

A
COLLECTION
OF OLD
BALLADS.

Corrected from the best and most
Ancient COPIES Extant,

WITH
INTRODUCTIONS
HISTORICAL, CRITICAL,
or HUMOROUS.

Illustrated with COPPER PLATES.

*Let no nice Sir despise the hapless Dame,
Because Recording BALLADS chaunt her Name.
Those Venerable Ancient Song-Enditers
Soar'd many a Pitch above our modern Writers.
With rough Majestic Force they mov'd the Heart,
And Strength and Nature make amends for Art.*

ROWE.

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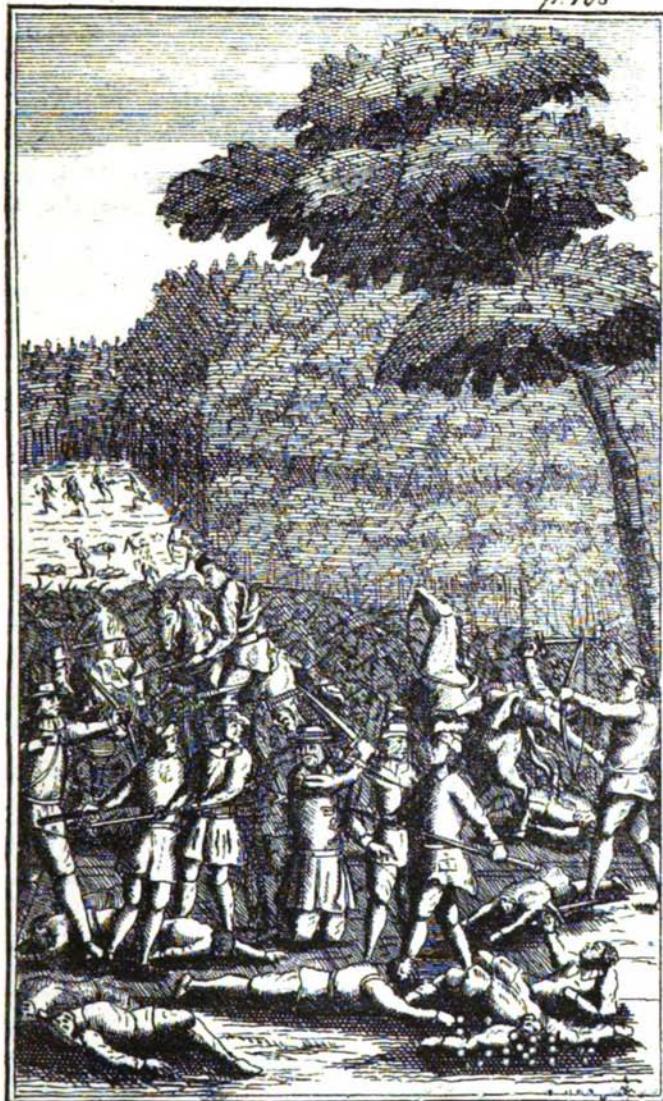
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Flying Fame



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XIV. An Unhappy Memorable Song
of the Hunting in *Chevy-Chace*, be-
tween Earl *Piercy* of *England*, and
Earl *Douglas* of *Scotland*.

To the Tune of *Flying Fame*.

*It would be a very difficult Matter to say, Whe-
ther the Partiality of our Poet towards the
English, or that of Buchanan, in the Ac-
count he gives us of this Part of History to-
wards the Scots, be greater. The former
brings but Fifteen Hundred Englishmen in-
to the Field, against Two Thousand Scots ;
yet makes his Countrymen stand their Ground
with Fifty three, whilst their Enemies fly
with Fifty five. The other asserts, That in
the Action which gave birth to this Song,
the English Army was far superior in Num-
ber ; yet were there slain of them, in that
Battel, Eighteen Hundred and forty, about
a Thousand wounded, and a Thousand and
forty taken Prisoners. On the other hand,
the same Historian says, There were a Hun-
dred*

