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THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES
OF
ROBIN HOOD.



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NEW AND REVISED EDITION

OF

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OF
ROBIN HOOD.



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THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF

ROBIN HOOD.

OUR hero was born in Nottinghamshire, where the family had a large mansion. His father, the Earl of Huntingdon, was head ranger of the north of England; his mother was of a noble family, being the daughter of Richard, Earl of Warwick, and was related to a great many respectable families; among which was the uncle of our hero, Squire Gamewell, of Gamewell Hall, in Yorkshire, and considered a very noted sportsman.

When our hero had attained his fourteenth year, he was sent by his mother on a visit to Gamewell Hall. His uncle, who had no children, wishing to do honour to his nephew, invited the neighbouring sportsmen to his house; and they were not a little surprised to find that this youth could draw the long bow, and engaged in the boar and stag hunts with the greatest intrepidity. Old Gamewell, proud of his nephew, found no difficulty in persuading him to fix his residence with him, with an assurance at his death to succeed to his estates. These preliminaries settled, our hero next made choice of a companion in the person of Little John, a servant of his uncle's, and one who was considered the best sportsman in the whole country.

These two companions seldom quitted each other; the sports of the field formed their only amusement; and for many years they lived a life devoid of care, anxiety, or sorrow.

Robin had gone to pay his father a visit, when the Squire being suddenly taken ill, a messenger was despatched to hasten him home; but the dangerous state of his mother's health prevented him from leaving her till a late hour on the following day. In the meantime, the Squire finding himself dying, sent for a monk, in order that he might make his peace with Heaven, and who prevailed on the dying man to sign a deed, conveying all he had to the church, as the only means of saving his soul. When Robin arrived at the Hall, his uncle was dead, and the monks, who had taken possession of the house, shut the doors against him, and would give him nothing, which was a sad reverse to poor Robin, for he had

been brought up as a gentleman without learning any business, and was unable to gain a livelihood. On turning from the Hall, he found Little John waiting for him, and deter-



mined to unite their fortunes, they resolved to go to Sherwood Forest, and support themselves by their bows.

Although the forest abounded with deer, Robin found that other comforts were necessary, which could not be procured without money; and thinking that the monks who had deprived him of his estate, ought to supply this, he laid every priest under contribution.

The fame of Robin Hood and the merry life he led, soon drew a number of young men to join his band, and increased it to above one hundred of the bravest fellows in the kingdom, whom he clothed in green. When the monks, from being so often plundered, came less in the way, Robin's men were obliged to extend their depredations to other parts of the country. It was only to priests, and the niggardly rich, that Robin Hood was an enemy; for he held the person and property of every woman sacred, and always took the part of the weak and injured. By the poor people he was adored, for he generously supplied their wants from his own private purse.

The first adventure of our hero, who now assumed the name of Robin Hood, was performed by him and fifteen more on the Bishop of Carlisle, with a guard of fifteen men, whom they met on the south side of Ferrybridge, in Yorkshire. Having dispersed his retinue, they took from the Bishop eight hundred marks; and then placing him on his horse with his face to the tail, obliged him in that condition to ride to London.

One day, Robin Hood, meeting with a butcher going to market to sell his meat, bought his whole cargo, and his mare

with it, which came together to about twenty pounds. With these Robin Hood immediately goes to the market and sells his bargains presently, making such good penny-worths, that



all the people thought he had stole it. Being now converted into money, he puts into an inn at Nottingham, and treated all the customers to the value of five pounds; which coming to the sheriff of the county's ears, who was at the inn at the same time, and taking him to be some prodigal spark of whom he might make a penny, intrudes into his company; and after some short discourse, asked him if he had any more meat to sell? "Not ready dressed," said Robin Hood, "but I have two or three hundred head of cattle at home, and a hundred acres of land to keep them on, which if you will buy, I'll sell you them a penny-worth." The sheriff snapt at the proffer, and took four hundred pounds in gold with him.

Away they rode, and he was much surprised at the melancholy place that Robin Hood had brought him to, but it was too late; for Robin Hood winding his horn, presently came Little John with fifty of his companions, who were commanded by their captain, Robin Hood, to take the sheriff to dinner with them, assuring them he had money enough to pay his share. Accordingly, they got a collation ready for the sheriff, and after dinner was over, led him into the forest, and there took all his gold away from him.

A gentleman, as he was riding from Coventry to London, met with Robin Hood, and taking him to be an honest gentleman, desired him to turn back, and go some other way, or else he would certainly meet with some highwaymen and be robbed, for he had narrowly escaped them himself; and so advised him if he had any charge about him, not to venture that way. "I have no great charge about me, Sir," said

Robin Hood; "however, I'll take your advice, for fear of the worst." So, as they were riding along, Robin Hood said, "Perhaps we may meet with some rogues of the gang by the way, for this is an ugly robbing road; therefore I'll secure this little I have, which is but ten guineas, by putting it into my mouth."

