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# Robin Hood



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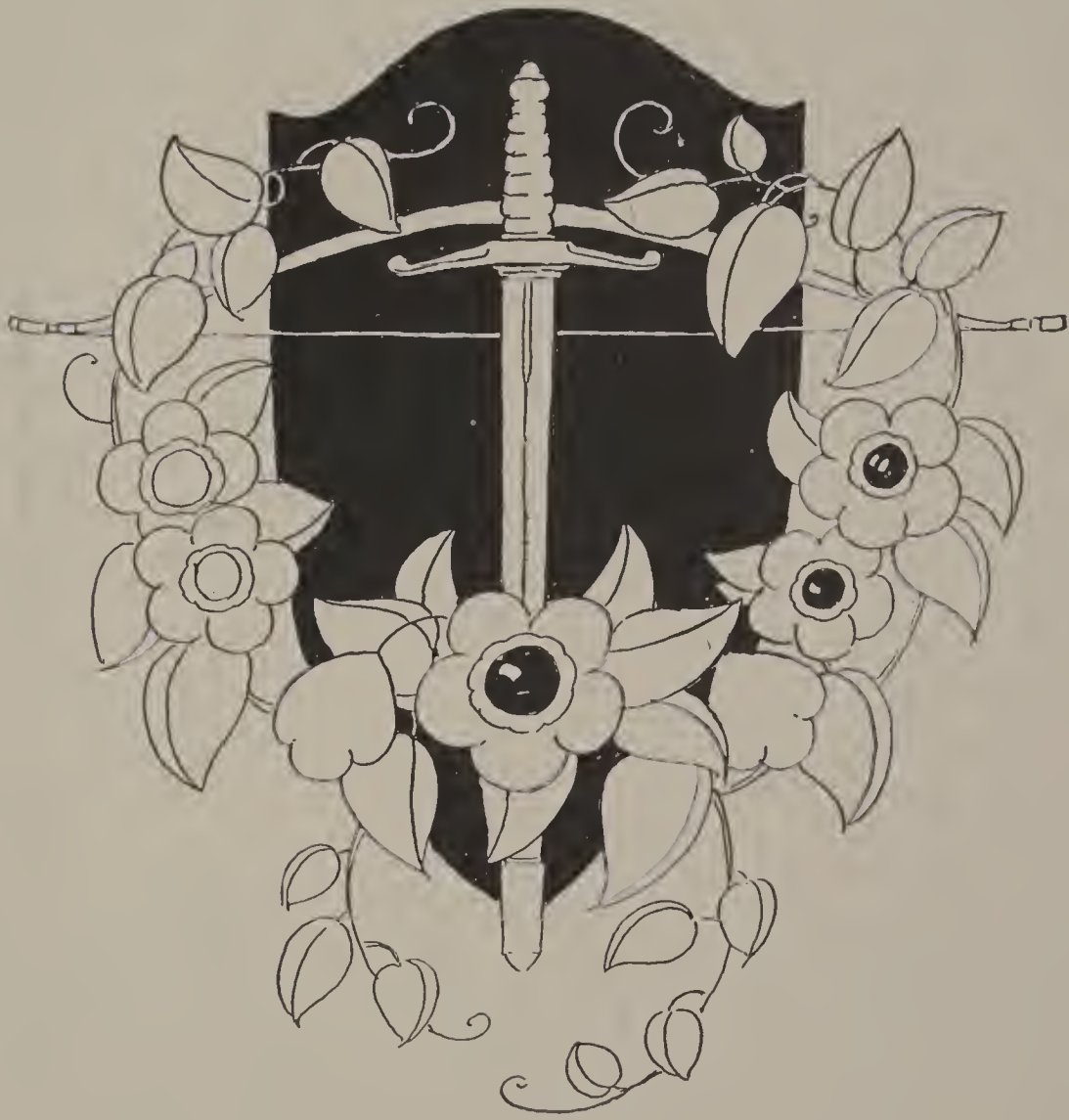
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ROBIN HOOD









**H**old! ♦ roared ♦  
**L**ittle John ♦ ✱ ✱



# Robin Hood



From the Original Ballad by  
**ULA WATERHOUSE ECHOLS**  
Author of "Legends of Charlemagne"

*Illustrated by* JAMES McCracken

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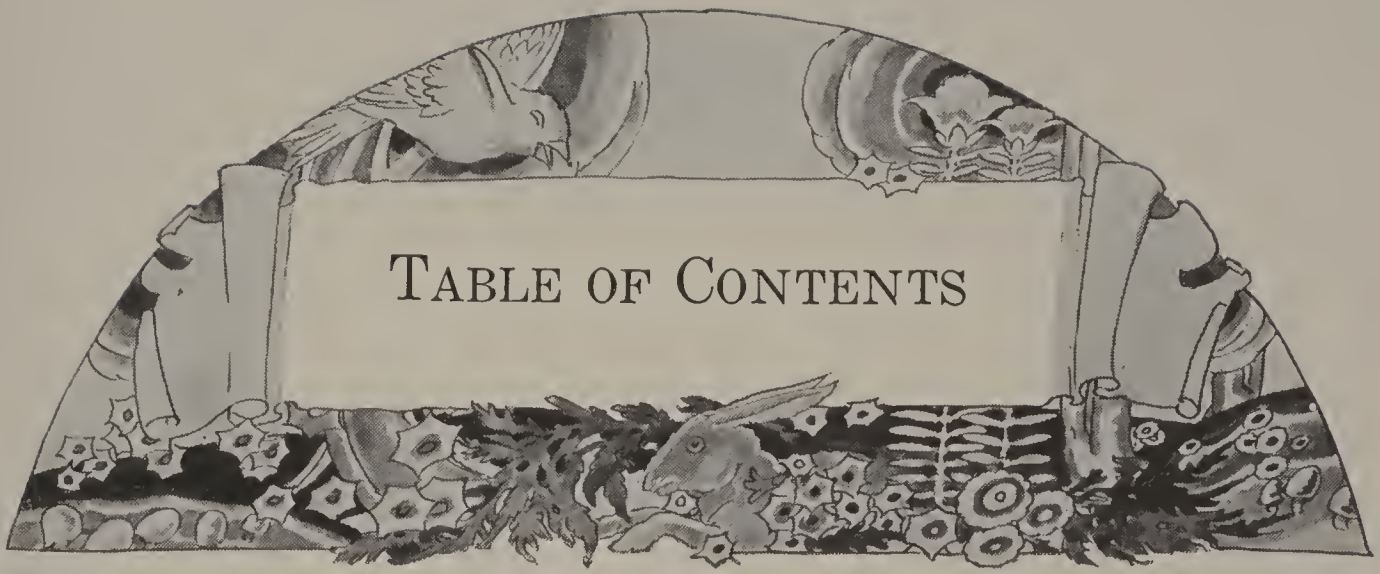


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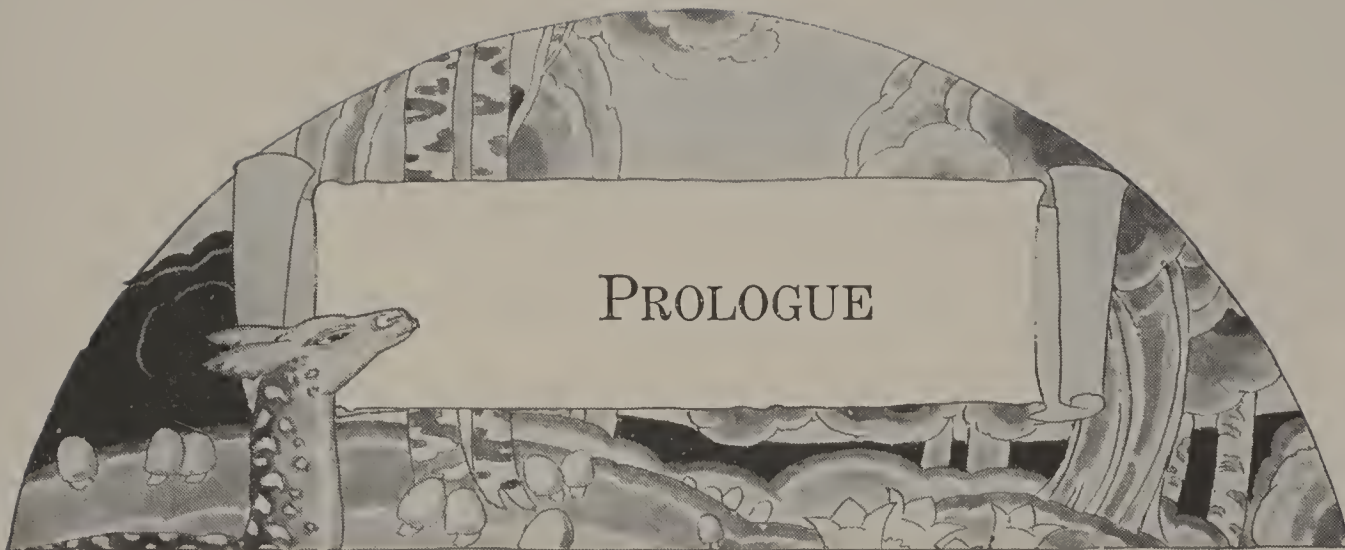
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“COME LISTEN TO ME, YE GALLANTS SO FREE.”

Come listen to me, ye gallants so free,  
All ye that love mirth for to hear,  
And I will tell thee of a bold outlaw,  
That lived in Nottinghamshire.

The merry pranks he played  
Would ask an age to tell,  
And the adventures strange  
That Robin Hood befell.





In Locksleytown, in merry Nottinghamshire,  
In merry sweet Locksleytown,  
There bold Robin Hood he was born and bred,  
Bold Robin of famous renown.



IN the old, old days in merry England many were the trees that covered the land. Many too were the wild animals that lived among these trees. There were deer, the hare and the coney. There were birds also in abundance, such as the partridge and pheasant. The animals were used for food, and their skins for clothing. Thus every man became a hunter. He was trained from the time he was a small boy to use the bow and arrow, for hunting was the serious business of all the men.

In the little villages built inside a wall of rough logs, the women and children raised grain and a few vegetables. But the greater part of the food came from the skill of the men in hunting wild game.

Year by year there were more people in the villages. More trees were cut down, and the animals became fewer. The men became farmers instead of hunters and did not depend upon the animals of the woods for their living. These English farmers were called yeomen.

But though it was not now necessary that the wild animals be killed for food, yet these yeomen never forgot how to use their bows and arrows. Their sons were trained in the use of them, as of old. Each lad had a bow according to his age and strength. He was also trained in the use of the long-bow and quarter-staff. These were his weapons just as the lance and sword were the weapons of the boys of noble birth.

Though there were many farming districts, yet there were still large forests where wild game was to be had. Anyone could go in and hunt, for these woods belonged to all.

At length, however, the Normans conquered England, and all this was changed. These kings drove out the old inhabitants, and planted trees instead of farms. They peopled the forests with deer instead of men. It began to look as if there would be nothing but forests and deer life left in all of England.

The new kings decreed also that these forests and all the wild animals belonged to them. The forests were now called the Royal Forests of England. No one could hunt in them unless he had permission from the King. Dire punishment was meted out to those who disobeyed the orders of the King. Off came their heads; or if they



escaped this fate, they became outlaws who roamed the forests with a price upon their heads.

The most famous of the Royal Forests was Sherwood, in Nottinghamshire. It was some thirty miles in length, and contained many caves and caverns where men could live in comfort in winter when it was too cool to dwell out under the trees. Food was not lacking, for the woods were filled with browsing deer, leaping hare, and many birds such as pheasant and quail.

Merry were the men that lived in Sherwood Forest. They were outlaws, to be sure, but true Englishmen. They cared not for the rule of the Norman kings who had invaded the merry little isle. They tried to make up to the poor people what the kings and their nobles had taken from them.

Now the most famous of these outlaws was by name, Robin Hood. 'Twas said that he was born in Locksleytown in Nottinghamshire. Some said that his father was a Royal Forester of Sherwood. Others said that he was the Earl of Huntington.

But be this as it may, one thing is sure. Great pains had been taken to make Robin skilled in the use of the long-bow and to speed a swift arrow. There was none his equal in all the countryside. Beloved was he by all the country people, for they delighted in tales of his jollity and great prowess. They knew also that no one ever went to the merry Robin for help and came away with an empty hand.

But in spite of all this, there was a price on his head.

The sheriff of Nottingham and his men were ever on the lookout for this jolly outlaw, and this is how he fell afoul the law.





OF HOW ROBIN OF LOCKSLEY DID BECOME  
ROBIN HOOD THE OUTLAW

Robin Hood was a tall young man  
And fifteen summers old;  
And Robin Hood was a proper young man  
Of courage stout and bold.



OW it so happened in the merry month of May, in the time of old when King Henry the Second ruled the land, that a shooting match was proclaimed by the Sheriff of Nottingham. To Nottingham were to come the best archers of all the countryside. Here also was a prize of some forty marks to be given to whomsoever sped the swiftest arrow.

News of this match did come by chance to the ear of young Robin of Locksley. Sad and sorrowful had he been for many a day since the death of his mother. But

when the tidings came of this match, quoth he to his uncle,

“What fair tidings are these? I would fain win that prize. But perchance mine arm hath lost its cunning, for ’tis many a day since it has drawn a bow.”

“Say not so,” answered his uncle, “thy gray goose shaft will meet the mark, and all will know that thou art master of thy bow. Get thee hence without delay. The Sheriff’s shooting match will not wait for thee to consider what thou wilt do.”

So without more ado, Robin picked up his long-bow of good strong yew, and slung over his shoulder a leather sheath filled with clothyard arrows. With a wave of his hand he was on his way to Nottingham.

Now the way to Nottingham Town from Locksley Town lay through the Sherwood Forest. Right briskly and happily did Robin step through the Forest, a merry whistle on his lips. The birds sang cheerily overhead, and the sunlight danced through the leaves of the great trees. Robin had not been so happy since the days when he had gone hunting with his father.

Suddenly a harsh voice stopped him.

“Hold, who goes there? What harm thinkest thou can be done with thy puny bow and arrows?”

Robin flushed with anger and turned toward the place from which the voice came. Here a group of a dozen men or more were making merry over a huge meat pie. All were clad in Lincoln green, and thus did Robin know them for the King’s Foresters. Fearful lest his hot

tongue lead him into trouble he turned aside from the group. Then the largest and roughest man of all said with a sneer,

“Perchance the little lad doth think to match his skill with the mighty bowmen at the Sheriff’s shooting match. Bah! A farthing for his skill.”

All laughed loudly at this. Whereupon Robin grew more angry than before, for he was mightily proud of his shooting.

“I can draw my bow with the best of them,” quoth he, “and none here can gainsay me.”

Again all the Foresters laughed loud and jeeringly.

Then Robin grew right mad, and said, “List to me, ye Foresters, I’ll hold any one of ye twenty marks that I can hit any target thou namest at threescore rods.”

“I will take thy wager,” shouted one of the Foresters, “yonder, some more than threescore rods away I see a herd of deer. See what thou canst do with thy puny strength. Never wilt thou cause a hart to die.”

Proudly did Robin raise his good yew bow, and drawing his gray goose arrow to his ear, let the string fly. With a twang! the arrow sped to its mark, and the noblest hart of them all leaped high in the air. Then it fell dead, its life’s blood reddening the green turf.

“How now, my good fellow,” laughed Robin, “I’ll take those twenty marks thou dost owe me.”

“Twenty marks, indeed,” replied the Forester in a rage, “a sound thrashing is what thou deserveth. Knowest thou not that the King’s deer hath been slain? Get

thee hence, or thy ears will be shaven close to thy head."

Robin, smarting under the taunts and deceit of the Foresters, turned on his heel without a word. His heart boiled with rage and despair, as he strode through the Forest. Well did he know what would befall him if he were caught by the Sheriff after shooting the King's deer. Gone were all the happy plans of the morning. A forfeit now was on his head.

But as these dark thoughts were passing through his head, of a sudden an arrow whistled by his shoulder. Well for Robin that the Forester's foot slipped as he pulled the string, or not another step would he ever have taken.

Quicker than a thought Robin turned and drew his own bow, and sent an arrow in return.

"Was it thou that said I could not shoot?" he shouted. "Here is the answer of my puny bow!"

Straight flew the gray goose shaft. With one cry the Forester fell forward on his face and lay still. Swiftly before the others could gather their scattered wits, Robin ran through the Forest. Many were the days he had spent in the greenwood, and it was home to him. One or two of the Foresters made a half-hearted attempt to follow, but each one feared death from Robin's stinging shaft. Ere long they came, and lifting the slain man, bore him sadly to Nottingham Town.

It was thus that Robin of Locksley became an outlaw. A price of two hundred pounds was set upon his head as a reward to whosoever would bring him to the Sheriff.

So Robin came to dwell in the greenwood for many a year. Soon there gathered about him many others who had been outlawed like himself, for one cause or another.

Before long there were some five score or more yeomen in the band. Robin was chosen to be leader. He was fair and just and none could match his skill with the long-bow. But with the quarter-staff, alas, one day he met his match.





IN WHICH ROBIN HOOD GAINED HIS GOOD RIGHT-  
HAND MAN LITTLE JOHN

When Robin Hood was about twenty years old  
    With a hey down, down, and a down;  
He happened to meet Little John,  
A jolly brisk blade, right fit for the trade,  
    For he was a lusty young man.

Though he was called Little, his limbs they were large  
    And his structure was seven feet high;  
Wherever he came, they quaked at his name,  
    For soon they would make them to fly.

How they came acquainted, I'll tell you in brief,  
    If you will but listen awhile;  
For this very jest, amongst all the rest,  
    I think it may cause you to smile.



One bright spring morning up rose Robin Hood, and calling his merry men about him, said, "Methinks that it is time that I go abroad. For fourteen long days there has been no sport."

"Aye, aye, Master," so said the merry men. They all sprang for their bows and arrows. Much as they loved the greenwood, yet it was great sport to roam afar. But Robin stopped them saying,

"I pray thee tarry in this grove, but see that ye mind my call. I will rove throughout the forest, but if I should not be able to beat a retreat, I will blow a blast on my horn."

So saying he gayly shook hands with his jolly bowmen, and bade them farewell.

Away he strode through the forest, now answering a bird call, or picking a flower that grew by the wayside. At length he came to the end of the leafy forest glades and into the open country. A bubbling brook sparkled across his path. The spring rains had swollen the brook into a good-sized stream, and it could not be crossed by the usual stepping-stones. A huge log lay across the stream making a bridge just wide enough for one person at a time to walk over. Just as Robin reached his end of the log, he espied a stranger at the other end. He quickened his step, but so did the stranger. Each thought to cross first.

