

**The Ballad of Chevy Chase – the original version, 14<sup>th</sup> Century**

The Persè owt off Northombarlonde,  
and avowe to God mayd he  
That he wold hunte in the mowntayns  
off Chyviat within days thre,  
In the magger of doughètè Dogles,  
and all that euer with him be.

The fattiste hartes in all Cheviat  
he sayd he wold kyll, and cary them away:  
'Be my feth,' sayd the dougheti Doglas agayn,  
'I wyll let that hontyng yf that I may.'

Then the Persè owt off Banborowe cam,  
with him a myghtee meany,  
With fifteen hondrith archares bold;  
the wear chosen owt of shyars thre.

This begane on a Monday at morn,  
in Cheviat the hillys so he;  
The chylde may rue that ys vn-born,  
it wos the mor pittè.

The dryvars thorowe the woodees went,  
for to reas the dear;  
Bomen byckarte vppone the bent  
with ther browd aros cleare.

Then the wyld thorowe the woodees went,  
on euary sydè shear;  
Greahondes thorowe the grevis glent,  
for to kyll thear dear.

This begane in Chyviat the hyls abone,  
yerly on a Monnyn-day;  
Be that it drewe to the oware off none,  
a hondrith fat hartees ded ther lay.

The blewe a mort vppone the bent,  
the semblyde on sydis shear;  
To the quyrry then the Persè went,  
to se the bryttlynge off the deare.

He sayd, It was the Duglas promys  
this day to met me hear;  
But I wyste he wolde faylle, verament;  
a great oth the Persè swear.

At the laste a squyar off Northomberlonde  
lokyde at his hand full ny;  
He was war a the doughetie Doglas commynge,  
with him a myghttè meany.

Both with spear, bylle, and brande,  
yt was a myghtti sight to se;  
Hardyar men, both off hart nor hande,  
wear not in Cristiantè.

The wear twenti hondrith spear-men good,

without any feale;  
The wear borne along be the watter a Twyde,  
yth bowndees of Tividale.

'Leave of the brytlyng of the dear,' he sayd,  
and to your bowys lock ye tayk good hede;  
For neuer sithe ye wear on your mothars borne  
had ye neuer so mickle nede.'

The dougheti Dogglas on a stede,  
he rode alle his men beforne;  
His armor glytteryde as dyd a glede;  
a boldar barne was never born.

'Tell me whos men ye ar,' he says,  
'or whos men that ye be:  
Who gave youe leave to hunte in this Chyviat chays,  
in the spyt of myn and of me.'

The first mane that ever him an answer mayd,  
yt was the good lord Persè:  
'We wyll not tell the whoys men we ar,' he says,  
'Nor whos men that we be;  
But we wyll hounte hear in this chays,  
in the spyt of thyne and of the.

'The fattiste hartees in all Chyviat  
we haue kyld, and cast to carry them away:'  
'Be my troth,' sayd the doughetè Dogglas agayn,  
'therfor the ton of vs shal de this day.'

Then sayd the doughtè Doglas  
unto the lord Perse:  
'To kyll alle thes giltles men,  
alas, it wear great pittè!

But, Persè, thowe art a lord of lande,  
I am a yerle callyd within my contre;  
Let all our men vppone a parti stande,  
and do the battell off the and of me.'

'Nowe Cristes cors on his crowne,' sayd the lorde Persè,  
'who-so-euer ther-to says nay!  
Be my troth, doughtte Doglas,' he says,  
'Thow shalt neuer se that day.'

'Nethar in Ynglonde, Skottlonde, nar France,  
nor for no man of a woman born,  
But, and fortune be my chance,  
I dar met him, on man for on.'

Then bespayke a squyar off Northombarlonde,  
Richard Wytharyngton was him nam;  
'It shal neuer be told in Sothe-Ynglonde,' he says,  
'To Kyng Herry the Fourth for sham.'

'I wat youe byn great lordees twaw,  
I am a poor squyar of lande;  
I wylle neuer se my captayne fyght on a fylde,

and stande my selffe and loocke on,  
But whylle I may my weppone welde,  
I wylle not "fayle" both hart and hande.'

That day, that day, that dredfull day!  
the first fit here I fynde;  
And youe wyll here any mor a the hountynge a the Chyviat,  
yet ys ther mor behynde.

### **The 17<sup>th</sup> Century version of the Ballad of Chevy Chase**

God prosper long our noble king,  
Our lives and safeties all!  
A woeful hunting once there did  
In Chevy Chase befall.

To drive the deer with hound and horn  
Earl Percy 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 Chase  
To kill and bear away.  
These 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 that,  
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 gallant greyhounds swiftly ran  
To chase the fallow deer:  
On Monday they began to hunt  
Ere daylight did appear;

And long before high noon they had  
An hundred fat bucks slain:  
Then having dined, the drivers went  
To rouse the deer again.

Lord Percy to the quarry went  
To view the slaughter'd deer;  
Quoth he, Earl Douglas 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 Earl did say:

Lo, yonder doth Earl Douglas come  
His men in armour bright -  
Full twenty hundred Scottish spears  
All marching in our sight.

Show me, said he, whose men you be  
That hunt so boldly here  
That, without my consent do chase  
And kill my fallow deer?

The first man that did answer make  
Was noble Percy, he  
Who said, We list not to declare  
Nor show whose men we be.

Yet we will spend our dearest blood  
Thy chiefest harts to slay.  
Then Douglas swore a solemn oath  
And thus in rage did say:

Ere thus I will out-braved be  
One of us two shall die!  
I know thee well, An earl thou art  
Lord Percy! so am I.

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

At last these two stout Earls did meet  
Like captains of great might;  
Like lions wud they laid on load  
And made a cruel fight.

They fought, until they both did sweat,  
With swords of tempered steel,  
Until the blood, like drops of rain,  
They trickling down did feel.

O yield thee, 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 this report of thee,  
Thou art the most courageous knight  
That ever I did see.

No, Douglas; quoth Earl Percy 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 spake more words than these  
Fight on, my merry men all!  
For why? my life is at an end,  
Lord Percy sees my fall.

Then leaving life, Earl Percy 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 redoubted knight  
Mischance could never take.

A knight among the Scots there was  
Who saw Earl Douglas die;  
Who straight in wrath did vow revenge  
Upon the Lord Percy:

Sir Hugh Montgomery was he called,  
Who, with a spear full bright,  
Well mounted on a gallant steed,  
Ran fiercely through the fight;

And past the English archers all,  
Without all dread or fear,  
And through Earl Percy's body then  
He thrust his hateful spear.

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.

And the Lord Maxwell in like case  
Did with Earl Douglas die;  
Of twenty hundred Scottish spears  
Scarce fifty-five did fly;

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen

Went home but fifty-three;  
The rest were slain in Chevy Chase  
Under the greenwood tree.

Next day did many widows come  
Their husbands to bewail;  
They washed their wounds in brinish tears,  
But all would not prevail.

Their bodies bathed in purple gore

They bore with them away;  
They kissed their dead a thousand times  
When they were clad in clay.

God save our king, and bless this land  
With plenty, joy and peace,  
And grant henceforth that foule debate  
'Twixt noblemen may cease