Now the gentleman, not in the least suspecting him to be of that profession, told him, that in case he should be set upon, he had secured his gold in the feet of his stockings, which he said was no small quantity, and that he had received it that day of his tenants for rent. Discoursing thus together, they had not gone above half a mile further before they came to a very bye place, where Robin Hood bid the gentleman stand and deliver his money. The gentleman was in great surprise, and told him he took him for a very honest and worthy person. However, there was no remedy for the loss of his money, which was about four score and ten marks. So Robin Hood left the gentleman, cursing his folly for telling him where he had hid his money.

Another time Robin had been riding for his pleasure, and as he was returning home in the evening very well mounted, coming near Turton Bridge, in Yorkshire, he perceived a gentleman in his gardens, which indeed were very extensive, Robin rode to the gardener, and inquired of him whether a gentleman, whose curiosity had led him to see those famous gardens, might not have the liberty of walking in them? The gardener knowing his master was very willing that any person appearing in good fashion might walk therein, gave him admittance. Robin, alighting, gave the gardener his horse to hold; and seeing the gentleman in the walks, Robin paid his respects to him in a submissive manner, at the same time begging he would pardon his presumption for coming into his gardens when his worship was recreating himself. The gentleman told him he was very welcome, and invited him to see his wilderness; where, sitting down in an arbour, they began to talk very merrily together; and, at the end of their discourse, Robin told him that he had heard he was a very charitable gentleman, and that he must make bold with him to borrow what money he had about him, for he had but little himself, and a long way to travel.

At these words the gentleman began to startle, and was very much surprised at his impudence. But Robin told him he was a dead man if he made any resistance. Then he tied him to a tree, and went away with a large booty; but he bade the gentleman be of good cheer, for he would send one presently to release him. And, accordingly, going to the

gardener, who held his horse all this while, gave him a nine-penny piece, saying, "Honest friend, your master wants to speak with you." Then mounting, he rode off the grounds, whilst the gardener made haste to his master, and was very much surprised to find him bound in that manner; but he immediately loosed him, and the gentleman returned him thanks for sending a rogue to rob him in his gardens.

One day, as Robin was in search of adventures near the skirts of the forest, he met a priest well mounted, with a fat



buck across his saddle, and disguised in a countryman's frock. Being in want of a horse, he resolved to rob the parson, and laying hold of the bridle, ordered him to dismount; but the priest struck a furious blow at Robin with the butt-end of his whip, which he received on his staff, and soon brought the priest to the ground.

After robbing the parson of his money and horse, and requesting to be remembered in his prayers, Robin rode off for Stratford. On the road he fell in with a rich country dealer going to purchase goods at Lancaster, with whom he soon got acquainted, and they travelled together; but the merchant was so close that Robin could make nothing of him. On reaching Coventry, where they dined together, and drank some good wine and ale, Robin told his fellow-traveller, that as the roads they had to travel were so dangerous, the safest way was to conceal their money in their boots, and on seeing Robin deposit a bag of gold, the merchant did the same. They again continued their journey until they came to a part of the road which crossed two ways, where Robin pulled off the merchant's boots, in which he got three hundred pieces of gold, and rode off for Sherwood Forest.

Our adventurer was a man of great courage, and a bold,

daring, and resolute temper; and being endowed with a great deal of love and charity for the poor, insomuch that he would relieve any poor families in distress, was, on the contrary, a mortal enemy to misers and the engrossers of corn: for he would often take from these to relieve the necessitous. One time being at Wantage, a great market for corn, he happened to fall into a person's company at an inn there, whom he knew to be a great engrosser of corn, and who had bought as much corn in the market as cost fourscore marks, which Robin bought of him again, and paid him one hundred marks ready money for it.

The corn he sent immediately to be distributed among the poor of the country. Robin understanding which way his corn merchant went, was soon at his heels, and demanded his money again, and what he had besides. The countryman was in great surprise, shaking and trembling very much, asking him whether he thought it was justice to take from him his money and his goods too? Says Robin, "Why, have not I, you villain, paid you for your corn honestly, and can you assume the impudence to talk of justice when there is none in the world acts more unjustly than an engrosser of corn? Sirrah, there is no vermin in the land like you, who slander both heaven and earth with pretended dearths, when there is no scarcity at all; so talk no more of your justice and honesty, but immediately deliver your money, or I shall crack your crown for you." Upon which he delivered him a bag, in which Robin found his own money, and as much more; so away he went with a great deal of satisfaction.