"Make not so much haste," called Robin. "Wait thou until the better man doth pass."

"Nay," quoth the tall stranger, "thou hast it wrong.

Stand back thyself, for forsooth, I am the better man."

"Step aside at once, my good fellow," said bold Robin Hood, "or I must needs show thee right good Nottingham play."

With that he drew forth an arrow quickly from his quiver, a broad arrow with a goose-wing tip.

"Then indeed must I thrash thee, if thou so much as offerest to touch the string," answered the stranger calmly.

"Thou dost prate like a donkey," quoth Robin, "for were I to but bend my bow I could send this dart quite through thy proud heart before thou couldst strike me one blow."

"Now thou speakest like a coward," replied the stranger, "for thou art well armed as thou standest, and could very easily shoot me. While I have naught but a staff in my hand."

"I scorn the name of coward," said Robin Hood, "so here's to fair play."

Whereupon he threw down his long-bow and ran to a thicket of trees. Here he chose himself a stout staff of ground oak, and called to the stranger merrily,

"Behold, I now have a staff, lusty and tough, and though my skill is better at the bow, yet I will now meet thee on this bridge. We will play with our quarter-staffs until one falls in the water. Then shall the other win, and we'll away."

"With my whole heart," replied the stranger, "I scorn to be the first to give out."

Without more ado they flourished their staffs about, and suddenly Robin gave the stranger such a bang with his staff that the stranger's bones rang.

"Ha," cried he, "I will repay that, and give thee as good as thou dost bring."

Then with a quick turn, the huge stranger brought his quarter-staff down on Robin's head with such a crack as to make the blood appear.

Whereupon there followed such a mighty battle betwixt the two yeomen as has not been seen for many a day. The stranger's blows were the heavier, but Robin's were more swift and numerous. Neither gave an inch from his place. Though the blows rained thick and fast and many were the sores and bruises, yet neither called out "Enough," nor seemed likely to fall from the bridge.

At length, when almost an hour had gone by, Robin gave the stranger such a blow on the ribs that his jacket seemed to smoke. The stranger well nigh lost his balance, but regained himself at once and with a quick blow sent our stout Robin, head over heels, into the water below.

"I prithee, my good fellow, where art thou now!" laughed the stranger, with roars of laughter.

"Good faith, I'm in the flood and floating with the tide," answered Robin. Nor could he keep from laughing when he thought how he must have looked when he fell into the water.

"Thou hast won the day. I must needs acknowledge that thou art a brave soul, and here's my hand on it."

"By my faith, thou art a brave soul thyself," quoth

the stranger as he leaned down to grasp the hand that was raised to him, "for thou art a good loser. Come, I will pull thee ashore."

He helped Robin to his feet, whereupon Robin waded to the shore, and reaching for an overhanging thorn bush, pulled himself out of the water saying,

"Thy blow did send my wits afar. Mine head doth even now hum like a bees' hive on a warm spring morning."

Then without further delay, Robin Hood did raise his horn to his lips and blew a strong blast which echoed down through the valleys and forest glens.

Ere long a rustling was heard in the bushes and of a sudden a score of stout yeomen clad in Lincoln green came running to the brook. Will Stutely was at their head.

"Good, my master, what hath befallen thee?" quoth he. "Thou art wet to the skin."

"So I am, in faith," laughed Robin, "and there stands the lad that tumbled me into the brook. And a drubbing he gave me besides."

"Then shall he take the same," shouted the merry men, and started toward the stranger to drag him into the brook. He raised his cudgel to defend himself, but Robin cried,

"Forbear, my men, a stout fellow is he, and one that gives fair play. What sayest thou, wilt join my band of bowmen bold and wear the Lincoln green?"

"Aye, marry, that I will, for well I like the greenwood.

But by what name art thou known? Thy skill and cudgel do I know, but not thy name."

"Hath the name of Robin Hood come to thine ears? In faith, I am he, and these are my merry men."

"I'll serve thee with my whole heart," replied the stranger.

"Well and good," quoth Robin, "I have gained a right stout man for my band. If thou canst use the bow as well as the cudgel, then am I fortunate indeed. But tell me, I prithee, what is thy name?"

"My name is John Little, and ne'er doubt that I will play my part."

Then up spoke Will Stutely, who dearly loved a jest, "John Little! Aye, marry, our young friend is so little he must needs be christened anew. I will his godfather be."

At this Robin and the merry band laughed loudly.

"Aye, a christening, and what is the name thou hast chosen?"

"This infant was called John Little," quoth jolly Will, "which name shall be changed anon." Whereupon he filled a horn with water, and throwing it upon the giant said,

"Thy name shall now be called Little John."

"Well hast thou chosen, Will Stutely. Little John shall it be henceforth," quoth Robin with a merry twinkle in his eye. "Come let's join hands, and a shout for Little John."

So they all gave a shout that rang far and wide, and plunged into the forest once more. Presently they came

to the spot where they made their home, and found the rest of the band.

“A christening feast must we have,” called Robin.

“A brace of fat does will do for a start,” replied one of the band, and the merry feast began. They ate and laughed and sang, and the merriment lasted for a long time.

“Thou shalt be an archer as well as the best, and range in the greenwood with us,” quoth good Robin.

Then music and dancing did finish the day, and when the sun waxed low in the sky the whole merry band went to their caves.

Thus did Robin Hood gain his good right hand man, Little John, and ere long the day came when he was second in command.





OF HOW ROBIN HOOD WENT TO THE SHOOTING MATCH  
AT NOTTINGHAM TOWN AND WON THE  
GOLDEN ARROW

So an arrow with a golden head  
And shaft of silver white,  
Who won the day shall bear away  
For his own proper right.



NOW the Sheriff of Nottingham had never been so worried in his life. There was that two hundred pounds that had been offered for the outlaw, Robin Hood, and not one whit nearer to receiving it was he than he had been some months before.

Whereupon he did a foolish thing. He went to the

King to ask him what he should do to capture bold Robin. He hoped perchance that the King would place a large force of men at his command.

Quoth the King, "Art thou not the Sheriff? What should I do about it? Is there not the law?"

"Yea, even so, good my lord," answered the Sheriff, "but of what good is the law? So many are the men about him that never could I serve the warrant."

"Thou speakest with a coward's heart," said the King. "Get thee gone, and if thou canst not capture him by force, then devise some tricking game to entrap him."

So the Sheriff turned from the King with a heavy heart. He thought and he thought, and at length he said to himself,

"What doth this Robin Hood like to do best of all? Yea, verily, 'tis to shoot, and right proud is he of his skill. A shooting match would bring him nigh to Nottingham Town. Then would I put my hands upon him, and never let him go."

Wherefore the Sheriff lost no time in proclaiming a shooting match that would be open to all comers. Far and wide was the news heralded, into every town and hamlet. The prize was to be an arrow of gold with a shaft of silver white.

Ere long the tidings of the great match came to brave Robin Hood. Calling his men together under the greenwood tree he said,

"Come, my merry men, and prepare yourselves, for yon sport I fain would see."





*The Sheriff turned from the King with a heavy heart.*



With that stepped forth a brave young man by the name of David of Doncaster.

“Master, I prithee, be ruled by me,” he quoth, “for to tell the truth I’m well informed that yon match is a trap. The Sheriff of Nottingham hath devised this to beguile us archers.”

“Methinks that doth sound like a coward’s word,” answered Robin, “and thy words please me not. Come what will, I’ll try my skill at yon brave archery.”

Then bespoke brave Little John, whose word was always wise.

“Come, listen to me. We need not be known. Behind us will we leave our mantles of Lincoln green. We’ll clothe ourselves so differently that none will us espy. Now one shall wear white, another red. Then for a change, one yellow and another blue. Thus we can go whatever ensues.”

“By my faith, ’tis a good plan,” laughed Robin Hood.

“Aye, good for Little John,” shouted all the men.

So forth from the greenwood they went with hearts all firm and stout. They were filled with the hope that they would meet the Sheriff’s men in a hearty bout.

“’Twere better far to mingle with the crowd,” said Robin, “lest perchance so large a group doth catch the eye of the Sheriff.”

So no two of them walked together, and they were so mixed with the other eight hundred on the green that Robin Hood himself was hard put to pick them out. As for the Sheriff, not one of them did he espy.

“Beshrew me,” quoth he, scratching his head, “I would have said that Robin Hood would have been here with the best of them. Now, methinks, he durst not appear.”

The shooting began, and not in many a day was such skill shown. The archers shot, each man in turn.

“Good for the blue jacket,” shouted one man.

“I wager on the brown,” called another.

“Brave yellow for me,” cried a third.

But the fourth man said, “None doth have the skill of the man in red.”

Whereupon the crowd shouted, “The red has it. Give the arrow to the red.”

Then did the man in red step forward to receive the golden arrow from the Sheriff.

“Here, my good fellow,” quoth the Sheriff graciously, “thou hast won the prize fairly. ’Twas thought that the brave Robin Hood would carry away the prize. But he showed not his coward face. Wilt join my band of Foresters? I have need of such as thee.”

Now the man in red was none other than Robin Hood himself. His eyes twinkled at the Sheriff’s word, but he bowed low and shook his head in answer.

“Nay, gramercy, my lord,” quoth he, “I serve no master save mine own.”

Then turning swiftly, he disappeared into the crowd. One by one his merry men followed him, and at length all were assembled under the greenwood shade.

“’Twould be a day worth spent if the proud Sheriff could but know to whom he hath given the arrow. Right

merry could I be at heart if this were so," sighed Robin.

"Grieve not, my master," answered Little John. "Thou didst listen to me before. If thou wilt allow I will advise once more."

"Speak on," said Robin Hood, "speak on. Thy wit's both quick and sound."

"This I advise," Little John replied, "that a letter shall be penned. Then shall it be sent to the Sheriff of Nottingham."

"'Tis well," laughed Robin. And all the merry men laughed loud and long at the surprise of the Sheriff.

'Twas not long thereafter when the proud Sheriff sat himself down to meat in his great dining-hall in Nottingham.

"This was not as I would have had it," he thought, "for I did not think that Robin Hood was such a coward. By now I thought to have him in my hands."

On a sudden something whistled past his shoulder and fell on the floor behind him. A servant stooped carefully and picked up a gray goose shaft from the floor. A tiny piece of paper was fastened in the arrow. Quickly did the Sheriff read and his face became purple with rage. This is what he saw:

"Greetings from the Sherwood green,  
And thanks to thee this day;  
For 'twas to merry Robin Hood  
The prize thou gavest away."



## OF HOW WILL GAMWELL BECAME WILL SCARLET

As Robin Hood walked the forest along—  
It was in the mid of the day—  
There was he met of a deft young man  
As ever walked on the way.



NOT so many days after the haughty Sheriff of Nottingham had been brought to grief Robin Hood and Little John were walking through the Forest. They traveled along with their bows slung over their shoulders for they had high hopes of bringing down a buck for their dinner. The day grew warmer as the sun rose higher in the sky. They grew tired and thirsty.

“Heigho,” quoth Robin Hood. “What time of the day? Methinks ere long we should espy a buck.”

“Aye, marry,” answered Little John. “’Tis in the mid of day. If we discover none as we round this little hill, then it were better to return to the greenwood.”

Soon a fine sight met their eyes. A large herd of deer was grazing peacefully at the far side of the open grassy space in the Forest.

“Seest thou that fine buck?” said Robin in a low tone. “It maketh my mouth to water when I think of the choice morsel of food that he will make.”

“Methinks I will go to the other side,” said Little John. “When he doth scent me on the breeze then he will run this way. Thou wilt then have an easy shot.”

“Well said,” answered Robin, “get thee hence.”

On a sudden a stranger appeared in the Forest path. Gay indeed was this stranger, and a fine figure he cut. All in red was he from his head to his feet. His doublet and hose were of silk. On his head was a jaunty scarlet hat with a long feather. By his side he wore a goodly sword embossed with gold.

“By my troth,” quoth Robin Hood, “who can yon gay spark be?”

“That I know not,” said Little John, “one can see that he is not of the Forest.”

“Nay, marry,” answered Robin, “for well doth that scarlet suit gleam in the woods. One could see him from afar. ’Tis some fop from the town who has come, perchance to walk in the greenwood.”

But even as they spoke the stranger sighted a deer. Without more ado he strung his bow, plucked an arrow from his quiver, and took aim. The noble stag gave a leap into the air. The string twanged and the arrow hummed. The buck fell headlong and lay still.

“By my life, a shot worthy of a forester,” quoth Robin. “Stay thou here, I prithee, Little John. I would fain have speech with him.”

Whereupon bold Robin walked up to where the stranger stood beside the deer he had slain.

“Well shot, well shot,” he said. “Thine arrow was loosed in the nick of time. I have need of such as thee. Wilt thou accept of the place and be a bold yeoman of mine?”

“Nay, why should I,” answered the stranger calmly. “I’ll have naught to do with thee. Make haste and go quickly.”

“And if, perchance, I am not of a mind to go?” demanded Robin.

“Then be sure of this,” returned the stranger, “I’ll give thee many buffets with my fist.”

“Thou hadst best not buffet me,” quoth Robin, thinking to try the courage of the stranger, “I may seem to be alone, yet there are many to take my part if I but blow my horn.”

“Be not too hasty to blow thy horn, my droll fellow,” replied the stranger. “If thou dost then will I cut thy blast in two with my good broadsword.”

“Methinks he hath plenty of courage despite his fop-



pish clothes," said Robin to himself. "I will make another trial of him to test him."

Then did Robin bend his good strong bow and take aim at the stranger's heart. But no whit did he flinch, nor one jot did he turn color.

"So this is what thou wishest, fair friend," quoth the stranger, "I can pay thee in like coin." Then he clapped an arrow into his bow with such remarkable speed that Robin was startled.

"Oh, hold thy hand!" cried Robin, "I prithee, hold thy hand. To shoot would be in vain, for if we should shoot, the one of us may be slain."

"'Tis well," replied the languid stranger, "but, methinks, this was begun by thee."

"Yea, verily," answered Robin, "and so do I end it." So saying, he placed his shaft in his quiver and his bow upon the ground. Whereupon the stranger did the same and waited to see what was next.

"I note that thou dost carry thy sword and buckler," quoth Robin Hood. "What sayest thou to a try with them to see who is the better man."

Then each man took his good broadsword and shield. Then each took his place under the tree.

Soon there began a great clanging and clashing as the heavy broadswords came together and the blows were deftly caught and warded off. The two swordsmen were so equal that for a good half hour neither one had been touched or had given one inch to the other.

Then Robin gave the stranger such a blow that he

staggered. In return the stranger cut at Robin with such a lucky stroke that it nicked him in the forehead. The blood streamed down and filled his eyes, so that he could no longer see to fight.

The stranger lowered his broadsword. But Little John seeing that his master was hurt ran to the spot.

“Good my master, I prithee, let me have a bout with him,” cried little John. “I can play with sword and buckler as well as thou.”

“Nay, have peace, Little John,” said Robin, wiping the blood from his eyes, “there has been enough bloodshed. ’Twas a fair bout. Never once did the stranger take a stroke when I was at a disadvantage.”

“I like not that such an one should draw blood from Robin Hood and escape,” muttered Little John.

“Did I hear aright?” asked the stranger, for the first time showing interest, “didst say Robin Hood?”

“Yea, verily,” answered Little John, “but what is he to thee?”

“Aye, marry, who art thou to turn his name about on thy tongue? Come, speak up,” quoth Robin Hood.

“In Maxfield was I born and bred. To the name of Will Gamwell do I answer. Hast forgotten thy cousin Will? ’Tis not many years since I would have known thee by sight, and thou me.”

“Ah, my good Will. How well I remember thy smile and now thy voice. Many were the good times we had in the Forest, and good was thy father to me. But what doest thou in the Forest?”

“Firstly I was seeking Robin Hood, for I too am an outlaw,” was the answer. “Dost remember the old steward of my father?”

“Aye, and a saucy old rogue was he, if there ever was one. He did fair deserve a killing.”

“Saucy was he, and not to be trusted. As my father waxed old, so did the steward wax more vile. At length it did come to mine ears that he was in league with our Norman neighbor who wished our lands. They thought to slay me, and the land would be theirs.”

“By the faith of my heart, ’tis an old trick,” quoth Robin. “But how didst thou best him?”

“’Twas in self defense, I swear it,” returned Will, “but what is my word against a Norman’s? The steward and I were hunting not long since, and some’at came to me that all was not well. Turning quickly I saw him bending his bow with the arrow aimed at me. I loosed my shaft at him, and the arrows passed. His arrow did but tear my doublet, but mine felled him to the ground. Before he died he did confess his treachery.”

“Foul treachery, too, a murrain seize him,” said Robin, “ever art they ready to strip the Saxon. What then, good my cousin?”

“Ere long the manner of the steward’s death was noised about, and the Sheriff was speedily on my track.”

“So thou didst flee to the shelter of the greenwood! We bid thee welcome, cousin, to our goodly company. Shake thou the hand of my brave Little John, the largest of us all. He is the second in command.”

“Well do we welcome thee, a stranger no longer,” quoth Little John, grasping Will’s hand in his grip.

“Methinks we will lay aside the old name. Thou didst come to us in scarlet, and Will Scarlet shalt thou be called from this very day,” said Robin Hood.

Thus did Will Scarlet join Robin Hood’s company, and swear to be true to the Forest laws.

“Belike I give thee this great stag for the feast as I join this jolly company,” quoth Will Scarlet.

“Well said,” laughed jolly Robin. “Little John and I had marked that buck for our very own when thou felled him with thy good yew bow.”





OF HOW ROBIN HOOD DID GAIN ANOTHER GOOD  
COMRADE FOR HIS BAND

In Nottingham there lived a jolly tanner,  
With a hey, down, down-a-down down,  
His name is Arthur a Bland:  
There is ne'er a squire in Nottinghamshire  
Dare bid bold Arthur stand.



**I**N Nottingham Town, so the story goes,  
lived a jolly tanner who was the best  
fighter with the quarter-staff in that part  
of the country. Now on the day that Robin  
Hood with Little John and Will Scarlet  
were returning from the hunting of the deer, this jolly  
tanner was walking through the Forest too. Although  
he scraped hides for a living, yet he loved the merry  
greenwood. Many times in the lovely summer this tan-

ner would take his bow and arrows and great quarter-staff and set off for Sherwood Forest.