dred Scots slain, and Two Hundred taken Prisoners; occasion'd by a few, in Pursuit, following a greater Number of their Enemies. Our Poet thought it would be an Affront to his Countrymen, to suppose that the Scots would so much as think of coming to attack the English in their own Kingdom, as in effect they did; and therefore he makes Earl Piercy enter Scotland, and hunt in the Liberties of Earl Douglas. The Fact of it is this: When King Robert the Second reign'd in Scotland, and K. Richard the Second in England, the Scots taking Advantage of our intestine Troubles, resolved to make an Incursion into the Northern Borders of this Kingdom, to carry off what Booty they could. To this End, they raised an Army, divided it into different Bodies, and gave the Command of a very considerable one to James Earl Douglas; who immediately enter'd Northumberland, and directly made up towards Newcastle. Henry Piercy, Earl of Northumberland, a popular, rich, and powerful Man, not only in that, but in the Neighbouring Counties, raised as many Men as the little Time he had would permit, and march'd against Douglas. Several Skirmishes were fought near Newcastle, which at length ended in a Duel between the Two Generals; and in which, Buchanan tells us, Piercy was

was unhors'd, and had his Spear taken from him. Be that as it may; Douglas did not long enjoy his Victory: For retiring the next Morning, Piercy pursued, and over-took him; and the Battel was fought which gave Rise to this Song, and in which Earl Douglas was slain, and Earl Piercy taken Prisoner. The Battel of Homeldon, or as our Poet calls it, of Humbledown, was not fought till under the next Reign, when K. Henry the Fourth and K. Robert the Third sway'd the Sceptres of the Two Kingdoms. The Ballad it self was written when the Dissentions of the Barons (who behaved like so many absolute Princes) made our Nation the perpetual Seat of Civil War: And the Design of the Poet was, to shew the Miseries which attend such unhappy Divisions: And this may very well excuse him for departing, as much as he has done, from History; and making that which was a National Difference, a private Quarrel. I shall not here point out the particular Beauties of this Song, with which even Mr. Addison was so charm'd, that in a very accurate Criticism upon it, (in several of his Spectators) he proves, That every Line is written with a true Spirit of Poetry. Nor is it esteem'd barely because this Great Man has recommended it; for, in all Ages, it has justly been admir'd: And in Sir Philip Sid-

Sidney's *Discourse of Poetry*, we find the following Expression. "I never heard the "Old Song of Piercy and Douglas, that "I found not my Heart more moved than "with a Trumpet; and yet it is sung by "some blind Crowder, with no rougher Voice "than rude Stile: Which being so evil ap- "parell'd in the Dust and Cobweb of that "uncivil Age; what would it work, trimm'd "in the gorgeous Eloquence of Pindar?

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's 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* prefent word,
He would prevent his Sport.
The *English* Earl not fearing this,
Did to the Woods resort;

With

With Fifteen Hundred Bow-men bold,
 All chosen Men of Might,
 Who knew full well, in Time of Need,
 To aim their Shafts aright.

The gallant Greyhounds 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
 An Hundred fat Bucks slain ;
 Then having din'd, the Drovers went
 To rouze them up again.

The Bow-men muster'd on the Hills,
 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 Eccho 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.
 With that, a brave young Gentleman
 Thus to the Earl did say ;

Lo yonder doth Earl *Douglas* come,
 His Men in Armour bright ;
 Full Twenty Hundred *Scottish* Spears,
 All marching in our Sight ;

All Men of pleasant *Tividale*,
 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, since my Hap it were,
 I durst encounter Man for Man,
 With him to break a Spear.

Earl *Douglas* on a milk-white Steed,
 Most like a Baron bold,
 Rode foremost of the Company,
 Whose Armour shone like Gold :

Shew me (he said) whose Men you be,
 That hunt so boldly here ;
 That, without my Consent, do chase
 And kill my Fallow Deer ?

The Man that first did Answer make,
 Was Noble *Piercy* he ;
 Who said, We list not to declare,
 Nor shew whose Men we be :

Yet we will spend our dearest Blood,
 Thy chiepest Harts to slay.
 Then *Douglas* swore a solemn Oath,
 And thus in Rage did say ;

E're thus I will out-braved be,
 One of us two shall dye :
 I know thee well, an Earl thou art ;
 Lord *Piercy*, so am I.

But trust me, *Piercy*, Pity it were,
 And great Offence to kill
 Any of these our harmleſs Men,
 For they have done no Ill.

Let thou and I the Battel try,
 And set our Men aside ?
 Accurſ'd be he, Lord *Piercy* ſaid,
 By whom this is deny'd.

Then ſtept a gallant 'Squire forth,
Witherington was his Name,
 Who ſaid, I would not have it told
 To *Henry* our King for Shame,

That e're my Captain fought on Foot,
 And I stood looking on.
 You be two Earls, ſaid *Witherington*,
 And I a 'Squire alone :

I'll do the best that do I may,
 While I have Pow'r to ſtand ;
 While I have Pow'r 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 the Bent ;
 A Captain mov'd with mickle Pride,
 The Spears to Shivers ſent.

