

A TRUE

TALE

OF

ROBIN HOOD.



STIRLING:

Printed and Sold by M. Randall.

W. A. L. E.

ROBIN HODGSON



LIBRARY

OF THE

ROBIN HOOD'S
CHALLENGE.



I'll draw my arrow to the head,
And send it from my good Yew bow,
A Hart of grace I will strike dead,
Tho' I'm five hundred feet him fro'

Five hundred Merks of this I'll bet,
Doubt not my wager I'll make good,
In his heart's blood the feather wet,
Or ne'er believe bold Robin Hood.



THE
HISTORY
OF
ROBIN HOOD.

BOTH gentlemen and yoemen bold,
Or whatso'er you are,
To have a stately story told,
Attention now prepare.
It is a tale of Robin Hood,
That to you I will tell,
Which being rightly understood,
I know will please you well
Our Robin Hood so much talk'd on,
Was once a man of Fame,
Intituled Lord of Huntingdon,
Lord Robin Hood by name,
In courtship and magnificence,
Than any of his day,
In bounteous liberality
He did too much excel.

And loved men of quality
More than become him well,
His great revenues all he sold,
For wine and costly cheer,
He kept three hundred bowmen bold,
He shooting lov'd so dear,
No archer living in his time,
With him might well compare,
He practis'd all his youthful prime
In exercise most rare.
At last by his profuse expence,
He had consum'd his wealth,
And being outlaw'd by his prince,
In woods he liv'd by stealth,
The Abbot of St Mary's church,
To whom he money ow'd,
His hatred to the Earl was such,
That he his downfall prov'd.
So being outlaw'd as tis told,
He with a crew went forth,
Of lusty cutters stout and bold,
Who robbed in the North.
Among the rest one Little John,
A yeoman bold and free;
Who could, if need stood him upon.
With ease encounter three.
One hundred men in all he got,
With whom the story says,
Three hundred men in arms durst not,
Keep combat any ways.

The Yorkshire woods frequented much,
 and Lancashire also,
 Wherein their practices were such.
 that they wrought meikle woe,
 None rich to travel too and fro'
 tho' ne'er so strongly arm'd;
 But by thieves so strong in shew,
 they were both rob'd and harm'd.
 His chief spite to the clergy was,
 who liv'd in monstrous pride,
 Not one of them he would let pass,
 along the highway side;
 But first to dinner they must go,
 and afterwards to shrift,
 For they suppes'd that he was ta'en,
 while thus he liv'd by theft,
 Nor Monks nor Friars he would let go,
 without paying their fees,
 If they pleas'd not to be served so,
 their stones he made them leave,
 For such as these the country fill'd
 with bastards in those days,
 Which to prevent, these sparks did geld
 all that came in their way,
 But Robin Hood so gentle was,
 and bore so great a mind.
 If any in distress did pass,
 he was to them most kind,
 That he would give or lend them,
 or help them in their need,

This made all poor men pray for him,
 and wish he well might speed,
 The widow and the fatherless;
 he would send means unto,
 And those whom fortune did oppress,
 found him a friendly foe.
 Nor would he do a woman wrong,
 but see her safe convey'd;
 He would protect with power strong,
 all those who crave his aid.
 The Abbot of St. Mary's then,
 who him undid before,



Was riding with two hundred men,
 and gold and silver store,
 But Robin Hood upon him set,
 with his courageous sparks,
 And all the coin by force did get,
 which was ten thousand merks,

He bound the Abbot to a tree,
 And would not let him pass,
 Before that to his men and he,
 His Lordship had said Mass
 Which being done, upon his horse
 He set him fast astride,
 And with his face towards his arse,
 He forc'd him to ride.
 His men were forced to be his guide,
 For he rode backwards home;
 The Abbot being this villify'd,
 Did sorely fret and fume.
 Thus Rob n Hood did vindicate
 His former wrongs received,
 For it was this covetous prelate
 Him of his land bereav'd.
 The Abbot rode unto the King,
 With all the haste he could,
 And to his Grace in every thing
 Exactly did unfold.
 And said if that no cause was ta'en.
 By force or stratagem,
 To take this rebel and his train,
 No man could pass by them.
 The King protested by and by
 Unto the Abbot then
 That Robin Hood with speed should die,
 And all his merry men :
 But e'er the King did any send
 He did another feat,

Which did his grace much more offend
 The fact indeed was great.
 For in short time alter that.

The King's receivers went
 Unto London with coin they had got,
 For his highness' northeren rent.



But Robin Hood and Little John
 With the rest of their train,
 Not dreading law set them upon
 And did their gold obtain
 The King much moved at the same,
 And the Abbots ask also,
 In his anger did proclaim,
 And sent word to and fro'
 That whosoe'er alive or dead,
 Would take bold Robin Hood,

Should have a thousand merks a-year,
in gold and silver good.

This promise of the king did make
full many a yoeman good,

Attempt bold Robin Hood to take,
with all the force he could :

But still when any came to him,
within the gay green wood.

He soon made them return again,
this yoeman was so good.