One fine summer day, when the merry bowmen were enjoying their sports, and trying each other's prowess, Robin, clad with his own superiority, said, "My friends, do you know any man that can match me at wrestling, playing the quarter-staff, or killing a deer?" Will Scarlet, who bore Robin a kind of grudge, replied, "I have heard of a friar in Fountain Abbey, who will draw a bow, wrestle, or handle a quarter-staff, with any man alive." "Say you so," said Robin, "I shall soon have proof of that;" and taking his bow and quarter-staff with him, went to the neighbourhood of the Abbey, where he saw a tall brawny friar walking by the river-side, and instantly knew him to be the man he wanted. Robin tied his horse to a tree, and coming up to the friar, said, "Carry me over this river, thou brawny friar, or I will crack thy crown." The friar returned no answer, but immediately took Robin upon his back, and carried him to the other side without speaking a single word. Robin leaped off the friar's back and pretended to be going away; but the

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friar stopped him, saying, "Carry me back again, thou fine fellow, or it shall breed thee pain." Robin took the friar on his back; and having carried him across the water he then insisted on the monk taking him over again, or he would break his bones. The friar took Robin on his back, but on



coming to the middle of the water, he threw him in, saying, "Now, my fine fellow, take your choice whether thou wilt sink or swim." Robin, however, got to land as soon as the friar; and challenged him to wrestle, shoot, and to a bout at quarter-staff; but at none of these could he beat the friar, nor the friar him. Robin was so well pleased with the friar that he wanted him to join the merry men; but the friar would not consent, and even tried to persuade Robin to turn monk; so they shook hands and parted good friends.

Robin Hood, soon after, going by himself into a lone house a little out of the road, found a poor old woman, weeping very bitterly. He desired her to acquaint him with the cause of her sorrow; to which she answered, that she was a widow, and being somewhat indebted to her landlord, expected him every moment to come and seize what few goods she had, which would be her utter ruin. Robin Hood bade her rest herself contented, and he would make things easy; so pulling off his rich laced clothes, and putting on an old coat, which the old woman lent him, and having likewise secured his horse in an old barn, in a little time came the old miserly landlord, and demanded his rent; upon this Robin Hood rises out of the chimney corner with a short stick in his hand, and says, "I understand, Sir, that my sister here, poor woman! is behind hand for rent, and that you design to seize her goods; but, she being a desolate widow, and having nothing to satisfy you at present, I hope you will take so much pity

and compassion as not to be too severe with her: pray, Sir, let me persuade you to have a little forbearance." To which the landlord replied, "I want my rent, and if I am not paid now, I'll seize her goods, and turn her out." When Robin Hood found that no entreaties would prevail, he pulled a leathern bag out of his pocket, and said, "Come, let's see a receipt in full, and I'll pay it:" so accordingly a receipt was given, and the rent paid. Then the landlord being going away, Robin Hood said, "'Tis drawing towards night, Sir, and there's great robbing abroad, therefore I would advise you to stay here till to-morrow morning, and take the day before you." "No, no," replied the landlord, "I'll go home now, I shall reach seven miles before it is dark." "Pray, Sir," said Robin, to him again, "let me persuade you to tarry here, for there's great robbing abroad." "I don't care," answered the landlord; "I will go home now; besides, I don't fear being robbed by any one man, let him be what he will." So taking his horse, away he rode, and Robin Hood after him, dressed then in his fine clothes, and meeting him at a pond where he knew he must pass by, bid him stand and fight, or deliver his money; which so terrified him, that he delivered all the money he had received for rent, and as much more to it.

As Robin was going one morning to Nottingham, he met with a tinker, and civilly asked him what news? "Why," replied the tinker, "I hear no other news than that of taking Robin Hood, and I have a warrant in my pocket for apprehending him; so if you can tell me where he is, I'll reward you." "Let me see the warrant," says Robin Hood, "and I'll go with you, and take him this night, for I know a house that he uses in Nottingham." "No (answered the tinker,) I'll let no man see my warrant."

So Robin then asked him to go to Nottingham, where he said he was sure to meet with Robin Hood. They soon reached Nottingham, where they went to an inn, and drank so plentifully, that the tinker fell asleep: then Robin took away the tinker's money, and the king's warrant, and left him the reckoning to pay.

Soon after this, Robin disguised himself in a friar's habit, and had not gone far before he met a couple of priests; he, making a pitiful moan to them, begged their charity, and that they would relieve one of their own function for the Virgin Mary's sake. "That we would do," said they "but we have lately met with a gang of villains who robbed us of all our money, and left us nothing to relieve ourselves." "I am afraid," said Robin, "you are so addicted to lying, that

an honest man cannot take your word; therefore let us all go down on our knees, and pray to the Virgin Mary to send us some money to defray our charges." Upon which they offered to run away; but Robin soon put an end to their career, and made them go to prayers.

They had not been long at their supplications, before Robin bid one of the priests feel in his pockets what the Virgin Mary had sent! upon which they both put their hands in their pockets, and pulled out nothing. Robin, upon this, fell into a great passion, and told them he believed that they were nothing but a parcel of lying deceitful knaves, to make him believe the Virgin had sent them nothing. So Robin searched their pockets, and found five hundred pieces of gold. When he saw this glorious sight, he could not forbear calling them lying and deceitful knaves. Soon after they rose up to go, but Robin stopped them, and made them take an oath never to tell lies to a friar again. After which he returned to Sherwood, where he made all his companions merry.

