

Robin
Hood
and his
Merry
Men




Maude
Radford
Warren

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Robin Hood

And His Merry Men

By

Maude Radford Warren

*Author of
"King Arthur and his Knights"*

Illustrated by

Milo Winter



Rand McNally & Company

Chicago

New York

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By MAUDE RADFORD WARREN



The Rand-McNally Press

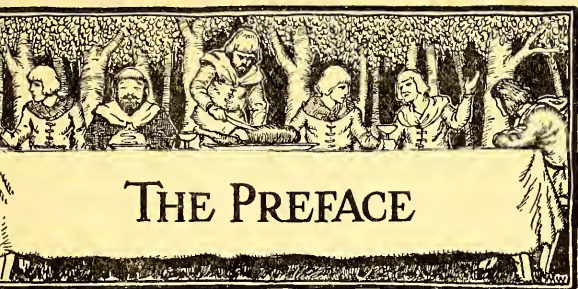
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THE PREFACE

THE following stories of the adventures of Robin Hood and his merry men are intended for pupils in the fifth and sixth grades. The writer has consulted the available sources but is under particular obligations to Childs's great collection of ballads. There is no definite tale or ballad reproduced in the first story, but it is built on the tradition that Robin Hood was once the Earl of Huntington, and was, for no good reason, deprived of his lands and title. The other stories follow well authenticated sources, but here and there strict proportion and accuracy have been neglected in order that the great outlaw and his men may, however romantically disguised, appear as thieves and ruffians. That is, the emphasis is put on deeds of rescue or other such knightly prowess, while the robbery which Robin Hood did is minimized, and where it appears it is shown that it occurred in the way of formal justice against a high-placed thief in order to restore lawful property to an unfortunate knight who had been robbed. But such deviation from the original sources does not destroy the general effect of the robust

doings of the outlaw and his followers. An effort has been made to discriminate among the main characters in order that the readers may receive a well-defined impression of each, and may mark the relation between the action and the characters.

It has been the writer's object to preserve, so far as might be, the spirit of the greenwood — of the ancient Sherwood Forest. In this regard, the old-time songs with their quaint music, and the Robin Hood ballads in the appendix, will assist the text. The virtues of courage, forbearance, gentleness, courtesy, justice, and championship which go so well with an outdoor background are illustrated in the deeds of Robin Hood and his followers. In order that the resemblances as well as the differences between life in the forest and in the court may be brought out, an account has been given, through the description of life in the castle of Maid Marian's father, of some of the customs and conventions of chivalry; it will be seen that each type of life gives scope for practice of both the bold and the gentle virtues. Contact with the old chivalric ideals is of value to children living in a democratic age which is still feeling after its own conventions, hampered, it may be, by uncertainties of definition. Certainly, the account of the days in the good greenwood can scarcely fail to appeal to the perennial primitive instinct of youth.

MAUDE RADFORD WARREN

To my niece and nephews,
MAUDE, PAUL, and JACK STANLEY

Robin Hood

*It was
spring-
time in
England*





CHAPTER I

ROBERT, Earl of Huntington, stood on the drawbridge of his square gray castle. It was springtime in England, toward the end of the twelfth century. He looked past the broad green lawns, on which gold and purple crocuses lifted their gay heads, to the meadows where the yellow cowslips grew. Beyond them lay the fields already planted and, in the distance, great Sherwood Forest.

The earl's face was grave and perplexed. He was about to give a dinner to the few retainers who were still faithful to him. His money was almost gone, but they loved him for himself and not for what he could give them. Now he was spending the last few shillings he had for their entertainment. When the dinner was over, he intended to tell them

The Banishment of Robin Hood that he could no longer provide for them, and that they must seek a richer master.

His look grew tender as he gazed down the broad road leading to the castle and saw his friends riding and walking toward him. First rode two or three knights on white horses, their bridles hung with silver bells which made pretty music. If they had been coming on a warlike errand they would have worn coats of mail and leg-pieces, but as they were coming to dine they wore doublets of silk, long silk stockings, and shoes of embroidered leather. Their wide hats were decorated with large plumes.

Behind them walked two score men at arms. Each wore a wide hat, a belted cloth tunic, close-fitting breeches, long woolen stockings, and boots of leather reaching halfway to the knee. For arms, they carried triangular shields two feet in length, swords, and spears with long pennants. After them came two score archers, dressed in much the same fashion. Some of them wore mantles, fastened at the shoulder with brooches. For weapons, each had a short sword, a long bow, and a sheaf of arrows. Last of all walked a few men poorly clad in woolen tunics, loose

woolen breeches, and rough woolen stockings, and bearing no arms except clubs. These were the cottagers, who tilled as well as they could the fields of their dear lord, Robert, Earl of Huntington.

*The
Banish-
ment of
Robin
Hood*

All looked at him with great love as he stood on the drawbridge. His hair was like the gold of the crocuses that grew on his lawns; his eyes were as blue as the water in the moat which his drawbridge spanned. He was so tall that he made an ordinary door seem small, and his body looked as if he had the strength of two men. He wore long silk hose of his favorite color, green, and a doublet of dark brocaded silk slashed with gold.

When the guests reached him the earl bowed courteously and led the way across the drawbridge into the court of his castle. This was a paved square around which the castle was built. As soon as he had entered, servants came running to take the horses of the knights and the weapons of the other men.

When all were inside, the earl was about to order his gatewarder to raise the drawbridge. Whenever this was done, the castle was like a little island, protected by the moat,

The Banishment of Robin Hood which could be crossed only by swimming. "Nay," the earl said to the warder; "let it stay down in case more guests arrive. If an enemy come, he dare not hurt me in the presence of these, my friends."

Then he conducted his guests through a wide entrance at one side of the court into his main hall, which was the chief room of the castle. It had once been hung with rich tapestries, but these had been sold for money to buy food. The floors were strewn with rushes. The table consisted of boards laid across trestles and covered with white linen. A few gold drinking bowls and jugs were set here and there, but most of the dishes were pewter.

The earl took the head of the table. Next him came the knights. On the table, just below the place where the knight farthest from the earl sat, was placed a golden salt-cellar. This showed the distinction in rank between the knights and those who had no titles. The men at arms came next below the knights, and then the archers, while the cottagers sat humbly at the foot of the table.

When all were seated a door at the back of the hall opened, and a sturdy, rosy-faced

friar entered, followed by a tall veiled lady. *The Banishment of Robin Hood*
The earl rose.

“Welcome, Friar Tuck,” he said. “Whom have we here?”

“Faith! a lady, unbidden, but none has a better right to come,” said Friar Tuck in a hearty voice. “’Tis your betrothed, Maid Marian.”

At that the earl’s face grew graver, but he stepped forward, and took her hand.

“Welcome, dear lady,” he said. “Sit at my right, and share this poor meal with us.”

The dinner was far from poor, but it was not a magnificent feast such as Robert, Earl of Huntington, had been wont to give when he was rich. There were no boars’ heads, no peacocks and swans dressed in their own beautiful feathers, no tiny larks served with delicate sauces. After Friar Tuck had asked a blessing, servants came in with venison pies, stewed geese, tiny roasted pigs, clouted cream, and plum tarts. The men in attendance hurried to and fro with such good will that no one was kept waiting more than a moment for food or drink.

The earl ate very little. He bent his head often to talk to dark, beautiful Maid Marian,

The Banishment of Robin Hood or to the knights. But always his face was grave. When the dinner was over he rose, and said:

“My friends, you all know that my estate has dwindled, and that I am poor. But you do not know that I am in debt. I am going to offer my castle and lands to the king, that he may have them sold. They will pay all I owe. I have enemies at the king’s court, but they will surely see by this deed that I am honest.”

They were all listening attentively, and Maid Marian was leaning forward eagerly.

“As you know,” Robert went on in a low voice, “I was soon to have married the lovely Lady Marian, daughter of Lord Fitzwalter. This marriage must be deferred until I can find some way of again getting money. Maid Marian is so dear to me that I cannot let her suffer want.”

Marian grew very pale, and sank back in her seat.

“Oh,” she whispered to Friar Tuck, “what does it matter to me that he must give up his castle? I could be happy with him if we had no shelter for our heads but the green trees of the forest.”

The earl looked at her with great love; then he continued:

“What I shall do, I do not know as yet.”

At that moment he was interrupted by the loud clatter of a horse's hoofs, and the confused murmur of voices outside. Then the door was dashed open, and the king's herald appeared. He was mounted on a white horse, which he boldly rode across the threshold into the great hall. His coat and hose were of scarlet, and he carried in his hand a long brass trumpet.

He blew a loud blast on this which made the room ring. Then he said: “Robert, Earl of Huntington, come into the king's court. Robert, Earl of Huntington, come into the king's court. Robert, Earl of Huntington, come into the king's court.”

The earl started to his feet, and all his men rose.

“Know all here,” said the herald, “that Robert, Earl of Huntington, is hereby debarred from all rights to this castle and estate, and is summoned to the king's court to answer for debt and treason. If he does not appear within six days, he is to be made an outlaw with a price on his head; and a rich reward

*The
Banish-
ment of
Robin
Hood*

The Banishment of Robin Hood offered to any who will bring him to the king, dead or alive."

Then he blew another blast, and shouted: "In the king's name, Robert, no longer Earl of Huntington, come into the king's court."

Some of the earl's men looked threateningly at the herald, but Robert made them a sign to be still. When the herald had ridden away, the earl raised his hand to quiet the loud talk that was bursting from the lips of his followers. He cast a reassuring look at poor frightened Maid Marian. Then he said:

"My friends and people, you have heard. If I go to the king's court, I shall be executed on a false charge of treason. If I stay here, I shall be an outlaw, hunted like a wild beast. What, then, must be my choice?"

His listeners began to answer loudly, but again the earl held up his hand.

"Shall we not leave the decision to the one I love best on this great earth—to the Lady Marian?"

Marian rose, pale but steady.

"My lord," she said, firmly, "never can I consent that you be tried for treason, for never was man less a traitor than you. An outlaw owes no allegiance to king or duke.

He is his own master. Therefore, my good lord, I beg you to be an outlaw. They will hunt you, but Robert, Earl of Huntington, will outwit them. Go, and seek your own kingdom.”

*The
Banish-
ment of
Robin
Hood*

The earl smiled at her; he glanced out of the window at the trees of great Sherwood Forest; then he looked at his stout archers.

“Well spoken!” he said. “I, no longer Robert, Earl of Huntington, will seek a new kingdom. And some day, when the king sees how he has wronged me, I shall come back to claim my Lady Marian.”

Friar Tuck rubbed his plump hands together.

“In faith, my lord,” he said, “I, your chaplain and friar, will follow wherever you go. Your food will need blessing, and your men will need the consolation of religion, wherever your kingdom may be.”

“I thank you, friar,” said Robert; “but I am not sure that I shall have any men.”

At this, a loud shout rose from his followers.

“Long live our lord!” they cried,—“our lord, whom we will follow forever!”

Robert’s face grew bright.

*"My
good lord,
I beg you
to be
an
outlaw"*



“I thank you, my friends,” he said; “but bethink you, I can offer you nothing.”

At this the knights rose.

“My lord,” said one of them, “we have wives and children. We must seek an overlord who will help us to lands and gold. Therefore, we take our leave.”

“Sirs,” said Robert, “I blame you not.”

He followed them into the courtyard, and called to his servants to bring their horses. When they had departed, he returned to the great hall.

“Since I am an outlaw,” he said, “no longer Robert the earl, you are to think of me as plain Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest. For there I shall live under the greenwood tree, and hunt deer for food. Those who follow me will have to share potluck. I give you all leave to go.”

But not a man made a movement to depart. They all rose to their feet, and shouted allegiance to their lord, Robin Hood.

“Call me not lord,” he said. “In the forest there shall be no distinctions of rank, but only the distinction of bravery and goodness. I am your friend, not your lord.”

Again they cheered him.

*The
Banish-
ment of
Robin
Hood* “You shall learn to be the greatest archers
in the land,” he said, “and shall be clad in
Lincoln green, the color of the grass.”

Once more his followers raised their voices. Every man's face showed loyalty and enthusiasm. All were ready to leave the shelter of a roof for the open woods, the safe tilling of fields for the uncertain hunting of deer. They welcomed the chance of adventure. But Marian's face showed no joy, only a sad courage. Robin's eyes were full of sorrow as they rested upon her.

“Farewell, Marian,” he said. “If you love me, go back to your father, Lord Fitzwalter, under the care of good Friar Tuck.”

Marian bent her head.

“Robin,” she said, “I go, but I shall come again.”

He watched her until she was out of the hall. Then he looked again at his men.

“Now,” he said, “who loves me, follows me!”

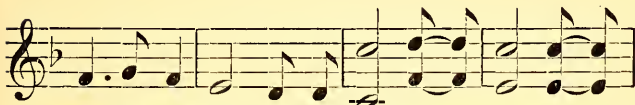
He strode out of the hall with never a look at his gold and silver plate. He went into the courtyard, and over the drawbridge, and down the broad road with never a look back at his gray castle. Behind him walked the

men, and as they went, one of his singers sang this song:

*The
Banish-
ment of
Robin
Hood*



1. My Rob-in is to the greenwood gone; And
2. I'll sit at his side by the greenwood tree, And



there he will hunt from the pink of the dawn, Till the
loy-al in serv-ice to him I'll be. No

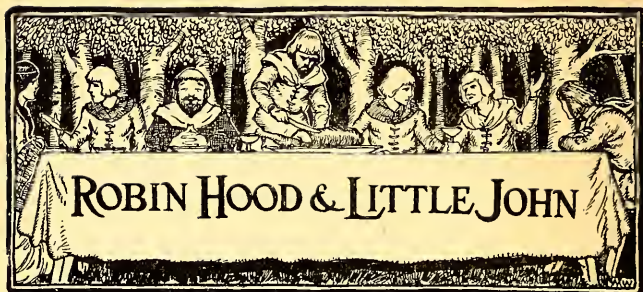


gray of the night comes down from the sky, For
sher-iff nor king's man my lord shall an-noy, For



Rob-in's a hun-ter, as none can de-ny.
bon-ny sweet Rob-in is all my joy.

And it was to this music that they all went into green Sherwood Forest.



CHAPTER II

WHEN Robin Hood entered Sherwood Forest he had about a hundred men. Many of these, chiefly the cottagers, soon showed they were not fitted for woodland life. They could not learn to shoot well, and they could not sleep comfortably in the open, under the trees. So Robin Hood advised them to go back to the estate and till the land for the master to whom the king might give it. Those who were left were all strong men, but Robin Hood felt that there should be more of them.

“Since I am an outlaw,” he said to Friar Tuck, as he sat in the good man’s little hermitage, “there is no doubt that I shall soon be hunted. News has been brought me that the king has sent word to the Sheriff of

Nottingham town to take me if he can, alive or dead. I am certainly not going living.”

Robin Hood and Little John

“And you do not want to go dead,” interrupted the friar. Friar Tuck had a sturdy, round figure, rosy face, and such a habit of merry laughter that he sometimes made his ribs ache. He was truly religious, nevertheless, and always kind and just.

“Therefore, we must get more men,” Robin said.

“That we must,” agreed Friar Tuck, “but the question is, how? Meantime, it would be well if we made the most of the men we have.”

“I have thought of that,” Robin said, “and to that end I have arranged that they shall practice archery for several hours each day. Will you go and see the sport this morning?”

“That will I,” answered the friar.

They left the hermitage, which was just a little open hut with a roof of boughs and a cushion of moss on which the friar knelt to say his prayers. Then they walked through an avenue of trees into the clearing which Robin Hood had chosen for his own. It was a great grassy oval, edged with oak trees. The underbrush was very thick for yards around, so that the spot would be hard

Robin Hood and Little John to find unless the seeker knew the forest well. Some of Robin's men had built themselves tiny huts like the friar's; a few had made little clearings under the oaks in which they had piled beds of grass and moss. One or two had made beds for themselves in the branches of the trees. Robin Hood himself slept under the tallest oak, with a heap of leaves for a pillow and his green mantle for a covering.

In the morning the soft chirp of the birds awakened him, and he would lie watching the gray dawn change slowly to pink and then to crimson, while the cheep of the birds turned to sweet, loud singing. Meantime, two or three of the archers chosen as cooks would come to a corner of the clearing and build the fire. Soon sticks would be blazing cheerfully, and over them, black kettles bubbling.

Robin thought of all this as he stood with Friar Tuck, looking at the soft green grass in which the pink-tipped daisies were thickly scattered.

"Ah, we are happy here, Friar Tuck!" he said. "And I should be wholly happy if only I had my dear Maid Marian."

"Have hope, Robin," said Friar Tuck,

heartily; "you and she will doubtless live here some day."

*Robin
Hood
and
Little
John*

Robin sighed, and then he said: "Come, now, and see the men at their archery."

"But why do they not practice on this broad sward of green?" asked Friar Tuck.

Robin Hood laughed.

"In faith, you know more of preaching than you do of archery, good friar!" he said. "This place of three hundred yards' square is too small. If my men shot here, their arrows would be buried in the underbrush. Truly, they are noble marksmen!"

"I may not be able to shoot well," said the friar, a little sulkily, "but I can fight very well with a staff. Besides, I can learn to shoot."

"You have a greater work than that," said Robin Hood. "You are a good fighter, but a better priest."

Yet Friar Tuck was not entirely pleased. He frowned, pursed his lips, and walked so heavily that his fat cheeks quivered with every step. Just then they reached a splendid straight road, made centuries before by the Romans. Across the road, some five hundred yards from where they stood, were set the targets—rough, shield-shaped boards on

Robin Hood and Little John which were painted black circles around the bull's-eye. Half a dozen of Robin's good archers stood holding their long bows, ready to shoot.

These long bows were beginning to supersede the crossbows in England. A crossbow was about four feet long, and consisted of a bow fixed crosswise on a stock, and discharged with a trigger. Almost any person could discharge one, but not always with certain aim.

The long bow could be used only by a strong man. It was six feet long, and carried an arrow three feet in length. When properly shot, the arrow had such force that it could penetrate a four-inch door. The usual range was from three hundred to five hundred yards. All of Robin's men, however, could shoot from five hundred to six hundred yards, and he himself could hit a mark at eight hundred yards.

One of the archers, who had been called on to shoot when Robin Hood and Friar Tuck came up, stepped to the middle of the road. He put his left foot a little forward, set his arrow into his right hand, lifted the bow, took careful aim, stretched his arm, and drew the arrow. With a loud whirring

noise it sailed to its mark, and a shout from the archers near the target proclaimed that he had come close to the bull's-eye.

*Robin
Hood
and
Little
John*

"Good shooting, indeed!" said Robin. "Each of my men is worth four; and yet I need more."

"What is your pleasure, good Robin?" asked Friar Tuck. "I am sure you have a plan."

"Faith, friar," replied Robin, "I know of nothing better than to go forth and speak to every big man I meet, and invite him to join us. And truly, I am going this very day."

"Shall we not go with you, master?" asked one of the archers. "Suppose you were met by enemies? You might overcome four or five, but hardly more."

"Never fear," said Robin Hood. "I will take my silver horn, and if I need help, I will blow it."

He set off down the Roman road, humming a merry tune. Presently he stepped aside to listen to the sound of a rippling brook. He wandered along it for a time, his head down, for he was thinking of Maid Marian, and of the old days when he was Robert, Earl of Huntington. Soon he came to a

Robin Hood and Little John narrow bridge spanning the stream, and started across it. As he took the first steps forward, he heard a clatter, and, looking up, saw another man about to cross. Robin Hood stared in amazement. The man was almost seven feet tall; his shoulders were as wide as a doorway, and his arm as thick as a beam. He was clothed in brown leather doublet and breeches, and thick woolen stockings, and he carried a heavy oaken stick.

“Good morning, friend,” said Robin.

“Friend!” repeated the young man, shaking his tangled black hair, and frowning. “I do not make friends of strangers.”

“We may not always be strangers,” said Robin, pleasantly.

“Then, if you are a friend, give way,” said the man, rudely. “This bridge is not wide enough for two to pass at the same time.”

“That is true,” agreed Robin, “but as I started to cross first, and as I am the older, I think you should give way to me.”

“Nay, I will not,” said the other.

He rushed forward, and with his club tried to strike Robin’s bow to the ground.

“Not so fast!” said Robin, sternly. “Why do you attack a peaceable traveler?”

“Fight with me, then,” said the young man. “Unless you are a coward, take a staff and fight with me.”

*Robin
Hood
and
Little
John*

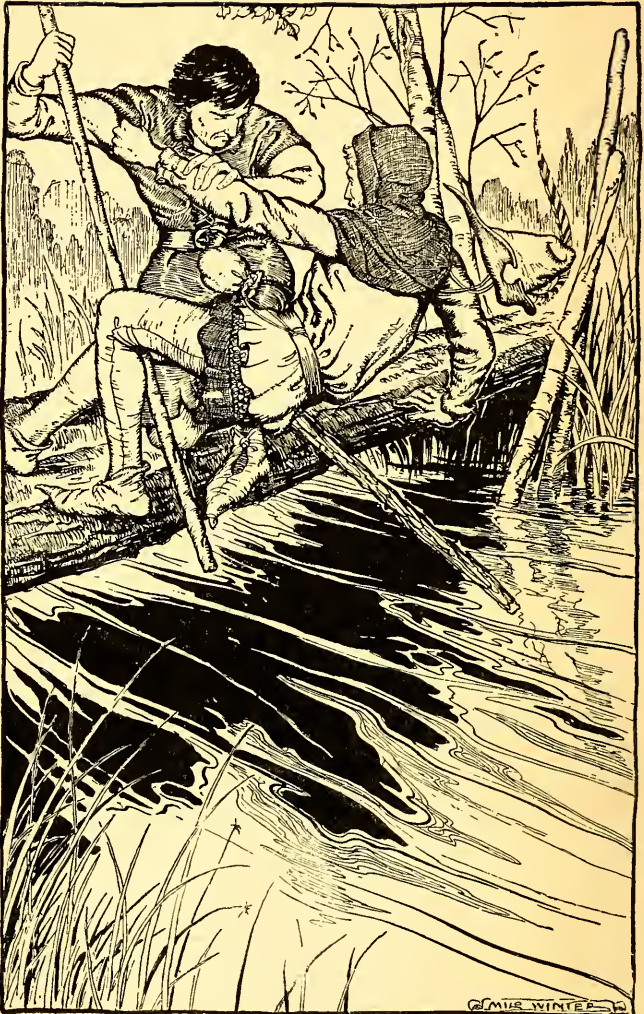
“No one has ever called me coward!” cried Robin Hood. “Stand you there till I return.”

He went to the bank of the stream, and cut a staff from a young oak tree.

“Now, friend,” he said, —“for I will still call you so,—let us see which is the better man.”

The stranger thought that because he was so large he had the advantage of Robin, but for a long time Robin parried his blows. Stroke after stroke each made, but all the strokes fell on their staffs and not on their bodies. Presently, however, the stranger struck Robin on the shoulder. Hurt by the blow, Robin pressed him furiously. Blow after blow he rained on shoulders and arms, until the young man was almost exhausted. Suddenly, seizing his chance, the stranger tripped Robin Hood, who fell backward into the stream. But in falling, Robin seized him, and they struggled together in the water. Almost immediately they scrambled to their feet, gasping, and trying to shake the water

*The
stranger
tripped
Robin
Hood,
but in
falling
Robin
seized
him*



from their eyes and hair, and clinging to each other in the middle of the current.

Robin Hood and Little John

“That was a trick you played, sir,” Robin said; “it was not fair fighting.”

The stranger looked a little ashamed.

“I never yet was beaten in a fight,” he muttered.

Robin made no reply. He waded to shore, and raising his silver bugle to his lips, blew a loud, sweet blast. Meantime, the stranger also waded ashore out of the water. No sooner was he standing on the bank than Robin’s bowmen, clad in green, rushed up to the little bridge, Friar Tuck, breathless, in the rear.

“Master,” cried some of his men, “why are you wet?”

“This man, here, tumbled me into the stream,” said Robin.

A tall archer rushed forward.

“Come,” he said, “let us put him back into the water for daring to duck you.”

“Not so fast,” said Robin. “This is a good man and true. Rather, let us make a brother of him. Friend,” he added, turning to the stranger, “do you follow any lord?”

“Not I!” said the man.

*Robin
Hood
and
Little
John*

“Then will you live with us, a simple life here in the woods, shooting deer and fighting when it is necessary to look after our rights and the rights of the poor?”

“Gladly, sir,” replied the huge stranger; “I love to shoot, and I like to eat venison. I see now that you are the great outlaw, Robin Hood. I am glad to be your man.”

“What is your name, friend?” asked Robin.

“John Little, sir.”

At this Friar Tuck burst into loud laughter.

“I pray you, good master,” he said, “look on this newcomer as a new infant. We shall have a feast, and name him—shall we not, master? Not John Little, but Little John, we shall call our big new baby.”

The bowmen laughed loud and long, and John himself did not resent the jest.

“Little John if you like,” he said, “but you will find that the new infant can strike many a lusty stroke for his new master, Robin Hood.”

Then they all turned homeward to Robin Hood’s clearing, where a great feast was prepared in honor of Little John; and that day there was no more work, only the playing

of games, and the singing of a song which Little John taught his new friends:

*Robin
Hood
and
Little
John*



1. The hunt is up, the hunt is up, and



it is well nigh day; And Har-ry our king is



gone hunt-ing, to bring his deer to bay.

The east is bright with morning light, and darkness it is fled,

And the merry horn wakes up the morn to leave his idle bed.

Behold the skies with golden dyes are glowing all around,

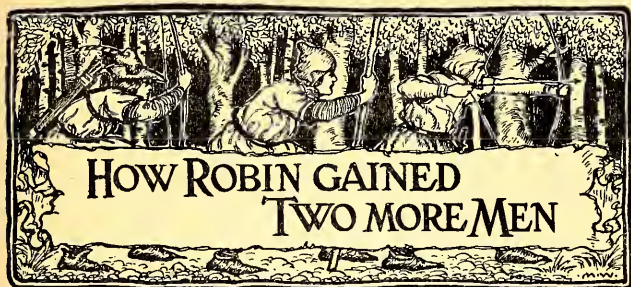
The grass is green, and so are the treen, all laughing at the sound.

The horses snort to be at the sport, the dogs are running free,

The woods rejoice at the merry noise of hey tantara tee ree!

Robin Hood and Little John The sun is glad to see us clad all in our lusty green,
And smiles in the sky as he riseth high, to see and to
be seen.

Awake, all men, I say again, be merry as you may,
For Harry our king is gone hunting, to bring his deer
to bay.



CHAPTER III

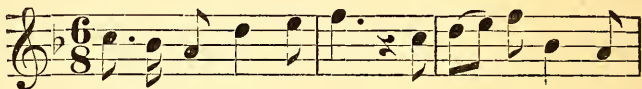
AFTER Little John became a member of his band Robin Hood searched for other powerful recruits. Two of them he won the week after Little John had joined him.

He and Little John were walking together along the Roman road. They were clad in homespun, and instead of bows and arrows they carried heavy quarterstaves. As they talked together, they heard, far away, the sound of singing. They looked down the road, and saw approaching them a tall, stout young man, carrying a sack across his shoulders.

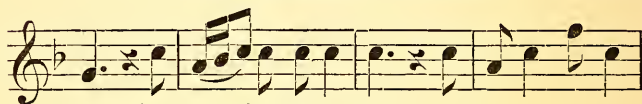
As he came nearer, they noticed that his clothes were covered with flour dust, and that tiny drifts of flour had settled in his heavy eyebrows and flaxen hair. There was even a smear of it across his broad red cheeks.

*How
Robin
Hood
Gained
Two
More
Men* "By my faith!" said Robin Hood. "This must be the young miller near Nottingham, of whose strength we have heard. He must be strong indeed, for he carries that great sack of meal as if it were a lady's kerchief, and he sings without loss of breath."

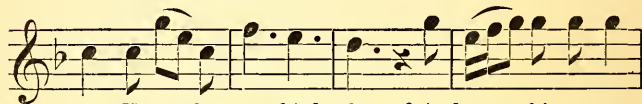
This is the song the young man sang:



Un - der the green-wood tree, Who loves to lie with



me, And tune his mer-ry note, his mer-ry, mer-ry



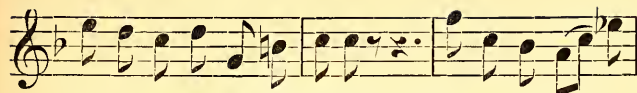
note, Un-to the sweet bird's throat? And tune his mer-ry



note Un - to the sweet bird's throat? Come hith-er,



hith-er, Come hith-er, come hith-er, come hith-er, come



hith-er, come hith-er, come hith-er; Here shall he see no

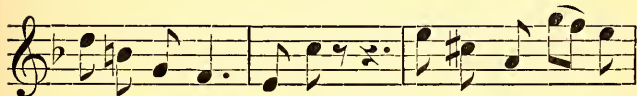
*How
Robin
Hood
Gained
Two
More
Men*



en - e - my, But win - ter and rough weath-er;



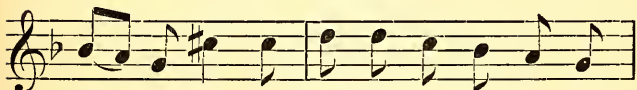
Here shall he see no en - e - my, But



win-ter and rough weath-er; Here shall he see no



en - e - my, But win - ter, but



win - ter and rough weath-er, rough weath-er, But

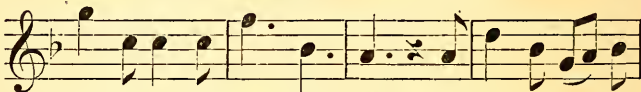


win-ter and rough weath-er. Un-der the green-wood

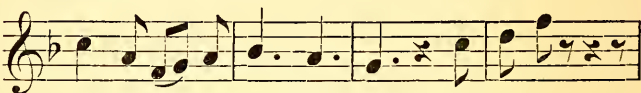
*How
Robin
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Two
More
Men*



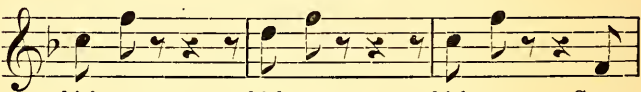
tree, Who loves to lie with me, And tune his mer-ry



note Un-to the sweet bird's throat? And tune his mer-ry



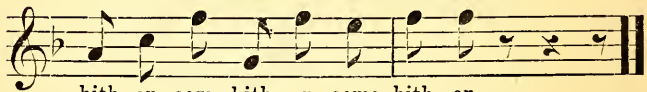
note Un-to the sweet bird's throat? Come hith-er,



hith-er, hith-er, hith-er, Come



hith-er, come hith-er, come hith-er, come hith-er, Come



hith-er, come hith-er, come hith-er.

