

Little Folk's Books.


THE HISTORY OF
BOLD ROBIN HOOD.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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London:

Published for the Proprietor by Darton and Co.



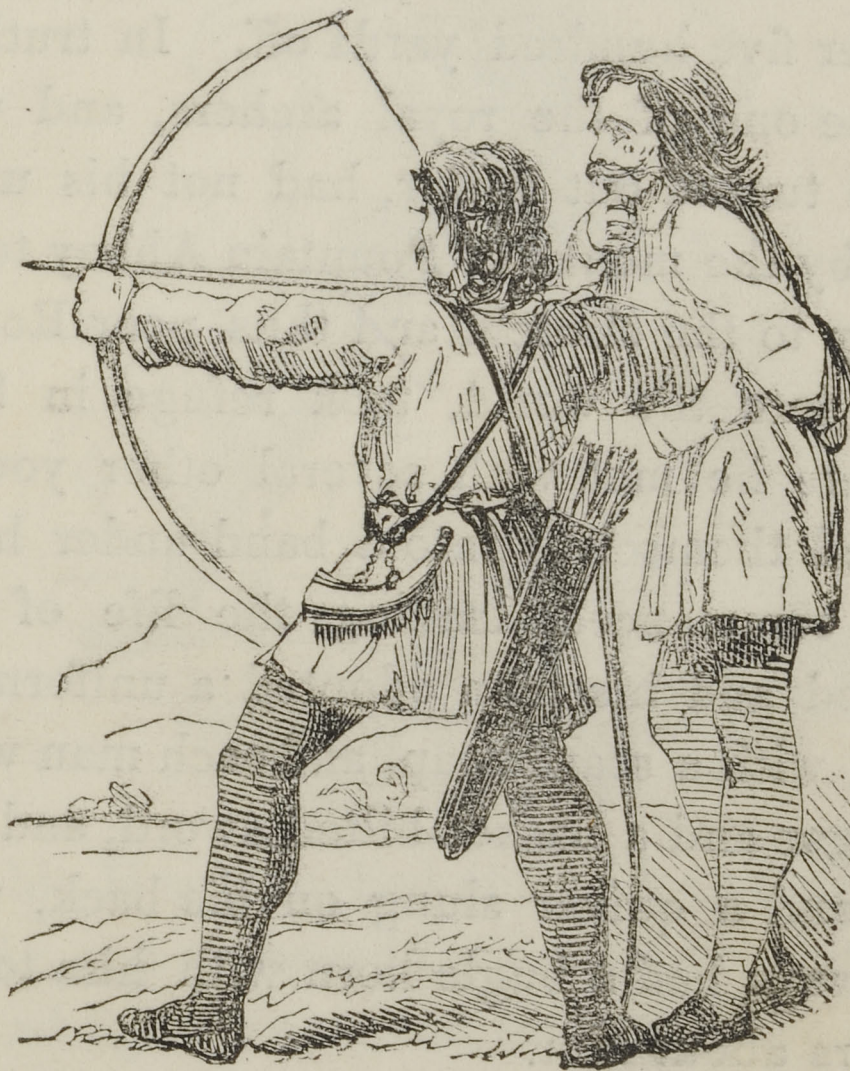
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Little Folks' Books.

THE HISTORY
OF
Bald Robin Hood.



Edited by Madame de Chatelain.

Bald Robin Hood.

THE famous Robin Hood, whose real name was Robert Fitzooth, and who flourished during the reigns of Henry the Second and Richard Cœur de Lion, was born in the town of Locksley, in Nottinghamshire, about the year 1160. He was a handsome youth, and the best archer in the county, and regularly bore away the prizes at all the archery meetings, being able to strike a deer five hundred yards off. In truth, he was just fit to be one of the royal archers, and would no doubt have turned out better, had not his uncle been persuaded by the monks of Fountain Abbey to leave all his property to the church, and thus poor Robin being sent adrift into the world, took refuge in Sherwood forest, where he met with several other youths, who soon formed themselves into a band under his leadership, and commenced leading the life of outlaws. Robin Hood and his men adopted a uniform of Lincoln green, with a scarlet cap, and each man was armed with a dagger and a basket-hilted sword, and a bow in his hand, and a quiver slung on his back, while the Captain always had a bugle horn with him to summon his followers about him.

One day when Robin Hood set out alone in hopes of meeting with some adventure, he reached a brook over which a narrow plank was laid to serve for a bridge,

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and just as he was going to cross it, a tall and handsome stranger appeared on the other side, and as neither seemed disposed to give way, they met in the middle of the bridge.

“Go back,” cried the stranger to Robin Hood, “or it will be the worse for you.”