Being another time at Wigton, in Yorkshire, and hearing how barbarously the ostlers would cheat the horses of their provender, he privately went into the stable, and hid himself under the manger. A little time after came the ostler, under the pretence of feeding Robin Hood's horse: no sooner had he put the oats and beans into the manger, and laid down his sieve, but he sweeps them all into a canvas bag fixed under one corner of the manger, and away he went.

After dinner, Robin Hood asked the ostler, "What corn he had given his horse?" He said he had given him what corn he ordered him, and the gentleman who had dined with him saw him bring it through the kitchen. To which Robin Hood answered, "Don't tell me a lie, for I shall ask my horse presently; fetch him hither, and you will soon see whether the ostler has done him justice or not." Accordingly the horse was fetched, and Robin Hood striking him on the belly, he laid his mouth to his master's ear. "Look you there now," said Robin Hood, "did not I tell you that the ostler had cheated him of his corn!" "Why," said the landlord, "what does he say?" "Say," quoth Robin Hood; "why, he says your ostler has flung all the corn into a bag placed at one corner of the manger." Upon which the landlord and his guests went into the stable, and searching narrowly about the manger, found the bag of corn at one end of it; for which cruel villany he immediately turned his ostler away.

Robin Hood another time was riding towards London, and being on Dunsmore Heath, met with William Longchamp, who was then Bishop of Ely, with a small retinue of about

four or five in number. Immediately he rode up to one of the bishop's servants, whom he pretended to know; "Ah, Tom," said he, "I am glad, with all my heart, that I am come up with you, for there's nothing but robbing, go where one will; I have a great charge of money about me myself, but since I have the good luck to get up with these honest gentlemen, I am not in fear of losing it."

This discourse which Robin Hood had with the man, made his lordship and his retinue think him to be an honest man, and they held a great deal of chat with him on the road, till at last an opportunity favouring his intention, says he to the bishop's attendants, "I am very dry; and since you are pleased to give me protection from danger as far as I shall go your way, I'll ride before, and see if I can get any good liquor to treat you for your civility." Robin Hood set spurs to his horse, and rode away; when, being out of sight, he quickly tied his horse to a tree in a thick wood, which was on one side of the road, through which the bishop was to pass; then returning back to the company, says, "O gentlemen! I am ruined and undone; for in yonder lane, meeting with two rogues, they have taken about forty marks from me: but the villains being but indifferently mounted, I don't doubt but that if you were to pursue them, you'd soon take them." The bishop, pitying Robin Hood's loss, said to his servants, "Let the poor fellow show you which way the rogues took, and go all of you, and take them if possible." They set off, taking Robin Hood along with them: and when they came into a narrow lane, he gave them the necessary directions for pursuing the highwaymen.

But Robin Hood's business was with the Bishop, and back he goes, and says to him. "Sir, my time is but short, therefore you must deliver what money you have, or expect the worst of usage." The bishop, not knowing how to help himself, was forced to give him two hundred and fifty marks, and then Robin Hood retired to the wood, there mounted his horse, and rode off with his prize. Soon after, the bishop, being met by his servants, they told him they could not hear of the rogues, high nor low. "Ah!" answered the bishop, "the greatest rogue has been with me, for he that pretended to be robbed of forty marks, hath just now made up the loss by robbing me of sixty times the money."

It was customary for our adventurer to go frequently in disguise: at one time he pulled off his fine clothes, and dressed himself like an old shoemaker, and put an old leather apron about him, the better to colour his being one of the craft. In this disguise he set out to travel, and being pretty

liberal in his expenses, the landlord provided him a good lodging. The house was full of guests, and a friar coming in very late, they had no lodgings for him; the friar, rather than go any further, chose to accept a bedfellow; but there was none that wished to be disturbed at that time of night, but Robin (whom they took for a shoemaker) was well enough pleased to have such a bedfellow.

Matters being thus accommodated, and the friar in bed, he soon fell fast asleep, and slept very heartily; but Robin having got a pretty good nap before, had no mind to sleep any more that night, but to lie awake, and meditate mischief, for he never loved any of that function, so he studied how he should change breeches with the friar; and getting up at dawn of day, he put on not only the friar's breeches, but also his canonical garments. Robin finding the sacred habiliments fitted him very well; and being thus rigged, down stairs he goes, and calls the ostler, bidding him bring his boots, and make ready his horse. The ostler, not in the least mistrusting but that it was really the friar, brought him his boots, and asked him what corn his horse might have? "Half a peck of oats," says Robin; which was given him. Robin called for the reckoning, and was answered he paid all last night, but for his horse. The horse having eaten up his corn, he mounted with all the expedition imaginable, giving the ostler something to drink his health.