“A good song,” said Robin.

“Hey, good master!” cried Little John, “I am going to play a merry jest on this fellow. I will pretend to rob him, and then I will take him into the forest and give

him such a feast as he never has had, and all his money back.”

Before Robin Hood could prevent him, Little John ran forward and stepped in front of the miller.

“Stop, man!” he said.

The miller swung his sack of meal from his shoulders to the ground, grasped more tightly his staff, and stood blinking at Little John from under his dusty eyebrows.

“Come now, do my bidding,” said Little John. “I have a mind to carry that heavy sack.”

“I give you thanks, if thanks are due you, but I can carry it, myself,” returned the miller.

“You mistake me,” said Little John. “I will carry it not for you but for myself, and likewise whatever money you have.”

The miller put one broad foot on his sack of meal.

“Alas!” he said, “I have but little. If you rob me, and Robin Hood hears what you have done, it will go hard with you.”

Robin Hood stood aside, watching the two. He thought it strange that the big man did not try to fight for his rights.

“Robin Hood is a friend of mine,” Little

*How
Robin
Hood
Gained
Two
More
Men*

*How
Robin
Hood
Gained
Two
More
Men* John said. "Come, give me your money, or I will spill your good meal on the ground."
"Alas!" cried the miller, falling on his knees, "do not spill my good meal! I will give you whatever money may lie at the bottom of the bag."

"Aha!" said Little John. "I knew you had some."

The young man rose slowly, and untying the mouth of the bag, buried his arms to the elbows in the meal. Robin stepped forward, thinking that the jest had gone far enough. Just as he bent over the sack with Little John, and was about to speak, the miller cast two great handfuls of the meal into their faces. It blinded them and they started back, rubbing their smarting eyes. The miller threw more and more at them, till they could see nothing. Then he seized his staff and struck at them again and again.

"Hold! hold!" cried Little John. "Would you strike a blinded man?"

"That I would," replied the miller, "if he tried to rob me!" He beat Little John across the shoulders, and a cloud of meal rose from his tunic.

"Good sifting I am having!" he shouted.

“This will teach you to be careful how you treat Much, the miller’s son.”

Then he turned his attention to Robin’s shoulders.

“Hold,” cried Little John, hearing the blows which had ceased to fall upon his own shoulders. “Do you know that you are beating Robin Hood?”

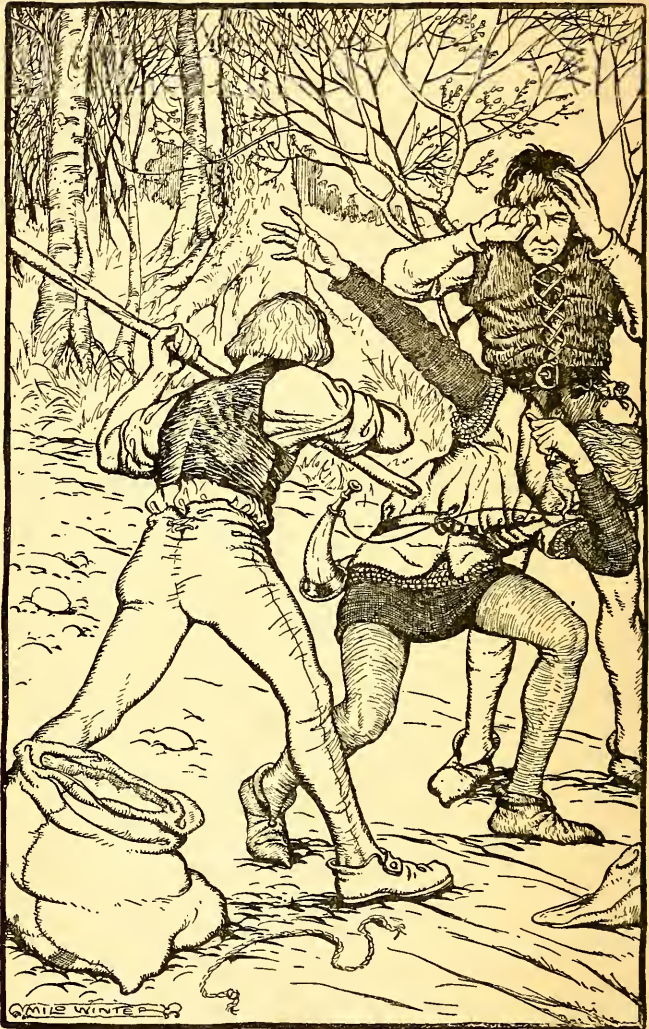
“What!” cried Much, the miller’s son, laying about him again with his stick. “Do you expect me to believe that Robin Hood would stand by and see a poor man robbed? I must give you a mighty blow for that.”

Robin’s conscience was smarting as thoroughly as his shoulders. He knew that no words of his could convince Much, the miller’s son; so he seized his horn, and blew on it thrice, loudly.

The miller continued his beating, and so diligently that he did not hear a crackling in the underbrush. He was astonished when a party of men in green fell upon him. They, for their part, were much surprised to find Robin Hood in need of their aid. They would have beaten Much as heartily as he had beaten their master, had Robin not stayed them.

*How
Robin
Hood
Gained
Two
More
Men*

*Robin's
conscience
was
smarting
as well as
his
shoulders*



“Nay!” he said. “It is I who have been in fault.”

He told his followers the story, and they could not help laughing. In fact, every one laughed except Much, and even he gave a broad though trembling smile. He understood, now, that he really stood before Robin Hood, and he was not without fear.

“Nay, then,” Robin said. “We have something to forgive each other, Much, the miller’s son. I will forget my sore bones if you will join my band, here in the forest. If I can teach you to use a bow as briskly as you use a stick, you will be of great advantage to us.”

All the men laughed at this except Little John, who was rubbing his shoulders and frowning.

“Right cheerfully will I join you,” responded Much, the miller’s son, “and you will find none more loyal than I.”

“Of that I am assured,” said Robin. “Come now; we must all go homeward, and two of us at least will seek salve for bruises.”

The bruises of Robin Hood and Little John were well healed, when at Wakefield they met

*How
Robin
Hood
Gained
Two
More
Men*

How Robin Hood Gained Two More Men with an adventure which won them another recruit. They had gone there in disguise to transact some business. As they were passing through the outskirts of the town they heard a very sweet whistling.

“That is a pleasant sound,” said Robin Hood. “It is as good in its way as the singing of our big Much, the miller’s son.”

“I trust he who whistles cannot use his stick so well as he uses his voice,” muttered Little John. “Here is a path through this corn, master, if you wish to come up with the sound.”

Robin Hood and Little John took their way through the cornfield, following the loud, sweet whistle.

“Aha!” cried Robin Hood. “I know who this is. It is George-a-Green, the pinder of Wakefield.”

The pinder (or pinner) of Wakefield was the man who kept the pound into which all stray animals were driven. The fame of George-a-Green had reached Robin Hood and his men. He not only took care of the pound, but had made himself guardian of the general welfare of Wakefield.

When Robin and Little John finally passed

through the corn, and reached George-a-Green, he had stopped whistling. He rose slowly to his feet, and they saw that he was almost as tall as Little John. He had brown hair, brown eyes, and a brown skin. Except when he was angry, his eyes twinkled and his mouth was rounded for whistling. But as he gazed on Robin Hood and Little John his mouth was stretched in a grim line, and his eyes were narrowed by a frown. He shook his quarterstaff, threateningly.

*How
Robin
Hood
Gained
Two
More
Men*

“How dare you leave the king’s highway, and break a path through the corn?” he demanded.

“Friend,” said Robin, mildly, “we have done your corn no harm.”

“I am no friend of yours,” said George-a-Green.

“Come, then, be friends with my stick!” cried Little John.

He swung his staff round his head, and brought it down. George-a-Green parried the stroke with his quarterstaff. Then he struck at Little John, who in turn avoided the blow. Again and again they tried to reach each other, and always they failed. At last they paused, breathless.

*How
Robin
Hood
Gained
Two
More
Men* “A truce!” cried Robin Hood. “In truth, it is hard to tell which is the better man.”

George-a-Green sprang at him, and lifted his stick.

“I have good enough will to fight the two of you together,” he shouted.

Robin lifted his stick, and the two fought for a long time, neither of them gaining the advantage. After each stroke, George-a-Green gave a brief, wheezing whistle, and Little John could scarcely forbear laughing at him.

“You have lost your breath,” said Robin Hood at last, “while I am still fresh. Let us rest.”

George-a-Green nodded, and sat down under a tree, while Robin, leaning against the trunk, gazed admiringly at the young man’s strong arms and shoulders.

“I wish with all my heart you would serve me instead of the town of Wakefield,” he said.

“There is but one man I will ever serve,” said George-a-Green, “and that is Robin Hood, who has sweet singers among his men to match my whistling. When my time is finished here in Wakefield, come Michaelmas,

I am going to seek him through Sherwood Forest."

"He has sought you, George-a-Green," said Robin, "for I am Robin Hood."

*How
Robin
Hood
Gained
Two
More
Men*

"Well, then, I give you greeting, new master!" replied George-a-Green.

He burst into a merry whistling tune, snapping his fingers and dancing a little to show his delight. Robin and Little John laughed at him. Then the three sat together for an hour, talking about life in the greenwood. Many stories had come to the ears of George-a-Green about the outlaws, some true and some false. Though he was a simple man, he was too sensible to believe all the rumors he heard. Having answered all his questions, Robin Hood said:

"Now, my good George-a-Green, will you minister to our needs and give us some food? In truth, your prowess has made me so hungry that I could eat for three men."

George-a-Green hastened to bring forth bread and beef and cheese, whistling gayly the while. And so the three sat comfortably together, Robin well content with this strong, cheerful addition to his band of merry men. When they returned to Sherwood Forest the

How Robin Hood Gained Two More Men first man to meet them was Much, the miller's son, singing this song:



Blow thy horn, hun - ter, Come, blow thy horn on



high! In yon-der wood there lieth a doe; In



faith she would not die. Come, blow thy horn,



hun - ter. Come, blow thy horn, jol-ly hun - ter.

Then George-a-Green whistled the air with variations. How glad they all were to have such hearty makers of music in the company!

As time went on, Robin Hood gained many recruits for his band, but none who were more beloved than Much, the miller's son, and George-a-Green, once pinder of Wakefield.



CHAPTER IV

MAID MARIAN lived with her father, Lord Fitzwalter, in one of the most beautiful castles in England. Like the castle which Robin Hood had once owned, it was built of gray stone. It had a moat, a draw-bridge, and a high watchtower where a warden always stood, gazing at all who approached.

After Robin Hood went to the greenwood, Marian often mounted to the watchtower, and stood looking over the wide, rolling fields of her father's estate. She did not hope to see Robin Hood, for she knew he dared not risk his life outside of Sherwood Forest; but she thought perhaps he would send one of his men with a message. It was very hard to wait day after day, not knowing whether Robin were alive or dead.

*The
Adventure of
Maid
Marian*

Maid Marian did not spend all her time in the watchtower, for she had many duties to perform. As her mother was dead, she had to take charge of the women of her father's household. There were some twenty of these, old and young, including her sisters. Every day they sat in a large upper room paneled with black oak, and listened and looked while she taught them to make beautiful embroideries and tapestries. If these women had been very observant, they would have noticed that of late all her tapestries had been woven with pictures of green trees, and grass, and fawn-colored deer. Marian's thoughts were all with Robin, and she expressed her fancies about his life through the work of her hands.

Sometimes, while the women were embroidering, and spinning, and weaving linen, Marian would read aloud to them. Not every woman of that day could read, and her listeners were proud of Maid Marian's accomplishment. Sometimes her father's chaplain came in and read them sacred stories. At other times they chatted and laughed among themselves, and told tales they had heard of the knights and the young squires.

When Lord Fitzwalter and his knights came home from hunting or long riding, the women hurried down to the courtyard to meet them. Then they helped remove the armor, and brought cooling drinks. And many a time, when Marian unlaced a helmet, she wished that the face under it might be that of her dear Robin Hood. In the evening, after supper was over, the ladies played on the harp or sang to the knights.

*The
Adventure of
Maid
Marian*

Marian had still another important duty. She brought up the little boys, aged from six to fourteen, who were pages in her father's castle. These children were the sons of friends of Lord Fitzwalter, and had been sent to his castle to be trained in all knightly duties. They spent a good deal of time in the open air, watching the knights and squires at work and at play, and helping take care of the armor and horses.

The boys liked to look at Marian's pretty face, set off by her rich and bright clothes. She wore a close-fitting laced bodice of green silk, with flowing sleeves so long that she had to tie them in a knot to keep them out of the way when she was using her hands very much. Her green silk skirt was long, and

*The
Adven-
ture of
Maid
Marian* was embroidered with gold thread. Some-
times she wore a mantle, and always a gold
necklace about her throat. Her hair was
braided in two long plaits interwoven with
ribbons, and brought over the shoulders to
hang down in front.

She taught the pages, through her stories, that they must always be courteous, brave, kind, and truthful. When she talked to them of brave men, she had Robin Hood in mind. This was the part of her duties that Marian liked best. It pleased her to watch the intent, earnest faces of the boys. Their clothes were pretty, too. They wore soft leather shoes, long silk stockings of gay colors, short silken hose, and silken doublets with lace at the wrists.

“If only Robin were here,” she thought, “that he might see how beautifully the boys learn all I teach them!”

One day her father sent for her and told her he had just betrothed her younger sister Jocelyn to a great lord, and that Marian must give up to Jocelyn her place as mistress of the house. In no other way could heedless Jocelyn learn all the duties of a great lord's wife. After Marian had taken his commands

she went up to the watchtower and looked out over the wide lands, in the direction of Sherwood Forest.

*The
Adven-
ture of
Maid
Marian*

“How can I bear this separation from Robin,” she thought, “now that I shall have to be almost idle?”

She watched, as she so often had, the herds-men away on the distant fields, or the men nearer by who were tilling the ground. Some of them looked as tiny as dolls. She wished that one of them would grow larger and larger, and at last change into a green-clad messenger from Robin.

“If only I were with him,” she thought, “I could train his young pages, if he has any; or at least I could mend the doublets and hose of his bowmen.”

At that moment the thought of going to Robin Hood came into her mind. She reasoned that she would now be of little use in her father’s castle, and that she could be of great service to Robin’s people. Marian always acted quickly upon her thoughts. She decided that she would steal away early the next morning.

That night she sat up late, putting her affairs in order. She went about saying

*The
Adven-
ture of
Maid
Marian*

good-by to many a quaint carved chair, and many a beautiful tapestry which she loved. Next she made a small bundle of clothing, putting into it, to please Robin, a soft robe of Lincoln green. Finally, she climbed to a round tower at the very top of the castle, where were some carved oak chests full of clothing. She selected a page's suit, all of green, and a shining sword.

Before it was light she put on the suit, and then, bundle and sword in hand, she stole down the oak staircase that led from her room to the courtyard. She dared not go to the great entrance because the drawbridge was up; and, besides, there the guards would challenge her. She slipped through the stables into the dewy garden, and took her way among the flowers and shrubs until she reached the stone wall. She went along it until she found a little secret door, to which she had the key.

She trembled as she slowly unlocked the door. She was leaving behind a life of safety, and was going to—what? There were many miles to walk before she would see the green trees of Sherwood Forest. She might be in peril from wild beasts or fierce robbers. But

she thought of Robin, and boldly stepped outside the wall. Then she ran down the bank above the moat, plunged into the water, swam across, and climbed, dripping, up the opposite side.

*The
Adven-
ture of
Maid
Marian*

The faint gray of dawn was just showing in the sky. Marian began to run, noiselessly. She did not wish the sharp-eyed warden to see her. He would wonder what a page could be doing out so early in the morning, and would send a swift arrow after her.

By the time the gray had changed to pink, Marian was far out of shooting range. She hurried breathlessly over fields and by hedges toward the Roman road, which she knew led to Sherwood Forest. When she stood upon it, at last, she felt far from safe, in spite of her sword, for many a robber infested the highway. But she comforted herself with the thought that she carried nothing valuable, and that surely no one would hurt a page.

Whenever she heard any one coming, she slipped into the woods beside the road, and as she was quick of movement, not once was she detected. In that way she watched many

*The
Adventure of
Maid
Marian*

people pass; bands of knights and squires and ladies on a hunting expedition; poor cottagers leading their donkeys, which drew rude carts full of late vegetables; and twice, silent, fierce-eyed riders wearing great boots, and carrying naked swords. These she knew to be robbers.

As she had brought no food with her she was obliged, when noon came, to eat the wild fruit of the woods. In an hour or two she grew hungry again, and was sorry she had not thought of bringing some dried meat and cakes with her. As the afternoon passed, she walked more and more slowly. It seemed to her that she would never, never reach Sherwood Forest.

At about seven o'clock she was too tired to go any farther, and she began to look for a place to sleep. She was afraid to choose the open ground, lest some wild beast should attack her; and she was afraid to climb into a tree lest she should fall out. At last she came upon a little black hut which a charcoal burner had deserted. She picked up enough sticks and branches to build a barricade before the open door; then she lay down behind it, her head on her bundle.

She was so tired that she slept at once, and did not waken till the sun poured in upon her over the barricade. Then she sprang to her feet, her courage all returned. Hearing the murmur of a brook, she followed the sound. She washed in the cold water, ate some wild fruit, and set forth cheerfully. Once she saw a young stag whose antlers were budding. He was rubbing them against the bark of a tree, to get rid of the covering skin. Marian longed to help him, but he leaped away when she approached. The sight of this timid creature somehow added to her own bravery.

*The
Adven-
ture of
Maid
Marian*

Although she did not know it, she was in Sherwood Forest, following the course of the same stream above which Robin Hood and Little John had fought. Presently, she came to the bridge from which the two had fallen into the water. While she was wondering whether or not she had better cross it, she heard the sound of quick footsteps, and a tall man clad in green came out from among the trees. He wore a mask over his face, and he spoke in a high cracked voice.

“My pretty boy,” he said, “you must turn about and go back.”

*The
Adventure of
Maid
Marian*

Marian was trembling, but she asked boldly, "And why?"

"Because none must cross this bridge unless he be a friend of Robin Hood."

"I assure you," said Marian, "that I am a very good friend of Robin Hood! Therefore, let me pass, good sir."

"Nay," replied the man. "I know Robin Hood well, and I am sure he has no acquaintance with any page. He is cut off from courts and castles."

"Nevertheless," persisted Marian, "if you will bring me to him I am sure he will be so glad to see me that he will give you a great reward."

"Hoighty toighty! You count much on his generosity, fair page."

"I know him well, sir," replied Marian.

"Come, come, enough of this fooling!" said the man, sternly. "You are but a court spy, young sir. Go you back the way you came. You shall enter no farther into Sherwood Forest."

Marian looked at the tall man, then at her shining sword, and then at her slim arms. Her heart sank, and yet she knew she could never go back to her father's castle.

"I will fight with you, if necessary," she said, in a trembling voice, "but I must pass."

*The
Adven-
ture of
Maid
Marian*

"Hey! I could spit you as if you were a young bird!" laughed the other. "But I would not hurt you, pretty page. Go you back."

But Marian suddenly darted forward and cut at the breast of the man. Laughingly he parried the thrust, but he did not return it. Marian struck at him again and again, till she was breathless, but she did not even scratch him. At last, with a quick stroke, she reached his mask and cut it from his face. Then she cried aloud, and dropped her sword, which fell tinkling into the stream. The man was Robin Hood.

"Oh, Robert! Oh, Robert!" she cried. "I did not know you when you spoke in such a high voice."

Robin looked at her in astonishment.

"Don't you know me?" she asked. "It is your own Maid Marian."

How glad Robin was to see her! He was amused that she had lifted a sword against him, pleased at her courage, and very much touched that she had come to seek him.

"Suppose I had hurt you!" she cried.

*The
Adven-
ture of
Maid
Marian* “You might hurt me with your tongue,
but never with your sword, my most dear
lady,” answered Robin.

Then, with loving and welcoming words, he led her across the bridge. Friar Tuck and Little John came running up, attracted by the sound of voices. Marian told them all her adventure.

“And I have come here to stay forever with Robin,” she finished. “I may stay, may I not?”

“It’s a hard life for a lady,” said Robin, gravely, “and yet I do not see how I can send you back to the castle.”

“Faith, stay she must!” said Friar Tuck. “I will marry you this very hour.”

“And I will go and kill a fine deer for the wedding feast,” said Little John.

“Do so, good man,” said Marian; “for in truth, I am as much in need of a dinner as I am of a wedding.”

It was a beautiful wedding held under the greenwood tree, with Marian in her silken robe, and Robin in a new suit of Lincoln green. And in honor of the marriage, and of Marian’s adventure, Much, the miller’s son, and all the archers sang this song,



It was a beautiful wedding held under the Greenwood tree

*The
Adven-
ture of
Maid
Marian* George-a-Green whistling a soft accompa-
niment:

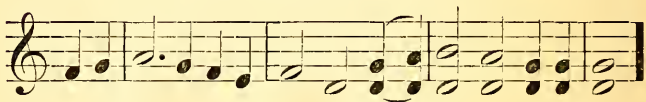
LOVE WILL FIND OUT THE WAY



1. O - ver the mountains and un - der the caves,



O - ver the foun-tains and un - der the waves,



Under waters that are deepest, Which Neptune still o-bey,



Over rocks that are the steepest, Love will find out his way.

When there is no place
For the glowworm to lie;
Where there is no space
For receipt of a fly;
Where the midge does not venture
Lest herself fast she lay;

If Love come, he will enter
And soon find out his way.

*The
Adven-
ture of
Maid
Marian*

You may esteem him
A child for his might;
Or you may deem him
A coward from his flight;
But if she whom Love doth honor
Be concealed from the day,
Set a thousand guards upon her—
Love will find out the way.

Some think to lose him
By having him confined;
And some do suppose him,
Poor thing, to be blind;
But if ne'er so close ye wall him,
Do the best that you may,
Blind Love, if so you call him,
Will find out his way.

You may train the eagle
To stoop to your fish;
Or you may inveigle
The phoenix of the east;
The lioness, ye may move her
To give o'er her prey;
But you 'll ne'er stop a lover;
He will find out the way.

*The
Adventure
of Maid
Marian*

There is no striving
To cross his intert,
There is no contriving
His plots to prevent;
For if once the message greet him
That his true love doth stay,
Though demons come and meet him,
He will go on his way.



CHAPTER V

MARIAN was very happy in the woods. It is true she did not have the luxuries to which she had been accustomed in Lord Fitzwalter's castle, but she had enough. She had added many comforts to the greenwood home. There was a rough kitchen table on which the cooks chopped pulse, pease, beans, onions, and other vegetables. On another table stood earthen pots, a hatchet, a mortar and pestle, a pepper mill, some iron cauldrons and pots, a gridiron, some frying pans, a sieve, some pitchers, and a few round dishes. In a little rough cupboard were kept flour and spices. In different chests she stored the linen, the silver dishes, knives, and spoons. There were as yet no forks in England.

*The
Adven-
tures of
Robin
Hood
and Sir
Richard
of the
Lea*

Although Marian did none of the cooking herself, she liked to superintend the good dinners which the outlaws ate. One day Little John killed an especially fine deer, and also snared some pheasants and plovers.

“Clearly, we are to have a rich dinner,” said Maid Marian. “I wish we might have a guest.”

“A guest?” Robin asked. “What guest?”

“I care not at all who it is,” she replied.

“I should like to entertain a knight once more,” Robin said.

“Why not?” she asked. “Come you here, Little John,” she called.

The big young man left the venison he was dressing and approached her, smiling.

“Good John,” she said, “will you go forth and ask the first knight you meet if he will come and dine with us?”

“Surely, mistress,” he replied.

“But hark you, Little John,” Robin said; “be sure to tell the knight just who it is that invites him. I wish no guest to come here unknowing that his host is an outlaw.”

“Well said, master,” said Little John. “For company, I will take Much, the miller’s son.”

Robin and Marian accompanied their messengers to the edge of the forest. Just before they reached the Roman road they saw a scornful looking lord riding by, accompanied by half a dozen followers.

*The
Adven-
tures of
Robin
Hood
and Sir
Richard
of the
Lea*

“There goes a wicked man,” Robin said. “He robs rich and poor alike. He will stop at no knavery. We must punish him some day.”

“It is the wicked Lord of Ely,” said Marian; “I know him well. He owns many abbeys hereabout.”

When the little company had passed, Marian and Robin strolled back through the greenwood, while Little John and Much, the miller’s son, set off down the Roman road. They met no one for a long time, but at last they saw a solitary figure riding toward them.

“Is that a knight, think you?” asked Much.

“If so, he must be very poor,” replied Little John, “for he is riding unattended.”

“Rich or poor, our master will make him welcome,” said Much.

As the horseman came nearer, they saw that he was riding carelessly, with one foot only in the stirrup, as if he did not care whether he were thrown or not. His doublet

The Adventures of Robin Hood and Sir Richard of the Lea and cloak and hose were all black, and very shabby. His face looked sad, but it was a gentle, good face.

“Greeting, sir,” called Little John. “I pray you, are you engaged to dine?”

“No,” replied the knight, in a low voice; “I had forgotten about dining.”

“Then my master bids you dine with him, if so be you are not too proud to dine with an outlaw. His name is Robin Hood.”

“Outlaw though he be,” answered the knight, “I have heard much good of him. Gladly will I come.”

He rode along dejectedly, the two men following. Robin Hood was waiting for them on the edge of the clearing.

“What!” he cried. “Is it you, Sir Richard of the Lea?”

“And is it you, my lord of Huntington!” exclaimed Sir Richard.

“Nay,” said Robin, “I am an outlaw now—no longer earl.”

“I am glad to see you, Robert or Robin,” said Sir Richard. “I am always your friend,—if, indeed, you care to be the friend of one so full of misfortune as myself.”

“In truth, you look wretched enough,”

said Robin. "Where is the gay scarlet doublet you liked to wear, and the great gray horse you always rode?"

Sir Richard sighed deeply.

"You remember my son Edwin?" he asked. "By accident the lad shot a knight belonging to the household of the Lord of Ely."

"Ah! that lord rode by only this morning," said Robin.

"Aye, he was riding to an appointment with me. This wicked lord has the favor of the king, and he has poisoned the king's mind against me. I have been obliged to give him all my gold, and my wife's dowry, in order to pay him for the life of the knight."

"That is a greater penalty than the law demands," said Robin.

"True, but this Lord of Ely has forced me to it. He took a mortgage of four hundred pounds on my castle. I paid it, but there were no witnesses, and he told the king I still owed him. So now I am forced to give the money to him over again, and if I cannot pay it to-day, then am I ruined. I and my wife, and my helpless little girls will be turned out into the world with nowhere to go."

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“And have you the four hundred pounds?” asked Robin.

“I have but ten shillings in all the world,” replied the knight.

They began to cross the clearing. Maid Marian approached, and the knight greeted her courteously. She brought him perfumed water in a golden bowl, and a linen towel, that he might wash his hands. Then she led the way to the feast, laid on a long table spread with a white cloth. It was a good dinner, with the green trees instead of tapestried walls, and the blue sky instead of a paneled roof, and the singing of the birds instead of a harper. Sir Richard tried to seem cheerful as his hosts pressed food upon him, but he did not succeed in throwing off his grief.

When the dinner was over and all the bowmen except Little John and Much, the miller's son, had gone with their bows and arrows to practice shooting along the Roman road, Robin Hood said:

“Presently, we shall follow, and you shall see some good sport. But that you may look upon it with a care-free spirit, Sir Richard, let me tell you that you shall have

four hundred pounds. My men and I have been winning some money, and we are glad to share with you. You shall have four hundred pounds from my own store."

Sir Richard's face brightened.

"It would save me from ruin!" he said. "And I think that I could pay it back within the year. For once I am sure that the castle is my own, I shall have the heart to see that the fields are tilled and the herds tended."

"We could not let your wife and children suffer," Marian said.

"It is for them that I accept the loan," Sir Richard responded.

"Go you, Little John," said Robin Hood, "and open my chest that stands there under the greenwood tree. Count out four hundred pounds for Sir Richard of the Lea."

Little John rose quickly and went to the chest, followed by Much.

"And you, my beloved lady," said Robin Hood to Marian, "can you not find twenty yards of scarlet-and-gold cloth for Sir Richard out of one of the cedar chests I gave you?"

"Gladly," replied Marian.

She hurried after Little John and Much. Little John was counting out the money.

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The Adventures of Robin Hood and Sir Richard of the Lea "In faith," said Much, "you have more than four hundred pounds there!"

"Yes, but the poor knight needs more," replied Little John.

"You are very generous with some one else's gold," remarked Much.

"Look at the mistress," said Little John. "She sets us a good example."

Maid Marian was measuring each yard of the twenty she had been told to cut by Much's bow, which was six feet long.

"The good knight's need is greater than ours," explained Maid Marian, hurrying back to Sir Richard, her arms full of glowing scarlet and gold.

Sir Richard's face was radiant.

"I can never repay you," he said, "even though I do give you back your gold."

"I am going to send an escort with you," said Robin Hood, as Sir Richard bound the cloth and the moneybags upon his horse. "You will need guards for the road, and a witness who can prove that the wicked Lord of Ely has been paid the second four hundred pounds. Little John and Much, the miller's son, shall go with you."

