

The famous and Memorable

HISTORY

OF THE

Battle on Chevy-Chace.

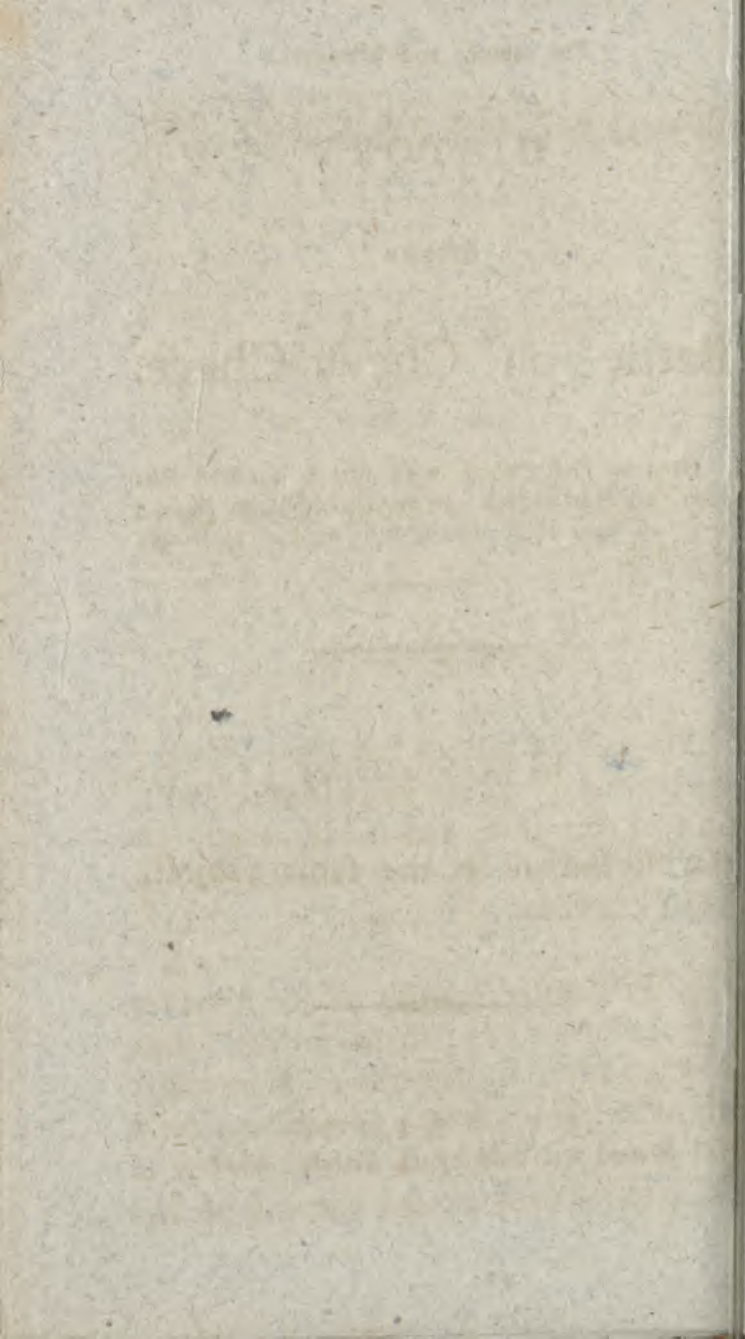
Between Earl Piercy, with fifteen hundred English, and Earl Douglas, with two thousand Scots; in which both these Earls, and most of their men were slain.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An old Ballad on the same subject.

STIRLING:

Printed and Sold by C. Randall, 1811.



The famous and Memorable

HISTORY

OF THE

Battle on Chevy-Chace.

Between Earl Piercy, with fifteen hundred English, and Earl Douglas, with two thousand Scots; in which both these Earls, and most of their men were slain.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An old Ballad on the same subject.

STIRLING:

Printed and Sold by C. Randall, 1811.

4.

following story, but let this suffice that he was grandson to a valiant knight who killed a king of Scotland at the siege of Roxburgh Castle, by running a spear into his eye. For which service his name was changed to Piercy or Pierce-eye.

The Earl his grandson, taking his progress attended by 1,000 stout archers, passing on to the marches of Scotland, he was informed that in the Forest beyond the Tweed called Chevy-Chace, belonging to Earl Douglas, there was such fine venison as was not equalled in the kingdom and provisions being scarce on the English side, the archers desired leave to go out in parties, and bring away as much as they could undisturbed; but he told them, if their courage was but sufficient to venture for it fairly, he would go with them and it should be brought off with honour as a lawful prize taken in an enemy's country. To this motion of the Earls they all gave consent, and he made a vow that for

three days he would take his pleasure in hunting on Chevy-Chace; then he sent for dogs and toils, and early on a midsummer morning they all crossed the Tweed. When they arrived at the place, the dogs were put in to rouse the harts: but the huntsmen's shouts and the sound of their horns caused the villagers to think it was the voice of war on some sudden invasion, so that several hid themselves, and many fled to alarm the country.

