

## **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!

*source*

<http://www.exclassics.com/>

### **Lady Augusta Gregory**

'In talking to the people I often heard the name of Biddy Early, and I began to gather many stories of her, some calling her a healer and some a witch. Some said she had died a long time ago, and some that she was still living. I was sure after a while that she was dead, but was told that her house was still standing, and was on the other side of Slieve Echtge, between Feakle and Tulla.

So one day I set out and drove Shamrock, my pony, to a shooting lodge built by my grandfather in a fold of the mountains, and where I had sometimes, when a young girl, stayed with my brothers when they were shooting the wild deer that came and sheltered in the woods.

It had like other places on our estate a border name brought over from Northumberland, but though we called it Chevy Chase the people spoke of its woods and outskirts as Daire-caol, the Narrow Oak Wood, and Daroda, the Two Roads, and Druim-da-Rod, their Ridge. I stayed till night in the low thatched house, setting out next day for Feakle "eight strong miles over the mountain.

It was a wild road, and the pony had to splash his way through two unbridged rivers, swollen with the summer rains. The red mud of the road, the purple heather and foxglove, the brown bogs were a contrast to the grey rocks and walls of Burren and Aidline, and there were many low hills, brown when near, misty blue in the distance; then the Golden Mountain, Slieve nan-Or, "where the last great battle will be fought before the end of the world." Then I was out of Connacht into Clare, the brown turning to green pasture as I drove by Rafferty's Lough Greine.

*Source: Lady Augusta Gregory - Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland.*

**Links**

Cheve Chase - Lesley Nelson-Burns

<http://www.contemplator.com/child/chevych.html>

Suggest a link?

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