At Robin Hood's command the two men

dressed themselves as knights, and rode with Sir Richard of the Lea till they came to the Fox and Goose, the inn where he was to meet the Lord of Ely. A good priest was just entering the inn, and they asked him to be a witness for Sir Richard. So the four entered the main room together.

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The Lord of Ely was sitting behind a table; his dark, scornful face looked very confident. Behind stood his half-dozen followers. They were all sure that Sir Richard did not have the four hundred pounds. Sir Richard bowed courteously, but the Lord of Ely scarcely nodded.

“Have you come to give up your castle to me?” he asked, abruptly.

“Have you my deed of surrender, my lord?” asked Sir Richard.

“Here it is, safe enough,” said the Lord of Ely, pointing to a paper on the table before him.

Little John boldly stepped forward and seized it.

“This is worthless, now,” he said, “for Sir Richard has the four hundred pounds.”

He tore the parchment into pieces as Sir Richard handed over the bags of gold.

Little
John tore
the parch-
ment to
pieces
as Sir
Richard
handed
over the
gold



The Lord of Ely scowled, and his face grew crimson.

“What is all this?” he demanded.

“A disappointment for you, my Lord of Ely,” said Little John.

“Another such word, my man, and I will hale you to the king, despite your rank!” cried the Lord of Ely.

Sir Richard made an anxious sign to Little John, who spoke no more. Much slowly counted out the gold, showing that Sir Richard had several pounds left. The Lord of Ely could hardly speak for rage.

“Another time, Richard of the Lea, I’ll have your castle and your life, too!” he shouted.

Sir Richard hurried away, afraid lest the Lord of Ely and his followers might do him and Much and Little John some harm.

“I shall feel secure only when I am in my own strong castle again,” he said.

Little John and Much saw him safely on his way to his Castle of the Lea. Then they went back to Robin Hood. They met him on the Roman road, a band of bowmen with him, among them George-a-Green, whistling merrily.

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Richard
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The Adventures of Robin Hood and Sir Richard of the Lea "Why are you here, master?" asked Little John. "Not to meet us, surely?"

"Nay, I know you too well to do you such honor, my good Little John," said Robin, smiling. "I am waiting for my Lord of Ely."

Little John and Much laughed joyously.

"Good, master!" said Much. "Now we can punish him for his rude treatment of Sir Richard." He broke joyfully into this song:

"We be yeomen of the forest,
Under the greenwood tree.
We live by our king's deer;
Other shift have not we."

They lay in the woods, laughing and singing, for about an hour; and then Robin Hood held up his hand to silence them. Half a mile away came riding the Lord of Ely and his men. They moved rapidly, looking from left to right for fear of robbers.

When they reached the stretch of road opposite Robin Hood he called to them to halt.

"Stop, my Lord of Ely!" he cried, loudly. "Why this haste?"

The Lord of Ely looked up. There stood Robin and, behind him, several archers clad in green, holding their bows ready to shoot.

“Pay me a visit, my lord,” said Robin. “Get down from your horse and walk this way. And bring your moneybags with you.”

“I have no moneybags,” mumbled the Lord of Ely. “I am a very poor man.”

At this the bowmen laughed.

“How much money have you in your moneybags?” asked Robin.

“Only ten shillings.”

“If you are telling the truth,” said Robin Hood, “I shall take pity on your poverty, and give you four hundred pounds. If you are speaking falsely, you shall give me four hundred pounds.”

The Lord of Ely pointed to his saddle.

“You can see my moneybag hanging on the pommel,” he said.

“Nay, I am sure you have another,” replied Robin.

He twitched off the lord’s mantle, and there at his waist hung the bags of gold which he had taken from Sir Richard of the Lea.

“I am sure you did not come by this money rightly,” Robin said, as he tied the moneybags to his own belt. “It is my duty to take it away from you, to teach you to be honest. But, in return, you shall sup here,—not

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Hood
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Richard
of the
Lea*

The Adventures of Robin Hood and Sir Richard of the Lea with me, for I would not sit at the same table with a man so cruel as you. But we had an honored guest to dine. I will give you the remainder of his feast."

The Lord of Ely was very angry, but he dared not speak further, for he feared that his life was in danger. Robin blindfolded him and his men, led them to the clearing, and placed them at table. The Lord of Ely sat with his followers huddled close to him, and hastily ate cold venison and tender pheasant, preserved figs, and plum tart. As soon as he dared he rose, and then Robin Hood led him and his men, blindfolded, back to the edge of the forest, and gave them permission to mount their horses and go.

"One piece of advice you must heed, my Lord of Ely," he said. "If I again find you taking money unjustly, I shall see that you do not keep it long."

The Lord of Ely and his men rode off hastily, bowed over their horses as if they feared that Robin would send arrows after them. When they were out of sight, George-a-Green turned to his master.

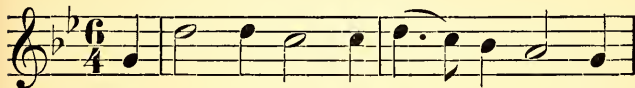
"Good Robin," he said, "we have done a man a kindness and punished an unjust

knave, and we still have our four hundred pounds."

"So much the better," said Robin. "We can give it to some other needy person."

Then they all went back to the clearing where Maid Marian awaited them, Much, the miller's son, with a comical face, singing over and over again this song:

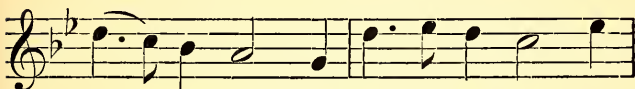
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and Sir
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of the
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The cramp is in my purse full sore, No



mon-ey will bide there-in - a, And if I had some



salve there-fore, Oh, light - ly then would I



sing - a Hey - ho! the cramp-a; hey - ho! the



cramp-a, Hey - ho! the cramp - a, the cramp-a!



CHAPTER VI

SINCE Robin Hood was an outlaw with a price on his head, he had many enemies eager to take him prisoner. The chief of these was the Sheriff of Nottingham. Many and many a time had this stern man, with a great band of followers, searched the long miles of Sherwood Forest, but he had never found Robin Hood's cunning hiding place.

At last he laid a trap into which he thought Robin Hood would be sure to fall. He proclaimed far and wide that he intended to hold a contest in archery. Every one should be welcomed. None should be questioned as to whence he came or whither he was going. This proclamation was pinned on several trees in Sherwood Forest, and presently Little

John found it and straightway brought it to Robin Hood.

“Aha!” said Robin, “the sheriff wishes us to walk into his hands.”

“It is a plot, then?” asked Little John.

“Plainly,” answered Robin. “Nevertheless, I think we had better go. The sheriff believes he will recognize us by our good shooting, but we shall puzzle him. We shall not shoot so well as we can; then he will think we are but ordinary bowmen.”

The bowmen listened to their leader with great interest. To enter Nottingham seemed to them an exciting adventure,—far more so than shooting in the forest, or contending with the Lord of Ely. Only rarely did Robin Hood allow one of them to go to the town, and then he wore a disguise, for to be recognized as an outlaw meant instant imprisonment. Therefore, the men longed all the more to exchange occasionally the woods for the streets.

“It will be pleasant to mingle with people once more,” said Much, the miller’s son, musingly; “I should like to hear some of the Nottingham singing.”

“I pray you, let only three or four go,”

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tures of* said Maid Marian, "and wear chain armor
*Robin
Hood* under your suits of Lincoln green."

*and Sir
Richard
of the
Lea* "That is a good plan," said Robin; "for,
indeed, treachery may be done us, however
careful we are."

There was some disappointment on the part of the bowmen when Robin Hood chose Friar Tuck, Much, George-a-Green, and Little John to accompany him. But the men always obeyed Robin cheerfully. They escorted the five to the Roman road, and watched them walking away, the cock's feathers nodding in their hats, their bows and quivers swinging on their backs. Robin Hood turned once or twice to wave his hand to Marian.

They walked two or three hours, and at last reached the town of Nottingham. The little stone houses, and thatched huts, and forges and shops were set irregularly along the streets. There was no castle, but the sheriff had a very handsome house of stone, with small dungeons underneath. In one of these he hoped some day to imprison Robin Hood.

At one end of the town was a big public square, where the contest was to be held.

Thither all the people were flocking. There were a few knights on horseback, accompanied by ladies whose palfreys wore trappings of rose-colored and violet silk. These ladies laughed gayly, and nodded to the common people. There were plump shopkeepers, clad in worsted, and carrying thick sticks, since they had no swords. Young mothers in holiday finery led their little children to see the show, while old women hobbled thither, leaning on crutches. Many men from the country round about had driven in with their families in rough carts with great heavy wheels. All were talking and laughing, and showing deep interest in the contest. Occasionally some one would speak to an archer, and wish him good luck in his shooting.

*Further
Adventures of
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Richard
of the
Lea*

When Robin Hood and his men reached the square they found several other bowmen assembled at one side; they were looking across at the mark which had been set up at the other side, five hundred yards away. The five friends smiled at one another. They could easily shoot that distance, even Friar Tuck.

Presently the Lord Sheriff came driving

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Adventures of
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Lea* up the street, escorted by armed guards. He wore a crimson robe edged with ermine, and he looked very cold and haughty. He took his seat in a pavilion just behind the archers, and then gave the sign that the sport might begin.

Man after man came up and shot at the white board on which was painted a black bull's-eye. Most of them fell far short of the mark; one or two came near it, but no one quite pierced it.

Then Robin Hood and his men stepped forward.

“By my faith,” whispered Robin, “it goes against the grain to miss the mark! But we must.”

Friar Tuck shot first; afterwards Little John, Much, and George-a-Green, each just touching the outside of the mark. Then Robin Hood drew his gray-goose shaft, and his arrow split the arrow of Little John. Every one but his men supposed this to be an accident.

“Well done!” cried the Lord Sheriff. “Now, all try again.”

Again each man shot, but not once was the bull's-eye pierced.

“The shooting might be better,” grumbled the sheriff.

“None could be better, my lord,” spoke up a constable, “unless it were that of the outlaws in Sherwood Forest.”

“I warrant you I can shoot as well as they can,” said Robin Hood, impulsively.

“Ah, boaster,” said the sheriff, “you are very free with your tongue. Try, now, and if you hit the bull’s-eye I will give you ten shillings; but if you fail, I will give you and your friends ten lashes each.”

“My men,” whispered Robin Hood to Little John, “put your backs together. We cannot take those ten lashes, so I must e’en do some pretty shooting; and then, as they will guess who we are, we must run for it, fighting as we go.”

Robin chose his arrows carefully, lifted his bow slowly, and shot again and again. First he filled the bull’s-eye full of arrows; then he split these, one after another, with other arrows. While every one stared open-mouthed at his wonderful skill, he backed away slowly from the pavilion, saying:

“I will show you what I can do at longer range, my Lord Sheriff.”

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He walked backward more quickly, shooting as he went, and again filling the bull's-eye with arrows. His four men edged along with him. By this time the Lord Sheriff had recovered from his astonishment, and his wits had begun to work. He sprang to his feet.

"Seize me those men!" he shouted. "For, in truth, I think we are not far from the outlaws of Sherwood Forest."

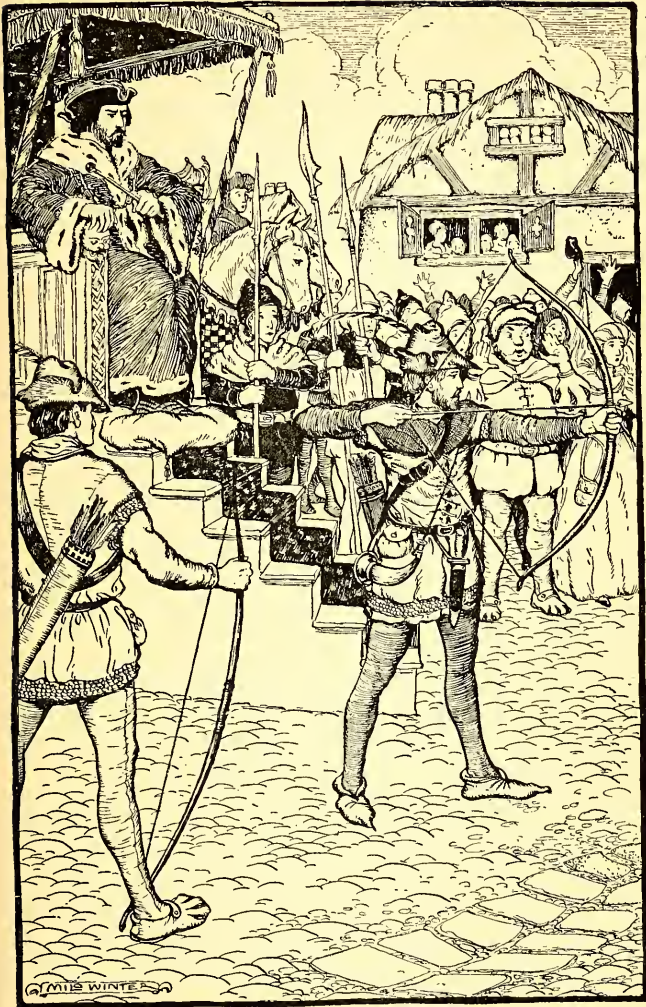
At that, Robin and his men began to run. The sheriff's archers, at his command, shot after them. But they aimed for the bodies, and all the arrows glanced off the chain armor underneath the green coats.

"Pursue the outlaws!" commanded the sheriff.

Robin and his men ran more quickly than ever, for now the sheriff's archers were trying hard to overtake them. One after another the pursuers dropped off, till only a few remained. They kept shooting as they followed Robin and his friends into the woods, and at last the arrow of one of them struck Little John in the leg. He staggered for a few moments, and then fell.

"Good master, I pray you, kill me," he

Robin chose his arrows carefully, lifted his bow slowly and shot again and again



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tures of* said to Robin, "for I do not wish to fall into
the hands of our enemies."

*Robin
Hood* Robin Hood handed his bow to Much.

*and Sir
Richard
of the
Lea* "Never can I kill you, dear comrade," he
said. "Do you, good Much, and George-a-
Green, and Friar Tuck, shoot. I am going
to carry Little John."

He lifted the huge young man and carried him painfully for several yards. He rested for a few seconds and then set out again, the others shooting steadily the while. George-a-Green whistled sharply every time he sped a shaft; big Much knotted his brown brows and frowned; the good Friar Tuck trotted backward heavily, his rosy face anxious, for he could not shoot so well as the others.

"Turn you to the left," panted Robin at last, "for this road leads to the castle of our good friend, Sir Richard of the Lea. Those who pursue us dare not come very near to his estate, and I cannot carry Little John much farther."

Even as Robin Hood spoke, Sir Richard appeared, walking through the woods in company with his wife and son and two or three followers.

"My good friend Robin Hood!" he cried.

“And in danger? Come, now, to my castle.”

When the sheriff's men saw Sir Richard and his company they stopped, and presently they turned back to the town of Nottingham.

Sir Richard ordered his men at arms to carry Little John. Then he led Robin up a grassy road to the Castle of the Lea, a red-towered building standing on a hill. His lady brought Robin and the men perfumed water, waiting on them just as Maid Marian had waited on Sir Richard. A good monk who was skilled in surgery cared for Little John's wound, and soon all were seated around the long table in Sir Richard's hall, where Robin and his men told the story of the day at Nottingham.

Then Sir Richard told Robin that he had prospered since the outlaws had helped him, and that he would be able to pay back the four hundred pounds before the year was out. He was much surprised when Robin told him that he had got back the money from the wicked Lord of Ely.

After that, a gray-haired old harper sang to them of the glories of King Arthur and his court; and all listened, especially the little pages, who hoped some day to be brave

*Further
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Richard
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Further Adventures of Robin Hood and Sir Richard of the Lea knights. The song the guests liked best was "Troy Town":



When Troy town for ten years' wars With-stood the



Greeks in man-ful wise; Yet did their foes in -



crease so fast, That to re - sist none could suf-fice.



Waste lie those walls that were so



good, And corn now grows where Troy town stood.

It was almost midnight before the guests were conducted to their beds. The floors were strewn with green rushes, while the

beds were spread with linen that had lain in sweet herbs.

Sir Richard wished to keep his guests for several days, but Robin feared that Marian might think some harm had befallen him if he stayed longer than he must. So next morning they set off early, Little John riding on a mule which Sir Richard had given him. Sir Richard accompanied them down the grassy road to the edge of the woods. Then he bade them farewell, and watched them as they made off down the Roman road.

When Robin was out of sight Sir Richard turned homeward, but no sooner had he taken the first steps than an arrow was sent through his hat, and a loud voice commanded him to halt. Then six of the sheriff's men ran up to him and bound his hands together.

"If we cannot take Robin Hood," they said, "we will take you to the sheriff, who will punish you for harboring him."

"Ah, ha! you are six men, and yet you are afraid to attack Robin Hood!" said Sir Richard.

Angrily they bade him keep silence, and led him off in the direction opposite that which Robin had taken.

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Richard
of the
Lea*

But Sir Richard's wife had seen it all. She was riding her white mule over the grassy road, meaning to meet Sir Richard and walk home with him. She had all but reached him when the sheriff's men made their attack. The lady waited till they were out of earshot. Then she urged her white mule down the Roman road after Robin Hood, and it was not long before she had overtaken him and told him her plight.

"And now, sir, will you go and rescue my good lord?" said the lady. "For if once he reaches Nottingham, the sheriff will put him in a dungeon, and never again will he see the light of day." Her tears fell fast, and she clasped her hands as she said: "I know I am asking you to risk your life for him, but did he not risk his for you, in giving you shelter?"

"Lady, there is no need to plead," said Robin. "Gladly we go, my men and I. You shall see your good lord very shortly."

Robin and George-a-Green and Much and the rosy Friar Tuck set off running down the Roman road, the lady and Little John trotting behind on their mules. Little John did his best to comfort her, but he was not

accustomed to speaking to ladies, and hardly knew what to say. He contented himself with repeating over and over the statement that Robin Hood's arm was the stoutest in Nottinghamshire, and that he would soon free Sir Richard.

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When they had almost overtaken the sheriff's men, Robin Hood said that they must skirt through the forest and meet their enemies face to face.

"In that way," he said, "we and they are less likely to harm Sir Richard."

"Do not hurt him," said the lady. "Oh, perhaps when the sheriff's men see you, they will turn and slay him!"

"Nay, they will not see us soon enough," said Robin, confidently. "Do you and Little John ride slowly along the road, and when you see us springing on the sheriff's men, urge your mules to a trot and come up to us."

Robin, Friar Tuck, Much, and George-a-Green slipped into the forest. After what seemed a very long time to the lady and Little John, they sprang out of the woods and fell upon the six bowmen. Then Little John struck his mule, and hurried up, with an arrow all ready to shoot.

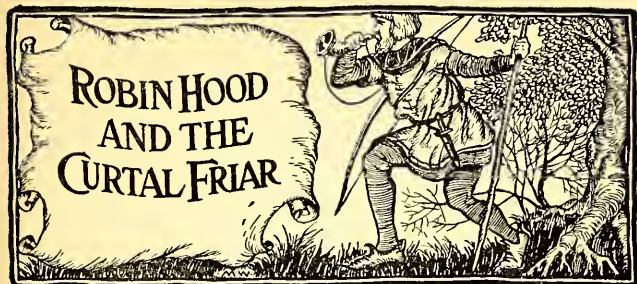
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By the time the sheriff's men had recovered from their surprise, big Much had dragged Sir Richard into the greenwood and untied his hands. Then he rushed back and helped Robin and Friar Tuck and George-a-Green to engage the six men. By this time, Little John was sending arrows at the enemy. All six of them were soon wounded and made prisoners.

Robin Hood took away their bows and tied their hands together.

"Now," he said, "I might slay you; for you have tried hard to make an end of me and my men. Yet you were only obeying the orders of your lord, the sheriff, and obedience is the duty of every true man. So I give you your freedom. Go back to the sheriff and tell him that if he wishes to catch Robin Hood he must learn a better way than any he has yet tried."

The six prisoners, their heads hanging, set off slowly toward Nottingham. Robin Hood escorted Sir Richard and his grateful wife to their Castle of the Lea. Then he and his men began their journey back to Maid Marian, waiting for them under the greenwood tree.



CHAPTER VII

ONE day Much, the miller's son, went off on a solitary hunting excursion. He wished to explore a distant part of Sherwood Forest, and he promised to return with some fine venison. He came back in the afternoon, however, empty-handed.

"What is this?" laughed Little John. "What has become of your boasts?"

Much made no reply. He walked grimly among the bowmen, who were sitting or lying on the grass of the clearing, until he came to Robin Hood, who sat under his tall oak.

"Master," said Much, with a black frown, "do you know that you are not the only lord of Sherwood Forest?"

"Why do you say that, Much?" asked Robin, mildly.

Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar “Because I know it to be true. I fared forth early this morning, finding many a new path in the forest. The flowers and birds enticed me, and I made more than one new verse as I walked and sang. Soon I came almost to the end of the forest. It is a part not far from Fountains Abbey.”

“I have heard of it,” said Robin; “but I have never traveled there.”

“Of that I feel sure,” said Much, the miller’s son, “else the Curtal Friar would not be there.”

“The Curtal Friar?” inquired Robin.

“I came to the part of the forest of which I speak,” went on Much, “and there lay a broad lake. Sitting by the edge of it was a Curtal Friar. He was as big as Little John, and I believe him to be as strong.”

At this, Little John leaped to his feet.

“Lead me to him, and I will show you better!” he cried.

“Patience, John,” said Robin Hood. “Go on with your story, Much.”

“This friar paid no attention to me till I had come close to him,” went on Much. “Then he asked me my business.”

“‘I am out for a day’s pleasuring,’ said I.

“‘Can you not find your pleasure in some other part of the forest?’ he asked. ‘I hold this part, and I do not care to have strangers or robbers cross this water of mine unless they pay me a heavy fee!’

*Robin
Hood
and the
Curtal
Friar*

“‘I will pay you no fee,’ I said, ‘nor am I a stranger or a robber, for this forest is the forest of my master, Robin Hood.’

“‘Go back to Robin Hood, your master,’ said he, ‘and tell him that if he ever comes near me he must make good his claim by force.’”

“Is that all?” Robin asked.

“Yes,” replied Much, sulkily. “I came back because he whipped up a bow from beside him, and had an arrow turned on me before I could draw my own bow.”

“Nay, for once you were too slow, Much,” said Robin, smiling. “I must e’en go to see this Curtal Friar. He will be an interesting man to meet.”

“In faith, yes! A fighting friar always is,” said Friar Tuck, fingering his long bow.

“May I go with you, master?” asked Little John. “I would fain see this man who is as big as I am.”

“Nay,” replied Robin. “I must go alone;

Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar but you may all be within bugle call, as is your wont."

Early next morning Robin Hood set out, carrying with him his best bow, a heavy sheaf of arrows, a leather shield, and a bright sword. It was almost noon before he reached the lake Much had described as lying near Fountains Abbey. The Curtal Friar sat on the shore, his bow and arrows and a buckler by his side. He turned his head and stared for a moment at Robin. Then he sprang to his feet, bow in hand. He was, as Much had said, a very tall man; perhaps not quite so huge as Little John, but certainly larger than Robin.

"Ho, stranger!" he shouted. "What would you here?"

"I would cross that water," Robin replied.

"I do not permit every one to cross," said the friar, with a grim smile; "but I will take you over if you will pay my fee."

"Whatever you ask," replied Robin.

He looked about for the Curtal Friar's boat, but none was to be seen.

"Nay, I use no boat in my ferrying," said the friar. "Up on my shoulders, man; I'll carry you over."

They went along the shore till they came to the ford. Then Robin mounted on the friar's back, holding his bow in his right hand. The friar lurched a little under his weight, but he stepped out boldly into the water. Nowhere did it come higher than his waist, and after a few minutes of careful walking, both were safe on the opposite shore. Through a break in the trees, Robin Hood could see the gray walls of Fountains Abbey.

*Robin
Hood
and the
Curtal
Friar*

"It is a pretty prospect here," he said. "I must go closer to the abbey."

"Not so fast," said the friar; "pay me my fee first."

"Gladly," said Robin. He took a bag of gold from his doublet. "What is the fee?"

"It is not gold," replied the friar; "but you must carry me back over the stream even as I carried you. That is my fee."

Robin compressed his lips. Then he said:

"Such was the agreement, though it is a strange fee you ask, and one I did not expect. Mount, then, friar."

The friar was a heavy weight for Robin. With the first step he took he staggered. He was the more impeded because he was

Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar carrying his bow lifted above the water. He managed to keep his footing, however, but he was glad to reach the other shore.

After he had put down the friar he stood dizzily for a few moments. Then he said, "So much for your fee, Curtal Friar; I will not pay another such. And now put me across again, for I would fain see Fountains Abbey."

"Marry, I will not," began the friar. Then he broke off, and said, "Well, then, mount again."

Again Robin mounted, careful to keep his bow out of the water. When they reached midstream the friar coolly shook him off.

"Thus far you go," he said; "for I have guessed you are Robin Hood. Your kingdom stops in the midst of my stream."

Robin said no word. His bow was still dry, and he held it aloft threateningly, as he waded ashore. The Curtal Friar, too, waded quickly to the spot where he had left his bow and arrows.

They scrambled upon the shore and began to shoot at each other. Robin shot first, and the friar caught the arrow on his buckler; then the friar shot, and the arrow would have

*The Friar
was a
heavy
weight for
Robin*



Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar gone to Robin's heart had he not warded it off with his shield. Several times this was repeated, until each saw that the other was no mean adversary. They shot fast and furiously, till their arrows were all gone.

"And now, what are we to do?" said the friar. "For I will not yield you an inch."

"Nor I you," said Robin. "Let us fight with swords, for I perceive you have two lying hid in that green bower on the bank."

"You have quick eyes," said the friar. "The swords, then."

They set to with the swords, and sharp sparks flew from the clashing steel. Each was so skillful that the other could not wound him. They fought and fought until their blows became as feeble as though they were fighting with straws.

"Methinks we shall fall down together," gasped Robin, "with the victory to neither. A boon, friar, and I will grant you no less."

"What is your boon?" asked the friar.

"Give me leave to blow three times on my bugle," answered Robin, and he leaned wearily against a tree.

"Ho, you would summon assistance!" said the Curtal Friar. "Then so will I.

Give me leave to whistle three times after you have blown your bugle."

Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar

"Agreed," said Robin.

He set his bugle to his mouth, and blew three blasts. Presently, in the distance, the friar saw fifty bowmen, clad in green, running toward him with their bows bent.

"Marry! it is as I thought," he said. Then he whistled loudly three times. Immediately, from beyond the walls of Fountains Abbey came, leaping and barking, fifty large black dogs.

"See you, Robin," said the friar, "I have a dog for every one of your men, and there is still myself for you."

While he spoke, the great dogs were swimming the stream. The first two that reached the bank leaped at Robin Hood and tore the doublet of Lincoln green from his back. But Little John had now arrived at the head of the fifty bowmen, and he killed one dog, while Robin killed the other.

The other men shot at the rest of the dogs, but what was their amazement to see the dogs leap and catch the arrows in their mouths!

"See you, Robin," said the friar; "my

Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar dogs have been trained. Some of them you may indeed succeed in killing, but not all."

"Nay, we can soon tire out your dogs," said Little John, and he lifted his bow.

"Stop!" said Robin Hood. "Hold your arrows, my men; and do you keep back your dogs, Curtal Friar."

They did as they were bidden, and then Robin said:

"It were a pity that you and I should be enemies, Curtal Friar. Tell me why you guard so carefully this stream."

"There are many robbers who have come to Fountains Abbey and taken our gold and food," said the friar. "I found that my only safety lay in keeping these dogs to help me guard this ford."

"Yet why did you attack me?" said Robin Hood. "You know that I am the king of Sherwood Forest. Why should not I pass and see Fountains Abbey if I wish?"

"I will not let you rob the abbey," said the friar, sturdily.

"Nay, then, I would not rob it," replied Robin; "I never take money unjustly, friar."

"I hear many tales against you," said the

friar. "You are an outlaw, and there is a price upon your head."

*Robin
Hood
and the
Curtal
Friar*

"There are many false reports in the world," Robin Hood said. "I am an outlaw, but I am not an evildoer. I am more likely to give you alms for the poor that come to Fountains Abbey than I am to take anything from you."

"Then let us hold the forest in peace together," said the friar. "Make the terms."

"In truth, peace is better than war," said Robin. "Friar, give my men leave to cross this stream whenever they will, provided always they pay you a fee of dried meat."

"Agreed," said the friar.

"Furthermore, pay me a broad gold piece every month, and I will give you as often a fat buck for your poor."

"Agreed," repeated the friar.

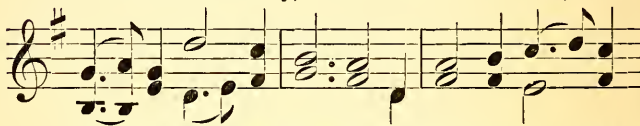
"And when you come to my retreat in the greenwood," said Robin, "there will always be a warm welcome for you from Marian and me, as well as from all my men."

"And for you," said the friar, bowing, "the doors of Fountains Abbey will be thrown wide."

Robin Hood and the Curial Friar At that, they all parted the best of friends, and Robin and his men went back, laughing and singing, to the greenwood:



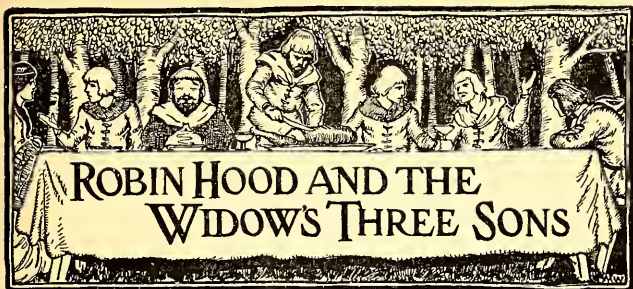
Jog on, jog on the foot - path way, And
Your pal - try mon - ey - bags of gold, What
Cast care a - way, let sor - row cease, A



mer-ri-ly take the stile-a; Your mer-ry heart goes
need have we to stare for; When lit-tle or noth-ing
fig for mel - an - chol - y; Let's laugh and sing, or,



all the day; Your sad tires in a mile - a.
soon is told, And we have the less to care for.
if you please, We'll frolic with sweet Dol - ly.