C H A P. II.

Of their killing many deers; and receiving a message from Douglas at supper-time, commanding them to depart.

THE harts and roes, tho' swift as the wind, could not outstrip the English arrows, the archers laying hundreds of them dead, till they had got such store of venison that they doubted how to carry it off—

yet having refreshed themselves, they found the quantity much lessened.

While the Earl was at supper at a table made upon the grass, and seated upon turfs, when he was about to give orders to his huntsmen to pursue the same sport the next morning, a messenger appeared in a scarlet livery. On which the Earl demanded from what place he came, and what his business was? To which questions he most haughtily replied:

Sir, whatever you are, my master, the noble Earl Douglas, chief ranger to the king of Scotland, to whom all these chaces belong, hearing you have presumed to enter them, by me tells you, that if you do not all suddenly depart, your lives shall pay for the injuries you have done, before to-morrow noon.

This being said, he was about to depart; but Earl Percy taking him by the sleeve, said, It is but right that you should carry beck an an-

swer to your great lord—Tell him that my name is Piercy, a name at which all Scotland has trembled; and that I purpose to take my pleasure in these woods and chaces for two days longer; and if he is valiant let him interrupt my sport at the hazard of his life.

Upon this the messenger departed to go to the Scotch Earl, and relate what was given him in charge by the Earl Piercy—At which the Scotfman stormed and fretted, and walked up and down in great fury.

He enquired the number of the English, but the messenger could not give him a certain account, he only guessed there might be about ten or twelve hundred men. Whereupon he ordered his men, and his armour, which was gilded with gold, to be got ready against morning, also all his friends and servants together with as many as made up full two thousand men.

 C H A P III.

Of Earl Piercy's second day's sport and his conduct of hearing of Douglas' approach.

THE Earl of Northumberland relying on his men's courage, who were the best archers in England, was so far from being daunted that he ordered the tables to be spread again, and great store of wine was drunk to the prosperity of their sport.

The sun had no sooner gilded the horizon, than the sport was renewed, and the woods resounded with the pleasing noise. That morning they killed the most stately hart ever seen. Then the Earl turning to one of his knights, said, The time draws near when, if Earl Douglas keeps his word, we shall have another kind of sport, therefore let us carefully keep our men together, for man to man

hear not any nation under heaven ;
 that if I thought he would not come
 he would remove to the next forest,
 or thither I perceive the deer have
 fled.

He had no sooner uttered these
 words, than Witherington came up
 to him and said, My Lord, cause the
 dogs to be called off, and muster up
 your forces, for on the top of yonder
 hill, I see Douglas coming towards
 you with upwards of twenty hund-
 red spearmen. I thank thee, replied
 the Earl, and doubt not thy courage.
 When Witherington, bowing, said,
 do not doubt to behave myself
 this day, as with the rest of your
 men, to be remembered in the most
 distant ages.

Immediately the horns sounded a
 retreat, the dogs were called off, and
 the archers mustered about their lea-
 der, who raised up their courage
 with the following oration,

My renowned countrymen, it was

your consent that we passed over the Tweed for recreation, which is soon likely to be disturbed—Earl Douglas has sent me a challenge; he is going to give us battle, or make us fly over the Tweed. Remember that you are Englishmen, and that Piercy is at your head. Be courageous; and for the honour of our king and country gain such lasting fame, as shall not die but with time.

Having said thus much, they all shouted, and immediately fell into order, some pruning their arrows and others new stringing their bows which were made of trusty steel.

C H A P. IV.

Of the meeting of the two Earls, their proposal to decide the quarrel in single combat, with Witherington's objection.

THE English archers were scarcely in readiness when Earl Dou

glas appeared on the top of the hill, mounted on a milk white steed, and his men ranged in order behind him. Earl Piercy taking a staff in his hand and a sword by his side, caused his men to move forward and to meet Earl Douglas, who being come within forty paces, demanded whose men they were that durst presume to hunt in his forest, and to kill his deer; whoever they were they must expect to be severely punished; and commanded them to yield if they expected mercy—The English Earl replied It matters not whose men we are; but what we have done we will justify, and what deer we have killed we will carry away, or die upon the spot.

This spoken with such courage made Douglas bolder likewise; said he, I know thee Piercy, thou art an Earl as well as I; therefore, if thou art as brave as fame reports thee, let thou and I decide it.

This offer pleased Piercy, who drawing his sword, bade defiance to

the challenger, and they were going to engage, when Witherington thus addressed himself to Piercy: My lord heaven forbid that I and the rest of your servants should stand idle while you are engaged; permit therefore my good lord, that we all partake in this day's glory.

Hereupon the english shouted, and the engagement became general.

C H A P. V.

Of the long continuance of the battle, and the death of both Earls.

THE english archers in the left division immediately sent a flight of arrows, which laid sixty of the Scotch dead; and the right division letting fly on the flank of their battalion, galled them most miserably. Earl Douglas seeing his men discouraged ordered them to advance, and came to a close fight whereby he in-

tended to make the english bows useless. But he was mistaken, for whenever the front opened, the archers plied the Scots with their arrows, while the others kept them in play with their swords insomuch that the ground was covered with their dead bodies.

