

***Robin Hood
and
Other Outlaw Tales***

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Illustrations

The illustrations are taken mainly from Joseph Ritson, *Robin Hood: A Collection of all the Ancient Poems, Songs, and Ballads, now extant relative to that Celebrated English Outlaw*, 2 volumes (London: William Pickering, 1832; first published 1795), with wood engravings by Thomas and John Bewick; and John Mathew Gutch, *A Lytell Gest of Robin Hode with other Ancient & Modern Ballads and Songs Relating to this Celebrated Yeoman*, adorned with cuts by F. W. Fairholt, 2 volumes (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1847). Volume I of Gutch includes at the end a second version of *The Lytell Geste* to which are added wood engravings by Bastin. Bastin mainly creates forest scenes beneath great oak trees.

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General Introduction

I. An Elusive, Enduring Hero

Six hundred years is a long time for a hero to endure. When in the 1370s William Langland mentioned the popularity of "tymes of Robyn Hode" (*Piers Plowman*, B V.395), he associated them with Sloth, but the energy of the hero and the stories have continued to the present; all the modern media constantly recreate the outlaw myth with all its direct, amusing, natural, romantic, and subliminally political vigor.

Only King Arthur of the medieval heroes has had such longevity, but there are striking differences. One is that where Arthur represents authority under some serious and ultimately tragic form of pressure, the Robin Hood tradition always presents, in many varied forms, resistance to authority — the two heroes in a real sense are the reflex of each other. But the differences between the outlaw tradition and that of Arthur are not only a matter of content. Where the noble adventures of the Round Table have often been enshrined in monumental prose and verse in many a prestigious genre, the stories of Robin Hood have always been more ephemeral — songs, short plays, proverbs, and place names; in our time, TV serials and films (some unmemorable) have been the media that have transmitted a tradition which is, like the outlaw himself, both fugitive and flexible, hard to pin down, whether in a sheriff's jail or under the ponderousness of canonical texts.

The hero and his myth are remarkably elusive: Chaucer once mentions "joly Robin" (*Troilus and Criseyde*, V.1174), probably a glimpse of the outlaw at a distance, but the author has weightier business in that poem; Shakespeare's *As You Like It* mentions in its first scene the forest myth, but clearly intends to separate itself from and also to outclass the popularity of Robin Hood on the Elizabethan stage. In *Ivanhoe* the hero has a limited part; Keats and Tennyson both wrote powerfully about the outlaw, but in minor parts of their work. Even today, when so much is edited, printed and reprinted, there is no anthology of the major Robin Hood texts readily available on the bookshop shelves. But against all that canonical marginality, almost every day a newspaper refers to the hero in a headline, and films, plays, pantomimes, and television productions continue to recreate this most volatile of heroes.

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2. Outlaw Parallels

In terms of the literary and educational industry, as well as in thematic essence, Robin Hood remains an outlaw. Eric Hobsbawm, in his classic study *Bandits* (1985), takes him as the archetype of the social bandit, the man, and sometimes woman, thrown up by circumstances who becomes a focus of resistance to an imposed and oppressive authority. All around the world they occur, whether in reality or fiction: Brazil's Lampião and Sicily's Salvatore Giuliano as well as the better-known Jesse James, Ned Kelly, and William Tell. But Robin Hood is not the only outlaw to emerge from medieval Britain, and several of the earlier versions may well have played a part in the development of his own tradition.

The late eleventh-century historical hero Hereward left a story well-known in Latin (*Gesta Herewardi*) and also in widespread references in English (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, for instance). Composed in the mid-twelfth century (the sole surviving manuscript dates from the thirteenth century), three hundred years before the earliest datable Robin Hood text, *Hereward the Wake* prefigures a number of character types, settings, plot elements, and themes found in the later Robin Hood tradition. There is the hero himself, banished and outlawed at age eighteen, by King William I. After adventures in Cornwall, Ireland, and Flanders, he returns to England to avenge the murder of his brother and to reclaim his confiscated ancestral home. Like Robin Hood, he lives in the forest (chapters xix and xxvii); he forms a band of "fugitives, the condemned and disinherited" (chapter xvi); he wields a deadly bow (chapters xx and xxvii); he dons disguises to reconnoitre the enemy camp as a potter (chapter xxiv) and as a fisherman (chapter xxv); he engages in trickery, shoeing his horses backwards (chapter xxvii); he is captured and imprisoned but is rescued by his faithful companions (chapter xxxv); and, in the end, he receives the king's pardon and reclaims his estate (chapter xxxvi). Here then are the basic ingredients of the later Robin Hood tradition. There are differences — his noble status, his inheritance problems, and his blatant nationalism, and although these are lacking in the early ballads and plays they do crop up later in the Tudor period and beyond.