CHAPTER VIII

ROBIN HOOD and his men were practicing archery one day, near the Roman road, when they heard the sound of weeping. They peeped through the trees and saw a tall woman clad in black like a widow, sobbing and wringing her hands. Robin Hood hastened to her.

"Prithee, madam," he said, "why' do you weep? Tell me, that I may help you."

"Alas, alas!" said the woman. "I am beyond help. I weep for my three sons to be hanged this day at Nottingham by order of the sheriff."

"What have they done? Have they harmed some defenseless person or robbed the poor?" he asked.

"No, no; they are good sons," said the

Robin Hood and the Widow's Three Sons widow, sadly, "so good that so far the sheriff has found no one in all Nottingham who is willing to hang them."

"But what have they done?" repeated Robin.

"They are three young squires who have been followers of Robin Hood, the outlaw, and they were taken last night for killing the king's deer."

"What!" cried Robin Hood, "are three of my good bowmen taken? But comfort yourself, madam, for hanged they shall never be while I live. Go you to Nottingham town. Ere long you shall embrace your sons."

"Nay, do not give me idle hopes," wept the widow.

"I speak the truth," he said. "Go you to Nottingham town, and have no fear. I am Robin Hood, and I will save these my men."

He bowed hastily and walked into the forest, where he consulted with Friar Tuck, Little John, Much, and George-a-Green. As they were speaking they saw an old, ragged beggar coming down the road, tapping tremblingly with his stick.

“See,” said Robin Hood, “there is the beggar’s raiment I must needs have if I am to carry out my plan. I pray you, my good men, come after me to Nottingham town.”

Robin Hood and the Widow’s Three Sons

Robin hurried to the old man.

“I pray you, good father,” he said, “exchange clothes with me as quickly as you can.”

“Nay, do not make game of an old man,” said the beggar. “My clothes are patched and torn, while yours are whole.”

“Nevertheless, let us change,” said Robin. “I am in earnest. To prove that I speak the truth, I give you this broad gold piece.”

The old man looked at the coin suspiciously, but when he saw that it was good gold he began fumblingly to take off his clothes. They were indeed patched from hose to mantle, with many colors and qualities of cloth. The hat was a large gray one, which came well down over the eyes. Then there was a bag for meal, one for salt, one for barley and corn, one for bread, and one for beef. Last of all, Robin put his silver horn and four sharp knives inside the worn doublet.

Then he set off quickly down the Roman

*"Nay, do
not make
game of
an old
man,"
said the
beggar*



road for Nottingham. Far ahead, he could make out the figure of the widow, hurrying to see her sons saved. On the way many people joined him, going to see the hanging of the poor youths.

Robin Hood and the Widow's Three Sons

“It will be a sin and a shame if those good young men have to die,” they said, “and only for killing of the deer which should be free to all men.”

Robin Hood listened to their words, but he made no remark himself. As he walked beside the forest, his sharp ears heard a slight continuous rustling, and he knew it was his merry men marching among the trees, ready to obey whatever orders he might give.

When he reached Nottingham, Robin followed the crowd to the great square where once he had shot so wonderfully. In the center of it was built a high gallows. On the platform of this stood the three young squires, their hands and feet bound, above each head a noose dangling. They looked pale but brave.

“Only last night they were free,” thought Robin. “They supped with me in the greenwood. Marry, and to-night they shall be free again! I wish they knew it.”

Robin Hood and the Widow's Three Sons A pavilion had been erected behind the gallows, and in this sat the Lord Sheriff. He looked about the crowd anxiously. Then he beckoned to a herald who stood on the steps of the pavilion.

“Come hither,” he said. “Sound again my demand.”

The herald blew his brass trumpet.

“Hear ye!” he cried. “The most noble the Lord High Sheriff of Nottingham demands that some loyal subject of the king come forward and offer himself as hangman to these three traitors who have slain the king’s deer.”

For a moment no one made any response. Then Robin Hood stepped forward.

“Stop him,” said some one in the crowd; “do not let any one hang these three young squires.”

Several tried to lay hands on Robin, but he slipped away from all of them, and reached the steps of the pavilion.

“You are a loyal old man,” said the sheriff, as Robin stood before him with head and shoulders bent, and hat pulled well down over his face. “Do you think you are strong enough to hang these traitors?”

"I could hang thirty traitors without growing weary," said Robin, grimly.

"Then you will be my hangman?"

"What will you give me?" asked Robin.

"Thirty pence, which is the regular hangman's fee, and all the clothes of these three traitors."

Robin Hood and the Widow's Three Sons

The poor widow heard the words and uttered a loud cry of despair. She had trusted in the word of Robin Hood, but where was he? How could he keep this old beggar man from hanging her sons? The people crowded against the scaffold, muttering angrily against the old man.

"Lord Sheriff," said Robin Hood, in a high, broken voice. "I prithee send a guard with me to the foot of the gallows, else the people will tear me in pieces."

Half a dozen of the sheriff's men led Robin Hood to the gallows.

"Now go back," said Robin, "and stand close about your Lord Sheriff. It seems to me that he will need help ere long."

The guards went back to the pavilion, and Robin stood alone by the three young squires.

"Fear nothing," he whispered. "It is I, my brave lads; I will save you."

*Robin
Hood
and the
Widow's
Three
Sons*

He went close to each one, pretending to adjust the nooses about their necks. In doing so, he slipped a knife inside the doublet of each. Then he went the rounds again, pretending to tighten the ropes about their hands and feet, but in reality cutting them.

"Oh, have mercy, and kill them quickly, if kill them you must!" wept the widow.

"My Lord Sheriff," pleaded a man in the crowd, "let those men go free. I myself will be surety that they will kill no more deer."

"Hold your peace!" thundered the sheriff. "You know well that these are the men of Robin Hood, the wicked outlaw who glories in destroying the property of the king."

"Nay, Robin Hood is kind," said the man. "If you send these young squires back to him, he will do the town some great kindness in return."

"Arrest that man!" shouted the sheriff. "He who dares to oppose my will shall be thrust into prison."

While the guards were searching for the man among the crowd, Robin took his bugle from his doublet. In the confusion, no one knew who it was who blew three shrill blasts.

“What sound was that?” cried the sheriff, turning to the herald.

“My lord, I do not know,” the man replied.

“A requiem for the souls of these three men, perhaps,” shouted Robin Hood.

“Get about your work quickly, old man,” said the sheriff; “else shall you forfeit the thirty pence and receive thirty lashes.”

As he spoke, up the main street came the quick tramp, tramp, of two hundred feet, and Robin Hood’s bowmen poured into the square. Their long gray-geese shafts were all ready to shoot, and the Lord Sheriff felt as though each shaft were aimed at his heart. At the same moment, while all eyes were turned upon the bowmen, Robin Hood and the three squires leaped from the platform of the gallows. The friendly crowd made a path for them, and they ran to join the bowmen.

Then Robin Hood stood at their head, drew himself up to his full height, and gazed at the Lord Sheriff.

“A man’s life is worth more than all the deer he could ever shoot,” he said sternly. “The forest and the food in the forest should be free to all. Look at me, Lord Sheriff;

*Robin
Hood
and the
Widow's
Three
Sons*

Robin Hood and the Widow's Three Sons I am Robin Hood. I was made an outlaw, and I have made myself King of Sherwood Forest. I offer its deer to all the good people here present. Come, whenever it pleases you, and shoot in my kingdom."

He turned and made a gesture to his men. They all backed away from the square, their bows lifted, and the arrows still aimed at the Lord Sheriff. The widow walked among her sons, weeping for joy.

"Madam," said Robin, "dry your tears. Your sons will be safe hereafter, for this incident will teach them not to be careless. They are safe so long as they stay in Sherwood Forest. Come home with us, madam, and my Lady Marian will show you how happy a life can be led in the good greenwood."

But the widow decided to return again to Nottingham. She bade her sons a loving farewell.

"I will come to see you in the greenwood," she said, "but you must never again travel out from the forest. You are certain not to come to harm so long as you keep close to Robin Hood."

So they parted. Robin and the men went

back to the greenwood, and as they went, *Robin Hood and the Widow's Three Sons*
 Much, the miller's son, who had been teasing the young squires about what he called their travel to Nottingham in search of adventure, began to sing this song, which he had heard in the town:



There were three trav-el-ers, trav-el-ers three, With a



hey down, ho down, lang tree down der - ry, And



they would go trav-el the North Coun-try, With-out



ev - er a stiv - er of mon - ey. . .

“They traveled east, and they traveled west,
 With a hey down, ho down, lang tree down derry,
 Wherever they came, still they drank of the best,
 Without ever a stiver of money.

*Robin
Hood
and the
Widow's
Three
Sons*

“At length by good fortune they came to a inn,
With a hey down, ho down, lang tree down derry,
And they were as merry as e'er they had been,
Without ever a stiver of money.

“Then taking their leaves they went merrily out,
With a hey down, ho down, lang tree down derry,
And they 're gone for to travel the nation about
Without ever a stiver of money.”



CHAPTER IX

A FEW days after their adventures with the sheriff's men, Robin Hood and Little John were standing on the Roman road, wondering how they should spend the day. Presently they heard the rumble of wheels and the sound of loud singing. They turned around and saw a potter driving a cart full of earthen pots of all sizes.

"This fellow has no fear," said Robin Hood. "Every week he goes singing down the road as if there were no outlaws in the forest."

"He is perfectly honest," said Little John, "and he has no doubt heard that we do not stop honest men. Yet, master, give me leave to have sport with him."

"Take your will, Little John," said Robin Hood.

*Robin
Hood
and the
Potter*

When the potter came up, Little John said to him:

“Ho, potter, stop your cart, and pay us a toll. We are no longer going to let you ride free on our road.”

“Marry, you may whistle for your toll!” shouted the potter. “Get up, Dobbin.”

“We are two to one,” said Little John, “and two big men, at that.”

“The biggest does not always win,” retorted the potter, cheerfully.

He jumped down from his cart, and took his great staff in his right hand.

“Come, now,” he said, “I challenge one of you to a play with the staff.”

Robin Hood stepped forward.

“Ready, my brave fellow,” he said. “Have at you.”

Then the two began to strike at each other, but both were skillful at the play, and parried each other’s blows. At last the potter struck Robin on the wrist, and sent his staff spinning from his hand.

“Well done, my man,” said Robin. “Shall we go on fighting?”

“Nay,” said the potter, “for I see you are a man whom, in the end, I cannot beat. I

should spend the morning here, and then who would sell my pots? I bid you good day.”

Robin Hood and the Potter

“Nay, then,” said Robin, “let me take your clothes and sell your pots, and do you stay here with Little John and my other men, and feast on venison.”

The potter smiled.

“Faith, I never tasted venison in my life,” he said; “but do you know how to sell pots? Perhaps you will sell them too cheap.”

“Have no fear,” replied Robin, “when I return I shall give you whatever money you ask for your wares.”

“Then strip off your green clothes and take my rags,” said the potter. “Faith, ’t is many a day since I had a whole doublet!”

His woolen doublet was indeed torn and soiled, his stockings full of holes, and his shoes cut. When Robin was dressed in these garments no one would ever have dreamed that he was the great outlaw. He leaped into the cart, and drove gayly down the road till he reached the edge of Nottingham town. Then he made the horse go very slowly, crying loudly:

“Pots! pots! Who will buy my pots? Very cheap pots!”

"Three-
pence a
pot!
three-
pence!"



The women came from the little houses — mothers with babies in their arms, and old women—all eager to ask his price. But Robin answered none of them till he reached the sheriff's great house. Then he said: "Threepence a pot! threepence!"

*Robin
Hood
and the
Potter*

The women looked at one another.

"The potter will not thrive long at his trade," they whispered. "Never before were such pots sold for less than fivepence."

Buyers came from all about, and Robin did a thriving trade. From the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse of the sheriff's wife peeping at him from a window. At last he had sold all the pots but five.

"These are not for sale," he said. "These I give as a present to the sheriff's wife."

Some one told this to one of the sheriff's maidservants, and she came out and carried the five pots in to her mistress. Then she returned and said that the sheriff's wife was pleased with the present, and would be glad to give Robin his dinner.

Robin quickly tied his horse, and went inside. The maidservant took him into the kitchen, where she spread a meal of black bread, cheese, and cakes.

*Robin
Hood
and the
Potter*

While he was eating, the sheriff's wife came into the kitchen. She was a stout, pretty lady, with dancing black eyes. Her father had been a peasant, and she liked to slip into the kitchen and talk to the peasants who came to see her servants. But the sheriff preferred that she should sit in the main hall, and have nothing to do with people of low rank.

Robin liked her, and they soon fell into pleasant talk. Then she went to the sheriff, who sat at work in his countingroom, and told him that the potter was a good talker.

"Bring him to me," said the sheriff.

So Robin went from the kitchen to the countingroom, and began to tell stories of adventure to the sheriff. At last he led the talk to the subject of archery. At that the sheriff's face grew grim.

"My lord has had a misadventure with archery of late," laughed the sheriff's wife.

Then she told Robin Hood the story he knew so well, about himself and his three followers.

"It was good shooting, nevertheless," said the sheriff.

“In faith, it is not difficult to shoot well,” *Robin Hood and the Potter* said Robin Hood, carelessly.

“Can you shoot, fellow, that you talk so freely?” asked the sheriff.

“Assuredly,” said Robin Hood.

“Prove it to me,” said the sheriff. “I will take you to the square where the contest was held, and you shall shoot.”

When they had left the house, and the sheriff's horse had been brought him, Robin saw that the sheriff's lady was still standing in the great entrance.

“Are you not coming, my lady?” he asked.

“Nay,” she said, “I have no palfrey; I must e'en stay at home.”

Robin thought it was strange that a man with so many horses as the sheriff must have, did not provide a proper palfrey for his wife. He kept his thoughts to himself, however, and drove behind the sheriff till they reached the square. Then he got down and took his bow and arrows from the bottom of the cart. He shot straight into the bull's-eye.

“Verily, you shoot as well as the strangers did who outwitted me here last month,”

Robin Hood and the Potter said the sheriff. "Who are you, fellow?"
"A man who has a little skill in shooting," replied Robin. "But one could hardly miss with this bow. Robin Hood put it into this cart this very morning."

"What!" shouted the sheriff. "Do you know Robin Hood?"

"As well as I know myself," replied Robin.

The sheriff's fierce face grew crimson.

"I want to see that man," he said; "I must know what he looks like. Can you bring me to him?"

"Do you mean that you wish to capture him?" asked Robin.

"Yes; and yet, if you lead me to him now with a company of my men, he and his bowmen will hear them coming through the greenwood. I do not want that."

"Then what do you want?" asked Robin Hood.

"I want to see his face so that I shall know him if ever we meet in Nottingham town. I do not doubt that he will attempt to meet me single-handed, as he has before. I want to be sure that I am capturing the great outlaw, and none other."

"So your plan is to go alone with me to

the greenwood to see Robin Hood?" asked Robin.

*Robin
Hood
and the
Potter*

"Yes, but I do not want him to see me," said the sheriff.

"I do not think I can promise that," said Robin Hood.

The sheriff looked at him doubtfully.

"You can trust me, however," went on Robin; "I will answer for your life with my own. If Robin Hood's men kill you, they shall kill me, also."

"Then, if I can count on your loyalty, I will go with you in the morning," said the sheriff. "We two are strong enough to overcome Robin Hood should we chance to meet him alone."

They went back to the sheriff's house, and Robin Hood spent the rest of the afternoon talking to the sheriff's lady. After supper he went at once to bed, and slept soundly till the morning. When he and the sheriff were ready to set out, he took leave of the sheriff's wife.

"I thank you for your hospitality, lady," he said, "and I beg you to accept this red-gold ring as a sign of my friendship."

She slipped it on her plump finger.

*Robin
Hood
and the
Potter*

“A gold ring and five fine pots!” she said. “Indeed, potter, you are as generous as if you were an earl. I trust that some day you will be requited for your kindness.”

Robin Hood and the sheriff rode out of Nottingham and then down the straight road to Sherwood Forest. Robin related many a story and sang many a song to please the sheriff, who said that the ride seemed very short.

“Faith, the rest of the day will seem long enough to you,” said Robin.

“What do you mean?” asked the sheriff.

“You will find my meaning in Sherwood Forest,” answered Robin. “Turn in here, my lord.”

The sheriff paused.

“Do you mean treachery, fellow?”

“Nay,” said Robin, jumping from the cart. “I have passed my word that you shall be safe.”

He put his hand on the bridle of the sheriff's horse, and held him. Then he brought his silver bugle from inside his doublet, and blew a loud, clear blast. Immediately, Little John, the potter, and a score of bowmen ran from the greenwood.

“Hey!” cried the potter. “Here come my clothes and my empty cart.”

*Robin
Hood
and the
Potter*

“Dear master,” cried Little John, “can this be the Sheriff of Nottingham?”

“It is,” said Robin Hood. “But I have sworn that he shall come to no harm among us. I have said that I will answer for his life with my own.”

Little John frowned.

“The wound in my leg that his men made is still painful,” he grumbled. “Master, is he not to pay for that?”

“Nay, John,” said Robin Hood, “this man is our guest for the day. I have taken food in his house; he shall dine safely in my greenwood.”

The sheriff was looking anxiously from one to another.

“Release me,” he stammered. “I command you! I am lord of this shire.”

“But I am lord of this forest,” returned the great outlaw; “for I am Robin Hood, the man you wished to see.”

The sheriff stared at him helplessly.

“I am going now to put on my own garments,” said Robin. “Then I shall sit opposite you at dinner, my lord, and

Robin Hood and the Potter you can take your fill of gazing at me." Little John and George-a-Green led the sheriff, blindfolded, to the grassy clearing, where Marian greeted them. She was very courteous to the sheriff, but he was so angry and afraid that he could scarcely reply to her.

Soon a great dinner was spread. The sheriff saw haunch after haunch of the king's venison, which he was supposed to protect. He saw the king's pheasants and partridges and plovers. Robin Hood urged him to eat, but he could take only a few scant mouthfuls.

After dinner Robin bade his archers set up a mark; and then he showed the sheriff what perfect marksmen they all were.

"You see, my lord," he said, "that we can protect ourselves. If you should come to the greenwood with a company of soldiers, you know what you would meet with."

The sheriff made no reply. He was very angry, and yet he could not help admiring the fine shooting.

In the middle of the afternoon Robin took him back to the clearing. The potter ran after them.

“Hold, Robin Hood,” he said; “the day is going. I must get home to my wife. Give me the money for the pots.”

*Robin
Hood
and the
Potter*

“What were they worth?” asked Robin Hood.

“A good pound of gold,” said the potter, “and I hope you will give me all of it, though I am willing to pay for the good cheer I have had with your men.”

“You shall not pay for that,” replied Robin, “for you were a welcome guest. Tell Little John to give you, from our treasury, not only one pound, but ten. And now farewell, potter; remember that you are welcome here whenever you choose to come as a friend.”

The potter took off his hat.

“I am proud to be the friend, however humble, of Robin Hood,” he said. “Fare you well, my lord.”

“Farewell,” said the sheriff.

“Marry,” laughed the potter, “I did not call you ‘lord’! I spoke to Robin Hood. To my mind, that man is a lord who shows himself best in wit and in strength of body. Farewell again, my Lord Robert, Earl of Huntington.”

*Robin
Hood
and the
Potter*

“Only Robin Hood of the green forest,” said the outlaw simply. “Farewell, potter.”

Then Robin Hood turned to the sheriff.

“Your horse is ready, my lord, and you have my leave to go.”

Little John came up, leading a white palfrey.

“But where is my horse?” asked the sheriff.

“You will ride home on this,” said Robin Hood. “I have exchanged it for your horse. Your good lady has no palfrey, and you have more horses than you need.”

The sheriff was angrier than ever. He said never a word, but as Robin blindfolded his eyes he thought: “Five pots, a ring, and a white palfrey! My wife has profited by this adventure.”

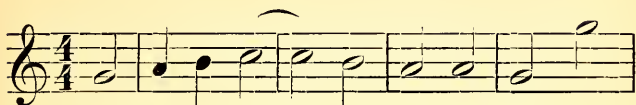
He mounted the palfrey, and then Robin Hood led him through a maze of paths into the road.

“Farewell, sir,” he said. “I think you will hardly find your way back to our haunts. Give greetings to your lady from me.”

The sheriff made no reply. He only urged the white palfrey to a trot. As he hurried down the Roman road in a cloud of dust, Much, the miller’s son, sang this song after

him, George-a-Green whistling the tune with all his might:

Robin Hood and the Potter



"Now Rob - in, lend to me thy bow, Sweet



Rob - in, lend to me thy bow, For



I must now a - hunt - ing with my la - dy



go, With my sweet la - dy go."

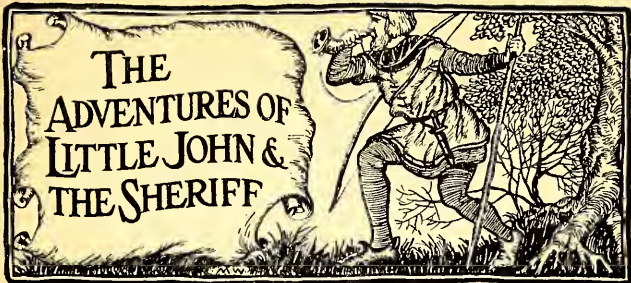
"And whither will thy lady go?
Sweet Wilkin, tell it unto me;
And thou shalt have my hawk, my hound, and eke
my bow,
To wait on thy lady."

"My lady will to Uppingham,
To Uppingham forsooth will she;
And I myself appointed for to be the man
To wait upon my lady."

Robin Hood and the Potter “Adieu, good Wilkin, all beshrewed,
Thy hunting nothing pleaseth me;
But yet beware thy babbling hounds stray not abroad
For ang’ring of thy lady.”

“My hounds shall be led in the line,
So well I can assure it thee;
Unless by strain of view some pursue I may find,
To please my sweet lady.”

With that the lady she came in.
And willed them all for to agree;
For honest hunting never was accounted sin,
Nor never shall for me.



CHAPTER X

THE Sheriff of Nottingham was determined to wreak vengeance upon Robin Hood and his followers. For weeks he and his men went through Sherwood Forest, seeking traces of the outlaws. But the sheriff was never able to find the path which led to the grassy clearing. Often an arrow would fall among his soldiers as a warning that Robin Hood and his bowmen wished to be let alone.

Finding that he could not take Robin Hood, the sheriff did a very unjust thing. He found out the names of some of the poor people whom Robin Hood had helped and began to persecute them because they were friends of an outlaw. At this Robin Hood was exceedingly angry. He did his best for the

The Adventures of Little John and the Sheriff poor people, giving them venison and money. But the sheriff continued to illtreat them. "If ever I take that man again," said Robin Hood, "I will not let him off so easily."

At this Little John begged to go forth on an adventure.

"Give me leave, good master," he said. "I think I can find a way to make the sheriff prisoner. I cannot forgive him for the wound in my leg, to say nothing of the way he treats these poor people."

"Go your way, John," said Robin Hood; "only be careful that no harm comes to you."

Little John went to Marian and asked her to look in her chests and find him a common suit of homespun cloth. Then she gave him a dye made of walnut with which he dyed his light hair and stained his skin. Even his friends hardly recognized Little John in the dark gypsy who stood ready to set forth on an adventure. He cut a staff and walked quickly to the town of Nottingham. When he reached the sheriff's house he knocked and demanded to see the lord.

The servant who answered the door looked at him scornfully.

“What has a poor fellow like you to do with my master?” he asked.

“Tell your master that I am looking for a place as a servant. Say that I am not only a strong man, but that I can shoot with a bow and arrow as well as Robin Hood.”

At that the servant let him in, for the sheriff was always eager to talk with a man who could shoot.

The sheriff looked up when Little John entered the doorway of the countingroom.

“So you wish to be my servant?” he said. “If you can really shoot well, I will take you.”

Little John soon showed him in the public square how well he could speed an arrow. The sheriff was pleased.

“I will take you as my own bodyguard,” he said.

Upon this Little John looked pleased, too. He knew that if once he could get the sheriff off alone, he could easily take him to Robin Hood.

“But not for a week,” the sheriff added. “I will see if you have the faithfulness a good servant should have, by putting you in the scullery. The steward will give you your orders. You may go.”

*The
Adven-
tures of
Little
John
and the
Sheriff*

Little John was anything but pleased to hear these words. After living a healthy life in the open air he hardly knew how he could endure staying in a little dark scullery, cleaning knives and plates. However, since it was only for a week, he determined to try. For three days he did his best, though it was very wearisome. The steward was severe with him, and made him do all the hardest work. Whenever he thought Little John was lazy, he struck him with his thick staff. Little John bore it all in silence, though his head ached as well as his back.

On the fourth morning he was awakened early by the sound of the sheriff going off on a hunt. Little John was very tired. He was sure that he would become ill if he stayed in the scullery another day. So he determined to leave the sheriff's service and try to take him prisoner in some other way. About sunrise the steward knocked at his door and ordered him to get up.

"Not I," said Little John; "I'm going to sleep till noon."

The steward beat on the door again and again.

"Beat it in, if you like," said Little John,

“but if you do, the sheriff will call you to account.”

At noon, Little John got up and went to the kitchen. The steward sprang at him, and struck him with a club. John easily knocked him down.

“I’m a strong man,” said Little John; “you had better not attack me again, for another time I will really do you some harm.”

He went into the pantry, where venison and pastry were on the shelves, as well as fruits and cheeses. But John was honest. He took only the black bread and curds which were allowed him for breakfast.

While he was eating, the steward shut and locked the pantry door. Little John only laughed, and when his breakfast was over he broke the door down and went into the kitchen.

“Farewell to you,” said he.

But a man almost as huge as Little John himself barred the door. This was the new cook, whom the steward had ordered to fight with John. Both of them were willing, for neither had ever been beaten. They got long staves and went into the courtyard.

*The
Adven-
tures of
Little
John
and the
Sheriff*

The Adventures of Little John and the Sheriff For two hours they struck at each other, and neither had the best of it. At last the big cook threw down his staff.

"No more for me!" he roared. "You are the best man I have ever met. I would call you friend."

Little John threw away his staff.

"Gladly," said he; "and now, let us leave this house. If you are a friend of mine, you will stay no longer with this steward and his lord, the sheriff."

Off they went through the town, and then into the woods about Nottingham. Little John told the cook who he was, and asked him if he would take service with Robin Hood.

"Nothing would please me better," replied the cook, "for I have heard many a tale of his courage and kindness. Take me to your lord."

After they had walked two or three miles they heard the sound of a hunting horn.

"Stop!" said Little John. "Is not that the sheriff's horn?"

"Truly," replied the cook, "I think it is."

"A plan has occurred to me," said Little John. "Do you take my bugle and follow this winding path by the hawthorn. When

you have gone two miles, blow. Robin Hood and his men will come. Tell them who you are, and ask Robin Hood to wait in the clearing by the yew trees till I come."

*The
Adven-
tures of
Little
John
and the
Sheriff*

"I will do as you say," replied the cook.

Then Little John ran off, following the sound of the sheriff's horn. After a short time he came upon the sheriff and two or three of his men. Little John hurried to the sheriff, and said, breathlessly:

"Oh, master, come with me! I will lead you to the finest buck that ever was seen. It has a green skin."

"Come, come, my good servant," said the sheriff. "Who ever heard of a buck with a green skin?"

"But I have seen it, my lord," persisted Little John; "it is here in the forest, not three miles away."

"It must be some magic, if the skin is green," said the sheriff.

"No, it is not magic," said Little John. "And that is not all, master. He has sharp antlers—sixty of them."

"Sixty antlers!" cried the sheriff.

"And five score deer follow him, also in green."

The Adventures of Little John and the Sheriff "Nay, my good servant John, your eyes have deceived you," said the sheriff.

"Only come with me, master, and see," urged John.

"There can be no harm in that," said the sheriff.

So he and his men followed Little John along the path by the hawthorns. Whenever Little John thought the sheriff or his men were impatient because they did not come up with the deer, he began to tell what a wonderful creature it was. At last he brought them to the clearing by the yew trees.

"Here we are, master," said Little John, catching sight of green coats among the yew trees. "The buck you seek is at hand."

At that moment out stepped Robin Hood and a hundred archers. They surrounded the sheriff and his men, and took them prisoners.

"Fellow," said the sheriff to Little John, "you have deceived me."

"Nay," said Little John, "I but spoke in parable. The green skin of the buck is the green raiment of Robin Hood, and the sixty antlers are his arrows. And I owed you this

for that arrow you once had shot into my leg.”

“Step back, Little John,” commanded Robin. “Now, my Lord Sheriff,” he said, “I could easily take your life, but I will not. I will keep you here, and make you live and work as we do.”

“For how long?” asked the sheriff.

“That I do not know,” replied Robin Hood.

The sheriff reflected that at least his life was safe, and he hoped that he and his men would somehow escape. Besides, life and work in the greenwood could not be very hard.

But in all this the sheriff was mistaken. He could not escape, for there were always three or four of Robin’s bowmen with him. Every morning he helped dress venison and prepare vegetables for dinner. Every afternoon he practiced shooting till his arms ached. After supper he helped cleanse the dishes. Little John enjoyed seeing him scrape trenchers, though he always did half the work himself.

It amused Much, the miller’s son, to hurry through whatever evening task was assigned

*The
Adven-
tures of
Little
John
and the
Sheriff*

*Every
morning
he helped
prepare
vegetables
for dinner*



to him, and then to stand close to the sheriff, who was still at work, and sing some care-free song. The following was one of his favorites:

*The
Adventures of
Little
John
and the
Sheriff*



Come fol - low, fol - low me; Ye



fair - y elves that be, . . . Which cir - cle on the



green, Come fol-low Mab, your queen. Hand in hand let's



dance a - round, For this place is fair - y ground.

When mortals are at rest,
And snoring in their nest;
Unheard and unespied,
Through keyholes we do glide;
Over tables, stools, and shelves,
We trip it with our fairy elves.