And earl Piercy accompanied by divers knights, broke in among them with such fury, that he laid heaps of them dead before him, so that earl Douglas, who was fighting valiantly on the other side, was obliged to come and rally his broken forces. The two earls met like enraged lions, whose armour was proof against their well tempered swords. But at length Piercy began to grow faint, when Douglas thus addressed him: Noble lord, you see your blood begins to flow fast, and death you cannot escape if you contend with me any longer: I therefore would have you yield yourself my prisoner; you shall be nobly used; and I'll preserve you to serve my king.—To this Piercy

replied, As for my life take you no care, but I shall never yield to a Scot.

Whilst they paused a little, an arrow from the ranks of the English archers pierced Douglas to the heart, whose last words were these: Fight on my merry men, for I am slain & Piercy sees me fall.

Earl Piercy mourned Earl Douglas' death, as one glorious hero ever mourns another. But while he stood near the body, Sir Hugh Montgomery, a valiant Scotch knight, pierced him to the heart. Witherington perceiving this, vowed revenge, and killed Montgomery with a broad-sword. But himself did not long survive for a Scot with an arrow put an end to his life.



An excellent old Ballad describing
the woetul hunting on Chevy-Chace ;
and the bloody fight between the
Earls, Piercy and Douglas.

GOD prosper long our noble king,
Our lives and safeties all,
A woful 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 stout Earl of Northumberland,
A vow to God did make,

His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summer 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 Percy present word,
He would prevent his sport :
The English Earl not fearing this,
Did to the woods resort,

With fiftē 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 day light did appear,

And long before high noon they had,
A hundred fat bucks slain :
They having din'd the rivers went,
To route 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 through the woods,
The nimble deer to take,
And with their cries, the hills and dales,
an echo shall 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 slept a brave young gentleman,
 And to the Earl did say :

Lo ! yonder doth Earl Douglas come,
 His men of armour bright ;
 Full twenty 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 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 noble Piercy. he
Did say, we list not to declare,
Or shew whose men we be,

Yet we will spend our dearest blood,
The chiefest harts to slay.
Then Douglas swore a solema 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.

Our English archers bent their bows,
 Their hearts were good and true :
 At the first flight of arrows sent,
 Full threescore Scots they flew.

To drive the deer with hound and horn,
 Earl Douglas had been bent,
 The captains, mov'd with muckle pride,
 Their spears to shivers sent.

They clos'd full fast on every side,
 No slackness there was found,
 Whilst many a gallant gentleman
 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 sword's of temper'd steel,
 Until the blood like drop's of rain,
 They tickling down did feel ;

And thus, Earl Percy, 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 are the most courageous knight,
That ever I did see.

To the Earl Douglas Piercy said,
Thy proff'rs 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 spooke more words than these,
Fight on my merry men all,
For now my life is at an end,
Lord Piercy sees me fall.

Then leaving life Early Percy took
 The dead man by the hand,
 And said Earl Douglas, for thy sake,
 Would I had lost my land.

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 Earl Douglas die,
 And straight in wrath, did vow revenge
 Upon the Lord Percy.

Sir Hugh Montgomery he was call'd,
 Who with a spear most bright,
 Well mounted on a salant steed,
 Rode fiercely through the fight.

He pass'd our English archers all,
 Without either dread or fear,
 And through Earl Percy'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,
A right and shaft he set ;
The grey goose wing that was thereon,
In his heart's blood was wet,

This fight 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 Ratchliff, 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 Ratchliff too,
His sister's son was he,
Sir David Lamb, tho' so esteem'd,
They saved could not be,

Of twenty hundred Scottish peers,
 Went home but fifty-three ;
 The rest were slain in Chevy-Chace,
 Under the green-wood 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 thousand times,
 When they were cold as clay.

The news was brought to Edinburgh,
 Where Scotland's king did reign,
 That the Earl Douglas suddenly,
 Was with an arrow slain,

Oh ! heavy news, king James did say,
 Scotland cau witness be,
 I have not any captain more,
 Of such account as he,

Like tidings to King Henry came,
 Within a little space,
 That Percy of Northumberland,
 Was slain in Chevy-Chace ;

Then God be with him, said the king,
 Since 'twill no better be,
 I trust I have in my realm,
 Five hundred good as he ;

Yet shall no Scot nor Scotland say,
 But I will vengeance take,

And be revenged on them,
For my Lord Percy's sake,

This vow the king full well perform'd
After. at Thumbledown ;
Where fifty Scottish Bar s were slain,
With men of great renown,

And of the rest of small account,
Did many thousands die,
Thus ends the hunt of Chevy-Chace,
Made by the Lord Percy.

God save the King, and bless his land,
In plenty, joy, and peace,
And grant herceforth that foul debates
'Twixt noblemen may cease.

F I N I S.