He shew'd to them such martial sport,
with his long bow and arrow,

That they of him did give report,
how great it was their sorrow,

That such a worthy man as he,
should thus be put to shift :

Being late a Lord of high renown,
of living quite bereft.

The King to take him, more and more,
sent men of mickle might,

But he with steel did beat them sore,
and conquer'd them in fight,

Or else by love and courtesy,
to him he won their hearts,

So that he liv'd by robbery,
in all the northern parts.

And all the country far and near,
of Robin Hood and's men,

For stouter lads ne'er liv'd by bread,
in those days nor since then.

The whom before I nam'd,
 fought all the means he could,
 To have by force this rebel ta'en;
 and his adherents bold,
 Wherefore he arm'd five hundred men,
 with furniture complete,
 But the outlaws slew half of them,
 and made the rest retreat,
 Now twelve of the Abbot's men he got,
 who came to him was ta'en,



And all the rest the field forsook,
 them he did entertain.

With banquetting and merriment,
 And having used them well,
 He to their Lord them safely sent,
 And willed them to tell,
 That if he wou'd be pleas'd at last,
 To beg of our good King,
 That he might pardon what was past,
 And him to favour bring,
 He would surrender back again
 The money that before
 Was taken by him and his men
 From him and many more.
 Poor men might safely go by him,
 And some that way did chuse,
 For well they knew that to help them,
 He evermore did use.
 But where he knew a miser rich,
 That did the poor oppress,
 To feel their coin his hands did itch,
 He had it more or less.
 Nay, sometimes when the highway fails;
 Then he his courage reuses,
 He and his men have oft assau'ted
 Such rich men in their houses.
 So their dread of Robin Hood,
 And his adventrous crew,
 The miser's keep great store of men,
 Who else maintain'd but few.
 King Richard of that name the First,
 Sir-named Ceur de Lyon,

When to defeat the Pagans curst,
 Who kept the Court of Sion.
 The Bishop of Ely Chancellor;



Who was left Vice Roy here,
 Who like a potent Emperor,
 Did proudly determine
 Our Chronicles of him report,
 that commonly he rode
 With a thousand horse unto the court,
 Where he would make abode.
 He riding down towards the North,
 With his aforelaid train,

Robin and his men did issue forth,
 them all to entertoin,
 And with the gallant grey goose wing,
 they shewed to them such play,



ROBIN HOOD, AND LITTLE JOHN.

That made their horses kick and fling,
 and down their riders lay,
 Full glad and fain the Bishop was
 with all his thousand men,
 To seek what means he could, to pass
 from out of Robin's ken,
 Two hundred of his men were kill'd,
 and fourscore horses good,
 Thirty who did as captives yield,
 were brought to the green wood,

Who afterwards were ranfomed
 for twenty merks a man :
 The rest fet spurs to horse and fled,
 away to Warrington,
 The Bishop fore enraged then,
 did in King Richard's name,
 Muster up a power of men,
 these outlaws bold to tame ;
 But Robin with his courtesy,
 so won the meaner sort,
 That they were loth on him to try,
 what rigour did impart.
 So that bold Robin and his men,
 did live unhurt of them.
 Until King Richard came again.
 from fair Jerusalem.
 And then the tale of Robin Hood
 his royal ears did fill,
 His grace admir'd in the green wood,
 he was continued still.
 So that the country far and near,
 did give him great applause.
 For none of them need stand in fear,
 but such as broke his laws,
 He wished well unto the king,
 and pray'd still for his health,
 And never practis'd any thing,
 against the commonwealth.
 Only because he was undone,
 by the cruel clergy then,

All things that he could think upon
 To vex such sort of men,
 He enterpriz'd with hateful spleen,
 In which he was to blame;
 For fault of all too wreak his spleen
 On all that by him came.

With the wealth that he by robbing got,
 Eight alms-houses he built,
 Thinking thereby to purge the blot
 Of blood that he had spilt.
 Such were their blind devotions then,
 Depending on their works;
 Which if true we Christian men
 Inferior are to Turk

But to speak true of Robin Hood,
 And wrong him not a jot,
 He would not shed any man's blood,
 That him invaded not;
 Nor would he injure husbandmen,
 That toil'd at cart and plow
 For well he knew it were not for them
 To live no men knew how.

The King in person with some lords,
 To Nottingham did ride
 To know what strength and skill afford,
 To tame this out-law's pride,
 And as he once before had done,
 He did again proclaim,
 That whoso'er would take upon
 To bring to Nottingham,

Or any place within the land,
 Rebellious Robin Hood,
 Should be prefferred in place to stand,
 With those of Royal Blood.
 When Robin Hood had heard the same
 Within a little space,
 Into the town of Nottingham
 A letter to his Grace.
 He shot upon an arrow head,
 One evening cunningly;
 Which before the Lords was read,
 Unto his Majesty.
 The tenor of that letter was,
 That Robin would submit,
 And be true Liegeman to his Grace,
 In every thing that's fit;
 So that his highness would forgive
 Him and his merry men all.
 If not he must in the Green Wood stay
 And take what chance befal,
 The King would have pardon'd him,
 But that some Lords did say,
 This president will much condemn
 Your Grace another day.
 While the King and Lords did stay,
 Debating on this thing,
 Some of the out-laws fled away
 Unto the Scottish King.
 For they suppos'd it he was ta'en,
 Or to the King did yield,

