercy sees me fall.
 Then leaving life, earl Piercy took
 the dead man by the hand,
 And said, earl Douglas for thy sake,
 would I had lost my iand.
 Oh Christ! my very heart doth bleed,
 with sorrow for thy sake,
 For sure a more renowned knight,
 mischance did never take.
 A knight among the Scots there was,
 who saw brave Douglas die,
 And straight in wrath did vow revenge,
 upon the Lord Piercy.
 Sir Hugh Montgomery he was call'd,
 who with a spear most bright,
 Well mounted on a gallant steed,

rode fiercely through the fight,
 He pass'd the English archers all,
 without e'er dread or fear,
 And through earl Piercy's body then,
 he thrust the hateful spear,
 With such vehement force and might,
 he did his body gore,
 The spear went through the other side,
 a full cloth yard and more:
 So did both these brave nobles die,
 whose courage none could stain;
 An English archer then perceiv'd
 the noble earl was slain,
 He had a bow bent in his hand,
 made of a trusty yew,
 An arrow of a cloth yard long,
 unto his head he drew,
 Against Sir Hugh Montgomery,
 aright and shaft he set;
 The grey goose wing that was thereon
 in his heart's blood was wet:
 The fighting did last from break of day,
 till setting of the sun,
 For when they rung the evening bell,
 the battle scarce was done.
 With earl Piercy there was slain,
 Sir John of Orgeton;
 Sir Robert Ratcliff, and Sir John,
 Sir James that bold barron.
 With good Sir John, and good Sir James
 both knights of good account,
 Good Sir Ralph Rabbin there was slain,
 whose powers did surmount;

For Witherington needs must I wail,
 as one of doleful dumps;
 For when his legs were smitten off,
 he fought upon his stumps,
 And with earl Douglas there was slain,
 Sir Hugh Montgomery,
 Sir Charles Currel that from the field
 one foot would never flee.
 Sir Charles Currel of Rateliff too,
 his sister's son was he,
 Sir David Lamb tho so esteem'd,
 they saved could not be.
 Of fifteen hundred Scottish Peers,
 went home but fifty-three;
 The rest were slain in Chevy-Chace,
 under the greenwood tree.
 Next day did many widows come,
 their husbands to bewail,
 They wash'd their wounds in briny tears
 yet all would not prevail.
 Their bodies bath'd in purple gore,
 with them they bore away,
 And kiss'd them dead a thouiand times,
 when they were cold as clay.
 God save the King, and bleis his land,
 in plenty joy and peace.
 And grant henceforth that foul debates
 'twixt noblemen may cease.

FINIS.