Away he rode, as fast as the friar's horse would carry him. The friar not dreaming what had happened, kept close within the bed; but about seven in the morning he rose out of his sleep, and going to bid his bedfellow good morning, soon found, not only that the bird was flown, but also that he was flown away with his feathers, for he saw nothing but a parcel of old clothes. Upon this the friar in great surprise calls for somebody to come up; but the servants supposing it was the shoemaker, asked him what ailed him to make such a noise, and bade him be quiet. This vexed the friar, and made him knock the harder; upon which the chamberlain went up, and threatened to thrash him if he made any more noise. The friar not understanding the meaning of this rude treatment, was amazed, and asked where his clothes were; the chamberlain replied, "Where a plague should they be but upon the chair where you left them? Who do you think would meddle with your dirty clothes? They are not of so much worth, that you need be afraid of any body's stealing them." "The man's mad," replied the friar: "Do you know who you speak to?" "Yes, I do," replied the chamberlain, "a drunken shoemaker." "Why, I am the friar," said he, "who

came in late last night." "The plague you are!" replied the chamberlain; "I am sure the friar went away at three o'clock this morning." With this noise and seuffle, up comes the landlord of the inn, and some of the servants, who presently discovered that this was the person they had mistaken for the shoemaker, and found that he had made an exchange with the friar; upon which the master of the inn furnished him with a suit of his own clothes, and money to bear his charges through his journey.

One morning, as Robin was strolling in the forest, he saw a genteel-looking young man sitting under a tree, who appeared to be very melancholy and dejected. He desired one of his bowmen to bring the young man to him; and when he came, Robin inquired the cause of his sadness. The young man, taking a ring from his pocket said, "I was to have been married yesterday to a young lady whom I have long courted, and I bought this ring for the occasion, but the Bishop of Hereford, her uncle, has rejected me, and means to give her to an old wealthy knight." Robin inquired whether the young lady had consented to her uncle's choice or not, and when and where the ceremony was to take place. Allan-a-dale (for that was the name of the young man,) told him that the lady was forced to comply much against her inclinations, and that the marriage was to take place that day in the parish chapel, about five miles from the forest. When Robin



heard the bishop's name, who was his great enemy, and the time and place, he told Allan-a-dale to put on a cheerful look, and he would ensure him of getting his mistress. "If you incline to join our bowmen," said Robin, "bring your bride to the forest, and let her live with us; but if you do not like our merry life, you are at liberty to carry her wherever you

please." Allan-a-dale agreed to join the bowmen, as with them he felt himself sure of protection; and then, seeing there was no time to lose, Robin disguised himself as a harper, and ordered twenty-four of his bowmen and Allan-a-dale to follow him; but proceeded to the church alone, where he found the bishop putting on his robes, who asked him what he wanted; Robin told him he was a harper, come to offer his services at the wedding. On the old knight and the bride making their appearance, Robin stepped forward and said, "I cannot allow this marriage to go on, for the bride must have her own choice." Then pulling out his horn, he gave three blasts, and the bowmen entered the church. "Young lady," said Robin, "as you are now free, see if there is any one here you would choose for your husband." She no sooner saw Allan-a-dale, than she sprang to him, and said, "Here is my choice." Robin requested the Bishop to proceed; but as he refused, he pulled off his robes, and put them on Little John, who took the book and went through the ceremony very gracefully, Robin giving away the bride. The bishop and the old knight slunk out of the church, and the rest of the party went off to celebrate the wedding at Sherwood Forest.

The Bishop of Hereford was so enraged at the trick played him, that he made several excursions to Sherwood Forest with a party of soldiers, on purpose to take Robin prisoner. One day, as Robin was walking alone in the forest, he heard



the trampling of horses behind him, and looking about, saw the Bishop, with six of his followers, in pursuit of him. As they were only at a short distance behind him, Robin had no time to lose, therefore he ran forward till he reached the cottage of a poor old woman, into which he rushed, and beg-

ged her to save his life. She immediately exchanged clothes with him, and as the Bishop came in with his men, Robin passed by them and got clear off. When he came in sight of his band, one of the bowmen, who observed him coming, cried out, "A witch, a witch!" and was about to let fly an arrow at him, when Robin discovered himself. He then told Little John to kill a fat deer, as the Bishop of Hereford was to dine with them, and taking his bowmen along with him, went to a particular spot to wait for his guest.

When the Bishop entered the cottage, he seized the old woman, who was in Robin's clothes, and said, "I know you are one of Robin Hood's gang, therefore take me to where he is, and your life shall be saved." The old woman who had got her directions from Robin, agreed to take him; and being soon mounted, they rode on to an opening in the



Forest, where Robin's bowmen were all drawn up, when the Bishop asked, "Who are these?" "I think it is Robin Hood, whom you want, and his merry men," replied she; "but I cannot be certain, for I am only a poor old woman, who changed clothes with him." The Bishop, after bestowing a hearty malediction on the old woman, was turning to ride off; but Robin brought him down from his horse, and forced him to go and partake of their good cheer. After dinner he made the Bishop dance a hornpipe, to the no small diversion of the bowmen; and having eased him of five hundred pounds, as payment of his reckoning, they led him and his followers to the high road, where the bowmen gave three cheers, and then returned to the forest.