Another early outlaw tale is *Eustache the Monk*, which survives in a unique manuscript, dated 1284. Based on the life of a historical figure, Eustache the Monk (c. 1170–1217), the 2307-line story in Old French rhymed couplets recounts the adventures of the French nobleman who was unjustly outlawed and dispossessed of his lands by the Count of Boulogne. After his father is killed by a rival, Eustache leaves his religious order to seek justice from Count Rainald of Dammartin. When his champion loses a judicial trial by combat, Eustache's inheritance is seized by the count, forcing him to flee into the forest as an outlaw. To exact his revenge, Eustache, often in disguise, sallies out of the forest and harasses the count or his men

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by robbing them of money or horses. A number of these activities closely resemble episodes in the Robin Hood ballads, strongly suggesting that they are sources rather than analogues. In addition to the capture and release of the Count of Boulogne, which closely parallels Robin's capture of the Sheriff of Nottingham in the *Gest*, we have another pair of episodes in which those who tell the truth are allowed to keep their money, while those who lie are robbed. This game of "truth or consequences" underlies two major scenes in the *Gest* involving Sir Richard at the Lee and the monk of St. Mary's Abbey in York. Other similarities include the stratagems of the trickster, the frequent use of disguise, and anti-clerical satire.

Another early outlaw who in some way influenced the Robin Hood tradition was Fouke le Fitz Waryn, grandson of Warin de Metz who settled on the Welsh borders after the Norman Conquest. The story in Anglo-Norman survives in a miscellany of some sixty works in Latin, French, and English, dated c. 1325–40. The prose romance is based on a thirteenth-century poetic version, now lost, and another version in Middle English is similarly lost. The first third of the ancestral romance (omitted in this edition) traces the history of the Fitz Waryn family from the Norman Conquest to the late twelfth century, and recounts the opportunistic marriages of Fouke's grandfather, Warin de Metz, and his father, Fouke le Brun, to two propertied heiresses, resulting in their lordship over Whittington and Ludlow. As the first part ends, the family loses control of both properties. The last two-thirds of the romance, which is included in English translation in this edition, covers the career of Fouke III, who after a four-year period (1200–03) of rebellion and outlawry, finally wins back his lands and titles. Of interest here is the outlaw narrative, consisting of the now familiar elements. After an argument with King John, who refuses to return his lands and titles, Fouke renounces his homage and leaves the court. When fifteen of the king's knights pursue Fouke and order him to return, he responds by killing fourteen, leaving one alive to report the incident (not unlike Robin's *Progress to Nottingham*). Fleeing to Brittany, Fouke is outlawed and stripped of his remaining lands. Returning to England, he hides in the forests, assembles a group of loyal knights, and plays a deadly game of hide and seek with the king's agents. Like Hereward and Eustache, Fouke and his second-in-command, John de Rampaigne, don various disguises — monk, merchant, collier — to avoid detection and to gather information. Three scenes in particular remind us of Robin Hood: like Little John in the *Gest*, Fouke's brother John waylays a caravan of merchants travelling through the forest and delivers them into Fouke's hands, and, as in *Eustache* and the *Gest*, there is a test of "truth or consequences"; in another episode, King John, like the sheriff in the *Gest*, is tricked into the forest, where he is captured and later released after swearing an oath; and finally, Fouke's brother William, after being severely wounded, begs his brother, as Little John begs Robin in the *Gest*, to kill him. To be

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sure there are significant differences between *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* and Robin Hood, but the core of the outlaw narrative is substantially the same.

Although the careers of Eustache and Fouke, particularly the resistance to King John, sound familiar to film-goers, in fact these features were added to the original Robin Hood story. The hero of the early ballads, and indeed many of the later texts, was never dated in the time of King John. That was first suggested by John Major in a history of Britain published in 1521, and it seems to have been part of a general movement towards making Robin more respectable. If, like Fouke, he opposed a bad king as a dispossessed lord, then his resistance was in a real sense in support of the existing structures of authority — very different from the guerrilla tactics against forest laws and sheriff's rule which are found elsewhere in the medieval texts.

