

THE  
BATTLE

OF

*Bannockburn ;*

AN OLD HEROIC BALLAD.

*Fought on the 24th June, 1314, by King Robert  
Bruce, with an army of 30,000, against King  
Edward II. with an army of 300,000 men.*



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*The Battle of Bannockburn.*

In days of yore did Scottish bards,  
Our heroes' acts proclaim,  
And 'mong the chief was Robert Bruce,  
A king of noble fame.

After the death of Wallace wight,  
(Butcher'd at London town,)  
The English overpower'd the land,  
And claim'd the Scottish crown.

Most of the forts were in their hands,  
Stirling, Bothwell, Dunbar,  
And nothing could redeem the land  
But hot and bloody war.

Our noble King, for want of men,  
Was forc'd in woods to lie,  
Till fortune's wheel turn'd up her spoke,  
And rais'd his courage high.

The gallant chieftains of the land  
Unto their King have flown,  
And vow'd to die thro' sweet revenge,  
Than bear the English frown.

The forts and castles they retook,  
And made the English flee;  
Rutherglen's stout Peel they next reduc'd,  
And then they took Dundee.

Bold Moubray Stirling Castle kept,  
(A place of noted fame,)  
And when the Scots laid siege thereto,  
He would not yield the same.

At last a treaty he did make,  
For twelve months and a day,  
If Edward did not him relieve,  
He then should march away.

Thus peace proclaim'd on every side,  
 Both did their freedom use ;  
 For Moubray did to London ride,  
 And told the king the news.

And is the Scots so mad, he said,  
 To give so long delay ?  
 I trust that long ere that time come,  
 They shall be slaves or clay.

England and Ireland's choicest men,  
 Were armed all cap-a-pee,  
 With Wales, and likewise Normandy,  
 For such was his decree.

Full many an English merchant came  
 The captive Scots to buy,  
 With waggons full of ropes and chains,  
 To bind them, lest they'd fly.

King Robert south from Stirling fix'd  
 His standard firm in stone,  
 Which yet for a memorial stands  
 That same hill-top upon.

Between St Ninians and Chartersha',  
 You'll see it as you pass,  
 There the royal pavilion stood,  
 Before the battle was.

To him there came the men of Bute,  
 Of Carrick, and of Kyle,  
 With many gallant Highland chiefs,  
 The flower of all the isle.

The leading chiefs were Edward Bruce,  
 Earl of Murray that gallant wight,  
 Doughty Douglas and Walter Stuart,  
 Well us'd to many a fight.

His brother Edward led the right,  
 The Earl of Murray the left ;

Brave Douglas and Sir Walter Stuart  
The main body they taught ;

In front our brave king Robert rode,  
And thus address'd them all :  
If there be any cowards here,  
That are afraid to fall,

Let them retire before the fight,  
And drag their servile chains ;  
While we, for Scotland's liberty,  
Will drain our dearest veins.

See how the Southern lowns approach,  
And think that we will fly ;  
Then let us forward to the fight,  
And either do or die.

So spoke the gallant Bruce, and all  
His men, with loud huzzas,  
Cry'd, eager to be led to charge,  
We'll die for freedom's cause.

Between them and their foes they'd dug  
Into the boggy ground,  
Ditches and pits, with sharpen'd stakes,  
The Southernns to confound.

They made cramp-irons and crow-toes  
Among the grass to lie,  
While rushes, floating on the mud,  
Deceiv'd the English eye.

Upon a rising ground they stood,  
View'd how the English came,  
All shining like the rising sun ;  
Their army seem'd a flame.

The hills and dales did echo make,  
Their trumps so loud did blow,  
Whilst ev'ry blast predicted death,  
And Scotland's overthrow.

The king by chance looking about,  
 With wonder did espy  
 Eight hundred mounted cap-a-pee,  
 Who did on horseback fly ;

Below St Ninians, cross the burn,  
 They made for Stirling town.  
 He called Earl Murray with speed,  
 Who was charg'd to keep that ground.

A rose is from your chaplet fallen,  
 On yonder ground doth lie ;  
 Redeem your honour now with grace ;  
 See how the English fly.