By law all the rest of his train,
 full quickly should be quell'd.
 Of more than full an hundred men,
 but forty tarry'd still,
 Who were resolv'd to stand by him,
 let fortune work her will.
 If none had fled, then all had got,
 a pardon for his sake free,
 Them into pardon means to take,
 his merry men and he,
 But ere the pardon to him came,
 this famous archer dy'd :
 The death and manner of the same,
 I'll presently describe.
 For being vext to think upon
 his followers revolt,
 In melancholy passion then
 he did recount the fault.
 Perfidious traitors, said he then,
 in all your manners past.
 I have guarded you as my men,
 now serve me thus at last :
 This sad perplexity did cause
 a fever as some say ;
 Which him into confusion draws
 thro' by a stranger way.
 This deadly danger to prevent,
 he hy'd him with all speed,
 Unto a nunnery with intent,
 for health's sake there to bleed,

A faithless Friar did pretend,
 in love to let him blood :
 But he by falsehood wrought the end
 of famous Robin Hood.
 The Friar (as some say) did this,
 to vindicate the wrong,
 Which to the clergy he and his
 had done by power strong,
 Thus he died by treachery
 who could not die by force ;
 Had he lived longer certainly,
 King Richard in remorse,



Had unto favour him receiv'd,
 his brave men elated :
 'Tis pity he was of life bereav'd,
 by one he so much hated.

A treacherous leach this Friar was,
 To let him bleed to death,
 And Robin was methinks an ass,
 To trust him with his breath.
 His corpse the prioress of that place,
 The next day that he dy'd
 Cauf'd to be buried in mean sort
 Along the highway side,
 And over him she caused a stone
 To be fixed in the ground.
 An Epitaph was set thereon,
 Whereon his name was found,
 The date of the year and day also,
 She made to be set there.
 That all who by that way did go,
 Might see it plain appear,
 That such a man as Robin Hood
 was buried in that place,
 And how he liv'd in the Green Wood.
 and robbed there apace.
 It seems that though the clergy he
 had put to meikle wee,
 He should not quite forgotten be,
 altho' he was their foe.
 This woman, though she did him hate,
 yet for his memory,
 She thought it was a pity that
 so great a name should die.
 This epitaph, as records tell,
 within three hundred years,

By many was discerned well,
 but time all things out-wears.
 His followers when he was dead,
 were some receiv'd to grace :
 The rest to foreign countries fled,
 and left their native place.
 And though this funeral was but small,
 the woman had in mind,
 Lest his fame should be buried clean,
 from those that came behind.
 For certainly before or since,
 no man ever understood,
 Under the reign of any priace,
 a man like Robin Hood.
 For thirleen years, and something more,
 these outlaws lived thus,
 Fear'd by the rich, lov'd by the poor,
 a thing most marvellous,
 A thing impossible to us,
 this story seems to be ;
 None dare now be so venturous,
 but times are chang'd we see,
 We that live in these happy days,
 of civil government,
 If need he had an hundred men,
 these rebels to prevent
 In those days men barbarous were,
 and lived less in awe,
 But God be thanked people fear
 more to offend the law.

No roaring gun was then in use,
 they dreamt of no such thing
 Our Englishmen in fight did chuse
 the gallant grey goose wing.
 In which activity our men,
 thro' practice were so good
 That in those days none equall'd them,
 especially Robin Hood.
 So that it seems keeping in caves
 in woods and forests thick,
 They beat a multitude with staves,
 their arrows did so prick
 And none durst near unto them come,
 unless in courtsey
 And all such he would fain send home,
 with mirth and jolity.
 His courtesey won him much love,
 as I before have told,
 This was the reason he did prove,
 more prosperous than he would.
 Let us be thankful for these times,
 of plenty, truth, and peace,
 And leave off great and horrid crimes,
 least they cause this to cease.
 Let no one think this is a lie,
 for wer't put to the worst,
 They must the truth of it descry,
 in Richard's reign the first.
 If any reader please to try,
 as I direction shew,

The truth of this brave history,
he'll find it truth I know.
And I shall think my labour well
bestow'd to purpose good,
When it shall be said that I did tell,
true tales of Robin Hood.



“Buy a new Tale of ROBIN HOOD.”

The Epitaph which the Prioreſs ſet over
Robin Hood, which as it is before men-
tioned, was to be read within three
hundred years, though in Old Engliſh,
much to the ſame ſenſe and meaning as
hereafter followeth.

Decembris Quarto Die, 1228.

ANNO REGIS RICARDI II.

ROBERT, Earl of Huntingdon,
Lies underneath this ſtone,
No Archer was like him ſo good.
His wildneſs nam'd him ROBIN HOOD.
Full thirteen years and ſomething more,
Theſe northern parts he vexed fore.
Such outlaws as he & his men.
MAY ENGLAND NEVER SEE AGAIN.

FINIS.