On this warm summer day as he went forth he glimpsed a herd of red deer. Quickly he strung his bow and went forward toward the herd.

Just at this moment Robin espied him and dropping his end of the large stag that they were carrying, said to Little John,

“Who is this fellow that darest to mark down our deer? Methinks I will call him to task.”

“Nay, good master,” answered Little John, “let me go in thy stead. Thou hast had one bout this day.”

So saying, he strode out into the open, leaving Robin to grumble to himself at the impertinence of Little John. For he liked not to be reminded of the bout with Will Scarlet.

Then Little John called to the stranger, “Who art thou, bold fellow, that ranges so boldly here? In sooth thou doest look like a thief that comes to steal the King’s deer.”

“Who art thou that questioneth me?” asked the stranger, “for thou does not look like a forester to me.”

“I am a keeper of this Forest,” replied little John, “and I look after the deer for the King and myself. Therefore I must stay thee from going further into the Forest.”

“Heigho, thou and how many more will stay me?” jeered the Tanner, with a grin.

“None other do I need,” cried Little John angrily.

“One more bold word of back-talk, and I’ll crack thy pate for thee.”

“Art thou such a goodly man then that all must fear thee?” quoth the Tanner with another grin. “I care not a fig for thy looking so big. On thy guard if thou wouldst fight with me. Methinks I do see a quarter-staff behind thee on the ground. Meet me with it, and I’ll tan thy hide for thee.”

Little John unbuckled his belt, and laid down his long-bow beside it on the ground. Then taking up a staff of stout oak he faced the Tanner.

“Look well to thyself, sirrah,” said he, “for I yield to thy weapon since thou wilt not yield to mine. But come forward for I would measure our weapons. I’ll not have my staff one inch longer than thine, for that would be foul play.”

“Nay, I fear not the length, for my staff is stout enough to knock down a calf, and I hope it will knock down thee,” said the Tanner.

On the instant Little John let fly his staff at the Tanner, and gave him such a blow on the crown of his head that he drew blood. The Tanner recovered himself quickly and brought down a terrific blow on Little John’s head. So they each had a blow apiece and the mighty battle began.

Now the Tanner had expected to win the battle for he was the best fighter in his part of the country. But Little John had not planned it so. Soon the Tanner realized that he had met his match.

Back and forth, round and round, they fought like two wild boars in a chase. Each strove to injure the other's arm or leg, or any other place. Knock for knock they dealt lustily. The Forest rang with the sound of their blows.

At the end of almost an hour when the two men were well nigh exhausted Robin Hood, who had been hiding, stepped forward and shouted,

“Hold thy hands, hold thy hands, and let thy quarrel fall. There is no need to thrash thy bones into pieces. Thou art so evenly matched that thou couldst fight forever. I make thee free, fellow, to roam as thou pleaseth through Sherwood Forest.”

“A murrain seize thee,” answered the Tanner. “Who art thou to give me freedom? Gramercy for naught, say I, for if freedom I've bought, then I can thank my good staff and not thee.”

“What tradesman art thou?” asked jolly Robin, “I prithee tell me what thou are and where thou dost come from.”

“A tanner am I and for many a year have I plied my trade in Nottingham. If thou wilt come there I vow I will tan thy hide for nothing,” answered the Tanner.

“Aye, and a good job can he do,” grumbled Little John, rubbing his sore head and sides.

“Gramercy to thee, good fellow,” quoth jolly Robin, “for thy kindness, but if thou wilt tan my hide for naught then I will do as much for thee. But tell me thy name, I prithee.”



“’Tis Arthur a Bland,” replied the Tanner, boldly, “and by what name art thou called?”

“My name is Robin Hood,” said the bold outlaw, “and wilt thou forsake thy tanning and come to the greenwood with me? Thou dost play a stout staff and I have need of thee. Thou wilt make a great team-mate for Little John.”

“Where is the famous Little John?” asked Arthur a Bland, “I would fain lay eyes upon him.”

“By my faith and troth,” laughed Robin, “thou hast laid more than thy eyes upon him this day, for thou didst give him a good drubbing.”

“Sayest thou so?” asked Arthur in surprise, “if I had known never would I have had the courage to raise my hand against him. I have heard of thee all for many a day and my heart has been with thee. A thousand pardons, Little John. Let us be friends. Here’s my hand on it.”

Little John feeling weary and sore after the long battle gave his hand to Arthur and said,

“It would have been worse for thee if thou hadst not worn such thick leathern clothes. But welcome to the greenwood, Arthur a Bland, and a murrain on all past blows.”

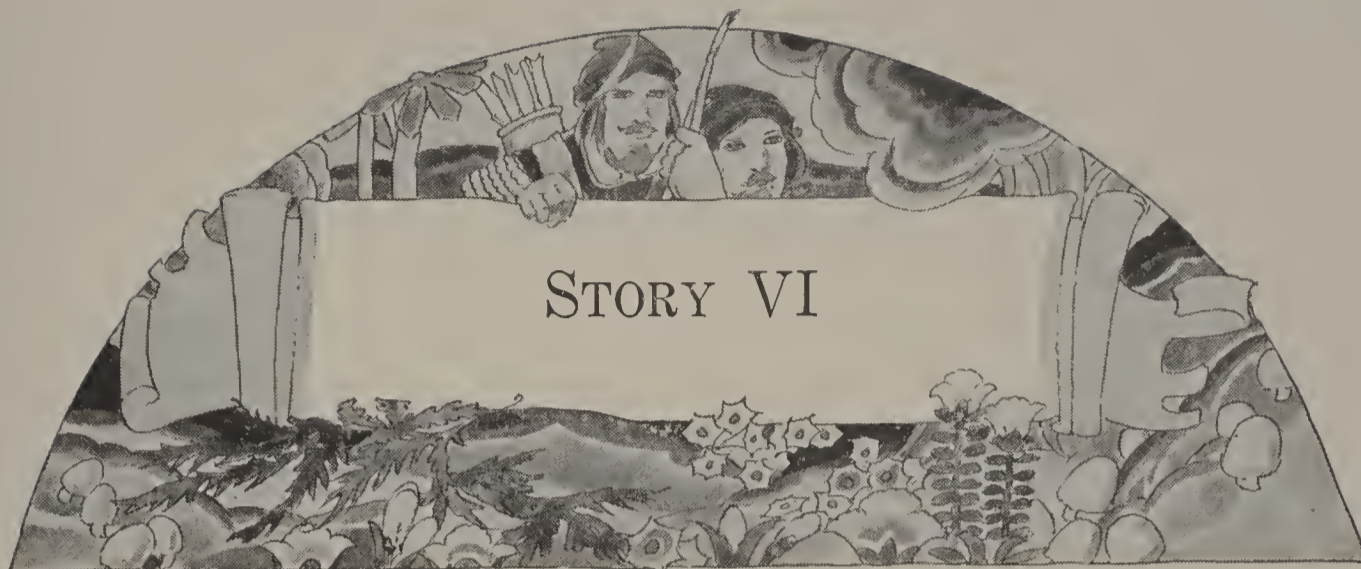
Then Robin Hood took them both by the hand and they all danced round and round the oak tree and sang with great glee,

“For three merry men and three merry men and three merry men we be.”

Thereupon they joined Will Scarlet who was still guarding the huge stag. Then they all took the highway through the Forest to join the others of the band.

And ever hereafter, as long as they lived,  
They three shall be all one;  
The wood shall ring, and the old wife sing,  
Of Robin Hood, Arthur and John.





## HOW ROBIN HOOD DOTH ENCOUNTER MIDGE THE MILLER

“Stout of back but slender-brained this Midge the Miller be  
So, playfully, we’ll take away his gold,”  
Little John spake merrily, and set about the task,  
But he was much surprised, the tale is told.



NOW although the bones of Robin Hood and Little John were sore, yet did they feel that a good day’s work was done. Two strong new men had been added to the band, and what could be dearer to the heart of Robin?

So as the day drew to a close, the four trudged along toward Sherwood Forest. Weary were they, for they carried the stag between them, but not too weary for a jest.

“Methinks I do espy a stout fellow coming down the

path," said Robin. "Let us sit here until he doth approach us."

"He is a stout fellow," declared Little John, "or he could not carry that huge sack of meal."

"Aye, marry," said Will Scarlet, "'tis Midge, the Miller. Great is his strength, but small is his wit, I've heard said."

"Sayest thou so," quoth Little John, "then I will play a merry jest on him."

Before Robin could guess what the jest was to be, Little John had risen and stepped forward.

"Hold, my good fellow," quoth Little John. "I would have a word with thee."

The Miller stopped in his tracks. He set his sack upon the ground, but took a firmer hold on his huge quarter-staff.

"What dost thou wish with me?" asked the Miller.

"I would carry thy heavy load for thee," answered Little John.

"Gramercy, good sir, if thanks be due thee," replied the Miller, "I can carry my meal myself."

"How now," said Little John. "It doth look as if thou hadst more than meal in yon sack. I will take not only the meal, but your gold."

"Alas, thou dost mistake me," declared the Miller, as he put one foot on the sack. "Little I have, and if thou shouldst rob me of that, then it would go hard with you should Robin Hood hear of it."

"I know Robin Hood well, and fear him not," said

Little John. "Make haste and give me thy money, or I will empty thy meal upon the ground."

"I prithee, spare the meal," pleaded the Miller as he fell on his knees, "and I will give thee all that lies at the bottom of the sack."

"Aha," said Little John knowingly, "I was sure that thou didst have some stored away."

By this time Robin felt that the jest had gone far enough, and he came forward with the other two. Meanwhile the Miller had untied the top of the bag. He stooped over, and filling both his hands with meal, threw it into their eyes. It blinded them, and before they could rub it out, he threw more and more handfuls, until they could see nothing at all. Then seizing his huge quarter-staff he struck first one and then the other, until all four had their share.

"Stop, stop," cried Little John. "Dost call it fair play to belabor a blinded man?"

"Aye, verily, that I do," quoth the Miller, "when he hath tried to rob me," and he beat Little John harder than ever. "Perhaps you'll be a little more careful now how you treat Midge the Miller."

So saying he turned to the other three and rained blow after blow on each. The meal still blinded them, and they could not help themselves.

"Hold," cried Little John again, "that is Robin Hood that thou beatest."

"Now I know that thou liest," said Midge, "for never would Robin Hood stand by and see a poor man robbed."

Take this for your untruth," and poor Little John received another heavy blow.

Robin knew that it was vain for him to tell Midge who he was, and in truth his conscience hurt him as badly as his shoulders. Whereupon he seized his horn and blew three loud blasts.

The Miller was so busy raining blows upon the four that he did not hear the coming of the merry band. He was amazed when he discovered that he was surrounded by a host of men in green. They would have fallen immediately upon Midge had not Robin called,

"Nay, do him no harm. I am at fault for I should not have let the jest go so far."

Then, ever ready to see the merry side of a story, Robin told their adventure. Soon the whole band was in roars of laughter, and even Midge could now give a broad smile. At first he felt that he had reason to fear Robin Hood, but not when he saw him laughing.

"Wouldst care to join our jolly band, young Midge the Miller?" asked Robin. "I might then forgive thee the drubbing thou has given me."

"Aye, that I would," said Midge, "and ever loyal will I be."

"Perhaps some day I can forgive thee when my shoulders have healed," quoth Little John with a wry face

"I will not say that thou didst bring it on thyself," said Robin with a twinkle in his eye. "But haste thee now, each and all to our Forest home. Three new staunch yeomen have we this day added to our band."





*In the summertime the leaves grow green and the birds  
sing on every tree.*





## HOW ROBIN HOOD DID OUTWIT THE TINKER

And as he came to Nottingham  
A Tinker he did meet,  
And seeing him a lusty blade,  
He did him kindly greet.



IN the summertime when the leaves grew green and the birds were singing on every tree, Robin Hood fared forth to Nottingham Town. It had been many a day since he had heard what was a-doing there, and he was fain to learn. His trusty sword was by his side, his bow and arrows at his back, and his fair bugle-horn slung on his hip. It was a goodly morn and merry at heart was Robin.

As he drew nigh to Nottingham a Tinker he did meet. The Tinker carried his leathern bag of tools on his back. In his hand was a mighty crabtree staff full six feet long.

Robin greeted him kindly saying, "Good morrow, friend. I prithee, tell me from whence thou dost come?"

"From Banbury I come and by trade I am a tinker," said the stranger.

"Alas, 'tis sad news I hear," quoth Robin, with a long face.

"What is the news?" asked the Tinker, "tell me without delay."

"Forsooth, nothing more nor less than that two men of thine own craft were set in the stocks yestermorn for drinking too freely of ale and beer."

"Now I know that thou dost jest, and a murrain seize thee," quoth the jolly Tinker. "Much more important news have I."

"What is thy news?" asked Robin.

"Where hast thou been that the news of this outlaw has not come to thine ears? Hast not heard that two hundred pounds have been offered for this outlaw, Robin Hood by name? Come thee closer, friend, I care not to shout this about. I have here in my pocket a warrant to seize this outlaw. If thou wilt help me in this matter, a goodly share of the reward shalt be thine."

Robin's eyes twinkled but he seemed to be in thought for a time.

"I know these parts well, and perchance I could give thee aid," he said. "Let me see thy warrant. An it be right, I will do the best I can to take him this very night. He's a slippery fellow and not easy to catch, but I'll do my best."

“Nay, I will not show thee,” answered the Tinker. “I’ll trust no one with it. He’ll not slip through my fingers, not he. Some men might be caught napping, but not the Tinker.”

“Belike thou’rt right,” quoth Robin Hood, “how dost thou know that I am not he?”

“By my faith,” said the Tinker, and he laughed until his sides shook, “thou art not he. He is large and fierce and not friendly like thee. Too many tales have I heard to be fooled about that famous outlaw.”

“I can see that thou art the very man to catch him, friend Tinker, and I fear for his hide when thou dost. But the sun grows warm and I am hungry. Let us to the Blue Boar Inn and quench our thirst.”

“Aye, marry,” said the Tinker, “that suits me well, e’en though it takes my last farthing. I had thought to eat this bread and cheese and to give thee a share. But the Inn sounds more to my liking.”

Without more ado they went along the road to Nottingham Town. Soon the Blue Boar Inn stood in their pathway. A goodly inn it was, and well known to Robin and his band. Many were the times that he and his jolly companions had gathered there when the wind was howling through the Forest. But when Robin Hood and the Tinker entered the door, not by one glance or word did the landlord show that he had ever laid eyes upon the outlaw before.

Robin gave orders for food and drink, such a dinner as the Tinker had never sat down to before.

“I trow thou art a free-handed fellow. Art sure thou hast the wherewithal to pay for it?” asked the Tinker anxiously.

“Aye, marry, eat thy fill,” quoth jolly Robin. But he smiled to himself.

So the Tinker ate and ate and ate. Never had he eaten so much. He drank and drank and drank, as he had never drank before. Ere long he was so drowsy that he fell sound asleep.

No sooner had the Tinker’s head nodded than Robin reached carefully into his pouch and pulled forth the warrant.

“Ha, beshrew me, so thou wilt catch the outlaw,” laughed Robin, and tore the warrant into bits. Then calling the landlord he said,

“See that this man pays the bill, and if perchance he hath not the sum, belike his bag of tools will do for forfeit.”

“Very good, Master Robin,” whispered the landlord, with a broad smile. “It would pleasure me right well to make him pay the reckoning.”

Whereupon bold Robin Hood went merrily on his way.

Toward evening the Tinker awoke. He rubbed his eyes and looked first to the right and then to the left. He looked to the east and to the west. To the north and to the south. But his mind was in a daze, and he could not remember where he was. It was an inn, no doubt, and he seemed to have had his dinner, since there were the remains in front of him.

“By my faith and troth,” he thought, “methinks I’ve had my dinner, but how came I here?”

Then he remembered his kindly companion. But he was gone. He sprang to his feet and the landlord, who had been watching him with one eye, came to him.

“Wouldst pay for thy dinner now?” he asked.

“I pay? Where is that bold yeoman who was to pay for this day’s feast? And he was to lead me to the bold outlaw.”

“And who might this bold outlaw be?” asked the landlord.

“By ’r Lady, hast not heard of the outlaw, Robin Hood? ’Tis for him that I have this warrant.” So saying he put his hand into his pouch.

With a roar of rage the Tinker cried, “A murrain seize thee, I’ve been robbed. My warrant from the Sheriff is stolen. I was to hold the outlaw wherever I found him.”

“Then thou shouldst have held him when thou had him,” quoth the landlord, “that was Robin Hood with whom thou wert eating.”

At this the Tinker’s mouth and eyes opened until it looked as if they could never be closed again. “How could that be Robin Hood? ’Twas said he was a fierce and cruel outlaw. He looked like any worthy yeoman.”

“Aye, ’twas he. I know him well, for many times he and his merry men have been in the Blue Boar.”

“But paid he not for this food? He asked me to come with him.”

“Naught do I know of that,” answered the landlord. “I know only that my food has been eaten, and thou art left to meet the reckoning.”

“Alas, I have naught,” sighed the poor Tinker.

“Then must thou leave thy hammer and bag of tools for the reckoning.”

The Tinker raved and raged, but the landlord was firm.

“The debt must be paid or thou wilt be in trouble twice. Once for what thou owest me, and again for sitting with an outlaw and letting him slip away from thee.”

“Thou hast me there, landlord, but I will have him yet. When I do I will thrash his jacket for him with my staff.”