*The
Adven-
tures of
Little
John
and the
Sheriff*

And if the house be foul
With platter, dish, or bowl
Upstairs we nimbly creep,
And find the sluts asleep;
Then we pinch their arms and thighs;
None us hears, and none us spies.

But if the house be swept,
And from uncleanness kept,
We praise the household maid,
And duly she is paid;
Every night before we go,
We drop a tester in her shoe.

Then o'er a mushroom's head
Our tablecloth we spread;
A grain of rye or wheat,
The diet that we eat;
Pearly drops of dew we drink,
In acorn cups filled to the brink.

The brains of nightingales,
With unctuous fat of snails,
Between two cockles stewed,
Is meat that's eas'ly chew'd;
Tails of worms and marrow of mice,
Do make a dish that's wond'rous nice.

The grasshopper, gnat, and fly,
Serve for our minstrelsy;
Grace said, we dance a while,
And so the time beguile:
And if the moon do hide her head
The glow-worm lights us home to bed.

O'er tops of dewy grass
So nimbly do we pass,
The young and tender stalk,
Ne'er bends where we do walk;
Yet in the morning may be seen
Where we the night before have been.

*The
Adven-
tures of
Little
John
and the
Sheriff*

What distressed the sheriff most was sleeping on the ground. Much helped him make a bed of green boughs, but they cut into his flesh. Then Much got grass and moss for him, but still he could not sleep comfortably. Besides, he was afraid of wild beasts, and he did not like to wake in the dawn when the birds began to chirp.

At the end of three days he came to Robin Hood in tears.

“There is not a more miserable man in the whole of Nottinghamshire than I,” he said, “and all because I have tried to punish you for breaking the law.”

“There you are mistaken,” said Robin. “An outlaw is subject to none. I make my own law and my own kingdom. I have never hurt you, and yet you have tried to kill me.”

“Let us speak no more,” said the sheriff. “I wish you would kill me now, Robin Hood,

The Adventures of Little John and the Sheriff for I assure you I would far rather die than live and work longer in your forest."

Marian felt sorry for the sheriff.

"His poor wife must long for him," she said. "Let him go, Robin; I am sure he will not make trouble for you again."

"If I let you free," said Robin Hood, "what will you do?"

"I will go back to Nottingham town," said the sheriff, "and neither I nor my men will ever seek to kill you or yours."

"That is not enough," said Robin; "for you are not able to kill us."

"Then I will no longer persecute Sir Richard of the Lea, who lately helped you," said the sheriff.

"Good, but can you promise nothing more?"

"I can help your men if ever they come into my power," said the sheriff after a pause, "and I will do that. Also, I will no longer trouble the poor whom you have helped."

"You have learned your lesson, my Lord Sheriff," said Robin, "and you have learned it cheaply at the cost of an aching back and tired arms."

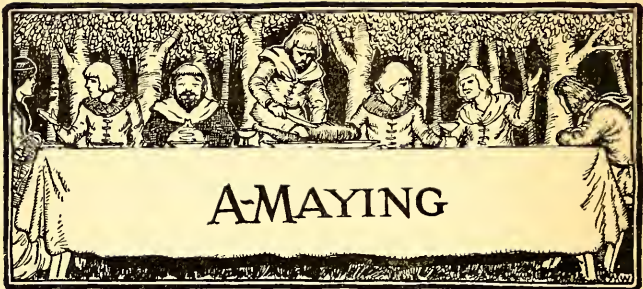
Robin Hood called his bowmen and ordered them to free the sheriff and his followers, mount them on their horses, blindfold them, and lead them to the Roman road. He himself led the horse of the sheriff.

*The
Adven-
tures of
Little
John
and the
Sheriff*

“And now, good-by,” he said. “Go you back to your good wife and give her gentle greetings from me.”

“Farewell, Robin Hood,” said the sheriff. “I do not wish to call you friend, but I respect you as a courteous enemy.”

They bowed to each other, and parted. Presently the clatter of the horses' hoofs died away on the Roman road, and Robin and his men were left once more sole occupants of Sherwood Forest.



CHAPTER XI

THE end of April had come in Robin Hood's forest. The crocuses were gone, and the cowslips and primroses were showing their yellow heads in the grass. The leaves on the trees were long; even the oaks were thickly enough clad to cast a shade. The young birds were almost large enough to fly, and every morning they woke Marian with their chirping.

"In my father's castle," said Marian, "they are beginning to think of May Day."

"Do you miss May Day?" asked Robin Hood. "Shall we go to Nottingham town and see the celebrations there?"

"Nay, then," said Marian, "let us have our own May-day games, Robin. Much shall sing for us; George-a-Green shall whistle;

Little John shall dance; some of the young men must wrestle; and you and I shall be crowned King and Queen of the May.” *A-Maying*

“That is a good plan,” Robin said.

They were sitting under Robin’s favorite oak. Marian was embroidering a green jacket for him, and he had been reading to her from a beautifully illuminated manuscript. Just as he was about to continue, Friar Tuck came hurrying across the clearing, his rosy face beaming with excitement, his plump cheeks shaking at each step.

“Hark you, Robin!” he said: “I have heard that the queen and her ladies, her pages, her guards, and some of the courtiers are to reach Nottingham to-morrow.”

“Say you so, indeed?” cried Robin.

“I suppose they will lodge with the sheriff,” said Marian, “for none other has so large a house. I warrant his lady will be vastly excited.”

“But this is not all,” went on Friar Tuck. “The sheriff is anxious that there shall be a splendid May-day celebration for Her Majesty. The great square of Nottingham is not sylvan enough, it seems. Despite the possible danger from us, he says, he intends

*A-
Maying* to hold the games and dancing in the clearing by the yew trees."

"The sheriff knows that there is no danger from us," Robin said. "I am a loyal subject who will always protect my queen, though I am an outlaw."

"He probably supposes that you are as base as himself," remarked Friar Tuck; "but he thinks that with his soldiers and because of the queen, the royal party will be safe."

"Oh!" cried Marian, clapping her hands. "Robin, let us hide in the thick woods about the clearing and watch their games!"

"And give up our own?" he asked.

"No, no; have both!" she said. "Let us see theirs first, and then have our own. As ours will be much better, they should be last."

"You are very loyal to our own, Marian," Robin Hood said, smiling. "It shall be as you wish."

When Robin Hood's bowmen heard that the queen with part of her court was coming to Nottingham, they were much interested. At various times during the next day or two, some of them went in disguise to Nottingham to see what they might of the royal party.

They could scarcely recognize the place. ^{A-}
A great triumphal arch had been built at ^{Maying}
the entrance of the town over the road along
which the queen was to pass. It was
entirely covered with green boughs, and
across the top was the word, "Welcome,"
made of white roses. There was another
arch, in front of the sheriff's house, painted
blue and gold. From the windows of the
other houses hung flags and banners—scarlet
and purple and crimson. Even the very
poor people had managed to decorate in some
way. Those who could not afford a banner
of cloth had woven mats of rushes to hang
from their windows, and had placed green
boughs over the doorways.

The clearing by the yew trees was full of
busy workmen engaged in making a pavilion
of green wood and boughs. In the center
was placed the sheriff's own carved chair,
over which was draped a robe of ermine.
Robin and Marian peeped at it from behind
the trees.

"Would you rather be a real queen than
Queen of the May?" Robin asked Marian.

"I prefer to be Queen of the Greenwood,
as I am," she replied.

*A-
Maying*

Early on the first of May the queen was awakened by the sound of singing outside the sheriff's house. The people of Nottingham were giving her a May-day greeting. After she had dressed and breakfasted, her white palfrey was brought to the door. It had scarlet trappings, and a bridle decorated with emeralds and jingling with golden bells. The queen wore a pale green robe in honor of the day. After her favorite page, Richard Partington, had helped her to mount, he walked at her horse's head. Then two score horsemen in coats of mail galloped to the front, while just behind the queen rode half a dozen ladies in waiting on brown and black palfreys led by handsome pages. Next came a score of knights beautifully dressed in green; then twenty more horsemen, and, after them, the Lord Sheriff.

All these set off down the road, followed by the bowmen, dancers, and wrestlers who were to provide the entertainment for the queen, and two stout boys carrying the Maypole.

This Maypole was a tall, slim, tapering tree trunk, all trimmed about with green leaves and spring flowers, and with a dozen

long green ribbons hanging from the top of it almost to the ground. *A-
Maying*

The people of the town followed the procession as far as they dared, but as they were not invited to see the entertainment they did not enter the greenwood. When the party had reached the clearing by the yew trees the sheriff assisted the queen to dismount and led her to the chair of state.

Meantime, Robin Hood, Marian, and the bowmen had gathered a few paces distant in the woods. They watched the ladies and courtiers group themselves about the queen, while the guards stood a little farther back.

"Do you see the bowmen, master?" asked Little John. "They are clad just like ourselves, in Lincoln green."

"The sheriff has a good memory," said Robin Hood.

"I fear that being clad like us will not give them our skill," remarked Little John.

"Hush," said Robin; "the sports are about to begin."

The Maypole was set up several yards distant from the pavilion. Then half a dozen men and maidens came forward, and courtesied to the queen; and, each taking one of the

A-Maying long green ribbons, they began to dance. Backward and forward they stepped, the ribbons always in their hands, a fiddler making a rude kind of music to which they all kept time.

When the dance was over, the queen applauded, but Marian smiled. She knew that her bowmen could dance more gracefully than that. Then stakes were set up at one end of the clearing, and some young men threw quoits. This game did not interest the queen particularly, because she was too far away to see when the quoits encircled the stakes. After that, other young men wrestled, and again Marian smiled as she thought how much more skillful the men of the greenwood were. Last of all, the twenty men in green stepped forward.

“These, your majesty,” said the sheriff, “are the best bowmen in the country, bar none.”

At that, Robin Hood shrugged his shoulders. “In faith, that is hard to bear!” he said.

“Nay, then, Lord Sheriff,” said the queen. “I did not know you had the best archers in England.”

“Your Majesty shall judge,” replied the ^{A-}sheriff ^{Maying}.

A row of targets was set up at one end of the clearing, and the twenty archers stepped forward and raised their bows. They had been practicing diligently and they shot well, most of them coming within the bull’s-eye.

“Well done!” cried the queen. “But the sport has been very short. Have you anything more to show me, my Lord Sheriff?”

“I had thought that more would tire Your Majesty,” replied the sheriff.

“Nay, then, I would gladly see more,” said the queen; “but since there is no more, I thank you heartily for the pleasure you have given me and my court.”

At this moment Robin Hood stepped forward. He was clad in his usual Lincoln green, and he wore, in honor of the day, a long mantle embroidered in gold. He fell on one knee before the queen.

“Whom have we here?” said she.

“Your Majesty, a most loyal subject,” he replied, “who craves leave to show you some May-day sport.”

“Gladly,” said the queen.

Robin Hood waved his hand, and his

Maying A- hundred bowmen marched two and two out of the woods and took their places, bows raised, before the targets at the end of the clearing.

The queen's men looked at one another uneasily, and felt for their weapons.

"Fear nothing!" cried Robin Hood loudly. "We are loyal men."

Then Marian, all in white, rode forward on her white palfrey. She dismounted at the pavilion and bowed low to the queen.

"Come you here, my pretty child," said the queen, "and sit on the footstool at my feet."

While Marian obeyed, a band of dancers came from the woods, Little John at their head, carrying a Maypole. It was far more beautiful than the sheriff's pole, for it was covered with the rarest of wild flowers and little delicate ferns. The long ribbons which hung from it were decorated with shining gold coins.

The dancers stepped before the queen and did a morris dance, weaving backward and forward, leaning and turning as lightly as if the green grass had been a waxed floor.

As they danced, they sang this song:

*A-
Maying*



Trip and go, heave and ho, Up and down,



to and fro; From the town to the grove,



Two and two let us rove. A - May - ing, a -



play - ing, . . . Love hath no gain -



say - ing. So trip and go, . . .



trip and go, Mer - ri - ly trip and go.

*A-
Maying* “Wonderful dancing!” cried the queen.
“Again!”

After the dance had been repeated, six wrestlers took their places and showed their skill. Next six tumblers performed most difficult feats of tumbling and leaping over high bars. Lastly, after the queen had applauded, Robin Hood called his archers.

“Your Majesty,” he said, bowing low to the queen, “my Lord Sheriff has shown you what his archers can do. Give me leave to present mine.”

“Let the men shoot,” said the queen. “Archery has ever been my favorite sport, as it is the king’s.”

Robin Hood whistled. At the signal, the archers came forward, and ranged themselves in front of the pavilion. He whistled again, and they got into position and lifted their bows. At the third whistle, they sped their gray-goose shafts, and immediately the bull’s-eye was full. Again Robin whistled, and this time each archer split an arrow.

Then Robin took his own bow, and stepping a little to one side, shot diagonally, so that he sent an arrow through three of those quivering in the bull’s-eye.

The queen rose, and extended her hand. ^{A-}
Maying

“My good subject, this is an unbelievable sight,” she said. “Accept this gold ring as a token of my favor.”

Robin took off his embroidered mantle.

“Your Majesty,” he said, “if you will accept this mantle in return.”

The queen took it, and then handed him the ring. Meantime, the sheriff was looking uneasily at Robin. He did not know whether or not he dared tell the queen who Robin was.

“And now, my good subject,” said the queen, “tell me your name, that I may speak of you and your wonderful shooting to my lord, the king.”

“Your Majesty,” he said, “have I your good leave to depart unscathed, I and all my men, and with your good favor, whoever I am?”

“Assuredly, since you are my true subject,” she replied.

“Then, Your Majesty, I stand here, Robin Hood, outlaw of Sherwood Forest.”

At that, the courtiers and men at arms put their hands on their weapons. One or two took a step forward. The ladies clung together in fear. The queen grew pale; then

*"Your Majesty,
I stand
here,
Robin
Hood,
outlaw of
Sherwood
forest."*



she turned to her followers and said: "Si-^{A-}
lence, all! Make no movement. Do not ^{Maying}
harm this man."

"Humph!" whispered Little John. "'Tis more like that we could harm them."

"Your Majesty," said one lord, "do you not know that there is a price on this man's head—that the king has commanded—"

"Sir," cried the queen, "you forget yourself! While the king is at war, as he is just now, I am king. I command that this man, to whom I have given my word, shall go free."

Robin Hood took Marian's hand, and led her to her palfrey. He beckoned his men to withdraw into the wood. Then he turned to the queen.

"Your Majesty," he said, "do you wish now to take back your ring?"

"Nay," said the queen, "a gift is a gift, and you are a true subject. Yet come not near my court again, Robin Hood. I may not always have the power to protect you. I thank you for your merry sport, and farewell."

Robin Hood bent and kissed her hand. Then he turned his back on all that silent

*A-
Maying*

company and took his way toward his own green kingdom. He spoke not at all, but the others were merry, particularly George-a-Green, who whistled and danced, and Much, the miller's son, who sang this song:

Joan, to the May - pole a - long let us
on, The time is swift and will be
gone; There go the lass - es, a - way to the
green, Where their beau-ties may be seen:
Bess, Moll, Kate, Doll, All the brave
lass - es have lads to at - tend them; Hodge,

Nick, Tom, Dick, Jol - ly brave

dan - cers, and who can a - mend 'em.

Joan, to the May - pole a - way let us

on, The time is swift and must be

gone; There go the lass - es a - way to the

green, Where their beau - ties may be seen.



CHAPTER XII

SOME time after his adventure with the queen, Robin Hood took his bow and went alone for a stroll through the forest. He thought of the old days when he had been an important person in the king's court, and now he was an outlaw with a price on his head! Full of such musing, he wandered far from his usual haunts. As he was walking down a forest path he looked up to see a beautiful herd of deer grazing just beyond him.

"Well met!" thought Robin Hood. "Now I can provide for our dinner."

Just as he was about to lift his bow, a young man came down the path behind him. The young man was tall and slim. He was dressed in a scarlet doublet, long white silk hose, and embroidered leather

shoes; in his scarlet hat was a white feather. As he saw the deer, he stepped forward and shot an arrow at the same moment that Robin sped his shaft. A beautiful fawn-colored deer fell, pierced to the heart, and Robin Hood sprang forward to its side. *Robin Hood and the Stranger*

“That is right, my good fellow,” said the young man; “pull out my arrow and bring me my deer.”

Robin Hood laughed.

“Your pardon, fair sir,” he said, “but that was my arrow.”

“Nay, then,” said the young man; “there is but one arrow, and that must be mine. I could not have missed, for I was taught to shoot by my uncle, who was famous all over England for his skill. I will pay you for your service, fellow.”

“I am willing to give service to any man as a courtesy,” said Robin Hood, “but I do not take orders such as you have just spoken, young sir.”

The stranger shrugged his shoulders.

“You lose a goodly fee,” he said; “but I am able to shoulder my own deer.”

“Aye, if it were your deer,” replied Robin, “but this is my deer. I know well my

Robin Hood and the Stranger arrows. You will find your arrow somewhere in the greenwood beyond."

They stood facing each other for a moment. Then, in a little clearing beyond, a doe appeared. The graceful creature lowered its head to graze.

"This is a better deer than the other," remarked the young man. "I will give you the first, for I see by your plain clothes that you are but a poor forester."

"Marry! do not judge too much by appearances," said Robin Hood. "I will e'en shoot this doe myself."

"Forester," said the stranger, haughtily, "I command you not to shoot. I wish to kill this deer without hindrance."

Robin Hood smiled.

"And who are you, that you give me such commands?" he asked.

"I am a strong man," returned the youth, "and a good shot with the bow, as my former attempt proved."

"I have some skill with the bow myself," returned Robin, "as my arrow, sticking in that deer, proves."

The young man raised his bow, threateningly.

"Stop," said Robin; "you have no arrow

fitted, while I have. I might have killed you at any time during our talk, had I wished.”

Robin Hood and the Stranger

“That is true—if you would dare to kill a nobleman,” said the stranger.

“I respect a nobleman no more than I respect a common man,” replied Robin Hood; “but I like your courage, and I forgive your insolence. I will fight with you, if you like, but it must be with swords.”

“Agreed,” said the young man, “but can you fence like a gentleman? And do you pledge your word to do me no treachery?”

“In truth,” returned Robin, “you try my patience, my fair youth! Had I wished, I could have killed you. I have no love for treachery. Do you see this silver bugle of mine?”

“A pretty toy,” said the stranger.

“Toy, forsooth! With one blast of this horn I could call a hundred men who would bind you, and put your noble person to doing some humble service if I bade them. So say to me no word about treachery.”

“All the better, if you have all these men at your command,” said the stranger, “for that assures me that I am fighting with no common forester.”

“Young man,” said Robin gravely, “give

Robin Hood and the Stranger me leave to say that you think too much of rank. Have at you."

They struck out at each other with their swords, and at the first sound of steel clashing against steel, off scampered the doe into the forest. The sun was in Robin Hood's eyes, but he scorned to ask the stranger to choose another spot for the combat. For a long time they parried each other's strokes. The young man was very nimble, and it took all Robin Hood's skill to avoid his thrusts.

"Aha!" said the stranger, as he slashed the sleeve of Robin's doublet, "a little closer, and I had drawn the blood, forester."

"The miss of an inch is as good as a mile," returned Robin, cheerfully. "I pay you back," he added, as he cut away half the ruffle on the young man's sleeve.

They fought on for ten minutes, and then the young man said:

"I pray you, call a halt. It is warm work fighting on this fine May morning, and I perceive that we shall not soon be done."

"Agreed," replied Robin.

Each leaned against the trunk of a tree and rested, panting heavily.

"Marry!" said the stranger, slowly, "it



*It took all
Robin
Hood's
skill to
avoid his
thrusts.*

Robin Hood and the Stranger seems a pity to fight so sorely. Forester, will you not put down your sword, and be my man?"

Robin smiled.

"Have you forgotten," he said, "that I told you I have a hundred men of my own?"

"I will take them too, and gladly," said the young man.

"Come, come," said Robin, sternly; "you are a poor reader of character if you think I am one who follows any man's bidding."

The stranger said nothing for a few moments. Then he asked:

"What good hiding places are there in this forest? And what are the names of those I am likely to see?"

"Nay," said Robin Hood, shortly, "I am to fight with you, not to give you information."

"Now, that was not spoken like a knight," said the young man, reproachfully.

"True," said Robin, "and I crave your pardon. I should have told you that there are good reasons why I can give no man news of this forest. You will remember, too, that this is the first time you have addressed me as knight."

The young man took up his sword again.

“You fight like a knight,” he said, “and you deserve the name. Have at you.”

*Robin
Hood
and the
Stranger*

Again they fought, and sharp steel smiting against sharp steel made a sound much louder than the singing of the birds on the branches above them. Stroke after stroke they made, their breath growing shorter and their wrists more tired. The sun, too, was stronger, and so dazzled Robin that more than once the stranger almost got under his guard.

At last the young man made a quick slashing stroke at Robin's head. The outlaw only partly avoided it, for a sudden sunbeam blinded him. The sharp sword went through his green hat, and fair curls, and made a long cut on the side of his head. He gave back a pace, while the blood ran down his face, and the stranger said:

“Marry, halt we till you have bound your wound.”

Before Robin could reply, Little John and Much, the miller's son, at the head of fifty bowmen, dashed through the surrounding trees. They had heard the sound of fighting, and now, when they saw their master's blood, their rage was great. Little John seized

Robin Hood and the Stranger the stranger in his great arms, and wresting his sword away, threw it to the spot where the dead deer lay.

“Master, shall I bind him?” cried Little John.

“That you shall not, my hot-headed friend,” replied Robin. “He overcame me in fair fight.”

“Nay,” said the stranger politely, “the fight was not over. You would have given me just as sharp a stroke.”

“Nevertheless, we will fight no more,” said Robin. “You have asked me to take service with you. Now, I ask you to join me.”

The stranger’s respect for Robin Hood had increased when he saw all the bowmen who acknowledged him as master. Besides, he observed that Robin had let him fight with his back to the sun.

“I cannot join you,” the stranger replied, “for I am in great misfortune. I am seeking my uncle, in the hope that he will receive me if my plight is not too sad.”

“Will you tell me your misfortune?” asked Robin.

“I have had the same mischance that once befell the son of Sir Richard of the Lea,” replied the young man. “By mistake, I

slew a knight who was a great favorite of the king, and I have been obliged to flee until the king's wrath is cooled. I have no following, but a little money, and, as I said, I seek my uncle.”

Robin Hood and the Stranger

“Perhaps we can help you to find him,” said Robin. “What is his name?”

“Robert, Earl of Huntington,” replied the young man, “but in these parts he is known as Robin Hood. I am Will Scarlett, son of his eldest sister and the Earl of Gamwell.”

“Are you indeed he who was the little lad, Will Scarlett?” cried Robin Hood. He put his arm around the young man's shoulder, and looked searchingly into his face. “Are you indeed that little lad whom I taught to shoot?”

The young man seized Robin's hand.

“And I did not know you, my good uncle! And I called you a forester, and asked you to serve me! Now I beg you to let me serve you.”

“We are all equal here,” said Robin. “You will learn to be less haughty when you have helped dress and cook a deer.”

The young man smiled.

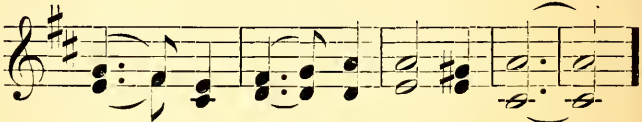
*Robin
Hood
and the
Stranger*

“I shall begin by carrying home the deer you shot. Uncle,” he said, “I yield to you.”
“Nay,” said Robin, “Little John shall carry it, and you shall walk with me and tell me of your mother. It has been many a long day since I have seen any of my own kin.”

So back they walked, two and two, to Robin Hood’s retreat, all the band rejoicing in their new recruit. Much expressed his pleasure in the following little snatch of song:



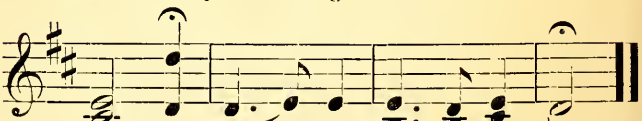
There's mon - y ane sings o' grass, o'



grass, There's mon-y ane sings o' corn,



There's mon - y ane sings o' Rob - in



Hood Kens lit - tle where he was born.



CHAPTER XIII

ROBIN HOOD had not asked his nephew half the questions he wished to ask about his sister, the Lady of Gamwell, and all those of the castle of Gamwell, when the walk home was interrupted. They were following a path close to the Roman road, when they heard the sound of a horse's hoofs. Looking through the trees, they saw a maiden, dressed all in black, riding on a black palfrey hung with sable trappings. The dreary color prepared them for her sorrowful face.

Immediately, Robin Hood stepped forth from the woods, followed by Will Scarlett and Little John.

"Madam," said Robin Hood, gently, "may I ask where you are from, and why you are so sad in look and in dress?"

*The
Adventure of
Robin
Hood
and Will
Scarlett
at Court*

“Good sir,” replied the maiden, “I come from the king’s city of London, and I am sad because all London is plunged in great grief.”

“What is the matter?” he asked.

“The city is besieged by the proud Prince of Aragon,” she said. “He came to woo the princess.”

“Marry,” said Robin Hood, “it is a strange wooing!”

“The king does not wish the princess to marry him,” went on the maiden, “but he says he will have her for his wife within ten days, or else he will lay waste the land all about. London can endure a siege, but the poor country people will suffer.”

“That is true, indeed,” said Robin; “and does the Prince of Aragon offer no alternative?”

“Yes,” replied the maiden, “and that is why I am riding, and three other maidens, also. We go north, east, south, and west, looking for help.”

“What help?” asked Robin.

“The prince is a huge man, and two of his bodyguards are giants in size,” she said. “They are terrible to look on, with their

bristling heads and flaming eyes, and they are marvelously strong. The prince says that if three champions can be found in all England to overcome him and his two giants, he will yield his suit for the princess. Our good king says that if any such can be found, he will give the princess to the greatest victor of the three.”

*The
Advent-
ure of
Robin
Hood
and Will
Scarlett
at Court*

“There must be many in this broad land who will be glad to fight for the princess,” said Robin Hood.

The maiden shook her head.

“None, none!” she said. “You do not know how strong are the Prince of Aragon and his giants.”

“On what day is this contest to be held?” inquired Robin.

“On Midsummer Day, June the twenty-fourth,” she replied.

“Fear nothing, maiden,” said Robin; “take my word for it that on that day the king will have all the champions he needs.”

The maiden rode on to the southward, and Robin Hood set off to his retreat, absorbed in thought. After Marian had welcomed Will Scarlett, and had asked after the health of various old friends, Robin Hood told her of his meeting with the maiden.

*The
Adven-
ture of
Robin
Hood
and Will
Scarlett
at Court*

"I know of what you are thinking, Robin," said Marian. "You wish to send three of our men to fight."

"Nay," said Robin, "you have not quite guessed."

"Ah, I fear I know! You wish to go yourself, with two of the men. I am afraid for you, but I must not hold you back," said Marian, bravely.

"Let me be one of the men!" cried Little John.

"And me, uncle!" cried Will Scarlett.

"Little John could match one of the giants, surely," said Robin, looking with pride on his huge follower. "Yes, you shall go."

"And shall I go?" asked Will Scarlett.

"You, too, impatient one," returned Robin, smiling; "for if you fight bravely in the contest, perhaps the king will forgive you for accidentally slaying his knight."

Both the young men were delighted. For the next few days they practiced tilting with the lance on horseback, and various other feats of strength. Meantime, Marian prepared three pilgrim's robes of motley gray, and scrips, and bottles, and long staves.

"It will be the safest disguise," Robin

explained to Little John and Will Scarlett. "If we are dressed as pilgrims, people will scarcely look under our hoods to see if we are the famous bowmen of Sherwood Forest."

*The
Adven-
ture of
Robin
Hood
and Will
Scarlett
at Court*

They set out for London two or three days before Midsummer Day. They wished to walk comfortably, and hoped to rest for a day before the contest began. Robin Hood carried a bag of gold under his long robe, while Little John and Will Scarlett carried dried venison and cakes.

It was beautiful weather, both cool and sunny. Many miles of their way lay through forest lands, but it seemed to them that no trees they saw were so beautiful as those of their own Sherwood Forest. Sometimes a deer ran by them, and then they wished for their bows and arrows. Now and then they passed through little hamlets, and always the villagers were talking of the Prince of Aragon, and of the contest. After a time, the little hamlets became more frequent, a sign that they were coming closer to London.

Many and many a time had Robert, Earl of Huntington, ridden over that road on a battle horse, but Robin Hood, who walked, was just as happy as the earl had been. When

The Adventure of Robin Hood and Will Scarlett at Court they came in sight of the River Thames he pointed out interesting landmarks to Little John, who had never been to London. Presently, they saw a gray haze, which later turned into the buildings of London—castles and huts, mills and smithies, shops and booths, all shining in the bright sunlight.

When they reached the heart of the city they realized that they had but little time to spare, for the contest was to be held the next day. Robin led the way to a shop not far from Paul's Church, and showing his bag of gold, demanded the best of armor. The armorer had some difficulty in finding a suit large enough for Little John.

"He is as big as one of those giants who are to fight against us to-morrow," he said.

After the armor was chosen—coats of mail, helmets, leg-pieces, shields, lances, and swords—Robin Hood went to a man who sold him three good horses. By the time they were paid for, there was but little gold left for lodging. So they stayed with the armorer, who fed their horses next morning, and gave them breakfast.

It was only a little after dawn when they set out for the south bank of the Thames,



The armorer had some difficulty in finding a suit large enough for Little John.

The Adventure of Robin Hood and Will Scarlett at Court near London Bridge. Here, in a great field, the combat was to be held. As they rode out into the field Little John said to Robin Hood: "Master, I am not afraid to fight, but truly I am almost afraid of so much magnificence!"