But Robin Hood laughed at the idea of his giving way to anybody, and proposed they should each take an oak branch, and fight it out, and that whoever could manage to throw the other into the brook, should win the day. Accordingly they set to in right earnest, and after thrashing each other well, the stranger gave

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Robin Hood a blow on his head, which effectually pitched him into the water. When Robin Hood had waded back to the bank, he put his bugle to his lips, and blew several blasts till the forest rang again, and his followers came leaping from all directions to see what their Captain wanted. When he had told them how he had been served by the stranger, they would fain have ducked him, but Robin Hood who admired his bravery, proposed to him to join their band.

“Here’s my hand on it,” cried the stranger, delighted at the proposal. “Though my name is John Little, you shall find I can do great things.”

But Will Stutely, one of Robin’s merry-men, insisted upon it that he must be re-christened, so a feast was held, a barrel of ale broached, and the new comer’s name was changed from John Little to Little John, which nickname, seeing that he was near seven feet high, was a perpetual subject for laughter.

Not long after this, as Robin Hood sat one morning by the way-side, trimming his bow and arrows, there rode by a butcher with a basket of meat, who was hastening to market. After bidding him good morrow, Robin asked what he would take for the horse and the basket? The butcher, somewhat surprised, answered he would not care to sell them for less than four silver marks. “Do but throw your greasy frock into the

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bargain," said Robin, "and here's the money." Delighted at having concluded so good a bargain, the butcher lost no time in dismounting and throwing off his smock frock, which the outlaw instantly put on over his clothes, and then galloped away to Nottingham.

On reaching the town, Robin Hood put up his horse at an inn, and then went into the market, and uncovering his basket, began to sell its contents about five



times cheaper than all the other butchers; for Robin Hood neither knew nor cared about the price usually

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paid for meat, and it amused him vastly to see his stall surrounded by customers. The other butchers could not at first understand why everybody flocked to purchase his goods in preference to their's, but when they heard that he had sold a leg of pork for a shilling, they consulted together, and agreed that he must be some rich man's son who was after a frolic, or else a downright madman, and that they had better try and learn something more about him, or else he would ruin their business. So when the market was over, one of them invited Robin Hood to dine with their company. The Sheriff of Nottingham presided at the head of the table, while at the other end sat the innkeeper. The outlaw played his part as well as the rest of them, and when the dishes were removed, he called for more wine, telling them all to drink as much as they could carry, and he would pay the reckoning.

The Sheriff then turned to Robin Hood, and asked him whether he had any horned beasts to sell, for he was a miser, and hoped to profit by the new butcher's want of experience, and drive a good bargain with him. Robin Hood replied he had some two or three hundreds; whereupon the Sheriff said that as he wanted a few heads of cattle, he would like to ride over and look at them that same day. So Robin Hood flung down a handful of silver on the table, by way of

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farewell to his astonished companions, and set out for Sherwood forest with the Sheriff, who had mounted his palfrey, and provided himself with a bag of gold for his purchase. The outlaw was so full of jokes and merriment as they went along, that the Sheriff thought he had never fallen in with a pleasanter fellow. On a sudden, however, the Sheriff recollected that the woods were infested by Robin Hood and his band, and he said to his companion he hoped they would not meet with any of them, to which he only answered by a loud laugh. Presently they reached the forest when a herd of deers crossed their path. "How do you like my horned beasts, Master Sheriff?" enquired Robin. "To tell you the truth," replied the Sheriff, "I only half like your company, and wish myself away from hence." Then Robin Hood put his bugle to his mouth and blew three blasts, when about a hundred men with Little John at their head immediately surrounded them, and the latter enquired what his master wanted. "I have brought the Sheriff of Nottingham to dine with us," said Robin Hood. "He is welcome," quoth Little John, "and I hope he will pay well for his dinner." They then took the bag of gold from the luckless Sheriff, and spreading a cloak on the grass, they counted out three hundred pounds, after

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which Robin asked him if he would like some venison for dinner. But the Sheriff told him to let him go, or he would rue the day; so the outlaw desired his best compliments to his good dame, and wished him a pleasant journey home. But if Robin loved a joke, he often did a good turn to those who needed his assistance. Thus, he lent four hundred golden pounds to



Sir Rychard o' the Lee, who had mortgaged his lands of Wierysdale for that sum to St. Mary's Abbey, and

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who happened to pass through Sherwood forest on his way to York, to beg the abbot to grant him another year. Robin Hood, moreover, bid Little John accompany him as his squire. When they reached the city, the superior was seated in his hall, and declared to the brethren that if Sir Rychard did not appear before sunset his lands would be forfeited. Presently the knight of Wierysdale came in and pretended to beg for mercy, but the proud abbot spurned him, when Sir Rychard flung the gold at his feet and snatched away the deed, telling him if he had shown a little christian mercy he should not only have returned the money, but made a present to the abbey. And, indeed, the monks had to rue their mercilessness in the end, as Robin Hood levied a toll of eight hundred pounds upon them as they once passed through Sherwood forest, which enabled him to forgive Sir Rychard's debt, when that trusty knight came to discharge it at the appointed time.