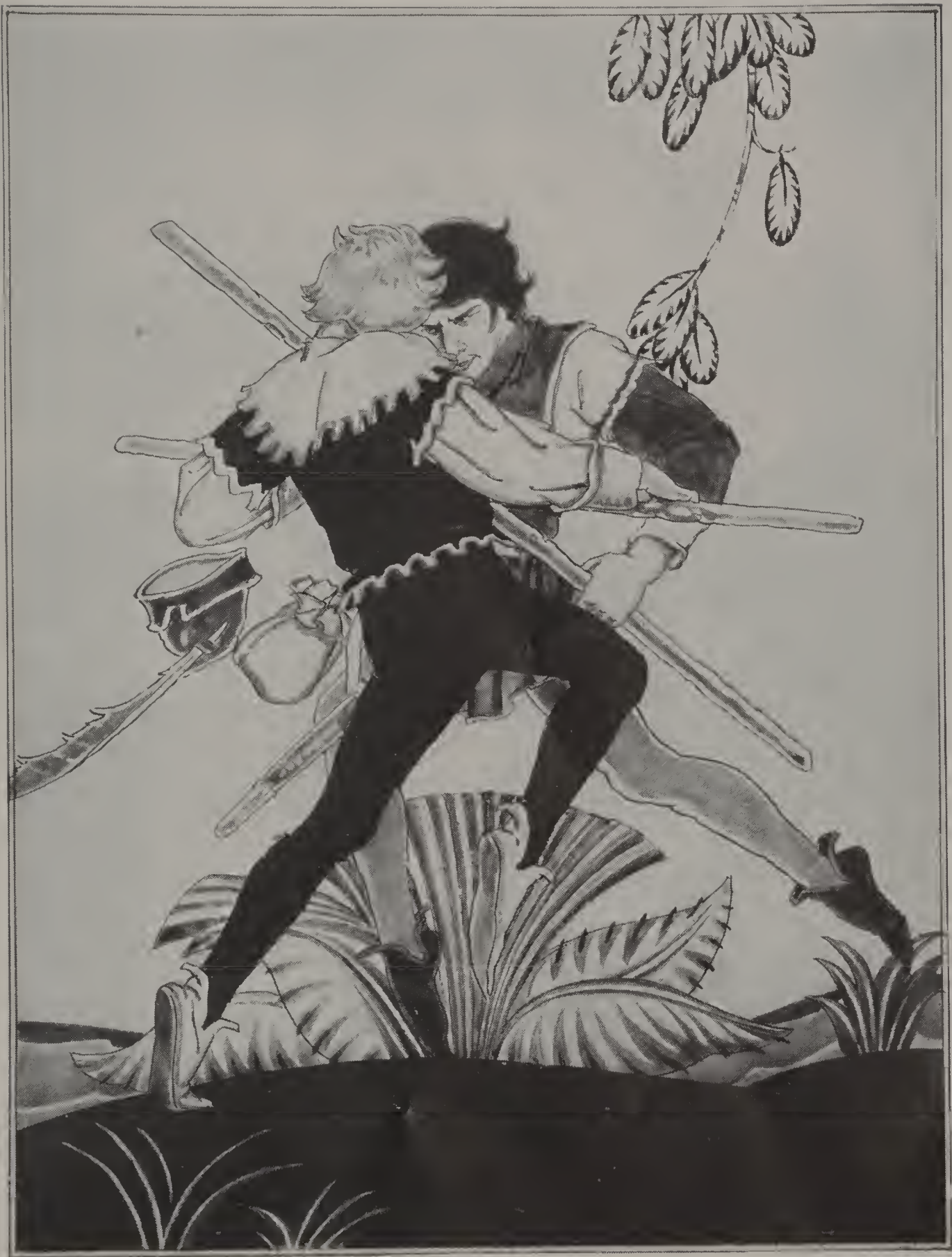
Sadly the Tinker gave the landlord his bag of tools and away he dashed along the very road that Robin had taken.

Before long he came upon Robin, who in truth had not gone far, for never was he one to run away from any man.

Quoth Robin Hood, “What knave is this that runneth into the Forest?”

“No knave I,” answered the Tinker, “but methinks one standeth before me. I now know thee, Robin Hood, and a taste of my crabtree staff shalt thou have ere I take thee to the Sheriff.”

Whereupon they fought. Whack, went the Tinker’s staff, but whack, went Robin’s also, and the Tinker found



*Whereupon Robin and the Tinker fought.*





that he had met his match. At length as Robin warded off a blow his staff broke beneath the stout strokes of the Tinker's staff.

"Now 'twere best for thee to yield," said the Tinker.

For answer Robin clapped his horn to his lips and blew three long hard blasts.

"Marry, 'tis not the time for the blowing of calls. Thou must come with me, or I shall have to spoil thy pretty face," said the Tinker, and he made his staff whistle in the air.

On a sudden out leaped Little John and a score or so of the merry men clad in Lincoln green.

"What now, Master Robin," asked Little John, "how can we serve thee?"

"This man would fain take me to see the Sheriff of Nottingham, where perchance I might hang."

"By my faith, then hang he shall first," cried Little John. He sprang toward the Tinker, swinging his heavy staff.

The Tinker had never seen such a giant of a man before, but he faced Little John bravely, his staff ready for a blow.

"Thou hast brave mettle, good fellow, and I like thee," quoth Robin. "Touch him not, Little John. I would have a word with him. Wilt join my merry band, Tinker, and live in Sherwood Forest? We hunt by day and feast by night, and no cares have we."

"Gramercy, 'twill sound me better far than this life on the road, and I love thee, good master, e'en though

thou didst cheat me at the inn. Thou art a stouter and better man than I, and I would fain serve thee the rest of my life," quoth the Tinker.

So the Tinker was content. They turned their footsteps toward Sherwood Forest where the Tinker was to live henceforth, as stout a servant as he had been an enemy.





OF HOW ROBIN HOOD DID AID THE SORROWFUL KNIGHT  
SIR RICHARD OF THE LEA

Now as the knight went on his way  
This game he thought full good;  
Then he looked on Bernysdale  
He blessed Robin Hood.



NOT many days after the Tinker had joined the merry band Robin Hood stood in deep thought under a greenwood tree. Little John made a jest, but not one word did Robin make in reply.

“Forsooth, good master,” said Little John, “wilt not come to dine? Not a morsel of food hath passed thy lips today. Will Scarlet hath brought as fine a buck as thou

hast ever seen. Nor is that all. Others have brought in fine birds.”

“Gramercy, Little John,” quoth Robin, “but long has it been since a guest hath graced our board, and I would fain see a stranger’s face. Go thou and find a guest, and I will eat with right good will.”

“Whom wilt thou have for a guest, good Robin?” asked Little John.

“If thou shouldst meet some bishop or baron or knight, then would it pleasure me to have him dine with me, and pay the reckoning. Or if thou shouldst have the rare good fortune to find our friend the Sheriff, that would be still better. Our treasury is low, and methinks thou dost know how to add to it. Take thy trusty bow and get thee hence.”

Whereupon Little John gladly wended his way through the Forest with several of the merry men. They had not gone far when a lady, richly dressed, rode by with her many servants. But since every woman was safe at the hands of these outlaws, they made no attempt to stop her.

Next some honest yeomen passed jingling their few pennies in their pockets and saying how hard were these days for an honest living. They too were not detained, for Robin never touched a poor man’s hoard.

At length, a sorrowful sight met their eyes. Far down the road they saw a knight riding alone. He came toward them slowly, and his horse was worn and thin. The knight’s armor was old and rusty, and he looked so sad

and forlorn that Little John hardly thought it worth while to stop him. But he remembered that Robin had told him to bring a knight for a guest, if he found one. So stepping into the road and dropping to one knee, he said courteously,

“I prithee, Sir Knight, accept my welcome to the greenwood. My master hath awaited thy coming, lo, these three hours.”

“Thy master, who is he?” asked the sorrowful knight.

“Robin Hood is his name,” answered Little John.

“And a stout yeoman is he, if what they say of him is true,” said the knight. “I had thought to dine farther on the way, but if the good Robin doth await me, lead on. He will find me poor company at his feast, but I have heard that he is a friend to all those in need.”

So the little party wended its way toward the greenwood. It was not a happy party, for the knight sighed and sighed and tears kept rolling down his long face.

Ere long they were espied by Robin, who hurried forth to welcome the sad knight. Robin greeted him courteously saying,

“We have waited thee long, gentle knight, and we bid thee welcome. The meal is ready, and I beg thee all to eat.”

So down they all sat to the feast. The long table built between two stumps of large trees, was laden with all kinds of good food. Here were roasts and steaks of choicest venison. Many too, were the pheasants and water fowl.

The knight, though still gloomy of face, began to look happier as he ate of the delicious food set in front of him. The merry jesting of the jolly band lightened his heart. He began to forget his sorrowing for a time.

“Gramercy, good Robin, with my whole heart,” said the knight, “such a feast hath not passed my lips this many a day. If thou wilt come to my domain, thou and thy merry band, I will strive to do thee honor in like fashion.”

“Nay, strange knight,” quoth Robin, “such is not our habit. Those that dine in our greenwood must pay the reckoning.”

“Alas,” sighed the knight, “so little is in my purse that I dare not offer it to thee for very shame.”

“A knight with little wealth in his purse?” asked jolly Robin. “By my faith, I wot thou speakest not the truth.”

“Aye, thou wouldst not call ten shillings wealth,” said the knight, “and that is all I can offer thee. On my knightly honor this is so. Wilt take my purse so that thine own eyes may see the truth?”

“Nay,” quoth Robin, “never would I doubt the word of so courteous a knight. But how camest thou into such dire straits? A rusty armor and empty purse ill becomes a knight of thy parts. Hast thou gambled thy high estate?”

“Thou dost me wrong, kind Robin,” answered the knight. “Beggared am I, but through no fault of mine own. In a tourney my son did slay a powerful knight. To save him from a dungeon I was forced to pay some

four hundred pounds. Not having this much money at the time, I was forced to borrow from the Abbot of St. Mary and gave my house and lands as surety. The time to pay doth draw near, and I cannot pay."

"Hast thou no friends?" asked Robin. "Canst thou not borrow such a sum?"

"Alack and alas," sighed Sir Richard, "when I was wealthy many were my friends. But when sorrow came to me, they all fled."

"Then 'tis well thou hast come to the greenwood," quoth Robin, "for despite our bad reputation we have never failed the needy. Little John, in what state is our treasury? 'Tis low, in truth, but mayhap it will yield the four hundred pounds."

"Aye, good master," answered Little John, with a twinkle in his eye, "so it will, and more if need be. I have already visited the treasury."

"Thou art a sly rogue," said Robin with a smile, "busk thee now, and bring the four hundred pounds to Sir Richard. Let us see if we can bring a smile to those sad lips."

"Would it not be well, also, good master, to add some rich clothing more befitting a knight of his estate?"

"'Tis well," quoth Robin, "and a prancing steed also. We will keep the poor one of his in exchange. Perchance good food will make him prance once more."

"Then should so great a knight have a squire and retainers as he rides through the forest. Give me leave to go, for I would fain see him on his way."

“So be it,” answered Robin, “go thou and a score of the others. Leave him not until thou hast seen him at peace once more.”

Whereupon the sorrow dropped at once from the gentle Sir Richard of the Lea. He straightened his broad shoulders and assumed his knightly mien. Soon he was dressed in the rich garments the generous outlaws had given him. Mounting his new horse he rode out of the greenwood in state, followed by Little John and some ten or so of the others.

“Gramercy, good Robin,” he said at parting, “I cannot tell thee all that is in my heart. But twelve months from now I will return to repay thee for all thy kindness.”

So saying he went on his way, no longer sorrowful.

Now the next day was the one in which the debt was to be paid to the Abbot of St. Mary’s. The Abbot and the Prior waited anxiously for the evening. If Sir Richard of the Lea did not come to pay the four hundred pounds then the rich lands would become their own. As the day drew near to sunset, the Abbot said,

“Of a surety Sir Richard cannot pay the reckoning. It would seem that we must claim the lands and estate, worthless though they be.”

“Nay,” answered the good Prior, “perchance he hath been delayed, and will come ere the sun has sunk into the sky. Besides the lands are not worthless. They be worth much more than the four hundred pounds. ’Twere a great pity to take his lands this way.”



“I have not asked thy advice,” said the Abbot. “Thou wert ever soft-hearted.”

As he spoke two ragged strangers were led into the room. One knelt before the Abbot in reverence for his holy office, saying,

“I have come on the day of reckoning, as I said.”

“Hast thou the four hundred pounds. Sir Richard?” asked the Abbot.

“And if I have not, what then wouldst thou do?” asked Sir Richard, who wished to see how the Abbot would treat him.

“Forsooth, why hast thou come if thou canst not pay the reckoning?” said the Abbot angrily.

“Perchance I hoped that thou wouldst give me a longer day,” replied the knight.

“The day is over,” said the Abbot, “thou hast had thy chance. The money must be paid ere the day darkens, or thy lands are forfeit.”

Whereupon the knight stood up, and looking the Abbot straight in the eye said, “’Tis well that one knoweth his friends in time of need.”

The Abbot grew uneasy, and pretending a courage he did not feel said, “Get thee hence, false knight!”

“Thou dost lie,” answered the knight. “Never have I been false. I gave thee thy chance to show thy kindly spirit, but now I know thee for what thou art.”

With a hurried step, Sir Richard strode toward the table, and poured four hundred pounds out from the bag that was concealed under his cloak.

“There is thy gold, Sir Abbot, which thou didst loan me. If thou hadst been civil I would have paid thee more.”

Then right merrily, with a song on his lips and in his heart, did Sir Richard of the Lea pass from the great hall of the Abbey. Outside he met Little John who awaited him with the horses. Then wishing each other “Godspeed” they went their separate ways; Little John to the greenwood to join the merry band; Sir Richard to his home. Here his lady was anxiously awaiting him.

“I bid thee welcome, my lord,” quoth she, “and what of our lands?”

“Now, my good dame, thou canst be merry and rejoice for the lands are ours again,” replied Sir Richard. “And forget not Robin Hood in thy prayers. But for him we would be beggars.”

For many a day the Knight dwelt in his castle looking after his lands and saving his money to pay back the four hundred pounds that he owed Robin Hood. He provided also a hundred bows and a hundred arrows, beautifully made. Each bow was strung tight, and every arrow was an ell long and notched with silver. They were tipped with peacock feathers. A seemly sight they were, and right proud was Sir Richard of their fine display.

Then he clothed himself and all his hundred men in white and red, and rode off to Sherwood Forest.

Ere long he came to the greenwood tree, and found Robin Hood and his merry men waiting for him.

“God save thee, good Robin Hood, and all thy merry men,” said Sir Richard. “I have come to keep my tryst.”

“Thou art more than right welcome to me, gentle Knight,” replied Robin. “Methinks thy lands have been returned to thee, for thou art not of a sorrowful countenance.”

“Yea, verily,” quoth the Knight, “and I have God and thee to thank. But I bring thee not only my thanks but thy four hundred pounds which thou didst lend me in my time of distress. Here also are some twenty marks for thy courtesy.”

“Nay,” answered Robin, “I will have none of it, for a miracle hath happened, and Our Lady hath repaid the money. Put back thy gold. Keep it for thy son and heir, when he returns from the Holy Land.”

“I am ever in thy debt, good Robin,” said Sir Richard, “but even if thou dost refuse my gold thou canst not refuse this poor present of bows and arrows that I have brought for thee and thy band.”

Loud was the shout that rose through the greenwood for Sir Richard of the Lea. The bows and arrows were tested and tried and found good. Many were the hours of feasting and dancing, while Robin and the gentle Sir Richard of the Lea talked together until the sun arose. Then they parted with a great love between them, and the Knight went on his way.



## OF HOW LITTLE JOHN BECAME THE SHERIFF'S SERVANT

Still stood the proud Sheriff,  
A sorry man was he,  
"Woe be to you, Reynold Greenleaf,  
Thou hast betrayed me."



NOW as Little John left Sir Richard of the Lea, his way lay through Nottingham Town. It so happened that he was just in time for the great Fair which was celebrated only once in five years. All thoughts of returning to the greenwood were soon out of his mind. He dressed himself bravely in red from his head to his feet, and went to the Fair. Here many heads turned to look at him in his finery, for not often was so tall and broad-shouldered a fellow seen.

Soon he strolled near the dancing booth where there was sweet music. He joined in the sport and was soon dancing with the best of them. Many maidens came and



*Little John dances with the maidens.*



tried to dance him down, but he did not weary. Each maiden thought him the finest man that she had ever seen.

Now there was in these parts a famous wielder of the quarter-staff named Eric o' Lincoln. He had cracked many pates that day with the force of his blows with the quarter-staff when he espied Little John standing head and shoulders above the others at the Fair.

"What ho, my stout fellow," called he to Little John. "Darest thou meet me in proper combat with thy quarter-staff?"

"Aye, it would pleasure me greatly if I had my good staff with me," answered Little John.

At once half a dozen of those standing by offered their staves to him. They were more ready to see someone else's head cracked than their own. He chose the largest and heaviest, and leaped upon the platform with Eric.

Each man took his place and stood ready for the first move. As soon as the director of the sport said, "Play," there followed such a display of skill with the quarter-staff as had not been seen for many a day in Nottingham Town.

At first Eric thought he could better his opponent and bragged about his skill. But soon he decided that he would far better save his breath for the fighting.

Twice Eric o' Lincoln and Little John met, gave blow for blow and parted. The third time they met Eric lost his temper and became so angry that he did not watch where his blows were falling. Soon Little John saw his

chance and giving Eric a quick blow on the crown of his head, staggered him. Before Eric could regain himself Little John smote him such a blow that he fell down as if he would never rise again. Great was the shout that arose for Eric was a bully who was loved by no one.

As Little John turned to give back the quarter-staff to its owner he saw that the time had come to shoot with the long-bow. The Sheriff had set up the target and sat near it on a high platform. Many of the townspeople had gathered near where the shooting was to take place.

The archers stepped forward as the heralds called their names and shot three arrows from their bows. The Sheriff espied Little John before it was his turn to shoot and said to himself, "Who is that tall stranger? Methinks he hath a strangely familiar look."

He beckoned Little John to him and asked, "What is thy name, fair stranger?"

"I am known as Reynold Greenleaf, sire, in Holder-ness where I was born," answered Little John, smiling inside, for the name he gave meant "Fox of the Greenwood."

"I like thee well," said the Sheriff, "and if thou canst shoot as well as thou dost appear, I would fain have thee in my service."

Little John struck the clout of the target three times when his turn came.

"Now I know that I want thee in my service," said the Sheriff, "for no such shooting has been seen since that outlaw did flaunt his prowess in my face."



Little John smiled to himself when he heard Robin Hood's skill spoken of in this fashion. He decided that he would stay in the Sheriff's service for a time. But instead of being a good servant he would be as bad a servant as he could be.

A few days later Little John awakened to find that the Sheriff had gone hunting and left him at home. This did not grieve him sadly, for he thought this was his chance to get even with the Sheriff.

Being very hungry he hurried down the stairs and asked the steward for food.

"Nay, Reynold Greenleaf, no food shalt thou have till the Sheriff returns, lazy lout that thou art," said the steward and he locked the pantry door behind him.