The Earl, abash'd at this rebuke,  
 In rage he rode away,  
 With two hundred warriors, horsemen all,  
 The bold Clifford to stay.

He got between them and the town ;  
 Be-west from Livilands,  
 Where two stones, as a memorial,  
 Unto this day there stands.

Now Clifford, with an art in war,  
 Enclos'd the Scots about,  
 While Murray order'd back to back,  
 His horse were not so stout.

The king beheld them from a hill,  
 And thought brave Murray gone :  
 Douglas implored him to aid,  
 But the king said let alone.

But yet at length he gave consent,  
 But e'er he got half through,  
 The English horse in scores came off,  
 Toom saddles not a few.

Then Douglas stopt and gave a cheer,  
 When Murray, turn'd again,

Had laid bold Clifford on the field,  
 With most part of his men.

But ere they reach'd the king again,  
 The English van was come  
 To view the field on their south front,  
 Led by the fam'd Bohun.

The king, afraid they should perceive  
 His crafty trap too soon,  
 Across the field in person rode  
 On purpose to be known.

Then Bohun, on a courser bright,  
 In furious rage came on,  
 Seeing the king so poorly clad,  
 And by himself alone.

The king perceiving well his aim,  
 Soon check'd his horse aside,  
 And struck him with his battle axe,  
 His helmet could not bide;

It clove him to the very teeth,  
 The blood and brains out flew;  
 Bohun fell gasping to the ground,  
 In both the armies' view.

With prayers, and hymns, and orisons,  
 Scots camp that night did ring,  
 While English oaths, from side to side,  
 For sweet revenge did spring.

Both armies long'd for break of day,  
 Although the night was short,  
 The Scots took solemn sacrament  
 Before the bloody sport:

The first charge on the left began,  
 The English horse took flight,  
 Where hundreds tumbled in the ditch,  
 To Scots a pleasant sight.

Then Murray fiercely on them set,  
 And did no mercy show,  
 While men and horse stuck in the mire,  
 And could no further go.

Then came the flower of English troops,  
 - All mounted cap-a-pée,  
 Which joined a confused crowd,  
 And fought promiscuously.

The doughty Scots were near undone,  
 They had too much ado,  
 Till Murray had his battle done,  
 And came to their rescue.

But now the battle general was,  
 And spreading o'er the land,  
 Fresh English troops still marching on,  
 By their fierce king's command:

When on the top of Gillies-Craig,  
 Appeared in their sight,  
 A crowd, like twenty thousand men,  
 Which were no men of might;

But wives and old decrepit men,  
 Some lasses and young boys,  
 With plaids and sheets waving on poles,  
 Who made a warlike noise.

The English soon perceived this,  
 With terror and affright,  
 And judg'd their safety was not sure,  
 So every man took flight.

Their king in Stirling would have staid,  
 But Moubray told him no,  
 For there in haste you'll be enclos'd,  
 And find your overthrow.

Your safety's home to England flee,  
 And thro' your carse to ride;

Go, while the fighting still goes on,  
I'll with you send a guide.

A little be-west the Saughen ford,  
Dy'd Gloucester the bold ;  
That ground unto this very day  
Is call'd the " Fighting Fold."

The English now were fairly beat,  
And Edward fled away,  
Whom Douglas with two troops of horse,  
Chac'd forty miles that day.

So eagerly he was pursued,  
And got to him so near,  
He was on point of being ta'en,  
But got into Dunbar.

To Berwick, in a fishing boat,  
They sculled him away,  
While to be kept from wrath of Scots,  
He earnestly did pray.

Hereford to Bothwell castle fled,  
And there was soon brought out,  
The only gen'ral left alive  
Of all king Edward's rout ;

And ransom'd was for Robert's queen,  
And his sweet daughter dear,  
Who captive had in London been,  
Fed on mean English cheer.

The fatal expedition  
Which on the Scots was made,  
Where fifty thousand lives were lost,  
Of nobles seven hundred.

Of Scots that day lay on the field  
Four thousand men and more,  
Yet gain'd the fame by sword and shield,  
Which was long lost before.