Robin Hood once being at Stratford, he met with a country dealer travelling into Lancashire to buy goods. Robin and this rider afterwards got acquainted together on the road.

At night they put up together at the Horse Shoe Inn at Daventry, where they supped off a quarter of venison and a roasted goose. After supper Robin proposed a game at All-fours, on which they drank several bottles of wine, when Robin wanted to sound the depth of his pockets, which he was too close to let him do that night, though he went to bed very drunk.



The next morning they breakfasted together, and agreed to travel towards Coventry, where, at the White Bear, they dined, and afterwards refreshed themselves with the landlord, and some excellent wine and ale. After dinner, Robin told his fellow-traveller, that it was a dangerous road they had to pass that evening, and therefore thought it advisable to conceal their money in their boots, or some other secure place about them. The traveller at first refused, but upon seeing Robin put a bag of gold down, he drew out his and did the same. This revived Robin Hood's spirits much. In this manner they travelled several miles before an opportunity or place presented, entertaining themselves with the valiant exploits of bold archers and their men.

They rode very loving along, the traveller intending that night to reach Litchfield, but when they came to a place called Cuckoo's Corner, which parts the roads, Robin told his companion that he was at his journey's end; he must instantly draw his boots off, for there was no time to dispute. Upon which the traveller replied, "I really thought as much, and suspected it from the first hour I came into your company." However, it was no time to hesitate or regret; Robin took his bag, in which were two hundred pieces of gold besides some pieces of silver, dismounted him, and took his horse. With this booty, and being alone, fearing also his

companions would blame his absence, he made directly for Sherwood Forest, riding through Warwickshire disguised as a page.

Robin being at an inn near Buckingham, heard great singing and dancing, and found it was a country wake, at which were present most of the young men and maids for several miles round about. Robin, pleased at the adventure, put up his horse, and, as he was drinking in the kitchen, an old rich farmer came in with a hundred marks tied up in a bag under his arm. Robin's eyes were more fixed upon the farmer's bag of money than the young folks dancing, and observing in the room where they were that there was a chimney with a large funnel, he went out and communicated his designs to the ostler, who, for a reward, drest a great mastiff dog in a cow's hide he had in his stable, placing the horns just on his forehead, when in the height of their jollity, by the help of a ladder and a rope, he let him hastily down the chimney into the room where they were all assembled. Robin had returned before the acting of this scene; the dog howled hideously as he descended, and rushing among them in that frightful form, turned all into hurry and confusion; and the old farmer, being in a dreadful fright, dropped his hundred marks, and fled for safety; the meantime Robin securing the money under his cloak, immediately took horse and made the best of his way.

By these and similar depredations he became noted, repelling force by force, and art by cunning. The severity of the forest laws, enacted by the Norman kings, made it necessary for his followers to keep together. Their numbers increased to four hundred of the best marksmen in the kingdom, among whom was the celebrated George Green, the Pindar of Wakefield.

At one time, when the finances of the merry men were very low, they resolved to plunder the rich convent of St. Mary, and to carry off the image of the Holy Virgin, which was of solid silver. Under the disguise of a poor blind minstrel and his mother, Robin Hood and Little John gained admittance to the convent; and, when the nuns and friars had retired to their cells, opened the gates to their companions. The alarm soon spread through the convent, and every one flew to the chapel for protection; but the bowmen having already entered the place, were proceeding to spoil it of what was most valuable, and to take down the silver image, when one of the nuns cried out, "Oh! mercy; will they take away the gift of our queen, even while she is within our walls?" On hearing this, Robin said, "My brave

comrades, desist, and let not disloyalty be ranked among our errors, this house and all within it are rendered sacred by the presence of Queen Eleanor!" The bowmen instantly obeyed their leader; and as they quitted the convent, Robin told the nuns to bless the queen for preserving their image, which otherwise would have bought wine to the Sherwood venison.

When the queen heard of the behaviour of Robin Hood, and that his respect for her alone had saved the convent from being plundered, she was so much pleased, that she determined to be a friend to him and his men.

Soon after King Richard's return from Palestine, he proclaimed a grand shooting match to take place in the palace grounds, and prizes were to be awarded to the best marksmen. Queen Eleanor, thinking this a favourable opportunity to execute her design in favour of Robin Hood, told the king that she could bring one hundred men, who would beat the most skilful of his archers. The king requested her to bring forward her champions, and if they were victorious, he would not only bestow on them the prizes but grant her any boon she asked. The queen immediately despatched the following



message to Robin Hood:—"Queen Eleanor greets you well, requesting that you will take one hundred of your bowmen with you, and hasten to London: for a great match at the bow is to take place there, and she has chosen you and your men to be her champions."