Locked doors meant nothing to Little John, so he gave a mighty kick which burst open the door. Whereupon he ate and drank what there was in the pantry. Then he went down to the kitchen. As he entered the door a delicious venison pie met his eye. But before he could reach it the Sheriff's cook stepped in front of him.

Now the Sheriff's cook was a bold strong man and he gave Little John three smart blows with his quarter-staff.

"Perhaps now thou wilt stay where thou belongest, knave," said he. "Such pies are not for the likes of thee."

Little John returned his blows heartily and said,

"Thou art a brave man. Perchance thou wouldst like to match thy skill with mine with the broadsword."

The cook was willing, and for two hours they fought, neither harming the other.

At length Little John said, "I knew thee for a strong and brave man. Little John am I. Come with me to the greenwood and join our merry band. There thou wouldst have twenty marks a year from Robin Hood and two changes of clothing."

"That soundeth good to my ears, and I will go with thee after we have had a good meal."

So they finished the venison pie between them, and when they could eat and drink no more, they broke open the treasure chests of the Sheriff and took his silver dishes and some three hundred pounds of money. "This will be a present to Robin Hood," they said. Ere long they were on their way to the Sherwood Forest, unseen by anyone.

Robin Hood welcomed them both when he saw them and asked, "What fair tidings dost bring from Nottingham, Little John?"

"The Sheriff doth send thee his greetings and this plate for a present. Also his cook hath come with me to do thee homage," answered Little John. "Methinks that perchance the Sheriff will dine with us this even."

"Now I know that thou dost jest," laughed Robin.

But Little John had run suddenly from the greenwood.

He ran on for some few miles until he came up with the Sheriff, who was still hunting with his men. He knelt in front of the Sheriff who said in surprise,

"Reynold Greenleaf, how camest thou here?"

“I would that thou shouldst see a fair hart of greenish color, sire, that is in this forest.”

“Aye, that is a sight that I would fain see,” said the Sheriff.

“Come with me then, sire, and I will lead thee,” quoth Little John.

The Sheriff turned his horse in the direction that Little John led and soon they were in a large open space. Under one of the great trees stood Robin Hood.

“There is thy green hart, O Sheriff,” said Little John with a smile.

The Sheriff shook on his horse and his face paled.

“Thou hast betrayed me, Reynold Greenleaf. I thought I knew thee at the first. Now I do know thee from thy size. Thou art Little John.”

“Aye, thou speakest truth,” said Little John. “But thou shouldst not have left me to mine own devices when thou didst go hunting. Since I did eat the food which was prepared for thee, perchance thou wilt eat here in the greenwood with us.”

“Aye, welcome art thou, Sheriff,” said Robin Hood.

The merry band led their guest to the table. He was not quite at his ease. But when his own cook brought in the huge meat pie he stared in consternation. The worst blow of all was seeing his own silver dishes on the table. Then he completely lost his appetite with fear.

“Dost not like our food, Sir Sheriff?” laughed Robin. “Little John did but borrow it this day so that you could eat in comfort here in the Forest.”

The Sheriff made a mild pretense of eating, for although he had a keen appetite from the long day's hunting, yet he still feared what these outlaws might do.

As soon as the meal was finished Robin said, "Thou shalt spend the night with us in the greenwood. Belike thou wouldst treat us more kindly if thou didst know how we do live."

The Sheriff longed for his comfortable bed, but he groaned and said nothing.

"'Twere a pity to sleep in thy rich clothes," quoth Robin.

So they stripped off his rich leathern shoes and hose and his fur-trimmed velvet coat. Then they gave him a green mantle to wear.

Soon they all stretched out on the ground and not long did it take them to be asleep. Not so the Sheriff. He tossed and turned all the night through and could not find one comfortable spot.

He was not sorry to see the dawn in the sky, or to hear Robin's jolly voice waking up the merry men.

"Didst sleep well in our Forest?" asked Robin.

But the Sheriff's only answer was a wry face.

"I mean to let thee go free, Sir Sheriff, and to return thy silver plate to thee, if thou wilt make a promise never to harm me or my band again."

Robin was always as good as his word. If he made a promise, he stood by it. But not so the Sheriff. Right gladly did he make his promise, but alas, all too soon did he forget it.



*"I mean to return thy silver plate to thee."*





## HOW ROBIN HOOD MET THE CURTAL FRIAR

“The curtal friar in Fountain Abbey  
Well can a strong bow draw;  
He will beat you and your yeomen,  
Set them all on a row!”

Robin Hood took a solemn oath,  
(It was by Mary free)  
That he would neither eat nor drink.  
Till the friar he did see.



ONE fine day in summer Robin Hood and his merry men decided that they would make a holiday. Some tried their skill with the quarter-staff. Others wrestled, and not a few practiced at shooting. Robin, who

loved a wager, quoth, "Methinks that none can shoot five hundred feet away. My stout new bow as forfeit if thou canst."

On the instant Little John struck down a deer more than five hundred feet distant.

"By my faith," said Robin, "that is a great shot, and the wager is thine." Then turning to the others in the jolly band, he said, "Where can ye find such skill? I would fain go more than a hundred miles to find his match with the bow."

"Good master," quoth Will Scarlet, and he laughed full well, "thou needest not go a hundred miles. There doth live a curtal friar in the Fountain Abbey than can beat both him—aye, and thee."

"Sayest thou so," answered Robin, pricking up his ears, for he was ever ready to test out the best in the countryside, "I will not rest till I have found this same friar."

Whereupon he made himself ready for the journey. He armed himself well, for 'twas not safe for him to wander alone lest perchance he meet the Sheriff's men. On his head he wore a cap of steel. Underneath his suit of green he wore a coat of chain mail. By his side hung his good broadsword. His shining buckler and his worthy bow were slung across his shoulder.

A goodly sight was he as he strode through the Forest, the brightness of the steel gleaming now and then beneath his green coat.

At length he came upon the Fountain Abbey standing



beside a shining river. On a sudden he espied a curtal friar walking by the water-side. A strange figure was he. Though he wore the robe of a friar, yet on his head was a cap of steel, and a broadsword and buckler were by his side.

“Methinks this is the self-same friar that was named by Will Scarlet,” thought Robin Hood, “a cool blade is he, and will stand a trial.”

Calling loudly Robin said, “Heigho, thou curtal friar, carry me over this water, or else thy life will be forfeit.”

So unexpected was this greeting that the friar stopped in his tracks, and laid his hand on his sword. He looked toward the voice and beheld Robin with his bow aimed at him. Calmly did the friar approach Robin and quoth he,

“Nay, be not hasty, good fellow, thou seemest like a worthy and it is needful that I give thee some attention.”

So saying he took Robin on his back. There was a twinkle in his eye and a cunning look which boded no good for bold Robin. But the friar spoke neither good word nor bad till he came to the other side.

Robin leaped lightly from his back saying right merrily, “Many thanks to thee, good friar.”

“By my faith,” said the friar, “one good turn deserves another. Now, forsooth, thou must e’en carry me back again.”

This was said courteously enough, but so shrewdly quick had the friar drawn his sword that Robin had no time to draw his bow.

“But, good father, thou art much heavier than I, and I know not the path through the stream,” said Robin.

“So, belike, thou hast not the courage to return the good favor that I did thee,” chuckled the friar. “Busk thee now, for I desire not to wait longer.”

Whereupon Robin bent his stout back and took the friar upon it. He fairly groaned under the weight of the friar as he started across the stream. He did not know his way, and went slipping and stumbling over the stones in his path. Once he stepped into a hole that nearly threw them both into the water. The friar chuckled to himself and held tightly to Robin’s shoulder, urging him to bestir himself. Not a word did Robin say, either good or bad, but his breath was almost gone when he reached the opposite bank of the river.

“Now ’tis my time to thank thee, kind stranger,” quoth the friar, as he leaped from Robin’s back.

But Robin had whipped out his sword and held the friar at his mercy.

“Turn about didst thou say?” panted Robin, as he wiped the sweat from his brow. “Now carry me back, and that right speedily, or I will prick thee as full of holes as a sieve.”

“Beshrew me, but this is a jolly game, fair stranger,” said the friar calmly as he took Robin on his back again, and plunged knee-deep into the water.

On a sudden as they came to where the water was deepest the friar’s stout shoulders were lifted. Over his head went Robin and down into the water with a splash.

“Now choose thee, choose thee, my fine fellow, whether thou wilt sink or swim,” quoth the friar, and waded to the shore.

Robin splashed and sputtered about in the water, but at length got to his feet. When he had shaken all the water out of his eyes he saw that the friar was standing on the shore laughing.

Then did Robin become a right mad man. He took his long-bow and one of his best arrows, and let it fly at the friar. But the friar caught it on his buckler and laughed again.

“Shoot on, my fine fellow, shoot on,” he called out, “shoot as thou hast begun. I will not shun thy mark e’en though thou shoot a whole day through.”

Robin shot passing well until all his arrows were gone. But each arrow the friar caught on his buckler and was unharmed.

At length the friar called, “What sayest thou to sword play?”

Whereupon they took their swords and steel bucklers and fought with might and main. Well matched were they, and fierce and mighty was the battle. Many sharp blows were given, but none could pierce the steel coat the other wore. Neither had met so stout a fellow in many a day.

At last in a furious lunge Robin’s foot slipped and down he came on his knees before the friar. The friar took no advantage, however, but paused until Robin should get upon his feet.

“I see that thou knowest how to play fair,” quoth Robin, “and I beg a boon of thee.”

“Say on,” answered the friar.

“Give me leave to set my horn to my mouth and to blow three blasts.”

“Aye, marry, that will I do,” said the curtal friar, “blow as many blasts as thou dost wish.”

So Robin sounded three long blasts on his horn and half an hundred yeomen with bows bent came running o’er the lea.

“Whose men are these that come so hastily?” asked the friar.

“These men are mine, good friar,” answered Robin, “what is that to thee?”

“A boon I now crave,” said the curtal friar, “the like I gave to thee. Give me leave to set my fist to my mouth and to whistle three times thereupon.”

“That I will do,” said Robin, “for the same courtesy is due thee as thou gavest me.”

The friar set his fist to his mouth and whistled three long blasts. At the sound half an hundred dogs came running and bounding to the friar’s side.

“Here’s a dog for every man,” said the friar. Two dogs sprang at Robin, one before and one behind, and nearly tore his green mantle off his back.

Then followed a curious battle. The merry men shot their arrows at the dogs for they feared for the life of their master. But the dogs had been trained by the friar to dodge the arrows and to catch them in their mouths.



*The friar whistled three long blasts.*



“By ’r Lady, what witchcraft is this?” cried Little John. Then calling to the friar, he said, “Take up thy dogs.”

“Who art thou to command me?” asked the friar.

“I am Little John, Robin Hood’s man, and if thou wilt not take up thy dogs soon, then will I take up them and thee.”

“Robin Hood, sayest thou? Beshrew me, if thou speakest the truth then ’tis the famous outlaw with whom I have had bout today.”

“Aye, that thou hast. He hath come to seek Friar Tuck whose skill hath been much talked upon.”

“He hath not far to seek,” laughed the friar, “and he hath measured my strength more than once today.”

“By my faith and troth,” quoth Robin, “art thou Friar Tuck? I came seeking thee to ask thee to join our band of merry men. Come with thy dogs to the greenwood. We have need of such a holy man as thou to keep us from our evil ways. Wilt join our band?”

“Aye, that I will,” laughed Friar Tuck. “It would pleasure me greatly. Wouldst thou have me carry thee back over the stream once more, good master?”

“Nay,” said Robin, with a chuckle, “methinks I would fain be mine own steed.”

And so away went the merry band, the bigger and better for having the jolly Friar Tuck.



## ROBIN HOOD AND ALLAN A DALE

“What is thy name?” then said Robin Hood,  
“Come tell me without fail.”  
“By the faith of my body,” then said the young man,  
“My name it is Allan A Dale.”



NE day as Robin Hood stood in the forest under the greenwood tree he espied a brave young man singing a merry song in a merry voice. The fine young man was dressed in a suit of scarlet red and looked as fine as fine can be. In his hand was a small harp on which he played as he sang a joyous song.

“Methinks he is a strolling minstrel,” thought Robin, “and I will let him sing happily at peace.”

Just then Robin noticed how dark the sky was overhead, and hurried back to the camp where the rest of the merry men were waiting for the evening meal.

Now as it happened on the very next morning Robin Hood stood again among the leaves so gay. With him





*“Why shouldst thou water the earth in this fashion?”*



were brave Little John and Midge the miller's son. Soon a sorrowful sight met their gaze. On the ground was stretched the young singer of yesterday. Gone was his gay suit of scarlet red and his harp was hung on a nearby tree. He fetched forth sigh after sigh and tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Alack and well-a-day!" sighed he.

"What ho," quoth Little John, "why shouldst thou water the earth in this fashion?"

"Stand off, stand off," the young man said, "leave me to myself."

"Nay," answered Little John, "thou must come before our master straight. He stands under yon greenwood tree."

When the minstrel was brought before Robin Hood he was asked most courteously, as was his custom, "Oh, hast thou any money to spare for my merry men and me?"

"Nay, I have no money," said the young man, "save five shillings and a ring. This ring I have kept for seven long years to have it at my wedding."

"Canst not use it now?" asked Robin.

"Joyous was I yesterday for I thought to marry the maid, but my poor heart is slain today for I have found that she is taken from me and given to a rich old knight."

"What is thy name," said Robin Hood.

"My name is Allan a Dale," replied the young man.

"Well said," quoth Robin, "and my name is Robin Hood. What wilt thou give me in ready gold or fee if I help thee to thy true love again?"

“Alas, alack,” then quoth the young man, “I have no money, no gold nor fee. But I will swear upon a book that I will be thy true servant if thou wilt help me.”

“’Tis well,” said Robin, “I like a true friend better than a purse of gold. Where is this wedding to take place?”

“Not far,” answered Allan, “a matter of five little miles.”

“Then not a moment have we to lose,” quoth Robin, “take thou, Little John, a score or more of the merry band and haste thee away to the church. Give me thy harp, good Allan a Dale, and I will meet the wedding party first.”

They all strode off at a goodly gait, and hid themselves in the forest before the arrival of the wedding party. Ere long the wedding procession came slowly to the church. At the head of the procession rode the wealthy knight, very solemn and old. Then came the maid’s father, and behind him the beautiful bride on a white palfrey. She was grievously sad of countenance and looked not as a bride should.

Then did the Bishop espy Robin with the harp. “What hast thou here, I prithee, tell it me?”

“I am a harper bold,” quoth Robin Hood, though in truth not one note could he play, “and the best in all the North Countree.”

“Thou art welcome, more than welcome,” the Bishop then said. “And now do thou show thy skill ere we begin the ceremony.”

“Nay,” quoth bold Robin, “thou shalt have no music till the bride and groom I see.”

Whereupon Robin Hood waited until all had entered the church. Then he called out loudly, “This is no fit match, that one so old should wed with youth and beauty. Let the bride choose the one that she doth love.”

“Thou art mad,” said the bride’s father, “this is the man of her choice.”

“Nay, by my faith,” quoth Robin, “thy choice thou shouldst say.”

“Silence,” said the Bishop, “this is unseemly talk in church.”

Then Robin put his horn to his mouth and blew out blasts two or three. Soon some four and twenty bowmen stood in the door and windows with their arrows ready to shoot.

“Come forth, Allan a Dale,” called Robin Hood. Turning to the maid he said, “I hear say that this is thy true love. Dost thou still wish to wed with him?”

Fear of the wrath of her father was in her heart, yet she said bravely, “Yea, Allan a Dale doth hold my heart.”

“This shall not be,” said the Bishop, “the maid will marry the knight.”

“My word hath been given,” said the father, “and never shall she marry a poor minstrel.”

“The maid hath chosen,” quoth Robin Hood. “Marry her to Allan a Dale at once, Lord Bishop, or thou wilt rue the day.”

So the Bishop married the two, though he feared what

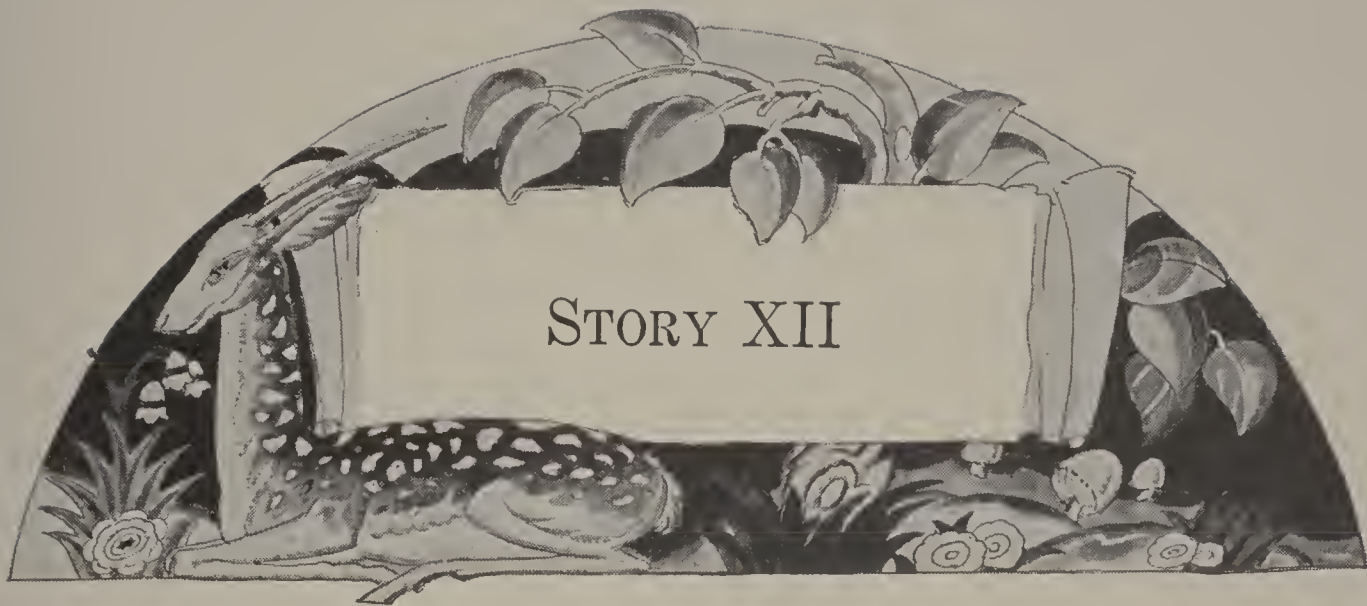
the old knight might do, and his voice trembled. But happy and fearless were Allan and his bride, and the merry men rejoiced with them.