They clos'd full fast on ev'ry Side,
 No Slackneſs there was found ;
 And many a gallant Gentleman
 Lay gasping on the Ground.

O Christ !

O Christ ! it was a Grief to see,
 And likewise for to hear,
 The Cries of Men lying in their Gore,
 And scatter'd here and there.

At last these Two stout Earls did meet,
 Like Captains of great Might ;
 Like Lions mov'd, they laid on Load,
 And made a cruel Fight :

They fought until they both did sweat,
 With Swords of temper'd Steel,
 Until the Blood, like Drops of Rain,
 They trickling down did feel.

Yield thee, *Lord 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 *Douglas*, quoth *Earl Piercy* then,
 Thy Proffer 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 more Words than these,
 Fight on, my merry Men all ;
 For why, my Life is at an End ;
Lord Piercy fees my Fall.

Then

Then leaving Life, Earl *Piercy* took
 The dead Man by the Hand ;
 And said, Earl *Douglas*, for thy Life
 Would I had lost my Land.

O Christ ! my very Heart doth bleed,
 With Sorrow for thy Sake ;
 For sure, a more renowned Knight
 Mischance did never take.

A Knight amongst the *Scots* there was,
 Which saw Earl *Douglas* dye,
 Who straight in Wrath did vow Revenge
 Upon the Earl *Piercy* :

Sir *Hugh Montgom'ry* was he call'd,
 Who, with a Spear most bright,
 Well-mounted on a gallant Steed,
 Ran fiercely thro' the Fight ;

And pass'd the *English* Archers all,
 Without all Dread or Fear ;
 And thro' Earl *Piercy*'s Body then
 He thrust his hateful Spear :

With such a veh'ment Force and Might
 He did his Body gore,
 The Spear went thro' the other Side
 A large Cloth-yard, and more.

So thus did both these Nobles dye,
 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 Tree ;
 An Arrow of a Cloth-yard long
 Up to the Head drew he :

Against

Against Sir *Hugh Montgomery*,
 So right his 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 Ev'ning-Bell,
 The Battel scarce was done.

With the Earl *Piercy*, there was slain
 Sir *John of Ogerton*,
 Sir *Robert Ratcliff*, and Sir *John*,
 Sir *James* that bold Baron :

And with Sir *George* and good Sir *James*,
 Both Knights of good Account,
 Good Sir *Ralph Rabby* there was slain,
 Whose Prowefs did surmount.

For *With'rington* needs must I wail,
 As one in 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 fly.

Sir *Charles Murrel*, of *Ratcliff*, too,
 His Sister's Son was he ;
 Sir *David Lamb*, so well esteem'd,
 They saved could not be.

And the Lord *Maxwell* in like wise
 Did with Earl *Douglas* dye :
 Of Twenty Hundred *Scottish* Spears,
 Scarce Fifty five did fly.

Of

Of Fifteen Hundred *Engl^{sh}* Men,
 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 brinish Tears,
 But all would not prevail.

Their Bodies, bath'd in purple Blood,
 They bore with them away ;
 They kis'd them dead a Thousand times,
 When they were clad in Clay.

This News was brought to *Edinburgh*,
 Where *Scotland's* King did reign,
 That brave Earl *Douglas* suddenly
 Was with an Arrow slain :

O heavy News, King *James* did say ;
Scotland can Witnes be,
 I have not any Captain more
 Of such Account as he.

Like Tidings to King *Henry* came,
 Within as short a Space,
 That *Piercy* of *Northumberland*
 Was slain in *Chevy-Chace* :

Now God be with him, said our King,
 Sith 'twill no better be ;
 I trust I have, within my Realm,
 Five Hundred as good as he :

Yet shall not *Scot* nor *Scotland* say,
 But I will Vengeance take,
 And be revenged on them all,
 For brave Earl *Piercy*'s Sake.

This

This Vow full well the King perform'd
 After, on *Humbledown* ;
 In one Day, Fifty Knights were slain,
 With Lords of great Renown :

And of the rest, of small Account,
 Did many Thousands dye :
 Thus ended the Hunting of *Chevy-Chace*,
 Made by the Earl *Piercy*.

God save the King, and bless the Land
 In Plenty, Joy, and Peace ;
 And grant henceforth, that foul Debate
 'Twixt Noblemen may cease.

