

The Salamanca Corpus: A Memorable Song on the
Unhappy Hunting in Chevy-Chase (1650)

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Anonymous

*A Memorable Song on the Unhappy Hunting in
Chevy-Chase (1650)*

Go prosper long our Noble King,
our lives and safeties all,
A wofull Hunting once there didi
in Chevy Chase befall:
Lo drive the Deere with hound and horne
Earle Piercy tooke his way,
The Child may rue that is unborne,
the Hunting of that day.

The stour Earle of Northumberland,
a vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish Woods,
three Summers days to take,
The chiefest Harts in Chevy Chase,
to kill and beare away:

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These tydings to Earle Douglas came,
in Scotland where he lay,

Who sent Earle Piercy present word,
he would prevent his sport,
The English Earle not fearing this,
did to the Woods resort,
With fiftene hundred Bow-men bold
all chosen men of might,
Who anew full well in time of warre,
to aime there shafts aright.

The gallant Grayhounds swiftly ran,
to chase the Fallow Deere,
On Munday they began to hunt,
when day-light did appeare,
And long before high moone they had,
an hundred fat Bucks slaine,
Then having din'd the Drovers went,
to rowse them up againe.

The Bow-men mustred on the hills,
well able to endure,
Their back-sides all with speciall care
that day was guarded sure.
The Hounds ran wifly through ye woods
the nimble Deere to take,
That with their cryes the Hills and Dales
an Eccho shrill did maky.

Lord Piercy to the Quarry went,
to view the tender Deere,
Quoth he, Earle Dowglas promised,
this day to meet me here,
But if I thought he would not come,
no longer would I stay:
With that a brave young Gentleman,
thus to the Earle did say,

Loe, yonder doth Earle Dowglas come,
his men in Armour bright,
Full fiftene gundred Scottish Speares,
all marching in our sight,
All pleasant men of Tevidale,

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fast by the River Tweed:
Then cease your sport Earle Piercy said,
and take your Bowers with speed.

And now with me my Countreymen
your courage foorth advance;
For never was there Champion yet,
in Scotland or in France,
That ever did on horse-back come,
and if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
with him to breake a Speare,

Earle Dowglas on a milke white Steed,
most like a Baron held,
Rode foremost of the companie,
whose Armour shone like Gold:
Shew me said he whose men you be,
that hunt so boldly here,
That without my consent doe chase,
and kill my Fallow Deere,

The man that first did answer make,
was Noble Piercy he,
Who said we list not to seclare,
nor tell whose men we be,
Yet we wll spend our dearest blood,
thy chiefest Harts to slay:
Then Dowglas swore a solemne Oath,
and thus inrage did say;

Ere [?] I will out braved be,
one of us two shall die,
I know thee well an Earle thou art,
Lord Piercy so am I:
But trust me, Piercy, pittty twere,
and great offernce to kill:
Any of these our harmlesse men,
for they have done no ill:

Let thou and I the Battell try,
and set our men aside;
Accurst be he Lord Piercy said,
by whome it is deny'd.

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Then stept a gallant Squire forth,
Witherington was his name,
Who said, he would not have it told,
to Henry our king for shame.

That ere my Captaine fought one foot,
and I stood looking on;
You two be Earles, quoth Witherington,
and I a Squire alone,
Ile doe the best that doe I may,
while I have power to stand,
While I have power to wield my sword,
Ile fight with heart and hand.

Our English Archers bent there Bowes
there hearts were good and true,
At the first fight of Arrows sent,
full fourscore Scotcs they slew.
to drive the Deere with hound and horne
Dowglas bad on the bent
A Captaine mov'd with mickle pride
the Speares to shivers went.

The clos'd full fast on every side,
no slacknesse there was found,
And many a gallant Gentleman,
lay gasping on the ground:
O Christ it were a grieffe to see,
and likewise for to heare,
The cryes of men lying in these gore,
and scattered here and there.
At last the two stout Earles did meet,
like Captaines of great might,
Like Lyons mov'd they laid on load
and made a cruell fight:
They fought untill they both did sweat,
with swords of tempered steele,
Untill the blood like drops of raine,
they [?] downe did feele.