As soon as the marriage was over, Robin said, "Get thee hence quickly to the greenwood with thy bride. We will hold the others at bay."

So the merry men held all those in the church at their mercy. Then when Allan and his bride were far away they ran from the place as swiftly as deer. A few of the more daring people started after them, but soon they were out of sight and ere long had reached the Sherwood Forest. Here they feasted and toasted the bride, and Allan sang for them more sweetly than he had ever done before.

And so Allan a Dale and his bride dwelt in the greenwood for many years.





## OF HOW ROBIN HOOD TURNED BUTCHER

Upon a time it chanced so  
    Bold Robin in forest did spy  
A jolly butcher, with a bonny fine mare,  
    With his flesh to the market did hie.



So great was the anger of the father of Alan's bride that for many a day the merry band lived very quietly in Sherwood Forest. They knew that he would not only be searching for the men himself, but that he would have set the Sheriff of Nottingham more against them than ever. But at length Robin Hood could stand it no longer, and one fine day he picked up his stout quarter-staff, and started out looking for adventure.

He had not gone far when he met a jolly young butcher. The butcher was going to the Fair, and his cart was filled with fresh meat.

“Good morrow, my good fellow,” quoth Robin, “methinks I would like thy company well. Where dost thou go with thy meat?”

“Forsooth, I am on my way to Nottingham to sell my flesh.”

“Now that is a jolly life,” cried Robin, “I would fain a butcher be. I prithee tell me the price of thy meat. Perchance I can make a bargain with thee. Will take five marks for thine whole outfit?”

“Aye, marry and may the saints be praised,” said the butcher, and jumped down from his cart hastily lest Robin change his mind.

No time was lost before the money for the bargain had exchanged hands, and the butcher dressed in Robin’s clothes went off down the road whistling a merry tune. Robin climbed up into the cart, and putting on the butcher’s cap and apron, drove off to Nottingham Town.

So boldly did Robin drive through the gates of the city, fearing neither the Sheriff nor any man. No sooner had he arrived in Nottingham Town than he looked about for the market place where the butchers had their stalls and there he spread his meat out for sale.

Now although Robin knew well how to bring down the deer with his arrow, yet he did not know how much such meat should sell for in the market. So in his ignorance he sold as much meat for a penny as the other butchers sold for three. It did not take long for the buyers to find this out, and soon Robin’s stall was crowded, while all the other butchers sold no meat at all.



Of course this did not please them, and they began to talk amongst themselves, saying, "Who can this new-comer be? He will ruin us, with his selling as much for one penny as we do for three."

"Then must we sell our meat more cheaply," suggested one.

"Nay, that would never do, for this must e'en be a prodigal fellow who has sold his father's land, and cares not how he wastes his money."

"Belike he hath stolen them and so can sell very cheap."

"What say that we become acquainted with him?" said he who was the leader of them all. So he stepped up to Robin and said smilingly,

"Come brother, we be all of one trade, and should be friends. Wilt thou dine with us today, for this is the butcher's feast day? On this day doth the Sheriff of Nottinghamshire invite us to dine with him in state. Stout is the fare, good friend, and methinks thou liketh such."

"Aye, that I do," quoth Robin, "I will dine with thee gladly, my brethren true, as fast as I can hie."

Thereupon selling his last meat, he went with them to the Sheriff's house. It was a merry jest to Robin, and he smiled to himself as he bowed low before the Sheriff.

"If the wicked old thing knew who I am my head would not be safe," thought jolly Robin.

But one of the butchers whispered to the Sheriff, "This is a right mad blade, and he doth spend his money like a prodigal. No common butcher is he."

So the Sheriff beckoned to Robin to sit on his right hand, and asked him to say grace. He did so. Then Robin called, "Eat and be merry and count not the cost. I will pay the shot, ere I go my way, e'en though it cost me five pounds or more."

The wily Sheriff said to himself, "Surely he is a prodigal, and is getting rid of his money as fast as he can. Methinks I might get some of it."

Aloud he said to Robin, "A merry blade art thou, and a merry jest thou didst play on the butchers this day, selling thy pennysworth of meat."

"I prithee, believe that I knew not how to sell for I am new at the trade, and scarce knew the value of the beasts," replied Robin.

"Hast thou many horn-beasts?" asked the Sheriff.

"Aye, hundreds have I, but not one have I been able to sell. There is also an hundred acres of good free land for which I have found no purchaser."

"Truly is he a spendthrift," thought the Sheriff, "perchance I can turn this to my advantage."

Aloud he said, "Money is scarce and times are hard, but I will give thee three hundred pounds for thy land and beasts."

Robin agreed at once and they shook hands on the bargain. The Sheriff was delighted to think how easily he was stripping this spendthrift.

"Shall we go at once to see the beasts and land?" asked Robin, "the day is not far spent."

"Aye," replied the Sheriff, "that doth pleasure me well."

I will bring the three hundred pounds and pay thee on the spot, so that I may have the beasts at once."

"On my faith," quoth Robin, "then I will make over the beasts as freely to you as ever my father did make them over to me."

So the Sheriff saddled a good horse, and away he went with bold Robin who rode the mare he had bought from the butcher. Straight toward Sherwood Forest they rode, and soon they were in the woodlands.

"I like not this way," said the Sheriff, "for it doth remind me of a man called Robin Hood. God save us this day from him."

"Beshrew me, if I fear what he can do to me," cried the butcher, "soon we will see the beasts."

They came a little further and on turning a bend in the road, a hundred good red deer they did see.

"How like you my horned beasts, good master Sheriff?" quoth Robin, "they be fair and fat to see."

The Sheriff reined in his horse, and gasped in wonder and alarm.

"I tell thee, good fellow, I would I were gone, for I like not thy company."

"Nay, be not hasty," said Robin, "I would have thee know my brethren for no doubt but they would like to learn of the bargain that thou hast made with me."

And without more ado Robin blew three blasts on his horn.

Shortly up the path through the trees came the whole company with Little John at their head.

“What is thy will, good master?” quoth Little John.

“Hast thou no eyes, my fine fellow,” asked Robin, “or dost thou not know his Excellency the Sheriff of Nottingham who is honoring us this day? He will dine with us today in Sherwood Forest.”

Then did the Sheriff know for sure that he was with Robin Hood and he became right fearful, for he remembered how much ill he had done Robin. Little John said very kindly,

“Thou art welcome. Come with me.”

So the Sheriff followed Little John, thinking, “Perhaps he hath forgotten the three hundred pounds.”

Robin said, “Well have I feasted this day with the Sheriff, and never shall it be said that Robin Hood doth not give as well as he doth take.”

Thereupon a royal feast was brought and the Sheriff urged to eat. Fearing what might happen next, for he knew not whether his life was safe, he could hardly swallow a mouthful. At length he arose, and said,

“Gramercy, good Robin Hood. I had not thought to find thee so gracious a host. But the hour waxes late and I would fain be on my way.”

“Not so hasty, Sheriff, thou didst have a bargain with me. Put down thy three hundred pounds.”

“Thou art a robber and a deceiver,” sputtered the Sheriff, “for the horned beasts were not thine.”

“Nay, thou hadst thought to get the better of me by thy greed. Put down thy gold, or thou wilt never return to Nottingham.”

Then Robin seized his cloak from off his back, and spread it on the ground. The Sheriff opened his pouch and let the gold fall on the cloak in a shining stream. Great was his sorrow at parting with his gold, but he knew that he richly deserved this treatment.

Then Robin brought him through the wood and set him on his dapple gray horse, and started him back to Nottingham Town, a sadder and wiser man.

And Robin went laughing away.





## HOW ROBIN HOOD DID FIGHT WITH GUY OF GISBOURNE

Let us leave off talking of Little John  
For he is bound to a tree,  
And talk of Guy and Robin Hood,  
In the greenwood where they be.

“I dwell by dale and down,” quoth Guy,  
“And I have done many a cursed turn;  
And he that calls me by my right name  
Calls me Guy of good Gisbourne.”

“My dwelling is in the wood,” says Robin,  
“By thee I set right nought;  
My name is Robin Hood of Barnesdale,  
A fellow thou hast long sought.”



THE Sheriff of Nottingham returned from the Sherwood Forest more wroth than ever at Robin Hood and his merry men. He longed to catch them, but knew not how, for they were more clever than he.

At length he bade his servants prepare a great feast, and invited all the barons and knights that lived in the surrounding country. When they had eaten and drunk their fill the Sheriff told them all his woe.

“Thou all doth know that no one is safe in the countryside if this terrible outlaw and his band are left to wander about. He doth disguise himself so easily that one is oft deceived. Much gold have I offered the King’s foresters, but they are in such awe of him that they lose color at the mention of his name. What knight of you will rally to mine aid?”

“In truth, Sir Sheriff,” quoth one knight, “the catching of an infamous outlaw is not the work for knightly hands. None would aid thee, save one who perchance lacked friends and gold, and cared naught for knightly honor.”

“Knowest thou of such an one, good knight?” asked the Sheriff.

“’Tis said that Sir Guy of Gisbourne is not above selling his services for gold, if the prize is great enough.”

No sooner had the guests departed than the Sheriff sent a messenger for this Sir Guy, asking him to come to Nottinghamshire. Now this Sir Guy of Gisbourne was feared and hated by every man, woman and child of his native town, for he was cruel and harsh and lacked the qualities of a true knight. The messenger had no trouble in finding him, and gave him the Sheriff’s message.

“Dost say five hundred pounds for the outlaw?” asked Sir Guy. “’Tis a goodly price for one man’s head. I will

go with thee at once. The head is mine for never have I failed."

Soon all was in readiness, and the messenger shook in his boots when he saw the knight. He was clad from head to foot in a horse's hide, dressed with the hair upon it. The ears of the horse's skin stuck up straight on the hood that covered his head. The mane and tail of the skin hung on his back, making him look more like a beast than a man. At his side hung a heavy broadsword and two daggers. Over his shoulder was slung a yew long-bow. Such, in truth, was this evil knight who was to destroy brave and kindly Robin Hood.

When Sir Guy arrived at Nottinghamshire he found that the Sheriff had gathered together an hundred or so of his own men and King's foresters. There were to be placed under the command of Sir Guy.

The Sheriff was well pleased when he saw the evil knight for he was sure that such a fierce-looking villain could make away with bold Robin. All plans were laid for the next morning. Sir Guy was not affrighted by the tales of Robin's prowess.

"I doubt that such skill is true, and I will meet him in single combat. Methinks the rogue hath made thee cowards by thy fears. A blast on this horn will I sound when he is dead. That will be before the sun doth set on the morrow."

At dawn the next morning Robin Hood was awakened by a bird singing over his head. He turned his head and saw that Little John had been awakened too.



“Good Little John,” quoth Robin, “a queer dream hath come to me this night. Two yeomen fought with me furiously. Then they took away my bows and arrows and bound me to a tree. Methinks I will now go and take revenge upon those two.”

“Nay, good master,” answered Little John, “dreams come and go swiftly, even as the wind over the hills.”

“Thou sayest true, best friend,” said Robin, “but perchance there is a reason for this dream. I go to seek those yeomen, for in the forest they may be.”

So saying, he leaped to his feet, and shouted to his comrades, “Busk thee, my merry men, and be ready for my call. Little John shall go with me.”

After a hearty breakfast all were ready, and soon the band strode through the greenwood quietly and in single file. Robin and Little John went one way and the band another under the leadership of Will Scarlet.

Ere long Robin caught sight of a tall figure not far ahead. Its body was covered with the hide of a horse, but by its side was a long sword and two daggers.

“By my faith,” quoth Robin, “seest thou this? Is it man or beast?”

“Do thou stand still, good master,” said Little John, “under this trusty tree. I will go to find out what this strange thing doth mean.”

“Ah, my good John,” quoth Robin Hood, “thou settest no store by me. Has it ever been my wont to send my men before, and tarry myself behind? I would break thy head if it were not that I might burst my bow.”

Little John was angry at these words, and turning on his heel, strode quickly toward the others, leaving Robin alone.

He had not gone far when shouting and cries came to his ears. As he drew nearer he beheld a mighty battle betwixt the outlaws and the Sheriff's men. His heart grew heavy as he saw that two of the band were lying slain. In the distance Will Scarlet was dashing over rocks and stones with the Sheriff and seven score men close upon him.

"I'll shoot one shot now," said Little John, "with all my might and main to strike the Sheriff ere he reaches Will Scarlet."

Whereupon he bent his great yew-bow with such force that it burst in twain and fell in pieces at his feet.

"Alas, thou wicked wood," sighed Little John, "that ere grew on a tree. Thou hast failed me when I needed thee most."

The arrow sped on its way, but failed its mark and struck William-a-Trent instead of the Sheriff. Will-a-Trent had always been a friend of the merry band, and Little John's heart was sad that he had caused his death. Soon a number of the Sheriff's men surrounded Little John and he was caught and bound quickly to a tree.

Then was the Sheriff overjoyed when he heard that Little John had been captured. He came to where Little John was bound and said, gloatingly, "Where is all thy strength now, sirrah? I will have thee drawn over hill and dale. Then I will hang thee on the highest hill."

“Thou mightest fail,” quoth Little John, “for there are yet many men in the greenwood.”

“What wouldst thou think if I told thee that even now thy Robin Hood is in the power of Sir Guy of Gisbourne?” asked the Sheriff.

Then was Little John sad indeed, for he remembered the creature in the woods and now knew him for this vile knight. He repented sorely of his anger toward his dear master in the morning.

In the meantime, as soon as Little John had left him, Robin Hood had gone straight up to the man in the queer horse-hide suit.

“Good morrow, good fellow,” quoth he.

“Good morrow, good fellow, to thee,” answered the other.

“Methinks by that bow thou bearest in thy hand that thou must be a good archer,” said Robin Hood.

“I have lost my way through the wood,” said the stranger.

“I will be thy guide, good fellow, and lead thee through the wood,” answered bold Robin. “Where dost thou wish to go?”

“I seek an outlaw,” quoth the stranger, “whom men call Robin Hood. Forty pounds would I give to meet with him this day.”

“Perchance I can lead thee to Robin Hood,” quoth Robin, “but first let us try each other’s skill with the bow, for we might haply meet this outlaw at any time.”

“Methinks that is a good plan, good fellow,” said the

stranger. Thereupon they cut a thin sapling that grew nearby and stuck it in the ground for a target.

“Lead on, good fellow,” quoth the stranger, “I prithee do thou shoot.”

“Nay,” answered Robin, “the leader shalt thou be.”

The first shot of the stranger missed the wand by a foot or more. Robin’s shot missed the wand by an inch. The second shot of the stranger went inside the garland at the top of the wand. Then Robin, as was his wont, let loose a shaft that split the wand in two.

“Blessings upon thee,” quoth the stranger, “thy shooting is good. If thy heart be as good as thy hand, then thou art better than Robin Hood. I prithee, tell me thy name, good fellow.”

“Nay, by my faith,” said Robin Hood, “’till thou hast told me thine.”

“I have dwelt in many places and have had many names. But my right name is Sir Guy of Gisbourne,” answered he.

“My dwelling is in this wood,” said Robin, “I am he whom thou seekest, Robin Hood.”

“What!” roared Sir Guy, “then defend thyself, thou weakling, for I have come to take thee alive or dead.”

Robin was on his guard, broadsword in hand. He faced Sir Guy, and with keen eyes, watched his chance.

Both knew that it would be a long, hard fought conflict, for they were well matched in skill and mettle. Sir Guy was fighting for a great prize, but Robin Hood was fighting for his life.

Two hours of the hot summer day passed, and they were still fighting. Never had such a battle been found in Sherwood Forest. Each man knew that no mercy would be shown and that one of them would die. There was no one to see that fair play was given, and Robin had to be doubly on his guard for a treacherous stroke from Sir Guy.

On a sudden Sir Guy gave a quick lunge at Robin Hood. Robin leaped back quickly, but caught his heel in a root of a tree, and fell heavily. Sir Guy sprang forward nimbly and gave him a thrust in the left side. It was a cowardly act. A true knight would have waited until his foe got to his feet.

“Ah, my dear Lady, give me aid,” muttered Robin Hood, “let not this cheat take my life before my day.” So saying, he leaped to his feet and with a sudden stroke drove his sword clean through Sir Guy’s body. Sir Guy’s sword dropped from his hand, and staggering backward he fell lifeless to the green sward.

Robin leaned panting and weary on his sword and looked down upon Sir Guy. “If thou hadst not been so great a traitor all thy life I would not have slain thee, for I like not to take life. Thou art the first I have slain since I fell afoul the law in my early youth. Mayhap I might be lying there if thou hadst fought fairly, as a knight should.”

So saying, Robin took off his suit of Lincoln green, and clad himself in the hairy garments of the dead man. His own he put upon Sir Guy.

“Now I will go to Barnesdale to see how my men do fare,” quoth Robin Hood.

Whereupon he blew upon Sir Guy’s horn so loud a blast that the Sheriff heard it where he awaited on the hill.

“Hearken all of ye,” quoth the Sheriff, “that brings us good tidings. Yonder Sir Guy’s horn doth blow telling that he hath slain Robin Hood. Aye, by my faith, and here comes the mighty knight himself, clad in his horsehide coat. Come hither, thou good Sir Guy. Ask of me what thou wilt.”

“Nay, I wish not for gold,” replied Robin, “and one boon only do I crave. Now that I have slain the master, let me strike down his knavish servant who is tied to yonder tree. I will have no other fee.”

“Thou art a madman,” said the Sheriff, “for not taking a knight’s fee.” But in his wicked heart he was glad not to pay out so large a sum, for it was more in his pocket. He granted Robin’s request, although he had thought to make sport of the hanging of Little John.

Now when Little John heard his master speak he knew that he would soon be free. Robin came as quickly as possible to cut Little John’s bonds, but the Sheriff and his men were close upon his heels.

“Standaback, standaback,” shouted Robin then, “why do you draw so near? Give me room to swing my quarter-staff.”

But the blow he gave was not with his quarter-staff but with his Irish knife, and he quickly cut the bonds

that held Little John. Then giving him Sir Guy's bows and arrows, he bade him look to himself. At the same instant Little John and Robin Hood turned about with bows bent.

When the Sheriff saw that Little John was free and that it was Robin Hood who stood before him, fear was in his heart. He clapped spurs to his horse and fled full fast toward Nottingham Town. All his company did likewise, for well they knew the deadly aim of Robin Hood and his band.