On the appointed day, in presence of the whole court, the king's archers, who were thought to be the best in the kingdom, ranged themselves on one side; while the queen's champions, all clad in green, with Robin Hood at their head, took their station on the other; but the queen was the only person there who knew them. After sounding the trumpets,

King Richard announced the prizes which were to be bestowed on the best marksmen, and the courtiers began to offer bets of six to one in favour of the king's men; but no one would bet against them. "Will no knight venture his money on my side?" said the queen. "Come, Sir Robert Lee, you must try your fortune;" but the knight begged to be excused, as there was no chance of success. The queen then asked the Bishop of Hereford, Robin Hood's old foe; but he swore by his silver mitre, that he would not bet one penny. "If you won't bet on the queen's side, how much will you venture on the king's?" said Robin. "All the gold I have with me, which is five hundred pounds," replied the bishop, and he laid the money on the ground. Robin immediately produced a bag of the same value, and threw it down upon the green.

Before the bowmen began, Queen Eleanor craved this boon from the king—that he should not be angry with any of her archers; but that they should be free to stay at court during the match, and afterwards to have forty days to retire to where they pleased. King Richard agreed to this; and then ordered the targets to be placed. The king's archers lodged about forty arrows in the target; but Robin's bowmen, to the astonishment of all the court, placed all their arrows in the mark.

The captain of the king's archers challenged Robin to shoot three arrows with him for one hundred pounds; to which Robin agreed, on condition that he would shoot one at the mark he produced. A fresh target was set up, and the captain, amidst thunders of applause, fixed his three arrows in the mark, and one of them in the very centre of the target; but Robin, with seeming carelessness, let fly his first arrow, which split the centre one to shivers, and stuck in its place. Robin then caused two willow wands to be stuck in the ground at double distance, observing, that this was the kind of mark he was accustomed to, and challenged all the king's archers to a trial; but as none of them durst venture after what they had seen, Robin, with the remaining two arrows, clove both the wands. The king's bowmen whispered to each other, that he must be the devil, for there never was such archery seen before; but the Bishop of Hereford said to the king, "I know now who they are; that is Robin Hood, and these fellows are his band." The king would not have allowed them to depart; but as his word had been already given for their security, he made a noble feast, bestowed on them the prizes, and sent them away with honour.

King Richard often thought of the wonderful dexterity

shown by Robin Hood and his band, and having heard of many of their generous actions, he regretted that they were outlaws, who, by plundering those whom he was bound to protect, were therefore enemies to the state. Sometimes he would exclaim, "If I could make these outlaws faithful subjects, what a pride they would be to my court!"

One day Queen Eleanor entered, and craved the boon he had promised to grant if her champions were victorious, "My dear Richard," said she, "the boon I ask, is the free pardon of Robin Hood and his men, who will, I am certain, prove themselves worthy of your clemency, and be a valuable acquisition to your crown." "My dear mother," said he, "I can refuse you nothing; but, before I grant your request, I must see Robin Hood again, in order to discover what his sentiments are; for which purpose I mean to disguise myself immediately, and go to Sherwood Forest."

As the queen approved of this, Richard, accompanied by twelve of his courtiers, all disguised as monks, mounted their horses, and proceeded to the Forest. Robin Hood, who observed them at a distance, thought it was a whole monastery of friars, and he determined to plunder them. King Richard, who was taller than the rest, rode foremost, and Robin taking him for the abbot, seized his horse by the bridle, saying, "Abbot, stand, and deliver your money; it was a monk that ruined me, and I have sworn to spare none of your fraternity." "But we are going on the king's message," said Richard. When Robin heard this, he let go the bridle, saying, "God save him! and confound all his enemies!" "Thou art cursing thyself," said the king, "for thou art a robber, an outlaw, and a traitor." "Were you not his messenger," returned Robin, "I would say you lied; for I never injured the honest and industrious man; I protect women and children, and all the poor around me; it is only from the miserly rich, and those who live upon the labours of others, that I take any thing, but as you are King Richard's servants, I will not deprive you of a single penny, and also excuse what you have said." Robin asked them to partake of his good cheer before they proceeded on their journey. This being exactly the thing that the king wished for in order to sound Robin, he gave a ready consent, and then said, "Were you not afraid singly to attack thirteen men?" "I am not afraid of ten thirteens," returned Robin; then putting his horn to his mouth, he blew a shrill blast, and one hundred and fifty of his bowmen instantly appeared in view. The king was so charmed with the sight, that he could not help thinking they were much better trained than his own men.

After dinner, the pretended monks again mounted their horses, and were preparing to take their leave of the bowmen, when the king said to Robin Hood, "Now, my brave fellow, if I were to procure your pardon and that of your men, would you turn faithful and useful subjects?" This being the first wish of Robin's heart, and for some time past always uppermost in his thoughts, he replied, "Abbot, I am tired of this kind of life; and though some may praise our bold adventures and generous actions, yet I now hate every thing connected with it. Were king Richard, who is a gallant soldier and a generous prince, to pardon our offences, and take us into favour, he would never have reason to repent his clemency, for he would find us the most loyal and peaceful of his subjects."

