

The King ... then put his Poictevin freebooters in charge of the castles of Wales, to repel the attacks of his enemies and gave the command of his army to the nobles John of Monmouth, and Ralph de Tone whilst he himself ... returned to Gloucester. In the same year the Marshall on one of his foraging incursions came to the town of Monmouth, which was hostile to him, where he ordered his army to proceed on their expedition, whilst he with a hundred of his fellow Knights turned aside toward the castle to besiege it in a few days; but as he was riding round the walls of the town he was seen by Baldwin de Guisnes, to whom the King had entrusted the charge of that castle together with several Poictevins, and understanding that the marshal was there with only a few followers for purpose of examining the castle, he sallied out with a thousand brave and well equipped soldiers and pursued him at full speed, designing to make him and his followers prisoners and bring them into the town. The Earl Marshal's followers advised him to consult their safety by flight to which he replied that he had never yet turned his back on an enemy in battle and declared that he would not do so now and exhorted them to defend themselves bravely and not to die unavenged. The troops from the castle then rushed fiercely upon them and attacked them with their lances and swords, a severe though unequal conflict then ensued, yet although there were only a hundred of the marshal's party to oppose a thousand of their adversaries, they fought for the greater part of the day. But Baldwin de Guisnes with 12 of his stoutest and best armed soldiers made an attack on the marshal in person and endeavoured to take him prisoner and carry him off to the castle; he, however kept them at a distance brandishing his sword right and left, and struck down whoever came in reach, either killing them or stunning them by the force of his blows, and although engaged single handed against 12 enemies defended himself for a length of time. His enemies at length, not daring to approach him, killed the horse he rode with their lances; but the marshal who was well practised in the French way of fighting, seized one of the Knights who was attacking him by his feet, and dragged him to the ground, and then quickly mounting his adversary's horse, he renewed the battle. The Knight Baldwin was ashamed that the marshal defeded himself single-handed against so many of his enemies for such a time, and made a desperate attack on him, and seizing his helmet, tore it from his head with such violence that

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The Battle of Monmouth.
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blood gushed forth from his mouth and nostrils: he then seized the marshal's horse by the bridle and endeavoured to drag it with its rider towards the castle, whilst others assisted by impelling the marshal on from behind. The latter, however, sweeping his sword behind him, struck two of his enemies to the earth stunned, but could not then release himself from their grasp. At this juncture a crossbowman amongst the marshal's company, seeing his lord in danger, discharged an arrow from his bow, which striking Baldwin, who was dragging the marshal away in the breast, entered his body, notwithstanding his armour, and he fell to the earth believing himself mortally wounded; his companions seeing this, left the marshal and went to raise Baldwin from the ground for they thought that he was dead.

Whilst these events were passing, news had been carried ~~that~~ to the marshal's army of the danger that he was in, on which they marched with all haste to his assistance and soon put his enemies to flight. A bridge in the neighbourhood of the castle, over which the fugitives hoped to make their escape, was found to be broken, on which great numbers of them threw themselves into the river and were drowned with their horses and arms; others having no means of escape, were slain by their pursuers, and some were made prisoners; and few of those who had sallied out from the castle returned safe. On the side of the marshal Thomas Siward, a brave knight and two of his companions were taken prisoner and carried off into the castle. Of the troops of the garrison 15 knights and great numbers of soldiers were taken and carried off by the marshal, together with their horses, arms and other booty. Numbers of the slain remained lying on the field of battle, amongst whom were seen Welsh, Poictevins and other foreigners, and Baldwin de Guisnes was carried to the castle severely wounded. This battle took place near the above castle on St. Catherine's day. After this battle the marshal with Gilbert Bassett Richard Siward and his other proscribed confederates, laid ambuscades for the Poictevins who held charge of the King's castles, so that whenever any of them went out foraging, they were attacked and no quarter was given them; the consequence of which was, that the whole atmosphere in that part of the country was tainted by the numbers of dead foreigners who lay about in the roads and other places.

(Roger of Wendover's Chronicle Vol. II.
pp. 574-576).

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