On each side of the field was a great pavilion. In one sat the English king and his lords and ladies; in the other, sat the followers of the Prince of Aragon. The sun sparkled on their gold and jewels, and Little John's eyes were dazzled by the scarlet and blue and crimson of their robes. In front of each pavilion was a long row of knights on horseback. The English king sat in the center of his pavilion, stern and pale, and by his side sat his daughter, the princess, heavily veiled.

Just as Robin Hood and his men entered the field a herald from the side of the Prince of Aragon rode forward, holding on high his golden trumpet. He was clothed all in scarlet silk and velvet.

"Hear ye!" he cried. "The most noble the Prince of Aragon and his two giants are ready to do combat with any three champions of the King of England for the hand of the most glorious Princess."

The princess shuddered a little, and looked

at her father. At the same moment the Prince of Aragon, dressed in black armor, rode out in front of his row of knights, followed by his two giants.

*The
Adven-
ture of
Robin
Hood
and Will
Scarlett
at Court*

Then an English herald galloped forward and lifted his trumpet of gold.

"Hear ye!" he cried. "What three brave men will fight as champions to succor the most noble the Princess of England?"

Robin and his men checked their horses.

"Many knights will come forward," said Robin, "and we must e'en take our turn."

But no one moved. Again the herald blew his trumpet, and called:

"What brave man will save the Princess of England? To him who does, by the king's command, her hand will be given, if so be he is of noble blood."

When they saw that no one replied to the second appeal, Robin Hood and his men galloped forward, and drew up in front of the king's pavilion. Robin leaped from his horse, and bent on one knee.

"Most noble liege," he said, "here are three unknown knights, who crave leave to give battle for the honor of England and to save the gracious princess."

*The
Adven-
ture of
Robin
Hood
and Will
Scarlett
at Court*

“Gladly do I give you leave,” said the king. “Mount, brave Sir Unknown Knight, and let the trumpets be sounded.”

Robin mounted, and he and Little John and Will Scarlett rode their horses in front of the long row of English knights to the place opposite the Prince of Aragon and his giants. Then the heralds sounded their trumpets, and all six riders spurred their horses forward, riding with their lances at rest. Immediately clouds of dust rose as high as their helmets, and the lances crashed against the shields. Little John’s lance broke, but he kept his seat. Not so the giant whom he had attacked; he was unhorsed, and lay stunned on the ground. Little John picked him up, armor and all, and carried him to the king.

“My liege,” he said, panting, “here is one of your enemies. What shall I do with him?”

Shouts of laughter greeted Little John; for what he had done was against knightly usage.

“In truth, the good fellow is a yeoman, and no knight!” said the king. “Leave him here, my good man, and my surgeon will care for him. Go you back to your horse.”

So Little John hurried back to the middle of the field, where Will Scarlett and Robin

were engaged with the Prince of Aragon and the other giant. All were fighting bravely. Will Scarlett had wounded the giant, but had himself received two sword cuts on his leg. Robin and the Prince of Aragon were on foot, striking at each other with their swords.

Little John circled about them, longing to help, but knowing that Robin Hood would not permit a fight of three against two. At last Will Scarlett unhorsed his giant, who begged for his life and surrendered. Him also Little John carried in his arms and laid at the king's feet. Will Scarlett sat on his horse, breathless and pale, blood flowing from his wounds.

For many minutes Robin Hood and the prince fought. Never had Robin met with so strong an adversary. Each dealt the other wounds, and yet they fought on with almost undiminished vigor. At last the sword of the prince broke. Robin Hood paused.

"You are a brave man," he said. "Take my sword, and I will use that of Will Scarlett."

Again they fought, and this time the prince dealt Robin Hood a cut through the visor of his helmet. Robin shook away the blood from his eyes, and, made fierce by the pain,

The Adventure of Robin Hood and Will Scarlett at Court pressed hard upon the prince. He drove him closer and closer against the ranks of his own men. Slowly borne backward, at last the prince stumbled and fell. Robin stood over him, his sword point pressing against the neck of the prince.

“Prince of Aragon,” he said, “I yield you your life before you ask it. Now, yield up your suit for the hand of the princess.”

“I yield,” said the prince, weakly. “I pray you, help me to my feet, for I am sore wounded.”

Robin assisted him to rise, and some of his own knights came forward and led him to his pavilion. Then Robin, followed by Will Scarlett and Little John, went to the King of England, and knelt before him, while the English applauded loudly.

“Sire,” said Robin Hood, “the Prince of Aragon has yielded his suit.”

“My brave Unknown Knight,” said the king, “I thank you for saving me and mine. Nor have I forgotten that I promised the princess to the victor.”

“Faith,” muttered Little John, “she cannot marry all three of us!”

All the courtiers smiled at this good simple

fellow, who so little knew how to talk in the presence of a king.

“Nay, but she shall choose,” said the king.

“Take off your helmets.”

“Small chance have I!” sighed Little John.

They undid their helmets, and the princess came forward, drawing aside her veil. First she looked at Little John, and as he had expected, she quickly passed him by. Next she looked at Robin with admiration, and lastly, she looked at Will Scarlett. Then she grew pale, and drew a quick breath.

“Sire,” she said, “I choose this young man. Often I have seen him at court, for if I mistake not, he is son to the Earl of Gamwell.”

At this the king frowned; then he said, slowly:

“You killed one of my good knights; but you have helped to save my daughter and perhaps my kingdom, so I must e’en forgive you. Yet I should be glad of a different son-in-law.”

Little cared Will Scarlett for the grudging remark! He kissed the hand of the princess, and went forward to meet his mother and father, who came down from the pavilion to

*The
Adven-
ture of
Robin
Hood
and Will
Scarlett
at Court*

The Adventure of Robin Hood and Will Scarlett at Court greet him. The lady of Gamwell cried aloud at seeing Robin, but he held up his hand to silence her.

“And now,” said the king, “I must give what reward I can to these other brave fighters. I would,” he said to Robin, “that the princess had chosen you.”

“Nay, sire, I should have had to refuse her,” replied Robin, “for I have already a wife whom I love with all my heart.”

“Then she has made the most suitable choice,” said the king. “Your face, though clean-shaven and scarred, seems familiar. Tell me your name, and ask what gift you will.”

“My liege,” answered Robin, “I ask as reward that you let me and my man go without further question as to our names, and that you will think of me as your most loyal subject.”

The king looked at him doubtfully.

“It must be as you wish,” he said, “but I would gladly entertain you at my castle. Fare you well; and when you will, come again to my court.”

“I thank you, sire,” said Robin, bowing low.

Then he and Little John rode from the field, all the people looking wonderingly after them.

Robin rode cheerfully, glancing back now and then at London, turning into a gray haze behind them. To him the simple life in the greenwood was nobler than life in the king's court. But Little John was rather sulky, for he wanted to stay and taste court life. He would have liked to hear the song Will Scarlett sang to his princess:

*The
Adven-
ture of
Robin
Hood
and Will
Scarlett
at Court*



Come, live with me and be my love,



And we will all the pleas - ures prove,



That hills and val - leys, dale and field,



And all the crag - gy moun - tains yield.

*The
Adventure of
Robin
Hood
and Will
Scarlett
at Court*

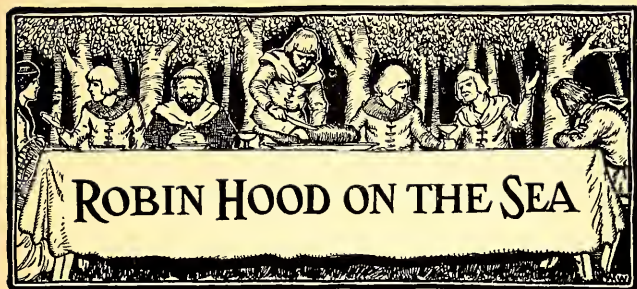
And we will sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of floers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold.
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold.

Thy silver dishes for thy meat
As precious as the gods do eat,
Shall on an ivory table be
Prepar'd each day for thee and me.
Shall on an ivory table be
Prepar'd each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.



CHAPTER XIV

IT was a beautiful day in early spring. The little buds were just breaking on the oaks, and the lilacs were making a lavender mist all over the young bushes. The outlaws had prepared a great feast, and had wreathed the table with young leaves and yellow crocuses. Marian only did not eat.

“Prithee, Marian,” said Robin, “are you ill, that you do not eat?”

“Nay,” she said, “but I am tired of venison. It seems to me that I have had nothing but that ever since I came to this greenwood.”

“Tell me what else you want,” said Robin. “I will ride to Nottingham and buy it.”

“You cannot,” she said, “for I want nothing but fish freshly caught out of the sea; and how am I to get that?”

*Robin
Hood
on the
Sea*

“You shall have it,” Robin replied. “I am tired of hunting; I shall go to Scarborough town and turn fisherman for a time, and bring you back plenty of fish.”

“Faith, good Robin,” said jolly Friar Tuck, “I hope you will leave your bow behind; else the very fishes will swim away from you.”

“Nay,” said Robin, “I am not sure that I can fish, but I know that I can shoot. I shall feel safer if I take my good bow, but I shall wrap it in a long cloth so that no one may guess I am a bowman.”

Marian found a homespun suit for Robin, and he set off, with a few pennies in his pocket, for the fishing town of Scarborough. It was a little place, not half the size of Nottingham. The people were nearly all fishers, and their houses were clustered close to the sea, from which they got their living. The shore was littered with boats and nets. The place looked strange to Robin because there were few trees and gardens, and the salt air did not smell like the air in Sherwood Forest.

He wandered down the one narrow street of the town until he came to a cottage at the door of which stood an old woman, knitting.

“Good dame,” said Robin, “I am looking

for a boat in which I can hire as a fisherman. Do you know any such?"

*Robin
Hood
on the
Sea*

The old woman put down her knitting and gazed searchingly at Robin.

"You seem an able-bodied man," she said, at last, "and I am willing to give you work. My husband, Captain Simon, sails my boat, and he is short a man. I will take you to him."

She went with him down to the shore where Captain Simon and his fishers were getting ready to launch a boat. It was a large boat with a high cabin and three sails, but it looked very small to Robin, used to the large spaces in Sherwood Forest.

"Simon," said the old woman, "here is a man who wants to fish with you."

Captain Simon looked sharply at Robin.

"Will you work hard, my man?" he asked.

"Aye; and I ask only a penny for my wages, and a few fish at the end."

"By my life!" said the fisher, "you must be a useless fellow or you would not be willing to come for a penny. However, I will try you. What is that long bundle you carry?"

"That is something I always find useful," replied Robin. "I pray you, let it come with me. It takes up but little room."

*Robin
Hood
on the
Sea*

“Hasten then,” said Captain Simon. “It is time the boat was off, if we are to do deep-sea fishing to-morrow.”

He bade his wife good-by, and he and his men pushed off the boat, and raised the sails. Robin had never been in a boat before, and while they were in the harbor he enjoyed the gentle motion. He liked to see the sunlight shining on the green waves, while the little town of Scarborough slipped farther and farther away. But as soon as they were outside the harbor the boat began to pitch and toss, to Robin’s great distress. He was very ill, but no one showed any sympathy for him.

“If you were really a fisherman,” said the captain, “you would be able to bear a gentle sea like this.”

Robin only clung to his bow, and wished he were in the greenwood, and wondered if he would live long enough to catch the fish for his dear Marian. But the next morning, he was quite well, and eager to begin fishing.

But he was so awkward in his attempts that Captain Simon became very impatient with him. First of all, he cast in his lines without bait. When the laughter of the fishermen showed him his mistake, he tried

to bait his lines. He was skillful with his fingers, as every man who handled the bow well must needs be; so he was able to put the bait on without mishap. But when it came to casting the lines, he blundered again. He got them tangled with the lines of the other fishermen, and even with the rigging of the boat.

*Robin
Hood
on the
Sea*

“You are a useless lubber!” said the captain, angrily. “You are frightening all the fish away. I am sorry I took you on board.”

“Never fear,” said Robin; “I shall soon learn, Master Captain.”

“I hope you will,” replied the captain; “you had better. If you make any more mistakes, I am going to tie you to the mast.”

Robin smiled. He was sure that he was not going to make any more mistakes; but he was too confident. At the end of the boat hung a dragnet. The captain ordered him and one of the fishermen to draw it up. Each took an end, and pulled and pulled.

“It comes heavily,” said Robin Hood; “there must be a good catch.”

“I am glad of that,” said the other, “for it will please the captain.”

Higher and higher came the net, until it

*Robin
Hood
on the
Sea*

rose out of the water and they could see the silver scales of the fish shining in the sunlight. At that moment the ship gave a heavy lurch. Robin Hood was not yet steady in his footing and he slipped and fell, dropping his end of the net. Down went the catch into the sea.

The captain ran to Robin and tried to strike him, but Robin parried the blow.

“Seize him, men!” cried the captain. “Bind him to the mast!”

The sailors obeyed, and though Robin struggled, they were too many for him. They tied him with ropes to the mast, and there he stood in the hot sun, harkening to the angry scolding of the captain. The fishermen listened in amazement. They had never seen their master so angry, and they were afraid he might kill Robin Hood. They were sorry, for they liked Robin, in spite of his blunders. Robin was angry, too. He wished himself back in the greenwood, where his men always showed him respect and affection. But he said nothing, for he knew that to show self-control was greater than to fish well or shoot well.

While the captain was abusing Robin all the men had their faces toward the outlaw,

and away from the sea. Now one of them turned away and looked out over the water. Then he gave a great shout.

Robin Hood on the Sea

“Master! Captain!” he cried. “Look! There, there!”

All the men looked. Sailing swiftly toward them was a French boat. The captain pulled nervously at his beard.

“Turn the boat,” he said. “There is nothing to do but try to run away.”

“What!” cried Robin. “Run away from an enemy!”

“The French boat is bigger than ours,” said one of the fishermen. “If the Frenchmen catch us, they will take our fish and all that we have and sink our boat, and kill us.”

“No, no,” said Robin, “I will save you. Bring me my good bow; bring me the long bundle wrapped in cloth.”

The captain struck him.

“Keep silent,” he said. “You could not fish; how can you save us?”

“You deserve to drown for striking a defenseless man,” said Robin; “but bring me the bow.”

The captain hesitated, and then he said:

“At least, it can do no harm to try.”

*Robin
Hood
on the
Sea*

One of the men brought Robin Hood his bow, while another unbound his arms. In the meantime, some of the fishers had turned the boat, and they sailed as fast as they could toward the English shore. But the French boat was more lightly built than theirs, and it gained every minute. The men looked in despair at the enemy, coming nearer and nearer.

Robin, however, showed no anxiety. He rubbed his arms, which were stiff from the ropes which had bound him. Then he carefully chose an arrow and fitted it to his bow. The fishermen kept glancing from him to the French ship. Robin lifted his bow. The French boat was now so near that with his sharp eyes he could see the faces of the men on the deck. He took for his target the man whom he judged to be captain. Then he sent an arrow through the air like a bird.

In a moment a loud cry rose from the deck of the French ship; the captain was struck down. But scarcely had they stooped to raise him when Robin shot again. Arrow after arrow he sent, until the French in fear turned to escape.

“After them!” cried Robin to the captain.

“We must take this enemy of our dear England. Turn the ship, captain.”

Robin Hood on the Sea

The captain gave the order, and now it was the English boat that chased the French.

“That is better,” said Robin, as he shot again. “I could not bear to be running away from an enemy.”

The French sailors were so frightened that they were no longer able to manage their boat skillfully, and soon the English overtook them. Robin leaped to the deck of the French boat, bow in hand.

“Surrender!” he cried. “Surrender to England!”

The French surrendered, and begged for their lives.

“Have you treasure on board?” asked Robin.

“A thousand pounds of gold,” they said.

“You must forfeit it,” ordered the bowman, “for that is the law of the sea. You should also forfeit your boat; but that I give to you.”

Two of the Frenchmen went below to the treasure chest, and brought Robin bag after bag of gold, till the thousand pounds were piled before him. Robin, his bow still strung, in case of treachery, ordered the English

Robin Hood on the Sea sailors to carry the treasure to their ship. Then he leaped backward after them, and commanded the Frenchmen to sail back to their own country. He kept his bow in position until they were too far away to throw a knife or dagger at the Englishmen. Then he turned to Captain Simon.

“Am I still a worthless landlubber, captain?” he asked, smiling.

“I crave your pardon,” said the captain. “A landlubber you are, for I still maintain that you are a poor fisher; but you are far from worthless. I thank you for my life, and for the lives of my men.”

“You are heartily welcome,” replied Robin.

“This thousand pounds of gold,” said the captain, “belongs, according to law, half to the king and half to you.”

“Nay,” said Robin, “I did not bargain for gold. I asked but a catch of fish and a penny.”

“Nevertheless,” said the captain, “the money is yours.”

“I will take it, then,” said Robin, “and in your town of Scarborough I will have built an almshouse for sailors.”

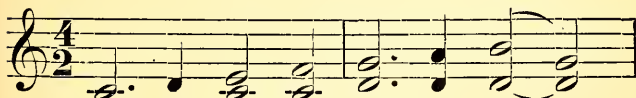
At this the men loudly cheered Robin. They showed him great respect on the

voyage home, for they had now begun to suspect who he was. There was but one man in England, they thought, who could shoot so well. Robin Hood told them stories of his life in the greenwood, and praised the simple pleasures he and his bowmen loved.

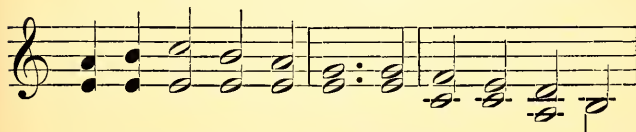
*Robin
Hood
on the
Sea*

As the little town of Scarborough came into sight, he laughed and said, "In faith I shall be glad to set foot on dry land and get back to my forest. I have done my last fishing."

They followed him as he leaped ashore, and begged him to stay with them. He remained for one meal, and as he rested after it, they sang and danced for him. Robin remembered the air and the words, that he might repeat them to Much and George-a-Green.



We be three poor mar - i - ners,
We care not for those mar - tial men



New-ly come from the seas; We spend our lives in
That do our states dis - dain; But we care for the


*Robin
Hood
on the
Sea*



jeop - ard - y, While oth - ers live at ease.
mer - chant - men Who do our states main-tain.




Shall we go dance the round, the round? Shall
To them we dance this round, a-round, a-round, To



we go dance the round, the round, the round? And
them we dance this round, this round, this round; And



he that is a bul - ly boy, Come
he that is a bul - ly boy, Come



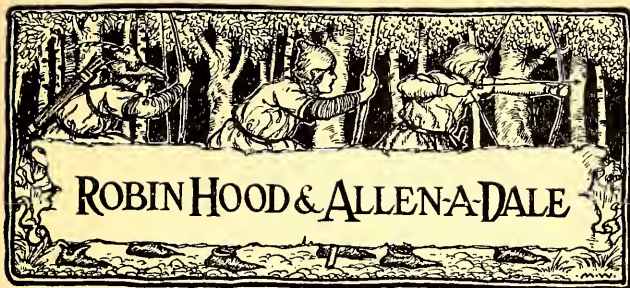
pledge me on this ground, a-ground, a-ground.
pledge me on this ground, a-ground, a-ground.

Then the fishermen loaded him with all
the fish he could carry, folded in their best

*Robin set
off gayly
to the
forest with
his silver
burden*



*Robin
Hood
on the
Sea* net. Robin set off gayly to the forest with his silver burden. He forgot all about the dancing green waves. He could see only Marian's dark, sweet face against the green leaves of their home.



CHAPTER XV

ONE day Robin Hood and Marian were wandering through Sherwood Forest near the Roman road. They liked to see the life of the world, to which they did not belong, passing by along the road on foot or on horseback.

Presently they heard a very gay voice singing this song:



It was a frog in the well, humbledum, humbledum,



And the merry mouse in the mill, tweedle, tweedle, twine.

Robin Hood and Allen-a-Dale "The frog would a-wooing ride, humbledum, humbledum,
Sword and buckler by his side, tweedle, tweedle, twine.

"When upon his high horse set, humbledum, humbledum,
His boots they shone as black as jet, tweedle, tweedle, twine.

"When he came to the merry mill pin, humbledum, humbledum,
'Lady Mouse, are you within?' Tweedle, tweedle, twine.

"Then came out the dusty mouse, humbledum humbledum;
'I am lady of this house'. Tweedle, tweedle, twine.

"'Hast thou any mind of me?' Humbledum, humbledum.
'I have e'en a great mind of thee,' tweedle, tweedle, twine.

"'Who shall this marriage make?' Humbledum, humbledum.
'Our lord, which is the rat.' Tweedle, tweedle, twine.

"'What shall we have to our supper?' Humbledum, humbledum.
'Three beans in a pound of butter.' Tweedle, tweedle, twine.

"But, when supper they were at, humbledum, humbledum,
The frog, the mouse, and e'en the rat, tweedle, tweedle, twine.

“Then came in Gib, our cat, humbledum, humbledum;
And caught the mouse e’en by the back, tweedle,
tweedle, twine.

*Robin
Hood
and
Allen-a-
Dale*

“Then did they separate, humbledum, humbledum;
The frog leapt on the floor so flat, tweedle, tweedle,
twine.

“Then came in Dick, our drake, humbledum, humbledum,
And drew the frog e’en to the lake, tweedle, tweedle,
twine.

“The rat he ran up the wall, humbledum, humbledum,
And so the company parted all, tweedle, tweedle,
twine.”

“That is a pretty tune,” said Marian;
“and he who sings it is a pretty young
man.”

He was a tall, fair youth, clad all in scarlet and gold. His scarlet leather shoes were embroidered in gold, and his silken doublet was sewn with gold thread. His fair curls were as bright as the sunshine, and his eyes and lips were laughing.

“I have seldom seen a happier face,” said Robin. “I wish him good fortune.”

The very next day they were walking in the forest, accompanied by Friar Tuck and

Robin Hood and Allen-a-Dale Little John, when they met the same young man. His head was bent, his eyes were on the ground; he had lost his hat, and his fair curls were uncombed. His horse followed him, whinnying, and tangling his forefeet in the dragging bridle reins. When they saw him Robin Hood and Little John, from force of habit, lifted their bows.

“Shoot,” he said. “Life is no longer glad for me; I pray you, shoot.”

“No man has ever dared come thus far into my retreat,” said Robin Hood. “It is against my law.”

“Then punish me for breaking your law,” said the young man; “and take what wealth I have left, too. It is but seven pounds of money, and a golden ring that I had been saving these seven years for my wedding.”

“You must have suffered some great misfortune,” said Robin Hood, “since you are so ready to part with your life and your money.”

“I have,” replied the young man.

“What is your name?” asked Robin.

“Allen-a-Dale.”

“Tell me your trouble, good Allen,” said Robin. “It may be that I can help you.”

“Nay, my case is beyond help,” said Allen-a-Dale, hopelessly. “You must know that I was brought up as a page in the castle of the noble Earl of Scar. First I was his page, and as such played often with his daughter, Lady Katherine. Later, when I was a squire, and then a knight, I still thought of Katherine. Seven years ago, just before I rode forth on my adventures, we were betrothed. I rode back yesterday with great gladness, for to-day had been set for our wedding.”

*Robin
Hood
and
Allen-a-
Dale*

Here Allen-a-Dale broke off, and sighed deeply.

“When I reached Scar Castle,” he said, “I was met coldly. The Earl of Scar was from home, I was told; his lady could not see me, and Lady Katherine was busy in her chamber. I waited wonderingly until the earl came back from hunting. He told me with scant courtesy that I should not marry Lady Katherine; that he had agreed that she should marry the old Knight of the Marshes, a very rich man.”

Marian listened sympathetically.

“But could you not get speech with the Lady Katherine?” she asked. “Does she not still love you?”

Robin Hood and Allen-a-Dale "I do not know," said the youth. "A fortnight ago she did, for I had a message from her by a trusty servant."

"I am sure she would not change in two weeks," Marian replied.

"Yet that avails me nothing," said Allen-a-Dale, sadly, "since in a few hours she is to marry this old Knight of the Marshes."

"The Earl of Scar has done wrong to break his word," said Robin. "Where does he intend to hold this wedding?"

"It will be held in Scar Chapel, not five miles away," sighed the youth.

"Nay, speak not so dolefully; I do not think it will be held," said Robin. "Do you follow my advice, and you may yet marry the Lady Katherine to-day."

Allen-a-Dale looked up wonderingly.

"Trust him," said Marian. "Whatever he undertakes, succeeds."

Robin Hood lost no time in getting back to the clearing in the greenwood. There Marian found for him a long gray robe and a flowing gray wig, and Much gave him his harp.

"Truly," said Marian, "you look now like a very ancient harper."

“When they hear me singing the songs of Much, the miller’s son, they will think I am a good one,” said Robin. “Now, hand me my bugle; and, Little John and Much, remember well the orders I have given you.”

*Robin
Hood
and
Allen-a-
Dale*

He set off on foot for Scar Chapel, followed at a distance of half a mile by fifty of his men. He walked briskly until he was close to Scar Castle. Then he slowed his pace to one more befitting an aged man.

The castle of the Earl of Scar was built of dark gray stone, and was almost covered with green ivy. Servants were hurrying to and fro, from kitchen to hall, speeding the wedding feast. The earl and his wife were in their great coach, ready to ride to Scar Chapel. The priest who was to perform the ceremony was clad in his vestments. Only the bride was lingering, weeping in her own room, and thinking of Allen-a-Dale, whom she loved. Just as she came down the great stairway, accompanied by her maidens, Robin Hood struck up his music. He sang a beautiful wedding song, and the earl, listening, said:

“That is a good musician. Let him join

Robin Hood and Allen-a-Dale the other harpers, and make music for us on the way to the chapel."

So Robin Hood headed the procession of musicians, and the wedding party proceeded to the church, the villagers strewing the path with flowers. At the door they were met by the Knight of the Marshes.

Robin pressed his way up close to the altar, which was covered with an embroidered cloth of white and gold and bore many lighted candles. It was a small chapel, with oaken piers and narrow windows. Robin was glad to see that these windows were open, and that the door, too, was left ajar. The priest came up to the altar, and then pale, sad Lady Katherine followed, leaning on her father's arm. The Knight of the Marshes took his place by her side.

Just then Robin Hood blew a loud blast on his bugle. Then he took his long bow from under his cloak, and fitted an arrow to it.

"What does this mean?" cried the Earl of Scar.

As he spoke, fifty green-clad bowmen, Allen-a-Dale at their head, leaped through the windows and in at the door, their bows ready to shoot.

“It means,” said Robin Hood, “that I like not the bridegroom you have chosen. There shall be a wedding here, but the bride shall marry the man she loves.”

*Robin
Hood
and
Allen-a-
Dale*

“How dare you speak thus in the church?” demanded the priest. “The maiden is marrying the man of her choice.”

The Earl of Scar and the Knight of the Marshes had drawn their swords, and so had some of their followers. But under the threatening arrows they dared not use their steel.

“Step forward, Allen-a-Dale,” commanded Robin Hood.

Allen came forward, clad in green like the archers, a bow and arrow in his hand.

“Lady Katherine,” said Robin gently, “do you indeed still love Allen-a-Dale, and do you still wish to marry him?”

The Lady Katherine was a timid maiden, and she looked in fear at her father.

“Do not be afraid,” Robin said. “Whatever your answer is, I will see that no harm comes to you or to Allen.”

“Yes,” she said; “yes, I wish to marry Allen-a-Dale.”

“That is enough,” said Robin. Then he

Robin Hood and added to the priest, "Sir, the maiden has chosen."

Allen-a-Dale "I forbid you to marry her to Allen-a-Dale," thundered the Earl of Scar.

"Marry her to me," commanded the Knight of the Marshes.

"Marry her to Allen," said Robin Hood, "or some who are here shall not go forth alive."

The priest hesitated, and then he said:

"Whatever befall me, I will marry the maiden to the man she has chosen."

"Well spoken," said Robin; "if the Earl of Scar attempt to punish you for doing your duty, I shall see that he suffers for it. Begin, good father; I shall give away the bride."

The priest married them, his voice trembling, for he was afraid of the two lords. Lady Katherine's voice also trembled, but Allen-a-Dale called forth his responses loudly and happily.

When the marriage was over, Robin Hood said to Allen-a-Dale:

"Take your bride, and mount her on the white palfrey without. Then ride quickly to my Lady Marian."

For ten minutes the bowmen held all



*"The
priest
married
them,
his voice
trembling"*

Robin Hood and Allen-a-Dale in the church at their mercy. Then they cautiously backed to the doors, Robin last, and once outside they ran like deer. They heard great shouting in the church, and looking back, saw the people pouring out and gazing after them. Two or three knights mounted their horses, but no one pursued them. They ran until they were quite out of danger, and then walked briskly to the clearing in Sherwood Forest. They there found Allen-a-Dale and his bride seated at their wedding feast.

“Welcome!” cried Robin Hood. “Here you shall stay with us until Robin Hood has got the king’s pardon. Then shall you go to the king’s court in London. And now, let us share in your feast.”

“And well do you deserve to,” said Lady Katherine, timidly, “for you have this day made happy two people who, but for you, would have been very miserable.”



CHAPTER XVI

ROBIN HOOD'S power had wonderfully increased. The common people often came to Sherwood Forest for his advice, preferring his judgment to that of the sheriff. Whenever a poor person wanted food or clothes he asked Robin for them. The sheriff sent many complaints to the king in London, but the king paid no attention to them. For the most part, he was engaged in war, and had no time to waste in pursuit of an outlaw. Besides, he was rather amused that an outlaw was the real master of Nottingham instead of the sheriff. Some of his courtiers urged him to send an army to punish Robin Hood.

"That would be foolish," said the king; "they say his band has increased to fully two

*Robin Hood's
Adventure with
the King*

hundred. If I sent down two hundred men who do not know Sherwood Forest, what would happen? They would all be shot in pieces while they were trying to find paths through the woods."

"Then send a thousand men, sire," suggested the courtiers.

"Nay, I have better use for my good soldiers than to make them food for arrows," replied the king.

"But, Your Majesty," they persisted, "Robin Hood takes their money from those rich people who, according to him, have dealt unjustly with the poor."

"In faith, he must have robbed many of the rich!" laughed the king.

"He has, and soon we shall all be poor."