Yield thee Lord Piercy, Dowglas said,
in faith I will thee bring,
Where thou shalt high advanced be:
by James our Scottish king;

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Thy ransome will I freely give
and this report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious Knight,
as ever I did see.

No Dowglas, quoth earle Piercy then,
thy proffers I doe scorne,
I will not yield to any Scot,
that aver yet was borne.
With that there came an arrow keene,
out of an English Bow,
And struck Earle Dowglas to the heart,
a deepe and deadly blow:

Who never spake more words than these
Fight on my merry men all.
For why my life is at an end,
Earle Percy sees me fall:
Then leading life, Earle Piercy tooke,
the dead man by the hand,
And said, Earle Dowglas for thy life,
would I had lost my Land.

O christ, my very heart doth bleed,
with sorrow [?] sake
[...]

The Second part to the same tune

Sir hugh Montgomery was he cal'd
who with a Speare full bright,
Well mounted in a gallant Steed,
ran fiercely through the fight:
And past the English Archers all,
without Earle Piercies body then,
he thrust his hatefull Speare.

With such a vehement force and might,
his body he did gore,
The staff ran through the other side
a large Cloth yard or more:
Thus did both these stout Nobles dye,
whose courage none could staine:
An English Archer then perceiv'd

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the noble Earle was slaine.

He had a good Bow in his hand,
made of a trusty Tree:
An Arrow of a Cloth-yard long,
unto the head drew he,
Against Sir Hugh Montgomery,
so right his shaft he set,
The Gray-goose wing that was thereon
in his heart blood was wet.

The fight did last from breake of day,
still setting of the Sun.
For when they wrung the evening Bell
the Battle scarce was done:
With stout Earle Piercy there was slaine
Sir John Ogerton,
Sir Robert Ratcliffe and sir Iohn,
Sir Iames that hold Baron.

And with Sir George and good Sir Iames,
both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Robby there was slaine
whose prowess did surmount:
For Witherington needs must I waile,
as one in dolefull dumps,
for when his Leggs were smitten off
he fought upon his stumps.

And with Earle Dowglas there was slaine
Sir Hugh Montgomery,
Sir Charles Morrell that from the field,
one for foot would never fly,
Sir Charles Morrell of Ratcliffe too;
his Sisters Sonne was he,
Sir David Lamb so well esteem'd,
but sav'd he could not be.

And the Lord Markewel in like case,
did with Earle Dowglas die,
Of twenty hundred Scottish Speares,
scarce fifty five did flie:
Of fiftene hundred English-men,
went home but fifty three,

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The rest were slaine in Chevy-Chase,
under the Greene-wood Tree.

Next day did many Widdowes come,
there husbands to bewaile
They washt their wounds in brinish teares
but all would not prevaile,
There bodies bath'd in purple blood,
they bore with them away,
They kist them dead a thousand times,
when they were clad in clay.

This newes was brought to Edenburg,
where Scotlands kind did reigne,
That brave Earle Dowglas suddenly,
was with an Arrow slaine:
O heavy news king Iames did say,
Scotland can witness be,
I have not any Captaine more,
of such account as he.

Like tydings to king Hencry came,
within a short a space,
That Piercy of Northumberland,
was slaine in Chevy-Chase,
Now God be with him said our King,
sith twill no better be,
I trust I have within my realme,
five hundred as good as he,

Yet shall not Scots nor Scotland say,
but I will vengeance take,
And be revenged one them all,
for brave Earle Piercies sake,
This vow the King did well performe
after at humble Downe
In one day fifty Knights were slaine
with Lords of high renowne.

And of the rest of small account,
did many hundred die,
Thus ended the hunting in Chevy Chase
made by the Lord Piercy,
God save the king and blesse the Land,



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with plentie Joy and peace,
And grant hencefoorth that fowle debate
'twixt Noble-men may cease.

