

Traditional & Folk Songs with lyrics & midi music

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Battle of Harlaw

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As I cam in by Denniedeer
An' doon by Netherha'
There was fifty thousand Hielandmen
A-marchin' to Harlaw."
Wi' my dirrum doo dirrum doo daddie dirrum dey

As I cam on and further on
And doon by Balquhain
It's ther I met Sir James the Rose
And wi' him, Sir John the Graham

"Oh came ye frae the Highlands man,
Oh cam ye a' the wey?
Saw ye McDonald and his men
As they cam in frae Skye?

"Yes we cam frae the Highlands man
An we cam a' the wey
And we saw McDonald and his men
As they cam in frae Skye."

"Oh was ye near McDonald's men?
Did ye their numbers see?
Come tellm me Johnnie Hielandman
What micht their numbers be?"

"Yes we was near and near eneuch
And we their numbers saw
There was fifty thousand hielandmen
A-marchin' to Harlaw."

"Gin that be true," says Sir James the Rose,
"Will come nae muckle speed.
We'll cry upon our merry men
An' turn oor horses head."

"oh na, Oh na," says John the Graham,
"That thing can never be
The gallant Grahams were never best
We'll try what we can die."

As I cam on and further on
And doon and by Harlaw
They fell fu close on ilka side
Sic strokes ye never saw.

They fell fu close on ilka side
Sic stroked ye never saw
For ilka sword gaed clash for clash
At the battle o' Harlaw.

The Hielandmen wi' their lang swords
They laid on us fu' sair
And they drove back oor merry men
Three acres breadth and mair

Braves Forbes to his brother said,
"Oh brither don't ye see.
They've beat us back on ilka side
And we'll be forced to flee."

Oh na, Oh na," my brother said,
"That thing can never be.
You'll tak your sword into your hand
And ye'll come on wi' me."

Then back to back the brithers twa
Gaed in among the throng
And they laid doon the Hielandmen
Wi' swords baith sharp and lang.

The first ae stroke that Forbes struck,
He gart McDonald reel
And the neist ae stroke that Forbes struck,
The brave McDonald fell.

And siccin a Pitlariche
I'm sure ye never saw
As was among the Hielandmen
When they saw McDonald fa'

And when they saw that he was dead
They turned and ran awa'
And they turned him in Leggert's den
A mile abeen Harlaw

Some rade, some ran and some did gang
They were a' sma' record
But Forbes and his merry men
They slew them a' the road

On Monoday at mornin'
The battle it began
On Saturday at gloamin'
Ye'd kentna wha had won

Gin onybody spier at you
For them that cam awa'
Ye can tell them plain and plain enough
They're sleeping at Harlaw.

Child #163
from Bonnie Bunch of Roses
ballad mentioned in 1549
Battle occurred July 24, 1411 near Aberdeen
SOF