"Nay, that day is far off," said the king lightly.

"But, sire," said one shrewd old courtier, "it is true that it would take Robin Hood a long time to rob all the rich of your great England, yet at the rate at which he is slaying deer in Sherwood Forest, they will soon all be gone. 'T is said he feeds the people on venison for miles about. No man but himself, or his archers, may hunt in Sherwood Forest.

He makes all the deer there his own quarry.” *Robin Hood's Adventure with the King*

The king by no means always listened to the woes of his subjects; he took their losses lightly enough. But he was very angry when he was told that his deer were being killed.

“Nay, if this be true, I will punish the man,” he said.

“Then you will send the soldiers, sire?” they asked.

“Nay,” replied the king, “I will go down to Nottingham and meet face to face this man who would defy me.”

Refusing to listen to the objections of his courtiers, he lost no time in riding to Nottingham with a great array of knights. They made a magnificent sight in their rich clothes and armor. The king's fear was that Robin Hood would get wind of his coming; and the fear was rightly founded. Robin had many trusty friends among the poor of Nottinghamshire who were glad to carry him news.

The king reached Nottingham town and took up his lodging with the Lord Sheriff. The next morning he set forth to ride through Sherwood Forest to hunt for deer and for the outlaw. As he and his men passed through the woods in the direction of Robin

Robin Hood's Adventure with the King

Hood's retreat, the deer became more and more scarce, until at last not one was to be seen. And though they looked for Robin Hood even more industriously than they did for the deer, he was not to be found.

Day after day they searched the woods as thoroughly as they could, but many parts were hedged about with impenetrable thickets, and among these Robin had cunning hiding places. Sometimes they wondered that no arrow was shot at them as a warning. They should have had a better knowledge of the loyalty of Robin Hood. After a search of two weeks, the king's impatience knew no bounds. At last a forester offered a plan.

"You can find Robin Hood, sire," the man said, "only if you go to Sherwood Forest in disguise. If you should dress as an abbot and, carrying a moneybag, ride with five knights, also disguised, through the woods, you would meet the great outlaw."

"A good plan! Faith!" said the king.

He called on the Lord Sheriff to furnish him with the disguise. Over his royal doublet he put an abbot's long cloak, and on his head a broad hat. Then, followed by five men all soberly clad in gray robes, he set off for the

greenwood. He had gone some three miles from Nottingham, and had struck into the forest, when, at a turn in the path he was taking, he saw a company of men clad in green coats and bearing long bows in their hands. At their head stood a tall, fair, handsome man with laughing eyes. He strode to the king's horse and took it by the bridle.

"Sir Abbot," he said, "by your leave, you must bide for a time with us. We are men, sir, who live on nothing but the deer in the king's forest; and as you have plenty of money, we must ask you to give us some for the poor."

"By my life!" cried the king, "there are many of you, and I have but forty pounds. I have spent the last three weeks with the king in Nottingham, where I have given much money to many a good lord. Nevertheless, if I had a hundred pounds, I would give it to you freely."

"That is spoken generously," said Robin.

He held out his hand for the king's money-bag. Then he poured the shining coins on the green grass, dividing them into two parts.

"Here, Little John," he said, handing one share to his huge follower; "put this in our

Robin Hood's Adventure with the King chest from which we dispense alms to the poor. Sir Abbot," he said with a low bow, "I give you back half your gold, and I trust we shall meet again."

"Gramercy!" was the reply. "And as I am greatly in the king's favor, I bid you in his name to dine with him at Nottingham."

As he spoke, he drew aside his robe a little, and showed the king's great seal.

Robin Hood bowed again.

"I love no man in the world so much as I do the King of England," he said. "I welcome the sight of my lord's seal, and, Sir Abbot, in sign of the honor offered me, I beg you, for love of the king, to dine with me to-day under my trysting tree."

"Gladly will I," replied the king.

His five followers exchanged anxious looks, but their lord gave no heed. He allowed himself and his men to be blindfolded, and then they were led through a twisting path into Robin Hood's great clearing. One of the bowmen had run quickly to tell Marian that guests were expected, so she had all ready silver basins of perfumed water and sweet linen towels.

Then they were led to a table spread with

a fair white cloth. The king smiled when he saw that the meat consisted chiefly of his own venison. He had never tasted better cooked food, he said. Robin Hood and Marian did the honors, while the bowmen who waited on the table were prompt and quiet. When the king saw how readily Robin's men obeyed him, he said to himself:

Robin Hood's Adventure with the King

"Faith, I would my subjects were as quick to do my bidding!"

After the meal, Robin proposed that his men should show their skill in archery. So they set up a willow wand with a rose garland twined about it, at which they were to shoot from a very considerable distance.

The king shook his head.

"You are too far from your mark by fifty paces," he said.

"Not so, Sir Abbot," replied Robin; "most of these men will hit the wand. Any one who fails to hit either it or the rose garland shall yield up his bow and arrows, and shall receive a blow on his bare head."

Then Robin shot first, splitting the wand. Little John, Much, George-a-Green, and others followed, all coming within the rose garland. The king expressed great surprise;

*Robin Hood's
Adventure with
the King*

then he asked Robin to shoot again. This time the great outlaw was careless in his sighting, and for the first time in his life he missed the mark.

"Ha, master," laughed Little John, "now must you receive a buffet on the head."

"If so," said Robin, "Sir Abbot here must bestow it."

"Right gladly," said the king with a grim smile, for he was a strong man. He turned up the sleeve of his abbot's gown, and gave Robin Hood such a blow that Robin fell full length on the ground.

The outlaws started forward angrily, but Robin ordered them back. He rose slowly to his feet, and then he knelt on one knee and bowed low to the king.

"Sire," he said, "when you rolled back your sleeve I saw the insignia of royalty. I crave your mercy. I am, as I have ever been, your loyal subject."

When he said that, all the bowmen fell upon their knees, and Marian bowed very low.

"Rise, Robin," said the king. "I believe you are a true and loyal man. I am safe here in your hands with my men."



*Robin
fell full
length
on the
ground.*

*Robin
Hood's
Adven-
ture with
the King*

"Sire," said Robin, rising, "no man here would hurt you in the slightest."

"You are a good host, Robin," returned the king, "and a good hunter. I forgive you the killing of my deer; but I must command you to be more sparing of your shooting in the future."

Robin smiled.

"Nay, sire, we have never killed needlessly," he said.

"We differ about that," said the king dryly. "But now, in order that I may be sure about the welfare of my deer, I bid you back to my court."

"Back to your court, sire!" cried Robin.

"Aye," replied the king, "I restore you your estates that were forfeited; I take from you the ban of outlaw. You are again Robert, Earl of Huntington. I will lay commands on Lord Fitzwalter to forgive your lady, his daughter. What more I and the queen can do to make your life happy in the court shall be done. And," continued the king, a little impatiently, "I am not wont to see my favors received with such a grave face, my Lord of Huntington."

Robin fell on his knee.

“Sire,” he said, “I am indeed grateful to you. I was but thinking—”

“And what were you thinking, my Lord of Huntington?” asked the king.

“I was thinking that our lives are very simple and happy here, sire,” returned Robin, in a low voice. “We commit no sins in the forest; we live in peace with those who are good, and pity and punish those who are evil, and we help the poor. My liege, is there any court in all this broad land of which one can say so much?”

The king sighed.

“In truth, my Lord of Huntington,” he said, “or Robin Hood, as I see you would fain be called, there are often sin and treachery at court. I lay no commands on you: choose you then what you will, or let the Lady Marian choose.”

“Sire,” said Marian, bowing low, “I am very happy here in the forest with Robin.”

“Then you will stay here, Robin Hood?” asked the king.

“Sire,” said Robin with a bright smile, “if you will grant us safe conduct, Marian and I and seven score men will come on a visit to your court. But after that I must

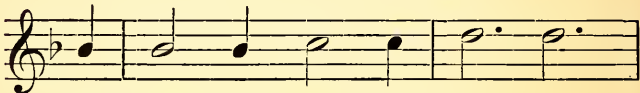
*Robin
Hood's
Adven-
ture with
the King*

e'en return to my home here and shoot the king's deer as has been my habit."

Then the outlaws escorted the king and his party back to the Roman road. After they had parted, Little John was so excited at the honor that had been done them that he forestalled Much, who would have sung for the bowmen. This was Little John's song:



"Rob - in Hood, Rob - in Hood," said Lit - tle John,



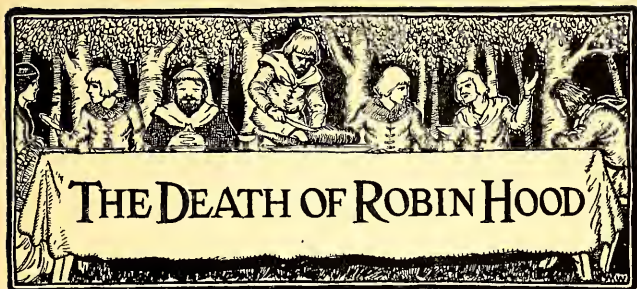
"Come, dance be - fore the queen - a,



In a red pet - ti - coat and a green jack-et, A



white hose and a green - a."



CHAPTER XVII

THERE were many years during which Robin Hood and his merry men forgot that change or old age could come to them in the greenwood. The trees were the same, for most of them had had their full growth for scores of years. The songs of the birds were as gay as they had been the first day the outlaws had come into the forest. The songs of Much, the miller's son, were as care free. George-a-Green whistled as merrily as ever.

But after long years the bowmen began to see a difference. They could no longer shoot so skillfully as they had in former times. They cared less to hunt, and were glad to welcome to their number young recruits, who would do the heavier work. Much

*The
Death of
Robin
Hood*

began to sing plaintive songs; George-a-Green's whistling grew thin. Then some of the older men died, and were buried in the forest. After that, it seemed as if winter came sooner and stayed longer than in the old days.

Robin, however, always looked and spoke cheerfully until Marian died. He had never thought of her as changing from the beautiful young girl who had come to him, dressed as a page, to share his fortunes. After he lost her he seemed to care but little what happened. Little John tried to rouse him.

"Master," he said to him one day, "since your friend the old king is dead and a new king reigns, do you not know that we are in some danger?"

"Is it true, John?" asked Robin.

"Aye," replied Little John. "I have heard rumors in Nottingham that a valiant knight, Sir Richard of Oxenbridge, is coming with a hundred men to give battle to us."

For a moment Robin Hood's eyes sparkled with their old light. Then he dropped his head, and said, listlessly:

"If Sir William comes, of course we shall meet his attack. But I fear that our days in the greenwood are nigh over."

“Nay, master, we are as strong yet as we were in our prime,” said Little John, cheerily.

*The
Death of
Robin
Hood*

“Ah, John, your hair is as silver as the bark of a birch tree, and your big shoulders are bent,” said Robin Hood. “Nothing is as it was except your courage. Nevertheless, if Sir William comes we shall e’en do our best to receive him.”

A few days later Robin was sitting with Little John in the clearing by the yew trees when he heard the steady tramp of men. He put his bugle to his lips, and sounded a loud blast. At the same moment Sir William of Oxenbridge and a hundred bowmen came breaking their way through the underbrush near the clearing. Robin Hood rose.

“Sirs, what seek ye?” he asked.

“Robin Hood, the outlaw,” replied young Sir William, “and if you can show him to us, I will give you many broad gold pieces.”

“I am here,” said Robin.

Sir William started forward, but Little John lifted his bow.

“Nay, sir,” said he, while he listened to the approach of Robin’s men whom the bugle had summoned, “you cannot take our master without a fair fight.”

*The
Death of
Robin
Hood*

“So be it,” replied Sir William.

The two bands drew up at opposite sides of the clearing, and began to fight. It was many years since Robin's men had battled with any one. At first, all their old ardor came back to them, and they sent their arrows quickly and strongly. But soon Robin saw that they began to tire. They still shot bravely, but not so quickly. Nevertheless, as they were much better archers than Sir William's younger men, neither side had the advantage. After a time, Sir William shouted to Robin and asked him to call a truce. Robin gave commands to his men, and then Sir William approached and said:

“Robin Hood, you fight well. The intention was to take you alive, throw you in prison, and then hang you. But if you will surrender now, I pledge you my word you shall not be hanged.”

“Gramercy,” said Robin; “but they would keep me forever in prison.”

“Aye,” replied the knight.

“Nay, that cannot be, after my free life in the greenwood,” replied Robin Hood.

He waited until Sir William had gone back to his men, and then he gave the signal to

shoot. After half an hour of grim, determined fighting, Sir William again called for a truce, and said:

*The
Death of
Robin
Hood*

“Robin Hood, yield, and I promise that you shall have but ten years of imprisonment.”

“Faith!” replied Robin. “I have not that many years to spend in this world. Let us fight on to the death.”

Robin’s archers felt renewed courage when Sir William gave this proof that his men were weakening. They shot fast and as well as they could, and before an hour had passed, Sir William withdrew his men.

“To-morrow,” he said, “we will fight with you again, and this time we shall win the victory.”

When Sir William and his followers had disappeared from the greenwood, Robin Hood sank to the ground.

“Help me, Little John,” he said; “I am wounded with an arrow.”

Little John bent over his master, and plucked away the barb of the arrow. Then he dressed the wound, while the bowmen stood about anxiously, looking sadly now at him, now at those of their band who were dead or hurt.

*The
Death of
Robin
Hood*

“My merry men,” said Robin, “I am sick, and we are nearly all old. To-morrow we could not win in the fight with Sir William’s young men. Therefore, I pray you, leave me and this greenwood. Go you hence to France or Spain or where you will. Seek another master and another means of livelihood. This forest is no longer safe for you, and I, who am about to die, can no longer protect you.”

They fell upon their knees about him and begged him not to send them away. They said that he would soon be sound, and that they could all live as well as ever in the greenwood. But Robin Hood was firm.

“Take what money and goods there may be in my oaken chests,” he said, “and bid me farewell. I shall lean on Little John and get me to Kirl’y Hall, where there is a woman I know. She will put a leech to my wound. If I recover I will follow you. And now, farewell.”

One after another they bade him farewell, the men who had so long worked and played with Robin. He watched them file away to the retreat. Then he said to Little John:

“I would fain see again the oak under

which Marian and I have so often sat, but I must not. Help me, I pray you, to Kirkly Hall.”

*The
Death of
Robin
Hood*

They walked throughout that night, resting every few minutes. At dawn they were in sight of Kirkly Hall, which lay not far from Fountains Abbey.

It was a low building of white stone. The woman who, Robin Hood had said, was skilled in surgery, came to the door in answer to Little John's loud knock.

“Good woman,” said Robin, “will you set a leech to my wound?”

She looked at him eagerly.

“Yes,” she said, “come you in; but your friend must stay without.” And she shut the door in the face of Little John.

He went and sat under a tree not far from the doorway, while the woman led Robin Hood through a number of passages until they reached a little corner room. It contained a bed and a chair.

“Lie on the bed,” said she, “and I will set the leech to your wound, and otherwise bleed you.”

She opened two of his veins; then she laughed harshly and jumped to her feet.

*The
Death of
Robin
Hood*

“Lie there and die, outlaw,” she said, “and I will get the price that is upon your head.”

Then she ran out of the room and locked the door. Robin Hood staggered to his feet, and tried to stanch the fast-flowing blood, but he could not. Next he tried to break the lock of the door, but it was too strong for him. At last he bethought him of his bugle. He went to the window and, leaning against it, blew a feeble note. It was a thin sound indeed, compared to the blast he used to blow in the olden days. But Little John, sitting under the tree, heard him.

“Can my master be making that faint sound?” cried Little John, leaping to his feet. “He must be near death, indeed!”

He ran to the outside door, and broke it down. He rushed through passage after passage, calling at every door for Robin Hood. At last, his master’s feeble voice answered him, and Little John broke into the corner room. He sank beside Robin, who lay on the floor.

“A boon!” he cried. “Let me burn this woman’s house!”

“Nay,” said Robin, “I have never waged war against women, and I shall not begin

Very feebly poor Robin shot an arrow."



*The
Death of
Robin
Hood* on the day of my death. But now, lift me, good Little John, and set me up against the window."

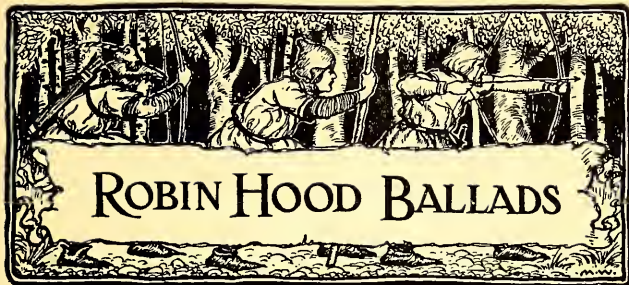
Little John obeyed him, and then Robin said: "Give my bow and arrow into my hand. I shall shoot the arrow, and where it falls there dig my grave."

Little John, weeping, obeyed him, and very feebly poor Robin Hood shot an arrow. Then he dropped back into the arms of his faithful friend.

"Bury me with my bow at my side," he said, "and put a stone over my grave so that my friends may know where I lie."

Then he died, and Little John buried him, with many tears, and for a number of days he could not bear to leave the grave. But at last he set off to join the other bowmen abroad. Before he went, however, he chose a stone for Robin Hood's grave on which he carved the epitaph:

"Here underneath this little stone,
Lies Robert, Earl of Huntington.
No archer ever was so good.
The people called him Robin Hood.
Such outlaws as him and his men,
England will never see again."



ROBIN HOOD AND LITTLE JOHN

1. When Robin Hood was about twenty years old,
With a hey down down and a down,
He happend to meet Little John,
A jolly brisk blade, right fit for the trade,
For he was a lusty young man.
2. Tho he was calld Little, his limbs they were
large,
And his stature was seven foot high;
Where-ever he came, they quak'd at his name,
For soon he would make them to fly.
3. How they came acquainted, I'll tell you in brief,
If you will but listen a while;
For this very jest, amongst all the rest,
I think it may cause you to smile.
4. Bold Robin Hood said to his jolly bowmen,
"Pray tarry you here in this grove;

- And see that you all observe well my call,
While through the forest I rove.
5. "We have had no sport for these fourteen long days,
Therefore now abroad will I go;
Now should I be beat, and cannot retreat,
My horn I will presently blow."
6. Then did he shake hands with his merry men all,
And bid them at present good-b'w'ye;
Then, as near a brook his journey he took,
A stranger he chanced to spy.
7. They happend to meet on a long narrow bridge,
And neither of them would give way;
Quoth bold Robin Hood, and sturdily stood,
"I'll show you right Nottingham play."
8. With that from his quiver an arrow he drew,
A broad arrow with a goose-wing:
The stranger reply'd, "I'll liquor thy hide,
If thou offerst to touch the string."
9. Quoth bold Robin Hood, "Thou dost prate like
an ass,
For were I to bend but my bow,
I could send a dart quite thro thy proud heart,
Before thou couldst strike me one blow."
10. "Thou talkst like a coward," the stranger reply'd;
"Well armd with a long bow you stand,

To shoot at my breast, while I, I protest,
Have naught but a staff in my hand."

11. "The name of a coward," quoth Robin, "I scorn,
Wherefore my long bow I'll lay by;
And now, for thy sake, a staff will I take,
The truth of thy manhood to try."
12. Then Robin Hood stept to a thicket of trees,
And chose him a staff of ground-oak:
Now this being done, away he did run
To the stranger, and merrily spoke:
13. "Lo! see my staff, it is lusty and tough,
Now here on the bridge we will play:
Whoever falls in, the other shall win
The battel, and so we'll away."
14. "With all my whole heart," the stranger reply'd;
"I scorn in the least to give out";
This said, they fell to't without more dispute,
And their staffs they did flourish about.
15. And first Robin he gave the stranger a bang,
So hard that it made his bones ring;
The stranger he said, "This must be repaid,
I'll give you as good as you bring.
16. "So long as I'm able to handle my staff,
To die in your debt, friend, I scorn":
Then to it each goes, and followd their blows,
As if they had been threshing of corn.

17. The stranger gave Robin a crack on the crown,
Which caused the blood to appear;
Then Robin, enrag'd, more fiercely engag'd.
And followd his blows more severe.
18. So thick and so fast did he lay it on him,
With a passionate fury and ire,
At every stroke, he made him to smoke,
As if he had been all on fire.
19. O then into fury the stranger he grew,
And gave him a damnable look,
And with it a blow that laid him full low,
And tumbled him into the brook.
20. "I prithee, good fellow, O where art thou now?"
The stranger, in laughter, he cry'd;
Quoth bold Robin Hood, "Good faith, in the flood,
And floating along with the tide.
21. "I needs must acknowledge thou art a brave soul;
With thee I'll no longer contend;
For needs must I say, thou hast got the day,
Our battel shall be at an end."
22. Then unto the bank he did presently wade,
And pulld himself out by a thorn;
Which done, at the last, he blowd a loud blast
Straitway on his fine bugle-horn.
23. The echo of which through the vallies did fly,
At which his stout bowmen appeard,

All clothed in green, most gay to be seen;
So up to their master they steerd.

24. "O what's the matter?" quoth William Stutely;
"Good master, you are wet to the skin":
"No matter," quoth he; "the lad which you see,
In fighting, hath tumbled me in."
25. "He shall not go scot-free," the others reply'd;
So strait they were seizing him there,
To duck him likewise; but Robin Hood cried,
"He is a stout fellow, forbear."
26. "There's no one shall wrong thee, friend, be not
afraid;
These bowmen upon me do wait;
There's threescore and nine; if thou wilt be mine,
Thou shalt have my livery strait."
27. "And other accoutrements fit for a man;
Speak up, jolly blade, never fear;
I'll teach you also the use of the bow,
To shoot at the fat fallow deer."
28. "O here is my hand," the stranger reply'd,
"I'll serve you with all my whole heart;
My name is John Little, a man of good mettle;
Ne'er doubt me, for I'll play my part."
29. "His name shall be alterd," quoth William Stutely,
"And I will his godfather be;
Prepare then a feast, and none of the least,
For we will be merry," quoth he.

30. They presently fetchd in a brace of fat does,
With humming strong liquor likewise;
They lov'd what was good; so, in the greenwood,
This pretty sweet babe they baptize.
31. He was, I must tell you, but seven foot high,
And, may be, an ell in the waist;
A pretty sweet lad; much feasting they had;
Bold Robin the christning grac'd.
32. With all his bowmen, which stood in a ring,
And were of the Notti[n]gham breed;
Brave Stutely comes then, with seven yeomen,
And did in this manner proceed.
33. "This infant was called John Little," quoth he,
"Which name shall be changèd anon;
The words we'll transpose, so where-ever he goes,
His name shall be call'd Little John."
34. They all with a shout made the elements ring,
So soon as the office was ore;
To feasting they went, with true merriment,
And tippl'd strong liquor gillore.
35. Then Robin he took the pretty sweet babe,
And cloth'd him from top to the toe
In garments of green, most gay to be seen,
And gave him a curious long bow.
36. "Thou shalt be an archer as well as the best,
And range in the greenwood with us;

Where we'll not want gold nor silver, behold,
While bishops have ought in their purse.

37. "We live here like squires, or lords of renown,
Without e'er a foot of free land;
We feast on good cheer, with wine, ale, and beer,
And evry thing at our command."
38. Then musick and dancing did finish the day;
At length, when the sun waxèd low,
Then all the whole train the grove did refrain,
And unto their caves they did go.
39. And so ever after, as long as he livd,
Altho he was proper and tall,
Yet nevertheless, the truth to express,
Still Little John they did him call.

THE JOLLY PINDER OF WAKEFIELD

1. In Wakefield there lives a jolly pinder,
In Wakefield, all on a green; (*bis*)
2. "There is neither knight nor squire," said the
pinder,
"Nor baron that is so bold, (*bis*)
Dare make a trespass on the town of Wakefield,
But his pledge goes to the pinfold." (*bis*)
3. All this beheard three witty young men,
'T was Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John;
With that they spyed the jolly pinder,
As he sate under a thorn.

4. "Now turn again, turn again," said the pinder,
"For a wrong way have you gone;
For you have forsaken the king his highway,
And made a path over the corn."

5. "O that were great shame," said jolly Robin,
"We being three, and thou but one":
The pinder leapt back then thirty good foot,
'T was thirty good foot and one.

6. He leaned his back fast unto a thorn,
And his foot unto a stone,
And there he fought a long summer's day,
A summer's day so long,
Till that their swords, on their broad bucklers,
Were broken fast unto their hands.

.

7. "Hold thy hand, hold thy hand," said Robin Hood,
"And my merry men every one;
For this is one of the best pinders
That ever I tryd with a sword.

8. "And wilt thou forsake thy pinder his craft,
And live in [the] greenwood with me?"

.

9. "At Michaelmas next my covnant comes out,
When every man gathers his fee;
I'll take my blew blade all in my hand,
And plod to the greenwood with thee."

10. "Hast thou either meat or drink," said Robin Hood,
"For my merry men and me?"
.
11. "I have both bread and beef," said the pinder,
"And good ale of the best";
"And that is meat good enough," said Robin Hood,
"For such unbidden guest.
12. "O wilt thou forsake the pinder his craft,
And go to the greenwood with me?
Thou shalt have a livery twice in the year,
The one green, the other brown [shall be]."
13. "If Michaelmas day were once come and gone
And my master had paid me my fee,
Then would I set as little by him
As my master doth set by me."

ROBIN HOOD AND MAID MARIAN

1. A bonny fine maid of a noble degree,
With a hey down down a down down
Maid Marian calld by name,
Did live in the North, of excellent worth,
For she was a gallant dame.
2. For favour and face, and beauty most rare,
Queen Hellen shee did excell;
For Marian then was praisd of all men
That did in the country dwell.

3. 'T was neither Rosamond nor Jane Shore,
Whose beauty was clear and bright,
That could surpass this country lass,
Beloved of lord and knight.
4. The Earl of Huntington, nobly born,
That came of noble blood,
To Marian went, with a good intent,
By the name of Robin Hood.
5. With kisses sweet their red lips meet,
For shee and the earl did agree;
In every place, they kindly imbrace,
With love and sweet unity.
6. But fortune bearing these lovers a spight,
That soon they were forced to part,
To the merry green wood then went Robin Hood,
With a sad and sorrowful heart.
7. And Marian, poor soul, was troubled in mind,
For the absence of her friend;
With finger in eye, shee often did cry,
And his person did much commend.
8. Perplexed and vexed, and troubled in mind,
Shee drest herself like a page,
And ranged the wood to find Robin Hood,
The bravest of men in that age.
9. With quiver and bow, sword, buckler, and all,
Thus armed was Marian most bold,

Still wandering about to find Robin out,
Whose person was better than gold.

10. But Robin Hood, hee himself had disguis'd,
And Marian was strangely attir'd,
That they provd foes, and so fell to blowes,
Whose valour bold Robin admir'd.
11. They drew out their swords, and to cutting they
went,
At least an hour or more,
That the blood ran apace from bold Robin's face,
And Marian was wounded sore.
12. "O hold thy hand, hold thy hand," said Robin
Hood,
"And thou shalt be one of my string,
To range in the wood with bold Robin Hood,
To hear the sweet nightingale sing."
13. When Marian did hear the voice of her love,
Her self shee did quickly discover,
And with kisses sweet she did him greet,
Like to a most loyall lover.
14. When bold Robin Hood his Marian did see,
Good lord, what clipping was there!
With kind imbraces and jobbing of faces,
Providing of gallant cheer.
15. For Little John took his bow in his hand,
And wandring in the wood,

- To kill the deer, and make good chear,
For Marian and Robin Hood.
16. A stately banquet the[y] had full soon,
All in a shaded bower,
Where venison sweet they had to eat,
And were merry that present hour.
17. Great flaggons of wine were set on the board,
And merrily they drunk round
Their boules of sack, to strengthen the back,
Whilst their knees did touch the ground.
18. First Robin Hood began a health,
To Marian his onely dear,
And his yeomen all, both comly and tall,
Did quickly bring up the rear.
19. For in a brave vein they tost off the[ir] bouls,
Whilst thus they did remain,
And every cup, as they drunk up,
They filled with speed again.
20. At last they ended their merrymment,
And went to walk in the wood,
Where Little John and Maid Marian
Attended on bold Robin Hood.
21. In sollid content together they liv'd,
With all their yeomen gay;
They liv'd by their hands, without any lands,
And so they did many a day.

22. But now to conclude, an end I will make
In time, as I think it good,
For the people that dwell in the North can tell
Of Marian and bold Robin Hood.

ROBIN HOOD AND THE CURTAL FRIAR

1. In summer-time, when leaves grow green,
And flowers are fresh and gay,
Robin Hood and his merry men
Were disposed to play.
2. Then some would leap, and some would run,
And some would use artillery:
“Which of you can a good bow draw,
A good archer to be?”
3. “Which of you can kill a buck?
Or who can kill a do?
Or who can kill a hart of greece,
Five hundred foot him fro?”
4. Will Scadlock he killd a buck,
And Midge he killd a do,
And Little John killd a hart of greece,
Five hundred foot him fro.
5. “God’s blessing on thy heart,” said Robin Hood,
“That hath [shot] such a shot for me;
I would ride my horse an hundred miles,
To finde one could match with thee.”

6. That causd Will Scadlock to laugh,
He laughed full heartily:
"There lives a curtal frier in Fountains Abby
Will beat both him and thee.
7. "That curtal frier in Fountains Abby
Well can a strong bow draw;
He will beat you and your yeomen,
Set them all on a row."
8. Robin Hood took a solemn oath,
It was by Mary free,
That he would neither eat nor drink
Till the frier he did see.
9. Robin Hood put on his harness good,
And on his head a cap of steel,
Broad sword and buckler by his side,
And they became him weel.
10. He took his bow into his hand,
It was made of a lusty tree,
With a sheaf of arrows at his belt,
To the Fountains Dale went he.
11. And comming unto Fountain[s] dale,
No further would he ride;
There was he ware of a curtal frier,
Walking by the waterside.
12. The fryer had on a harness good,
And on his head a cap of steel,

Broad sword and buckler by his side,
And they became him weel.