But before the Sheriff was quite out of sight Little John sped an arrow after him which wounded him in the shoulder. Whereupon the Sheriff rode into Nottingham Town with a broad arrow in his back, and vengeance in his heart.

Thereupon Little John turned to Robin Hood and said, "Ah, my master, forgive me for having left thee alone with thine enemy. I was cross and angry, but I should not have left thee as I did."

"Alas, good and tried friend, it is I that should beg forgiveness. For I spake unkindly and in haste," answered Robin.

Then the two embraced each other fondly, and strode together through the forest, where they found most of the merry band. Here the night was spent in feasting and tales of brave deeds.

Thus was the Sheriff of Nottingham again outwitted and he despaired of ever catching Robin Hood, the outlaw.



## HOW WILL STUTELY WAS RESCUED BY ROBIN HOOD

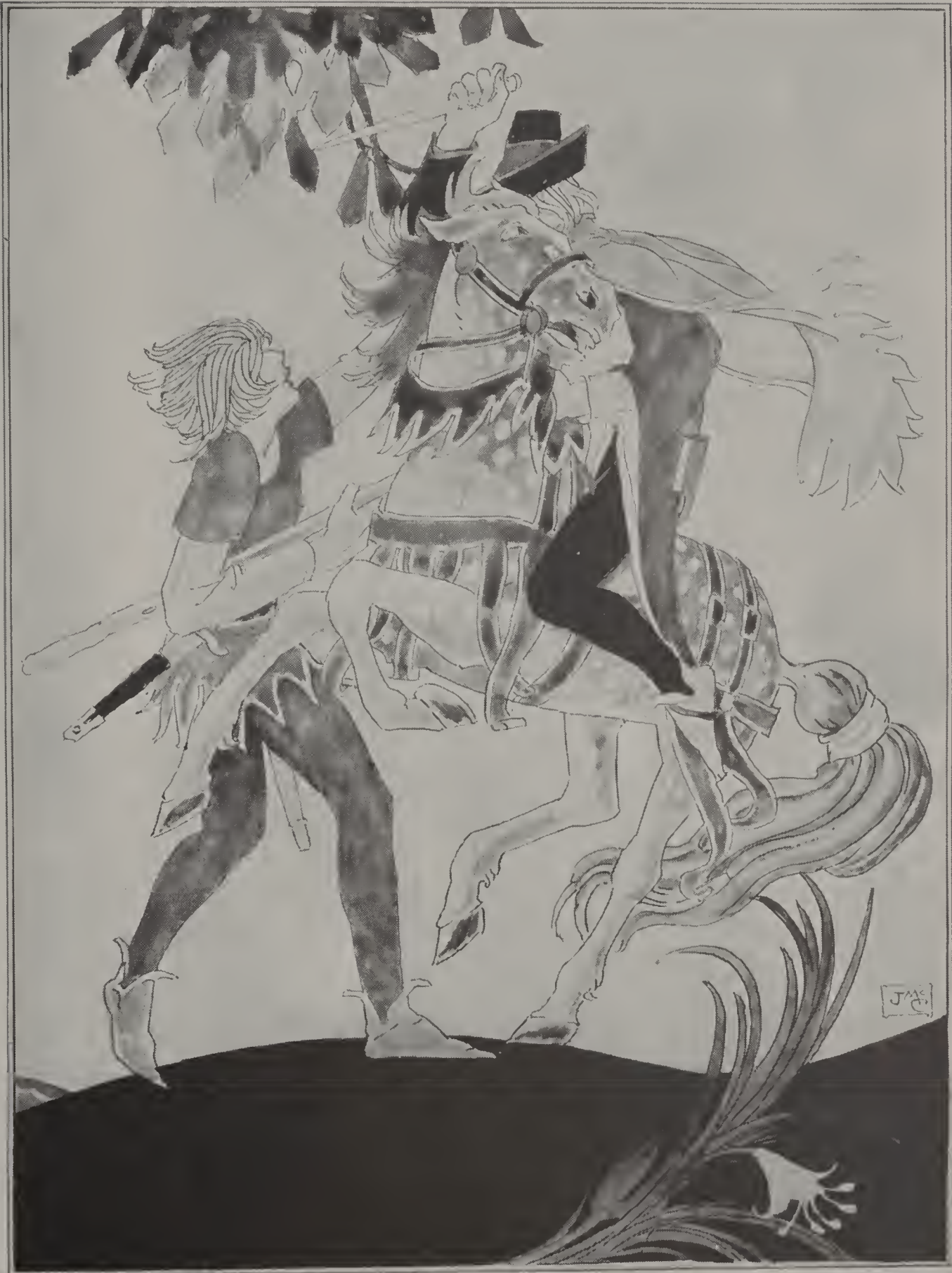
When Robin Hood in the greenwood lived,  
Derry derry down  
Under the greenwood tree,  
Tidings there came to him with speed,  
Tidings for certainty,  
Hey, down, derry derry down.

That Will Stutely surprised was,  
And eke in prison lay;  
Three varlets that the sheriff hired  
Did likely him betray.



IN the morning after the battle between Robin Hood and Sir Guy the merry band was very anxious because one of their comrades had not returned to the greenwood. This was Will Stutely, beloved by all.





*Will Stutely was surprised by the Sheriff's men.*



There were those who had seen him in conflict with the Sheriff's men. But they knew how fleet he was of foot, and thought that he had escaped.

"By my faith," quoth Robin Hood, "not one instant is to be lost before we find out where lieth good Will."

On the instant a messenger came with all speed, shouting, "Tidings, good Robin, ill tidings."

"Tell us at once thy tidings, good friend," said Robin.

"It is of Will Stutely who was surprised by three of the Sheriff's men and now lieth in prison in Nottingham Town. 'Tis said he will hang on the morrow, but methinks that the anger of the Sheriff will fain hasten him to the gallows."

Robin was sorely grieved over this news, and called his merry men to his side. They all swore a mighty oath that Will Stutely should be rescued, even though some of them died in the attempt.

Whereupon they all made ready to go to storm the prison in Nottingham Town. A gallant sight were they as the whole band stood in a row. All dressed in Lincoln green were they. Every man had a good broadsword at his side and a stout yew-bow at his back. Robin Hood was dressed in scarlet from top to toe, and made a brave show as he walked at the head of his band. Resolved were they to bring Will Stutely home, or every man to die.

When they came near the castle where Will Stutely lay, Robin said, "I hold it good that we stay here in ambush and send one forth some news to hear. I prithee,

young David of Doncaster, go thou to the ancient Palmer that doth stand beside the castle wall. Perchance he can give thee news of Will Stutely."

With that out stepped the brave young man and spake thus to the old man,

"I pray thee, Palmer old, tell me if thou dost rightly know, when must Will Stutely die? He is one of bold Robin Hood's men that now lies a prisoner in the castle."

"Alack, alas," the Palmer said, "woe is me that I must say the words. Will Stutely must be hanged this day on yonder gallows tree. If only his noble master had known he would have sent someone to take him away from such a death."

"Aye, that is true," quoth young David then, "they would most truly set him free if they were near this place. But fare thee well, thou good old man, and thanks to thee. If Stutely be hanged this day, then he will be revenged."

No sooner had he spoken than the castle gates were opened wide, and out came Will Stutely with his hands bound, and guards on every side. He looked about him to see if there was any help for him. Then he spake to the Sheriff gallantly,

"Grant me one boon now that I see that I must die. My noble master has never had a man that was hanged to a tree. Give me, I prithee, a sword in my hand, and let me be unbound. I will then fight with thee or thy men till I lie dead upon the ground."

But the Sheriff would not grant his desire, for he had

sworn that the outlaw should be hanged and not be treated as a brave man.

“Do but unbind my hands,” implored Will, “and I will ask for no weapon.”

“Nay,” said the Sheriff, “thou shalt die on the gallows, and so shall thy master too, if he comes into my power.”

“Thou coward,” cried Will Stutely with scorn, “thou faint-hearted peasant slave! If ever my master do thee meet thou shalt be treated as I have been.” Then growing still bolder he said, “My noble master scorneth such as thee and thy cowardly crew, who will not fight me for my life. Pah! what care I for thee. I defy thee to do thy worst!”

Not another word did the Sheriff speak, but motioned the guard to take Will to the gallows. On a sudden Will saw someone he knew. Out of the bushes leaped Little John saying,

“I pray thee, Will, before thou diest take leave of all thy dear friends.” Then turning to the soldier who guarded Will, he said, “I must needs borrow him awhile. How say you, good Sheriff?”

“Now, as I live,” shouted the Sheriff in anger, “methinks I know that varlet. Seize him and do not let him go.”

But Little John quickly cut away Will Stutely’s bands. Then he snatched a sword away from one of the Sheriff’s men, saying, “Here, Will, take thou this, and defend thyself awhile. Aid will come to thee straightway.”

Thereupon they turned back to back in the middle of the guards, and kept the guards at bay.

Soon the cry, "Robin Hood approacheth near with many an archer gay," came to the Sheriff's ears.

"Make haste, make haste," the Sheriff cried in a trembling voice to his men, "we are undone, and our lives will not be worth anything if we are caught by this outlaw band."

So the Sheriff left in all haste, and his doughty men with him.

"Oh, stay," called Will Stutely, "take leave of us ere thou depart. Here is bold Robin Hood now that thou wouldst fain have hung."

Then turning to Robin he quoth, "Little did I think when I came here that I would ever see thy face again. Gramercy, good master, to thee and all my good comrades."

So it was that Will Stutely was set at liberty and brought safe from his foe. Happily did he march back with the merry band to the greenwood, little the worse for his adventure. But not so happy was the Sheriff for he had boasted far and wide of the hanging of the outlaw.



## OF HOW ROBIN HOOD DID SERVE QUEEN KATHERINE

“If that I live a year to an end,”  
Thus did Queen Katherine say,  
“Bold Robin Hood, I will be thy friend,  
And all thy yeomen gay.”



NOW it so befell that the good Queen Katherine made a wager with the King that there were archers in the countryside that had more skill with the bow than his. The King took up her wager speedily, for he was proud of his yeomen, and was sure that no others shot with the prowess that his could show.

“Thou canst have thy choice of the flower of archery from all England. But even when thou hast chosen the best the wager will go to me,” quoth the King.

“Nay, methinks thou dost speak hastily. An thou dost give me thy pledge, my liege lord, that all who come to thy archery may come and go as they please, I will bring together such skill as thou hast never seen,” answered the Queen.

The King gave his honest word that all should come and go in safety, and Queen Katherine hurried to her rooms. She called her favorite page to her and said,

“The fame of Robin Hood and his men hath come more than once to mine ears, and I would fain see this bold outlaw. Prepare thyself for a journey to Sherwood Forest.”

Nothing loth, the page, Dick Patrington by name, betook himself with all haste to the Sherwood Forest.

His way lay past the Blue Boar Inn, and being thirsty after his ride through the heat of the day, he alighted from his horse and entered. He called for a bottle of wine, and said to several archers who were near him,

“A toast, say I, to good Queen Katherine, and to the reward of my search.”

A tall yeoman stood beside the page and said, “Gladly will I drink to the health of good Queen Katherine, but I must know more of thy quest. Tell me, sweet page, what is thy business and cause so far in the north country?”

“I mean no harm, good archer, but I have a message from our Queen for Robin Hood. She hath bid me inquire of one good yeoman or another until I find him. Canst take me to him?”



“Aye, marry, that I can for I am Little John. But thou must first tell me thy errand with Robin Hood.”

“The Queen would have him come to London Town and she will guard him from all harm. No more will I tell until I see Robin himself,” answered the page.

“Mount thy fair steed, young page, and I will show thee Robin Hood and all his yeomen gay,” replied Little John.

They set out at once and soon were come to the greensward where the merry men were seated or lying about.

“What is this that Little John hath brought us?” cried one of the men. For the page was dressed in velvets of bright colors, and had jewels on his hands.

Robin Hood came forward from his place and Little John said to the page, “There is he whom thou wishest to see.”

Straightway Dick Patrington fell on his knees before Robin Hood and said,

“Queen Katherine doth greet thee well by me. She hath heard of thy skill at archery and would fain witness thy prowess. Not long since hath King Henry proclaimed a shooting-match and he doth wager that his archers are the best in the countryside. Queen Katherine would not have it so. She hath faith in thy skill and bids thee be present as her own yeoman, thou and two others of thy band.”

“That would pleasure me greatly,” quoth Robin Hood, “but knowest thou not that I am an outlaw and a price is on my head?”

“Aye, verily, ’tis well known, but the Queen hath sent thee this ring from off her fair hand as a sign of thy safety. She bids thee post to fair London court without fear.”

Robin Hood took the ring from the page, and kissing it placed it on his hand. Then he said, “Gladly will I do the bidding of the Queen, and this ring will never part from me.”

Whereupon he called together the merry band and said, “Our good Queen Katherine doth desire three archers from our band to uphold her wager. Methinks I will take Little John and Will Scarlet with me to show their skill, and Allan a Dale to charm the Queen with his sweet music. Busk thee now, and prepare food for our friend Dick, while we do array ourselves for the journey.”

So Little John, Will Scarlet and Allan a Dale ran, full of gladness, to make themselves ready. They were pleased that they had been chosen to go with Robin.

Anon they came forth, all ready to start. The three were dressed in Lincoln green with black hats and white feathers. But Robin was in scarlet from his head to his feet. Each had a fine horse upon which to ride, and they rode off in state to London Town with young Dick Pat-rington.

Meanwhile, Queen Katherine sat in her royal chamber awaiting the arrival of her page. Her ladies were all about her chatting and laughing and not a few were in a trembling state when they thought of the famous out-law who was soon to be in their midst.



*So Allan sang before the Queen.*



At length word came to her that Dick Patrington had arrived and that he awaited her in the court below. She bade him be brought to her.

When she saw his companions the Queen received him joyously. Robin Hood fell down on his knee before her.

“Thou art welcome, Locksley, and all thy worthy yeomen,” quoth the Queen. “Thy great skill is known to me, and I am laying a great wager on that skill. But I fear not that thou wilt win the prize.”

“We are thy true servants, good my Queen,” said Robin, “and we have come to do thy bidding.”

Then the Queen smiled happily, and bade him arise and to rest himself from the long journey. Soon rich food was brought to them, and they ate their fill. Whereupon there followed a jolly hour or so in which Robin told the Queen and her ladies many of their merry adventures. They laughed again and again at these tales. At length the Queen said,

“I hear that we have a goodly minstrel with us here. I prithee, sing to us, fair Allan a Dale, for thy fame hath reached here in London Town, and 'tis many a day since I have heard good music.”

So Allan sang before the Queen, and all marvelled at his skill with the harp.

The day of the shooting-match dawned bright and clear.

Finsbury Field, where the match was to be held, was a gay sight with banners flying and many booths of gaily colored canvas. The archery range was in the center.

On each side of it were rows and rows of seats for the barons and knights and their ladies. The thrones of the King and Queen were placed on a high dais so that they could easily see all that went on about them.

Some twenty renowned archers were getting their bows in readiness for they all wished to gain the great prizes of three hundred tuns of Rhenish wine, three hundred tuns of beer, and three hundred of the King's fatted deer.

Soon the King and Queen came upon the field amid the shouting of the people and the blowing of silver trumpets. They seated themselves and then the King looked about for his archers. They lined up in front of him in goodly array, and right proud was he of them.

Then it was that Queen Katherine asked, "Thinkest thou that these are the very best archers in all England?"

"Aye, marry, in all the world say I," answered the King.

"Methinks I do know of three archers that can beat them at their best," said the Queen with a smile.

"Sayest thou so?" asked the King. "Then bring them forth, if thou canst."

"In sooth I will, my liege lord, if thou wilt again give me thy promise that all who come shall be unharmed," said the Queen.

"Thy wish shall be my law," quoth the King. "Bring forth what archer thou wishest and he may come and go freely for forty days. Furthermore, if these archers of thine should best my archers I will give them special

prizes to boot. With thee I will make a wager of a silver bugle and a gold-tipped arrow."

"Good my lord," laughed the Queen, "I take thy wager." Then turning to the others present he said, "Who among ye noble knights will share the wager of the Queen?"

But none were hardy enough to risk the loss of their money, for they all had great faith in the skill of the King's archers.

Then the Queen sent her page to bid Robin approach. Soon he was seen walking across to the Royal box with Little John and Will Scarlet. All three doffed their caps and knelt before the King and Queen.

The Queen leaned forward and spake in a sweet clear voice, "As thou knowest, Locksley, I have made a wager with the King that thou and thy two yeomen can outshoot any three of his men. My faith is with thee."

"We will not fail thee, your Majesty," answered Robin Hood.

Just as he finished speaking it so happened that the Sheriff of Nottingham passed by. When he saw Robin Hood and Little John he stopped in his tracks and could not believe his eyes. Not remembering the reverence due the King he shouted out, "My liege lord, knowest thou this fellow? 'Tis Robin Hood, the wicked outlaw, who stands there. How came he here?"

"Is this thing true?" asked the King as he turned to the Queen angrily.

"Aye, 'tis true," replied the Queen, with a smile, "but

forget not thy pledge that these men should go free for forty days.”

“And keep my promise I will,” quoth the King, “but woe betide them when this time is over. Let them look well to themselves, for I will make no such promise again.”

Calling his archers to him he said,

“My word hath been given, good fellows, that thou wilt show thy skill against these archers three. If thou wilt outdo them then extra silver will be thine. If not, then thou wilt lose thy prizes to these knaves. Never wilt thou regret this day if thou canst win.”

The King’s archers, who like many others knew of Robin’s skill, promised to do their best.

Excitement reigned on Finsbury Field as the Queen’s wager with the King became known. Great was the excitement, too, over the fact that Robin Hood was at the shooting-match. All wanted to see the famous outlaw use his great long-bow.

New targets were placed. Six willow wands covered the center of every target. Only the most skillful could touch such a target from a distance.

Robin Hood motioned the King’s archers to try their skill first. Tepus, the King’s best archer, shot well. His six arrows all hung on the target. Next Gilbert shot, and one of his shafts hit the center ring. Loud were the cheers that went up. The next archer, Clifton, missed the target. Will Scarlet shot, but so nervous was his hand that he missed the mark.



Then it was Little John's turn. He stepped forward with his seven-foot bow, and shot one arrow after the other so fast that it looked as if they had all been loosed with one pull of the string.