"Behold your king!" said Richard, opening a part of the monk's cloak, which discovered the star and other insignia. Robin and his bowmen were instantly on their knees before him. "Rise up, my brave fellows, your leader is now Earl of Huntingdon, which is his just right, from being next heir



to the late earl. I restore you again to society, by freely pardoning all your past offences; and I expect from your future good behaviour, and the services which you are able to render me by your skill and bravery, if you are inclined, never to have cause to repent of my kindness."

Robin Hood, now Earl of Huntingdon, and his bowmen, immediately swore allegiance to the king; and by their good conduct afterwards, Richard was induced to place them near his own person as a body guard.

It is evident none but the rich and considerable were objects of Robin Hood's depredations; for so far from plundering the poor, he did them all the good that lay in his

power. Of the luxury of the priests of his time he took particular notice, but never abused those he robbed, nor molested any woman. The priests of Bridlington, in Yorkshire, and Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, were his greatest enemies; for the latter set a price on his head, and several stratagems were set to catch him, but in vain. The bowmen in his retinue were all true men and honest, the terror of the rich and the protector of the poor, with whom he often associated.

Time passed on, King Richard died, and was succeeded by Prince John, under whose sovereignty the miseries of the people daily increased. Robin Hood subsequently followed King John as far as Northumberland, when the former was on his way to Edinburgh. His name got well known in the army; and whatever portion of the king's men fell in with Robin's, they were slain to a man. John quitted the north for Dover, and left commands for several bands of troops, stationed at various places, to follow and join him. Those which had to pass through Derbyshire, Yorkshire, or Lincolnshire, were mostly intercepted, and but few escaped to tell that Robin Hood had been among them.

Robin had now reached his fifty-fifth year; he began to feel dull and listless, and a presentiment was upon him that his time was at hand. An abbey which stood on the borders of the wood, called Kirkley Abbey, had once received him when wounded in an attack upon a band of Normans; the prioress claimed a relationship, and tended him very carefully until he recovered. Little John now advised him to seek her, and there be blooded—a remedy at that time, for all diseases of both body and mind—so he went, and was received with great seeming welcome. The prioress invited him to partake of refreshment, which, however, he declined, and requested to be bled forthwith.

She then showed him into a small upper room, and laid him upon a couch, while she opened a vein in his arm; she then took an enormous quantity of blood from him; so much, that he refused to allow her to take any more—she smiled, bound up his arm, and left the room, carefully locking the door after her—placing the key in her pocket, she descended the stairs.

The prioress, although affecting to be devoted to her Maker, had a most questionable love for a certain knight, who was very frequent in his visits to the abbey; and by dint of working upon her fears, he persuaded this wicked woman to destroy the brave Robin Hood. So when darkness crept on, she stealthily removed the bandage from his arm, carried

the bandage away with her, locked the door as before, and there left him to expire.

Morning broke; and as the sun's rays broke upon his heavy eye-lids, he experienced the most dreadful sensation of sickness—he lay quiet—yet bleeding, and not knowing that his life was fast ebbing away. At length he discovered the horrible truth; he feebly gained the lattice, but unable to raise himself, so as to pass through it, he with his remaining breath, blew his horn. The well known sound was heard by Little John, who was near the abbey walls; suspecting wrong, he called together a strong party, and rushing to the gates, demanded admittance. This was denied, so the gates were broken open. He again heard the tremulous notes of the horn, followed the sound, and soon found poor Robin Hood in a dying state, from loss of blood.

Little John was greatly exasperated, and vowed to rase the treacherous building to the ground: "Not one stone," said he, stamping his foot violently on the ground, "not one little stone shall stand upon another."

"I prithee, no!" said Robin to Little John, "the last act of my life shall not change in spirit to what the first was—let the woman's conscience be her punishment—I will not harm her. But," said Robin, with a fainting voice, "give me my bow, and but one arrow—it will be my last shaft—and where it rests in the greensward, there would I rest also!"

"Raise me," said Robin Hood, in a plaintive voice; he drew his bow with a convulsive exertion, and the arrow flew over the tree tops to a considerable distance. Little John watched the arrow in its flight; and turning, received the last words of Robin Hood. "It is my last shot! the last time I ever draw bow-string! Farewell, my bonny yew bow, and trusty broad arrow; bear me to the spot where it fell." So died the renowned Robin Hood.

He expired the 24th of December, 1347, aged 55, and was interred in Kirkley Park, Yorkshire.

EPITAPH.

ROBERT, Earl of Huntingdon,
Lies here, his labour being done.
No archer like him was so good,
His wildness named him ROBIN HOOD.
For thirteen years and somewhat more,
These northern parts he vexed sore:
Such outlaws as he and his men,
May England never know again.