13. Robin Hood lighted off his horse,
And tied him to a thorn:
"Carry me over the water, thou curtal frier,
Or else thy life's forlorn."
14. The frier took Robin Hood on his back,
Deep water he did bestride,
And spake neither good word nor bad,
Till he came at the other side.
15. Lightly leapt Robin Hood off the frier's back;
The frier said to him again,
"Carry me over this water, fine fello,
Or it shall breed thy pain."
16. Robin Hood took the frier on's back,
Deep water he did bestride,
And spake neither good word nor bad,
Till he came at the other side.
17. Lightly leapt the frier off Robin Hood's back;
Robin Hood said to him again,
"Carry me over this water, thou curtal frier,
Or it shall breed thee pain."
18. The frier took Robin Hood on's back again,
And stept up to the knee;
Till he came at the middle stream,
Neither good nor bad spake he.

19. And coming to the middle stream,
There he threw Robin in:
"And chuse thee, chuse thee, fine fellow,
Whether thou wilt sink or swim."
20. Robin Hood swam to a bush of broom,
The frier to a wicker wand;
Bold Robin Hood is gone to shore,
And took his bow in hand.
21. One of his best arrows under his belt
To the frier he let fly;
The curtal frier with his steel buckler,
He put that arrow by.
22. "Shoot on, shoot on, thou fine fellow,
Shoot on as thou hast begun;
If thou shoot here a summer's day,
Thy mark I will not shun."
23. Robin Hood shot passing well,
Till his arrows all were gone;
They took their swords and steel bucklers,
And fought with might and maine;
24. From ten o' th' clock that day,
Till four i' th' afternoon;
Then Robin Hood came to his knees,
Of the frier to beg a boon.
25. "A boon, a boon, thou curtal frier,
I beg it on my knee;

Give me leave to set my horn to my mouth,
And to blow blasts three."

26. "That will I do," said the curtal frier,
"Of thy blasts I have no doubt;
I hope thou'lt blow so passing well
Till both thy eyes fall out."

27. Robin Hood set his horn to his mouth,
He blew but blasts three;
Half a hundred yeomen, with bows bent,
Came raking over the lee.

28. "Whose men are these," said the frier,
"That come so hastily?"
"These men are mine," said Robin Hood;
"Frier, what is that to thee?"

29. "A boon, a boon," said the curtal frier,
"The like I gave to thee;
Give me leave to set my fist to my mouth,
And to whute whutes three."

30. "That will I do," said Robin Hood,
"Or else I were to blame;
Three whutes in a frier's fist
Would make me glad and fain."

31. The frier set his fist to his mouth,
And whuted whutes three;
Half a hundred good ban-dogs,
Came running the frier unto.

32. "Here's for every man of thine a dog,
And I myself for thee":
"Nay by my faith," quoth Robin Hood,
"Frier, that may not be."
33. Two dogs at once to Robin Hood did go,
The one behind, the other before;
Robin Hood's mantle of Lincoln green
Off from his back they tore.
34. And whether his men shot east or west,
Or they shot north or south,
The curtal dogs, so taught they were,
They kept their arrows in their mouth.
35. "Take up thy dogs," said Little John,
"Frier, at my bidding be";
"Whose man art thou," said the curtal frier,
"Comes here to prate with me?"
36. "I am Little John, Robin Hood's man,
Frier, I will not lie;
If thou take not up thy dogs soon,
I'le take up them and thee."
37. Little John had a bow in his hand,
He shot with might and main;
Soon half a score of the frier's dogs
Lay dead upon the plain.
38. "Hold thy hand, good fellow," said the curtal frier,
"Thy master and I will agree;

And we will have new orders taken,
With all the haste that may be."

39. "If thou wilt forsake fair Fountains Dale
And Fountains Abby free,
Every Sunday throughout the year,
A noble shall be thy fee.

40. "And every holy day throuhout the year,
Changed shall thy garments be,
If thou wilt go to fair Nottingham,
And there remain with me."

41. This curtal frier had kept Fountains Dale
Seven long years or more;
There was neither knight, lord, nor earl
Could make him yield before.

ROBIN HOOD RESCUING THE THREE SQUIRES

1. Bold Robin Hood ranging the forest all round,
The forest all round ranged he;
O there did he meet with a gay lady,
She came weeping along the highway.

2. "What weep you for then?" said jolly Robin,
"I prithee come tell unto me";
"Oh! I do weep for my three sons,
For they are all condemned to die."

3. "What have they done then?" said jolly Robin,
"Come tell me most speedily";
"Oh! it is for killing the king's fallow deer,
And they are all condemned to die."
4. "Get you home, get you home," said jolly Robin,
"Get you home most speedily,
And I will unto fair Nottingham go,
For the sake of the squires three."
5. Then bold Robin Hood for Nottingham goes,
For Nottingham town goes he,
O there did he meet with a poor beggar-man,
He came creeping along the highway.
6. "What news, what news, thou old beggar-man?
What news, come tell unto me":
"O there is weeping and wailing in fair Nottingham,
For the death of the squires all three."
7. This beggar-man had a coat on his back,
'T was neither green, yellow, nor red;
Bold Robin Hood thought 't was no disgrace
To be in a beggar-man's stead.
8. "Come, pull off thy coat, you old beggar-man,
And you shall put on mine;
And forty good shillings I'll give thee to boot,
Besides brandy, good beer, and wine."
9. Bold Robin Hood then unto Nottingham came,
Unto Nottingham town came he;

O there did he meet with great master sheriff
And likewise the squires all three.

10. "One boon, one boon," says jolly Robin,
"One boon, I beg on my knee;
That, as for the deaths of these three squires,
Their hangman I may be."
11. "Soon granted, soon granted," says great master
sheriff,
"Soon granted unto thee;
And you shall have all their gay clothing,
Aye, and all their white money."
12. "O I will have none of their gay clothing,
Nor none of their white money,
But I'll have three blasts on my bugle-horn,
That their souls to heaven may flee."
13. Then Robin Hood mounted the gallows so high,
Where he blew loud and shrill,
Till an hundred and ten of Robin Hood's men
They came marching all down the green hill.
14. "Whose men are they all these?" says great
master sheriff,
"Whose men are they? Tell unto me":
"O they are mine, but none of thine,
And they're come for the squires all three."
15. "O take them, O take them!" says great master
sheriff,
"O take them along with thee;

For there's never a man in all Nottingham
Can do the like of thee."

ROBIN HOOD AND THE PRINCE OF ARAGON

1. Now Robin Hood, Will Scadlock, and Little John
Are walking over the plain,
With a good fat buck which Will Scadlock
With his strong bow had slain.
2. "Jog on, jog on," cries Robin Hood,
"The day it runs full fast;
For though my nephew me a breakfast gave,
I have not yet broke my fast.
3. "Then to yonder lodge let us take our way,
I think it wondrous good,
Where my nephew by, my bold yeomen
Shall be welcomd unto the green wood."
4. With that he took the bugle-horn,
Full well he could it blow;
Straight from the woods came marching down
One hundred tall fellows and mo.
5. "Stand, stand to your arms!" crys Will Scadlock,
"Lo! the enemies are within ken",
With that Robin Hood he laughed aloud,
Crys, "They are my bold yeomen."
6. Who, when they arriv'd and Robin espy'd,
Cry'd "Master, what is your will?"

We thought you had in danger been,
Your horn did sound so shrill."

7. "Now nay, now nay," quoth Robin Hood,
"The danger is past and gone;
I would have you to welcome my nephew here,
That hath paid me two for one."
8. In feasting and sporting they passed the day,
Till Phoebus sunk into the deep;
Then each one to his quarters hy'd,
His guard there for to keep.
9. Long had they not walked within the green wood,
But Robin he was espy'd
Of a beautiful damsel all alone,
That on a black palfrey did ride.
10. Her riding-suit was of sable hew black,
Sypress over her face,
Through which her rose-like cheeks did blush,
All with a comely grace.
11. "Come tell me the cause, thou pritty one,"
Quoth Robin, "and tell me aright,
From whence thou comest, and whither thou goest,
All in this mournful plight."
12. "From London I came," the damsel reply'd,
"From London upon the Thames,
Which circled is, O grief to tell!
Besieged with foreign arms.

13. "By the proud Prince of Aragon,
Who swears by his martial hand
To have the princess for his spouse,
Or else to waste this land:
14. "Except that champions can be found
That dare fight three to three,
Against the prince and giants twain,
Most horrid for to see:
15. "Whose grisly looks, and eyes like brands,
Strike terror where they come,
With serpents hissing on their helms,
Instead of feathered plume.
16. "The princess shall be the victor's prize,
The king hath vowd and said,
And he that shall the conquest win
Shall have her to his bride.
17. "Now we are four damsels sent abroad,
To the east, west, north, and south,
To try whose fortune is so good
To find these champions forth.
18. "But all in vain we have sought about;
Yet none so bold there are
That dare adventure life and blood,
To free a lady fair."
19. "When is the day?" quoth Robin Hood,
"Tell me this and no more";

“On Midsummer next,” the damsel said,
“Which is June the twenty-four.”

20. With that the teares tickled down her cheeks,
And silent was her tongue;
With sighs and sobs she took her leave,
Away her palfrey sprung.

21. This news struck Robin to the heart,
He fell down on the grass;
His actions and his troubled mind
Shewed he perplexèd was.

22. “Where lies your grief?” quoth Will Scadlock,
“O master, tell to me;
If the damsel’s eyes have pierced your heart,
I’ll fetch her back to thee.”

23. “Now nay, now nay,” quoth Robin Hood,
“She doth not cause my smart;
But it is the poor distressed princess
That wounds me to the heart.

24. “I will go fight the giants all
To set the lady free”:
“The devil take my soul,” quoth Little John,
“If I part with thy company.”

25. “Must I stay behind?” quoth Will Scadlock;
“No, no, that must not be;
I’le make the third man in the fight,
So we shall be three to three.”

26. These words cheered Robin at the heart,
Joy shone within his face;
Within his arms he hugged them both,
And kindly did embrace.
27. Quoth he, "We'll put on mothly gray,
With long staves in our hands,
A scrip and bottle by our sides,
As come from the Holy Land.
28. "So we may pass along the highway;
None will ask from whence we came,
But take us pilgrims for to be,
Or else some holy men."
29. Now they are on their journey gone,
As fast as they may speed,
Yet for all haste, ere they arriv'd,
The princess forth was led:
30. To be delivered to the prince,
Who in the list did stand,
Prepar'd to fight, or else receive
His lady by the hand.
31. With that he walkt about the lists,
With giants by his side:
"Bring forth," said he, "your champions,
Or bring me forth my bride.
32. "This is the fourth and twentieth day,
The day prefixt upon;

Bring forth my bride, or London burns,
I swear by Acaron."

33. Then cries the king, and queen likewise,
Both weeping as they speak,
"Lo! we have brought our daughter dear,
Whom we are forced to forsake."
34. With that stept out bold Robin Hood,
Crys, "My liege, it must not be so;
Such beauty as the fair princess
Is not for a tyrant's mow."
35. The prince he then began to storm,
Crys, "Fool, fanatick, baboon!
How dares thou stop my valour's prize?
I'll kill thee with a frown."
36. "Thou tyrant Turk, thou infidel,"
Thus Robin began to reply,
"Thy frowns I scorn; lo! here's my gage,
And thus I thee defie."
37. "And for these two Goliaths there,
That stand on either side,
Here are two little Davids by,
That soon can tame their pride."
38. Then did the king for armour send,
For lances, swords, and shields:
And thus all three in armour bright
Came marching to the field.

39. The trumpets began to sound a charge,
Each singled out his man;
Their arms in pieces soon were hewd,
Blood sprang from every vein.
40. The prince he reacht Robin a blow—
He struck with might and main—
Which forced him to reel about the field,
As though he had been slain.
41. “God-a-mercy,” quoth Robin, “for that blow!
The quarrel shall soon be try’d;
This stroke shall shew a full divorce
Betwixt thee and thy bride.”
42. So from his shoulders he’s cut his head,
Which on the ground did fall,
And grumbling sore at Robin Hood,
To be so dealt withal.
43. The giants then began to rage,
To see their prince lie dead:
“Thou’s be the next,” quoth Little John,
“Unless thou well guard thy head.”
44. With that his faulchion he whirld about—
It was both keen and sharp—
He clove the giant to the belt,
And cut in twain his heart.
45. Will Scadlock well had playd his part,
The giant he had brought to his knee;

Quoth he, "The devil cannot break his fast,
Unless he have you all three."

46. So with his faulchion he run him through,
A deep and gashly wound;
Who damd and foamd, cursd and blasphemd
And then fell to the ground.

47. Now all the lists with cheers were filld,
The skies they did resound,
Which brought the princess to herself,
Who was faln in a swoond.

48. The king and queen and princess fair
Came walking to the place,
And gave the champions many thanks,
And did them further grace.

49. "Tell me," quoth the king, "whence you are,
That thus disguisèd came,
Whose valour speaks that noble blood
Doth run through every vain."

50. "A boon, a boon," quoth Robin Hood,
"On my knees I beg and crave":
"By my crown," quoth the king, "I grant;
Ask what, and thou shalt have."

51. "Then pardon I beg for my merry men,
Which are within the green wood,
For Little John, and Will Scadlock,
And for me, bold Robin Hood."

52. "Art thou Robin Hood?" then quoth the king;
 "For the valour you have shown,
Your pardons I doe freely grant,
 And welcome every one.
53. "The princess I promised the victor's prize,
 She cannot have you all three":
"She shall chuse," quoth Robin; saith Little John,
 "Then little share falls to me."
54. Then did the princess view all three,
 With a comely lovely grace,
Who took Will Scadlock by the hand,
 Quoth, "Here I make my choice."
55. With that a noble lord stept forth,
 Of Maxfield earl was he,
Who lookt Will Scadlock in the face,
 Then wept most bitterly.
56. Quoth he, "I had a son like thee,
 Whom I loved wondrous well;
But he is gone, or rather dead;
 His name is Young Gamwell."
57. Then did Will Scadlock fall on his knees,
 Cries, "Father! father! here,
Here kneels your son, your Young Gamwell
 You said you loved so dear."
58. But, lord! what imbracing and kissing was there,
 When all these friends were met!

They are gone to the wedding, and so to bedding,
And so I bid you good night.

THE NOBLE FISHERMAN

1. In summer time, when leaves grow green,
When they doe grow both green and long,
Of a bould outlaw, called Robin Hood,
It is of him I sing this song.
2. When the lilly leafe and the elephant
Doth bud and spring with a merry good cheere,
This outlaw was weary of the wood-side,
And chasing of the fallow deere.
3. "The fisherman brave more mony have
Then any merchant, two or three;
Therefore I will to Scarborough goe,
That I a fisherman brave may be."
4. This outlaw calld his merry men all,
As they sate under the green-wood tree;
"If any of you have gold to spend,
I pray you heartily spend it with me.
5. "Now," quoth Robbin, "I'le to Scarborough goe,
It seems to be a very faire day";
Who tooke up his inne at a widdow-woman's house,
Hard by upon the water gray.
6. Who asked of him, "Where wert thou borne?
Or tell to me, where dost thou fare?"

“I am a poore fisherman,” said he then

“This day intrapped all in care.”

7. “What is thy name, thou fine fellow?

I pray thee heartily tell to me”;

“In mine own country where I was born,

Men called me Simon over the Lee.”

8. “Simon, Simon,” said the good wife,

“I wish though maist well brook thy name”;

The outlaw was ware of her courtesie,

And rejoiced he had got such a dame.

9. “Simon, wilt thou be my man?

And good round wages I’le give thee.

I have as good a ship of mine owne

As any sayle upon the sea.

10. “Anchors and planks thou shalt want none,

Masts and ropes that are so long”;

“And if that you thus furnish me,”

Said Simon, “nothing shall goe wrong.”

11. They pluckt up anchor, and away did sayle,

More of a day, than two or three;

When others cast in their baited hooks,

The bare lines into the sea cast he.

12. “It will be long,” said the master then,

“Ere this great lubber do thrive on the sea;

I’ll assure you he shall have no part of our fish,

For in truth he is of no part worthy.”

13. "O woe is me," said Simon then,
 "This day that ever I came here!
I wish I were in Plomton Parke,
 In chasing of the fallow deere.
14. "For every clowne laughs me to scorne,
 And they by me set nought at all;
If I had them in Plomton Park,
 I would set as little by them all."
15. They pluckt up anchor, and away did sayle,
 More of a day than two or three;
But Simon spied a ship of warre,
 That sayld towards them most valourously.
16. "O woe is me," said the master then,
 "This day that ever I was borne!
For all our fish we have got to-day
 Is every bit lost and forlorne.
17. "For your French robbers on the sea,
 They will not spare of us one man,
But carry us to the coast of France,
 And ligge us in the prison strong."
18. But Simon said, "Do not feare them,
 Neither, master, take you no care;
Give me my bent bow in my hand,
 And never a Frenchman will I spare."
19. "Hold thy peace, thou long lubber,
 For thou art nought but braggs and boast:

If I should cast thee over-board,
There were nothing but a lubber lost."

20. Simon grew angry at these words,
And so angry then was he
That he tooke his bent bow in his hand
And to the ship-hatch goe doth he.
21. "Master, tye me to the mast," saith he,
"That at my mark I may stand fair,
And give me my bended bow in my hand,
And never a Frenchman will I spare."
22. He drew his arrow to the very head,
And drew it with all might and maine,
And straightway, in the twinkling of an eye
Doth the Frenchman's heart the arrow gain.
23. The Frenchman fell downe on the ship-hatch,
And under the hatches down below;
Another Frenchman that him espy'd
The dead corps into the sea doth throw.
24. "O master, loose me from the mast," he said,
"And for them all take you no care,
And give me my bent bow in my hand,
And never a Frenchman will I spare."
25. Then streight [they] did board the Frenchmans
ship,
They lying all dead in their sight;
They found within the ship of warre
Twelve thousand pound of money bright.

26. "The one halfe of the ship," said Simon then,
"I'le give to my dame and children small;
The other halfe of the ship I'le bestow
On you that are my fellows all."
27. But now bespake the master then,
"For so, Simon, it shall not be;
For you have won her with your own hand,
And the owner of it you shall bee."
28. "It shall be so, as I have said;
And, with this gold, for the opprest
An habitation I will build,
Where they shall live in peace and rest."

ROBIN HOOD AND ALLEN-A-DALE

1. Come listen to me, you gallants so free,
All you that loves mirth for to hear,
And I will you tell of a bold outlaw,
That lived in Nottinghamshire. (*bis*)
2. As Robin Hood in the forrest stood,
All under the green-wood tree,
There was he ware of a brave young man,
As fine as fine might be.
3. The youngster was clothed in scarlet red,
In scarlet fine and gay,
And he did frisk it over the plain,
And chanted a roundelay.

4. As Robin Hood next morning stood,
Amongst the leaves so gay,
There did he espy the same young man
Come drooping along the way.
5. The scarlet he wore the day before,
It was clean cast away;
And every step he fetcht a sigh,
"Alack and a well a day!"
6. Then stepped forth brave Little John,
And Nick the miller's son,
Which made the young man bend his bow,
When as he see them come.
7. "Stand off, stand off," the young man said,
"What is your will with me?"
"You must come before our master straight
Under yon green-wood tree."
8. And when he came bold Robin before,
Robin askt him courteously,
"O hast thou any money to spare
For my merry men and me?"
9. "I have no money," the young man said,
"But five shillings and a ring;
And that I have kept this seven long years,
To have it at my wedding.
10. "Yesterday I should have married a maid,
But she is now from me tane,

And chosen to be an old knight's delight,
Whereby my poor heart is slain."

11. "What is thy name?" then said Robin Hood,
"Come tell me, without any fail":
"By the faith of my body," then said the young
man.
"My name it is Allen-a-Dale."
12. "What wilt though give me," said Robin Hood,
"In ready gold or fee,
To help thee to thy true-love again,
And deliver her unto thee?"
13. "I have no money," then quoth the young man,
"No ready gold nor fee,
But I will swear upon a book
Thy true servant for to be."
14. "How many miles is to thy true-love?
Come tell me without any guile":
"By the faith of my body," then said the young
man,
"It is but five little mile."
15. Then Robin he hasted over the plain,
He did neither stint nor lin,
Until he came unto the church
here Allen should keep his wedding.
16. "What dost thou do here?" the bishop he said,
"I prethee, now tell to me":

“I am a bold harper,” quoth Robin Hood,
“And the best in the north country.”

17. “O welcome, O welcome,” the bishope he said
“That musick best pleaseth me”;
“You shall have no musick,” quoth Robin Hood,
“Till the bride and the bridegroom I see.”

18. With that came in a wealthy knight,
Which was both grave and old,
And after him a finikin lass,
Did shine like glistering gold.

19. “This is no fit match,” quoth bold Robin Hood,
“That you do seem to make here;
For since we are come unto the church,
The bride she shall chuse her own dear.”

20. Then Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth,
And blew blasts two or three;
When four and twenty bowmen bold
Came leaping over the lea.

21. And when they came into the church-yard,
Marching all on a row,
The first man was Allen-a-Dale,
To give bold Robin his bow.

22. “This is thy true-love,” Robin he said,
“Young Allen, as I hear say;
And you shall be married at this same time,
Before we depart away.”

23. "That shall not be," the bishop he said,
"For thy word shall not stand;
They shall be three times askt in the church,
As the law is in the land."
24. Robin Hood pulld off the bishops coat, 1
And put it upon Little John;
"By the faith of my body," then Robin said,
"This cloath doth make the a man."
25. When Little John went into the quire,
The people began for to laugh;
He askt them seven times in the church,
Least three times should not be enough:
26. "Who gives me this maid," then said Little John;
Quoth Robin, "That do I,
And he that doth take her from Allen-a-Dale
Full dearly he shall her buy."
27. And thus having ended this merry wedding,
The bride lookt as fresh as a queen,
And so they returned to the merry green wood,
Amongst the leaves so green.

ROBIN HOOD'S DEATH AND BURIAL

1. When Robin Hood and Little John
Down a down a down a down
Went oer yon bank of broom,
Said Robin Hood bold to Little John,
"We have shot for many a pound."
Hey, down a derry derry down.

2. But I am not able to shoot one shot more,
My broad arrows will not flee;
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God, she will bleed me.
Hey, down a derry derry down.
3. Now Robbin he is to fair Kirkly gone,
As fast as he can win;
But before he came there, as we do hear,
He was taken very ill.
4. And when he came to fair Kirkly-hall,
He knocked all at the ring,
But none was so ready as his cousin herself
For to let bold Robin in.
5. "Will you please to sit down, cousin Robin,"
she said,
"And drink some beer with me?"
"No, I will neither eat nor drink,
Till I am blooded by thee."
6. "Well, I have a room, cousin Robin," she said,
"Which you did never see,
And if you please to walk therein,
You blooded by me shall be."
7. She took him by the lilly-white hand,
And led him to a private room,
And there she blooded bold Robin Hood,
While one drop of blood would run down.

8. She blooded him in a vein of the arm,
And locked him up in the room;
Then did he bleed all the live-long day,
Until the next day at noon.
9. He then bethought him of a casement there,
Thinking for to get down;
But was so weak he could not leap,
He could not get him down.
10. He then bethought him of his bugle-horn,
Which hung low down to his knee;
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And blew out weak blasts three.
11. Then Little John, when hearing him,
As he sat under a tree,
"I fear my master is now near dead,
He blows so wearily."
12. Then Little John to fair Kirkly is gone,
As fast as he can dree;
But when he came to Kirkly-hall
He broke locks two or three;
13. Until he came bold Robin to see,
Then he fell on his knee;
"A boon, a boon," cried Little John,
"Master, I beg of thee."
14. "What is that boon," said Robin Hood,
"Little John, [thou] begs of me?"

“It is to burn fair Kirkly-hall,
And all their nunnery.”

15. “Now nay, now nay,” quoth Robin Hood,
“That boon I’ll not grant thee;
I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor men in woman’s company.

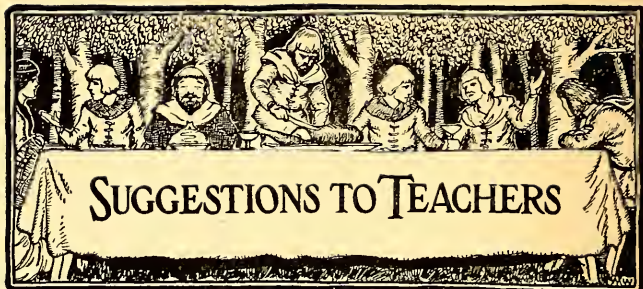
16. “I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at mine end shall it be;
But give me my bent bow in my hand,
And a broad arrow I’ll let flee
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digged be.

17. “Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet;
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.

18. “Let me have length and breadth enough,
With a green sod under my head;
That they may say, when I am dead,
Here lies bold Robin Hood.”

19. These words they readily granted him,
Which did bold Robin please;
And there they buried bold Robin Hood,
Within the fair Kirkleys.

20. Thus he that never feared bow nor spear
Was murdered by letting blood;
And so, loving friends, the story it ends
Of valiant Robin Hood.
21. There's nothing remains but his epitaph now
Which, reader, here you have,
To this very day which read you may,
As it is upon his grave,
Hey down a derry derry down.



IT has been the writer's object in these stories to follow the Robin Hood ballads as closely as may be. In the interests of morality, however, it has not always been possible to preserve the proportion of the old ballads or to transcribe them without change. For example, the ballads give an unfair view of the clergy; if they do not make theft a gracious act, they at least show that the hero is too prone to take the law into his own hands. For these reasons, only one story is given where Robin Hood robs a priest, and then he does it in the interests of justice. Other deviations from the original proportion are the additions to the Maid Marian story, and to the circumstances of Robin's banishment; in the latter case, the tradition is followed that Robin Hood was of noble birth. (See Ritson's *Robin Hood*.) There are also a few slight alterations in incident or character which have been made for the sake of consistency or of plot.

A good deal of the comedy element and of the fighting has been kept—the fighting necessarily, or the Sherwood Forest flavor would have been lost. The

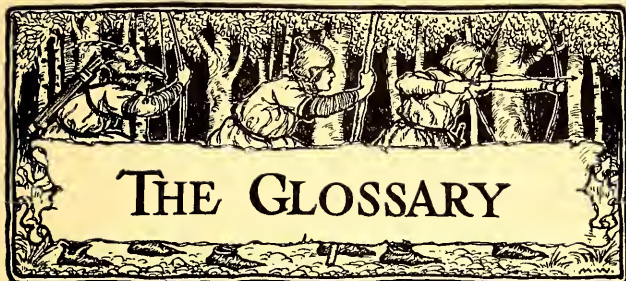
spontaneity and charm of the outdoor life will, it is hoped, appeal more readily to the imagination of children because of the introduction of the old English songs. Most of them are taken from Chappell's *Old English Popular Music*. Good additional books to consult are Ritson's *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, and Rimbault's *Illustrations of the Robin Hood Ballads*.

For the rest, the best qualities of the outlaws have been emphasized—their sense of justice, their loyalty to friends, their kindness to the poor, and their gentleness to the weak.

Doubtless the teacher will see that the children appreciate the points of the story—the moral, the humor, the characters, and the climaxes—by asking questions; but she can make them realize each story better if she allow them to live it by dramatizing it. With this in mind, the writer has taken the opportunity of presenting something of the customs and manners of the chivalric age. The teacher can make the ideas of the children more definite by consulting Leon Gautier's *Chivalry*, translated by Henry Frith, and published by Routledge. It is a concrete and scholarly history of chivalry, copiously illustrated. Another good book is Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the English People*, which has full descriptions of hawking, hunting, wrestling, and games. The children can reproduce castles, armor, and furniture with the help of chalk, cardboard, plaster, and a sand table. Certain of the Robin Hood costumes could be made in cheap fabrics. In this connection, the excellent pictures in Howard Pyle's *Robin Hood* will be a help.

The nine ballads given are taken from the Child edition, to which the teacher may refer those pupils who are interested enough or sufficiently advanced to wish to consult some original sources. They are printed without change except the fourth, from which stanzas 2, 3, 5, and 6 have been omitted. Words which are not to be found in the ordinary dictionaries will be found in the glossary. For good accounts of the ballads, the teacher should consult such works as Courthope's *History of English Poetry*; Garnett and Gosse's *History of English Literature*; *The Cambridge History of English Literature*; and *The Dictionary of National Biography*.





- artillery.** Engines for discharging missiles, as bows, slings, etc.
- ban-dogs.** Large dogs in a band or else tied up.
- beshrewd.** Cursed.
- brook.** "I wish thou maist well *brook* thy name": do credit to it.
- b'w'ye.** Be with thee.
- clipping.** Embracing.
- curtal.** Short, docked; of a friar, short-frocked; of any animal that has lost its tail.
- discover.** Make known.
- dru.** Do, perform. "as fast as he can *dru*."
- elephant.** A kind of flower; a species of scabious.
- finikin.** Dainty, pretty.
- forlorne.** Lose.
- free.** Gracious, liberal; "by Mary *free*."
- fro.** From.
- frier.** Friar.
- gillore.** Galore, in abundance.
- greece.** Fat and fit for killing; "a hart of *greece*."
- harniss.** Armor.

- hew.** Color.
- hy'd.** Hied.
- ligge.** Lay.
- lin.** Cease, leave off.
- liquor.** Slang for thrash or beat; "Liquor thy hide."
- mo.** More.
- mothly.** Motley; "put on mothly grey," put on variegated grey.
- mow.** Mouth; thick lips; jests; "such beauty is not for tyrant's mow."
- palfrey.** A woman's saddle horse.
- pinder.** An officer of a manor having the duty of impounding stray beasts.
- raking.** Moving forward rapidly; "yeomen came *raking* o'er the lea."
- spight.** Spite.
- stint.** Stop.
- stiver.** Any very small coin.
- strait.** Immediately.
- streight.** Straight.
- swound.** Swoon.
- sypress.** A name of several fabrics originally imported from Cypress; cloth of gold; satin; "Sypress over her face."
- tane.** Taken.
- treen.** Trees.
- whute.** Hoot.
- win.** Go.