His shots all reached the target, and since he knew that another round would be shot he did not wish to do better than the others. No cheering was heard for him, nor none for Robin as he stepped forward with his great long-bow. He took his best shaft from his quiver and fitted it into his bow. Then with a smile at the Queen he sped his arrow swiftly into the very center of the target.

Still the people did not cheer. Little John urged Robin to shoot again or it might seem to be but a chance shot. But Robin shook his head.

Again the archers shot in turn, each taking more careful aim than before. Tepus and Gilbert both lodged their shafts in the center the same as Robin had done. The people were wild with delight because now their archers had shot as well as Robin. Little John shot again, but failed to beat the King's men. All were breathing more freely for they felt that the Queen had lost her wager, and that the King's archers would win.

But Robin had not yet had his final shot. He had promised the Queen to win for her, and he could do naught but her bidding. Never yet had he failed his comrades or those that had faith in him, and he was not going to do so now.

He raised his bow, and drew the string to the ex-

treme length of the shaft. He held it there steadily and quickly let it speed on its way to the target. The arrow split the wand in two and pierced the center of the target. Then before anyone could think he had sped another arrow and had split his own arrow that was in the center of the target. Again, for a third time, he sped an arrow and the second shaft was split in twain.

Never had such skill been shown on Finsbury Field and the crowds rushed up to gaze at the broken shafts. It would be something to talk of for many a day.

Robin hung his bow over his shoulder and walked quickly to the Queen. Little John and Will Scarlet followed. As Robin knelt before the Queen, the King spake not a word, but rose from his seat in anger and left the Field.

“Gramercy, good Robin, for thy fine display. Thou hast won the prizes for thyself and thy yeomen. Thou hast shot worthily, and hath shown me that I made no mistake in choosing thee for mine archers. Where wilt thou have the prizes sent?”

“Nay, kind and fair Queen, give, I prithee, the prizes to good Tepus and Gilbert who would have won the prizes had we not been there. We have no need of wine nor deer. But if thou wouldst give to Little John and me the silver bugle and the gold-tipped arrow then would we have a remembrance of thee and our visit this day.”

“It shall be as thou dost desire, good Robin,” quoth the Queen. “But I am anxious that thou leave the city at once. The King will hold to his promise, but he is

deeply angered, and I like not to think of what might happen to thee if some treacherous one might harm thee, thinking to please him. Go at once, and tarry not, I prithee. I will send my page, Dick Patrington, to guide thee from the city.”

So the yeomen bade the good Queen Katherine farewell, and hurriedly followed the young page through the crowds of the city. And thus ended the famous shooting match before Queen Katherine.





OF HOW KING HENRY DID CHASE ROBIN HOOD,  
BUT CAUGHT HIM NOT

And when the game it ended was,  
Bold Robin won it with a grace,  
But after, the king was angry with him,  
And vowed he would him chase.

What though his pardon granted was  
While he with them did stay,  
But yet the king was vexed with him  
When as he was gone away.



REAT was the wrath of the King as he left the shooting-match where his famous archers were defeated. He went to the royal chambers and nursed his anger. He was sorry now that he had given his promise

to the Queen. Taking the Sheriff of Nottingham aside he said,

“I can now see why thou hast been at thy wits’ end to capture this sly outlaw. If I had not given my promise to the Queen we could even now have him in our hands.”

“Women know nothing of affairs of state, my liege lord,” replied the cunning Sheriff. “It would be to the good of the whole countryside to capture this sly fox. Give me leave to try once more.”

“Say no more,” quoth the King, “and see that the Queen knows nothing of thy plans. I will not bid thee go or stay.”

Now young Dick Patrington was nearby and heard the talk between the King and the Sheriff. He went at once to the Queen. She was sorely vexed and sorrowful when she heard these things. But she sent young Dick after the outlaws to warn them of their peril.

Little John was awakened by the galloping of the horse’s feet and he called the other three.

“Methinks we are pursued from the sound of furious riding that I hear,” said he.

Soon Dick came into sight.

“Ah, good Dick, hath the Queen further need of us?” asked Robin.

“Nay,” answered Dick, “but the wicked Sheriff hath persuaded the King to follow thee and to hang thee all to the nearest tree. I have come at the Queen’s bidding to warn thee of this treachery.”

“Our thanks to thee and to her Majesty. She need

not fear for us now since we will be on our guard," quoth Robin Hood.

"'Twere better that we scatter and leave the highway," said Robin. "Perchance it would be even better to go by foot on the little by-paths through the woods."

Little John did not wish to leave Robin Hood, but he told him he must go. So they parted company, and all three galloped off in different directions.

Robin went forward cautiously on foot, leading his horse until he could find a buyer. Many times he stopped to listen, but he could hear nothing of the Sheriff's men. At length he came to a sparkling little stream. Tying his horse to a nearby tree he knelt down, making a cup of his hands. As he was drinking something flew past his ear and fell in the water beside him. It was a gray goose shaft. Quick as a wink Robin leaped to his feet, untied his horse and was away. But the Sheriff's men were after him. Many were the shafts that were sent but all, good luck for Robin, missed their mark.

Now Robin knew every path in the woods so ere long he had outwitted his pursuers. But it was some time before he felt that he could dismount and get his breath.

"By my faith, stout Robin," he said to himself, "that was a narrow escape. Perchance I would do well to get rid of this bright suit which doth attract the eye."

Soon he espied a lowly milkman trotting along by the side of his old mule. Two long milk-cans were slung over the mule's back. The milkman wore a long black robe and on his head a queer fur hood.



*As he was drinking, something flew past his ear.*





“None would know me in this,” chuckled Robin to himself.

“Heighho, good milkman,” quoth he, “what say to a fair exchange? I will give thee my fine horse with his trappings for thy mule. And also my suit of red for thy suit of black.”

The milkman lost no time in making the exchange, for he knew that he was getting the better of the bargain. Then they parted, both well content.

No sooner had the milkman been lost to sight than a company of mounted men came riding up. They were the Sheriff’s men. One turned aside and asked Robin if he had seen four mounted archers pass along the road.

“Dost mean the three in green and one in red?” asked Robin.

“Aye, those were the four.”

“Thou art on the right road for they went straight ahead,” answered Robin.

So away galloped the men up the road.

Robin knew that the men-at-arms would return when they found no archers, so he quickly gave the milk-cans to an old woman standing near, and leaped on the old mule’s back. Although he could not make great speed, yet he was long on his way before the Sheriff and his men returned.

Great was the anger of the Sheriff when he realized that Robin had befooled him again. He saw the milk-cans and found out from the old woman which way Robin had ridden.

Now the Sheriff knew that the Fountain Abbey lay in that direction, so they all galloped off after bold Robin.

In the meantime, Robin had reached the Fountain Abbey and had been received by the good friar there. He had eaten a hearty meal and felt ready to go on.

“No longer must I tarry, good friar,” quoth he. “If thou wilt get for me a palmer’s habit to wear instead of this ragged robe I will thank thee greatly. My mule I will leave thee, for he is not a speedy beast and doth hinder my progress.”

So saying he strode off into the woods.

Some hours later the Sheriff and his men rode up to the gates of the Abbey. They were much elated when they saw the old mule for they were sure that they had caught their prey.

The good friar let them enter the Abbey and gave them meat and drink, but naught did they find that showed that any stranger had been there.

“Hast seen no one this night?” asked the Sheriff.

“Naught but an old palmer,” answered the friar.

“Methinks the sly fox hath changed his garb again,” said the Sheriff.

Now the last thing that Robin wished was to bring the Sheriff and his men to Sherwood Forest. Not that he feared for his men, for they could hold their own against any men-at-arms. But he feared lest the King might be with the Sheriff and he did not wish him to be injured. So he did his best to keep them away from the Forest.

At length he came to Emmet Priory and asked for his good friend Friar William. Friar William was most happy to see his old friend, but was saddened by the news that he was being pursued.

“Thou must need change thy disguise once more, for thine enemies may be near. I will dress thee in a monk’s cowl and hood, and then we two will go together on the highway,” said the good Friar William.

They soon heard the clatter of hoofs on the highway, and each seizing a staff strode out past the horsemen that came riding through the gate.

“Thou dost make a better friar than I, Robin,” laughed the friar as they parted company, the friar to return to the Abbey, and Robin Hood to journey on his way.

The good Prior of the Abbey invited the Sheriff and his men to come into the Abbey and rest. They were nothing loth to do so, and it was many hours before they were again on their way.

Meanwhile Robin Hood had made up his mind that the safest plan was to return to London Town to see the Queen. He joined a company of priests that were going there and reached London in safety.

When there he hied himself at once to the Queen, and falling down on his knees before her said, “An it please your Grace, I am come to this place to speak with King Henry.”

Queen Katherine answered bold Robin then. “The King has gone to merry Sherwood to seek Robin Hood, so he said.”

“Then fare thee well, my gracious Queen, for I will go at once to Sherwood. I would fain know what his Grace would have with me, when we do meet.”

But when King Henry did come home, full weary and vexed in mind, he had not seen Robin Hood.

“Welcome home, my sovereign liege,” cried Queen Katherine. “Bold Robin Hood, the good archer, hath been here seeking thee.”

Then King Henry did laugh and say, “He is a cunning knave. I have sought him these whole three weeks.”

“A boon, a boon, I beg of your Grace,” quoth Queen Katherine then, “pardon his life and seek no more to capture him.”

“Thou pleadeth well, my Katherine, and he shall have a pardon. I like so bold a heart,” answered the King. And so endeth Robin Hood’s chase.





OF HOW GOOD KING RICHARD OF THE LION HEART  
CAME TO SHERWOOD FOREST

King Richard hearing of the pranks  
Of Robin Hood and his men,  
He much admir'd, and more desir'd,  
To see both him and them.



ANY years had passed since Robin served the good Queen Katherine. King Henry had died and King Richard of the Lion Heart had become King. He had come from many stirring adventures in the Holy Land, and was ever fond of those who had courage and bravery.

The Sheriff of Nottingham wasted no time in telling him of the famous outlaws who were still robbing the

rich to pay the poor, and who still killed the King's deer.

"I would see these famous outlaws face to face," quoth King Richard, much to the Sheriff's surprise.

The Sheriff tried to warn him of the danger of the Forest, but the King was like Robin Hood in that he delighted in roaming about in disguise, and finding his adventure single-handed.

So it was not long after the King came to Nottingham Town that he arranged to visit Sherwood. He arrayed himself in an abbot's robe, and six of his knights went as monks.

They had not ridden far into the deep Forest until they came upon Robin Hood. He sprang forward and seized the bridle of the King's horse and said:

"Sir Abbot, abide with us awhile. We be but poor yeomen who dwell in the Forest and must needs kill the King's deer for food, for we have no other way to live. While thou hast, I'll wager, much gold from thy many lands and churches. Give us some of thy moneys for sweet charity's sake."

"Little enough have I with me this day, some fifty pounds or so," answered the Abbot, "but that I give to thee."

Robin Hood took the money and divided it into equal parts, giving half to his men. Then he returned the other half to the Abbot, saying, "So courteous hast thou been that I will not take thy all."

"Thou art a courteous outlaw thyself. Such has not been said of thee. We be messengers of the good King

Richard, who sends thee his greetings. He is not far from here and hopes to speak with thee."

"God save the King," cried Robin Hood and bent his knee to the ground. "I love him well, and thou art welcome since thou hast come from him."

"'Tis said that thou art disloyal to the King, but this would not seem so," said the Abbot.

"Nay, he who says that liest in his heart," replied Robin. "But come, taste of our greenwood cheer."

Robin took the King's horse by the head and led him to the tent.

"I would not treat thee so kindly if thou hadst not come from the King, for I care not much for the clergy," quoth Robin.

At once he set his horn to his mouth, and a loud blast did he blow. One hundred and ten of Robin's men came marching in a row. Each man bent his knee before Robin.

"By my faith, 'tis a gallant sight to see. Would that all my men came to my bidding as do these merry men of the greenwood," said the King to himself.

Orders were given and soon a marvelous feast was spread before them all. Venison and fowls were plentiful and there was fish from the river nearby. At last King Richard swore that never on land or sea had he ever feasted better.

Then Robin took a can of ale and said, "Come, let us now begin. Come, every man shall have his can to drink a health unto the King."

The King himself drank to the King, and all the merry men drank to the health of good King Richard.

“Perchance thou wouldst like to see the life we lead before thou must go back to Nottingham Town,” quoth Robin. “Bend all thy bows,” he called to the merry band, “and show such sport as thou wouldst before the gracious King himself.”

The King watched the men warily at first, thinking they might prove traitors, but he soon saw that there was no treachery. It was for target practice that the long-bows were drawn.

“Now let us see what thou canst do,” quoth Robin. “Whoever fails to shoot through yon target shall give his arrows as forfeit. Aye, verily, he shall also get a good buffet on the head from his master.”

They showed such brave archery, by cleaving sticks and wands that the King was moved to say, “Such men as they live not in many lands.”

But there were those who missed and Robin smote them sorely on the head, for he wanted them all to be the best archers in the land. Little John and Will Scarlet split the wand, and so did Robin Hood and Gilbert the Cook. But at the last shot Robin missed the mark an inch or more.

Whereupon a great roar went up for seldom had they seen their master miss the mark.

Then Will Scarlet spake, “Where are thy arrows, good master, for they are forfeit? Also stand forth and take thy good buffet.”



“Aye, a law holds good both ways,” laughed Robin. “I prithee, Sir Abbot, do thou give me a buffet with thy strong arm.”

“’Tis not my habit to cuff good yeomen,” replied the King. “I would not like to do thee harm. Let some other do it.”

“Nay,” quoth Robin, “I would that thou shouldst buffet me. Smite boldly without fear.”

“So shall it be,” replied the King.

Then he rolled up his sleeves showing such a forearm as to make the yeomen stare. Robin stood firmly with his feet wide apart and waited, for he was sure that no fat abbot could knock him down. The next instant he found himself prone on the grass with his head swimming. He stood on his feet slowly and rubbed his sore head.

“By my faith, thou art the stoutest churchman I have ever known. Never have I been so smitten. Who but King Richard could have such an arm of might.”

Thereupon he looked more closely at the Abbot and saw that it was in very truth the King. He fell again to his knees, and said, “Thy pardon, my liege lord, for me and my merry men. We would gladly be in thy service, true servants evermore.”

“Stand up again,” then said the King, “I’ll thee thy pardon give on the one condition that thou and thy whole company will come to the court and ever dwell there close to me.”

So the next day they all went to London Town with

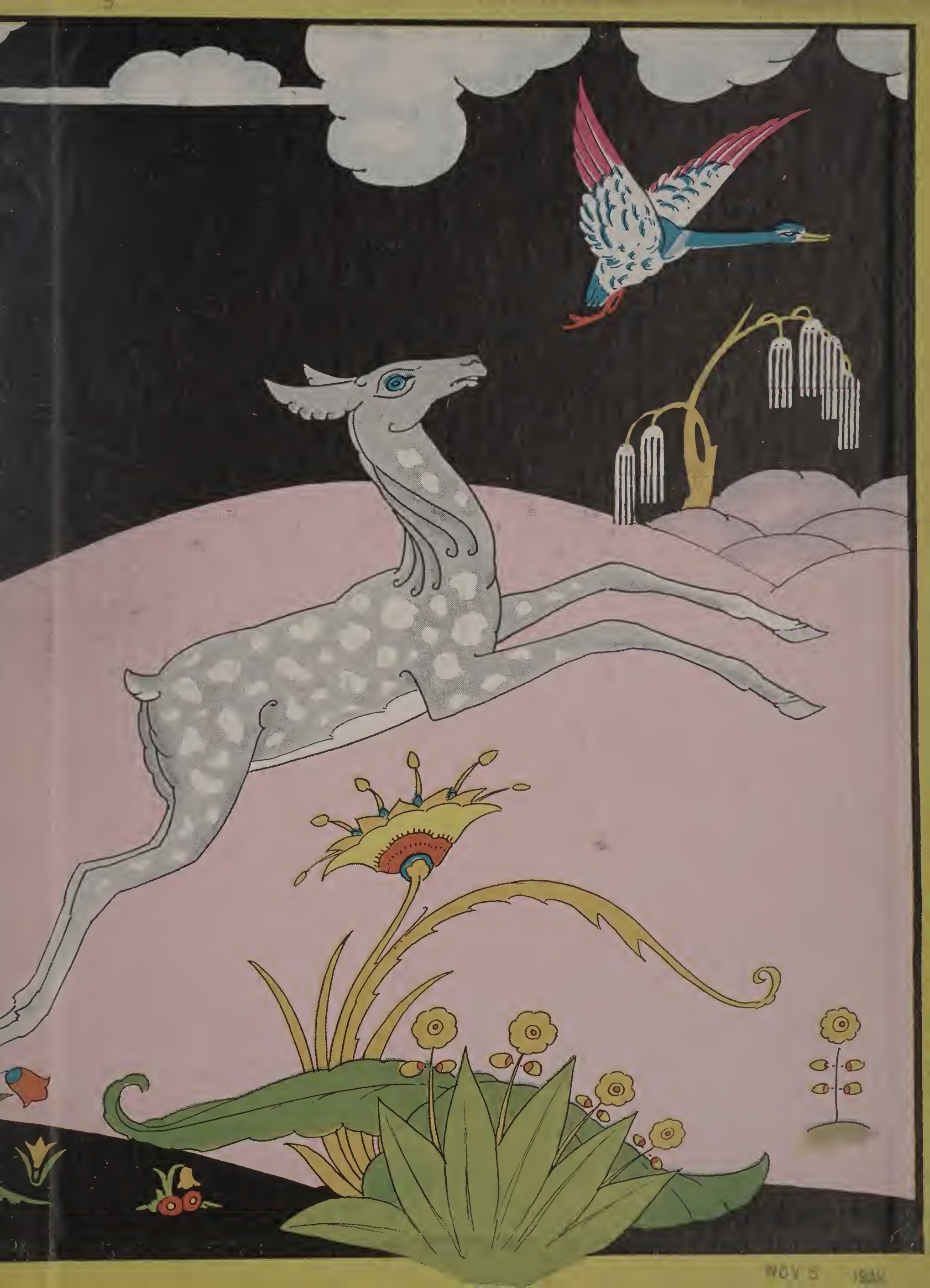
the King, each swearing that they would come often to the Sherwood Forest. But it was many a year before most of them saw the Forest again, for the good King Richard's journeys carried him into many lands.

They are all gone to London Court,  
Robin Hood with all his train;  
He once was there a noble peer,  
And now he's there again.









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