Another time as Robin Hood was roaming through the forest, he saw a handsome young man, in a very elegant suit who was passing over the plain, singing blithely as he went. On the following morning he was surprised to see the same young man coming along with disordered clothes and dishevelled hair, and sighing deeply at every step, and saying: "Alack!

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and well-a-day!" Robin Hood having sent one of his men to fetch him, enquired what lay so heavy on his heart, and why he was so gladsome yesterday and so sorry to day. The young man pulled out his purse, and showed him a ring, saying: "I bought this yesterday to marry a maiden I have courted these seven long years, and this morning she is gone to church to wed another." "Does she love you?" said Robin. "She has told me so a hundred times," answered Allen-a-Dale, for such was the youth's name. "Tut man! then she is not worth caring for, if she be so fickle!" cried Robin Hood. "But she does not love him," interrupted Allen-a-Dale, "he is an old cripple quite unfit for such a lovely lass." "Then why does she marry him?" enquired Robin Hood. "Because the old knight is rich, and her parents insist upon it, and have scolded and raved at her till she is as meek as a lamb." "And where is the wedding to take place?" said Robin. "At our parish, five miles from hence," said Allen, "and the Bishop of Hereford, who is the bridegroom's brother, is to perform the ceremony."

Then without more ado, Robin Hood dressed himself up as a harper with a flowing white beard, and a dark coloured mantle, and bidding twenty-four of his men follow at a distance, he entered the church and took his

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place near the altar. Presently the old knight made his appearance, hobbling along, and handing in a maiden as fair as day, all tears and blushes, accompanied by her young companions strewing flowers. "This is not a fit match," said Robin Hood aloud, "and I forbid the marriage." And then, to the astonishment of the Bishop and of all present, he blew a blast on his horn, when four and twenty archers came leaping into the churchyard, and entered the building. Foremost amongst these was Allen-a-Dale, who presented his bow to Robin Hood. The outlaw by this time had cast off his cloak and false beard, and turning to the bride, said, "Now, pretty one, tell me freely whom you prefer for a husband—this gouty old knight, or one of these bold young fellows?" "Alas!" said the young maid, casting down her eyes, "Allen-a-Dale has courted me for seven long years, and he is the man I would choose." "Then now my good lord Bishop," said Robin, "prithee unite this loving pair before we leave the church." "That cannot be," said the Bishop, "the law requires they should be asked three times in the church." "If that is all," quoth Robin Hood, "we'll soon settle that matter." Then, pulling off the Bishop's gown, he dressed Little John up in it, and gave him the book and bid him ask them seven times

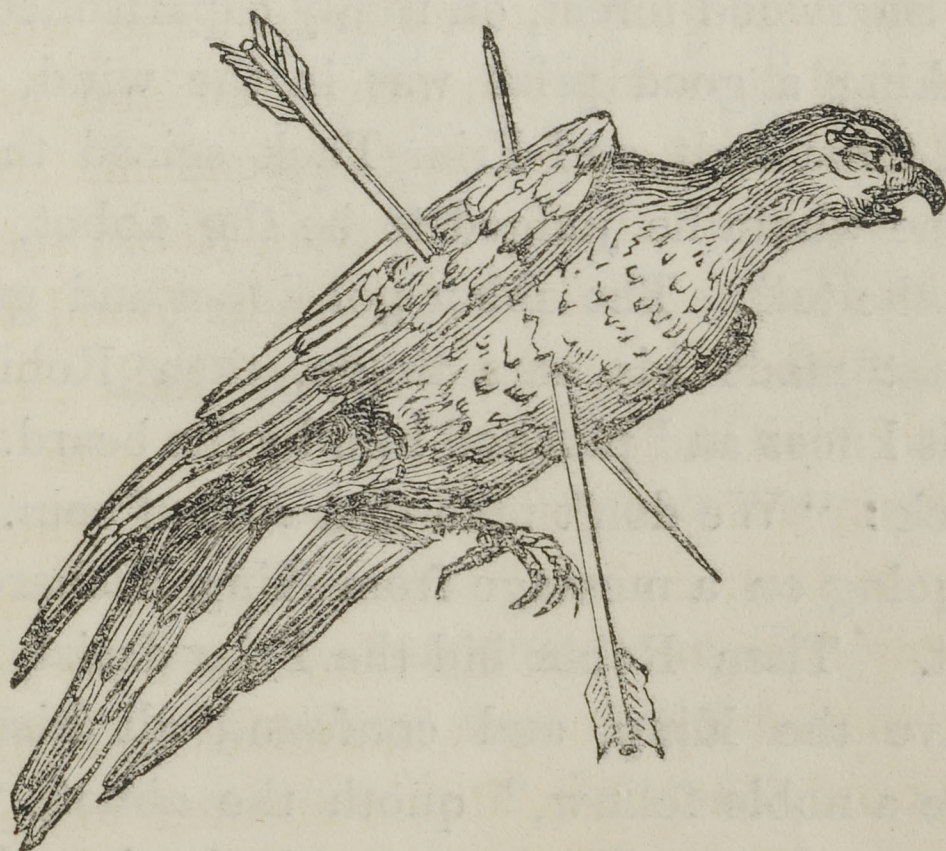
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in the church, less three should not be enough. The people could not help laughing, but none attempted to forbid the bans, for the bishop and his brother were glad to slink out of the church. Robin Hood gave away the maiden, and the whole company had a venison dinner in Sherwood forest; and from that day Allenda-Dale was a staunch friend to Robin Hood as long as he lived.

Robin Hood had often heard tell of the prowess of a certain Friar Tuck, who, having been expelled from Fountain's Abbey for his irregular conduct, lived in a rude hut he had built himself amidst the woods, and who was said to wield a quarter-staff and let fly an arrow better than any man in christendom. So being anxious to see how far this was true, Robin set off one morning for Fountain's Dale, where he found the friar rambling on the bank of the river Skell. The friar was a burly man at least six feet high, with a broad chest, and an arm fit for a blacksmith. The outlaw walked up to him, saying: "Carry me over this water, thou brawny friar, or thou hast not an hour to live." The friar tucked up his gown, and carried him over without a word, but when Robin seemed to be going, he cried out: "Stop, my fine fellow, and carry me over this water, or it shall breed you pain." Robin did so,

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and then said ; “ As you are double my weight, it is fair I should have two rides to your one, so carry me back again.” The friar again took Robin on his back, but on reaching the middle of the stream he pitched him into the water, saying : “ Now my fine fellow, let’s see whether you’ll sink or swim.” Robin swam to the bank, and said : “ I see you are worthy to be my match ; ” and then summoning his foresters by a blast of his bugle, he told the friar he was Robin Hood, and asked him to join his band. “ If there’s an archer amongst you that can beat me at the long bow, then



I’ll be your man,” quoth Friar Tuck. Then pointing

to a hawk on the wing, he added: "I'll kill it, and he who can strike it again before it falls, will be the better man of the two." Little John accepted the challenge. The shafts flew off, and when the dead bird was picked up, it was found that the friar's arrow had pinioned the hawk's wings to his sides, and that Little John's had transfixed it from breast to back. So Friar Tuck owned himself outdone, and joined Robin's merry men.

The whole country now rang with Robin Hood's lawless pranks, when one morning six priests passed through Sherwood forest, on richly caparisoned horses, and thinking a good prize was in the wind, the outlaws bid them halt, and Friar Tuck seized the bridle of the one whom he judged to be the abbot, and bid him pay the toll. The abbot got down and gave him a cuff that made his ears tingle, then Robin flung him on his knees and plucked him by the beard. Quoth Friar Tuck: "We don't take that sort of coin. "But we are going on a message from King Richard," said the abbot. Then Robin bid the Friar desist, saying: "God save the King, and confound all his foes!" "You are a noble fellow," quoth the abbot, "and if you and your men will give up this lawless life and become my archers, you shall have the King's pardon."

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He then opened his gown, and Robin Hood and his archers, guessing at once that Richard himself stood



before them, bent their knees to their liege lord, crying :
“ Long live King Richard.”

So Robin Hood accompanied the King to London, followed by fifty of his most faithful adherents, and here he assumed the title of Earl of Huntingdon, but he soon grew tired of the confinement of court, and asked permission to revisit the woods. The King

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granted him seven days, but when once he breathed the pure air of Sherwood again, he could not tear himself away; and when from old habit he sounded his bugle, he was surprised to see the signal answered by fourscore youths. Little John soon joined him, and he again became the leader of a band. King Richard was so enraged on hearing this, that he sent two hundred soldiers to reduce the rebel, and a desperate fight took place on a plain in the forest, when Robin Hood was wounded by an arrow, and removed to Kirkley's Nunnery, where the treacherous prioress suffered him to bleed to death. Seeing his end fast approaching, he called to Little John, and begged him to remove him to the woods, and there poor Robin Hood died as he had lived, beneath the green trees, and was buried according to his wish. The stone that marked the spot bore the following inscription:—

“Here, underneath this little stone,
Lies Robert, Earl of Huntingdon.
Ne'er archer was as he so good;
And people called him 'Robin Hood.'
Such outlaws as he and his men
Will England never see again.”

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