3. The Historical Robin Hood

All these analogous heroes, though, were historical figures, however much their stories became mythologized in the retelling. It remains an item of faith, or perhaps obsession, among many modern commentators that Robin Hood too was a real person, and they believe that enough careful attention to the records will produce a real Robin Hood who might, like the equally obscure King Arthur, be the real figure behind the myths — or legends, as such historians would want to call them. It is true (and usually ignored by the modern historians) that the earliest references to the hero all assume he was a real person amplified in story, an English Wallace, it might seem, especially because the earliest chroniclers who mention Robin are all Scottish. Part I of this edition shows how Wyntoun in the 1420s spoke of "waythemen," forest outlaws, who were "commendit gud" by the populace; and Bower a little later also understood them to be real outlaws who were also popular heroes; Major, even though he gentrified the hero, never displaced him into the realms of myth. Such an attitude was continued through the English commentators Grafton in the 1560s and Stow in the late sixteenth century, and the antiquarians joined in this process. Just as Camden found the cross that allegedly marked Arthur's grave at Glastonbury, so he wrote about the epitaph for Robin found at Kirklees and soon enough there was a stone-cut version to be seen and even a drawing of the grave (Holt, 1989, pp. 41–43). By 1600 there existed, preserved in a Sloane manuscript in the British Library, a prose *Life* of Robin Hood (discussed in Dobson and Taylor, 1976, pp. 286–87), and the first major edition of the ballads, by Joseph Ritson in 1795, was prefaced with a long "Life," with footnotes, references, and all the equipment of biography in the age of Boswell.

Far from being history, these accounts are a tissue of non-historical materials

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straight from folklore or fiction. The Sloane *Life* is largely a reworking of some of the ballads, especially the lengthy fifteenth-century *Gest of Robyn Hode*. The epitaphs and illustrations of the grave show a distinctly literary inheritance, and the high point of Ritson's "Life" is his reprint of William Stukeley's genealogy of the hero which makes him descend from the nephew of William the Conqueror, and at the same time considers him a Saxon patriot. By contrast to this florid nonsense, the early chronicle references, though they know of the popular story, have a spare reference to the hero that, like the Welsh Annals in the case of Arthur, might be thought to imply authenticity. Though nothing in the texts can be traced to the thirteenth century, where the "real Robin Hood" historians would place him, there is some support for such an original date in that Wyntoun located his "waythemen" in 1283 and Bower put them back to the 1260s. Although there might well have been other reasons for that (to associate him in Wyntoun with Wallace and in Bower with Simon de Montfort) it does indicate their sense of the distant nature of the tradition.

That idea of antiquity and the prolific appearance of the name do not, however, suggest that there was one "original" Robin Hood, but that by then the name refers generally to someone who was in some way outside or against the law as it was being imposed. That interpretation is strongly suggested by evidence from another area, not considered by historians because it is neither individual nor criminal in orientation, but in fact providing by far the largest number of early references to the hero.

4. Plays and Games

If the existing references before 1600 are gathered (Knight, Appendix, 1994) one is struck by the remarkable number of plays and games of Robin Hood, up and down the country. From Exeter (1426–27) to Aberdeen (1438), from Norfolk (1441) to Wiltshire (1432), the length and breadth of Britain appears to have been populated with annual ritual activities focused on the hero. No scripts have certainly survived, though there are a few short plays (see pp. 269–95) that may derive from this widespread play and game tradition, focused on ritual-like activities that were non-literary like the many pageants and parades that still engage people's attention and emotions. There would be, in early summer, a procession, led by Robin, with people dressed in green and bearing forest symbols such as branches or garlands of leaves. They would go from one village to another, or one part of the town to another, and collect money, usually in return for some entertainment, for example, a short play featuring a fight and a rescue. The money would be used for the community, for mending the roads in one case, and although the church was involved in the events, it was effectively a civil activity involving the churchwardens rather than the priest.

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There seems to have been real prestige involved in playing the hero, as people waited years for their turn and even handed down that right from father to son, hence the surname "Robinhood" found on some occasions.

None of this involves resistance to authority; the whole process is firmly within the law. Robin is the figurehead of a celebration of the combination of the natural and the communal. But if we are to believe the evidence of the very early texts, the pageants would present Robin's triumph against the hostile forces of law and order which came from a distance: the sheriff, the visiting forester like Guy of Gisborne, the oppressive abbot, but not the friendly grass-roots friar. With this fictional capacity for resistance, it is not surprising that on occasions Robin Hood became the actual as well as symbolic leader in carnivals that sometimes turned to riot at places as far apart as Wednesbury in the West Midlands (1497) and Scottish Edinburgh (1561). Even though gentrification was in full flow, in the seventeenth century this social-bandit capacity was well remembered and gave rise to the remarkable 1661 play *Robin Hood and His Crew of Souldiers*, in which the radical Robin Hood concedes defeat to the newly restored royalist authorities.

Two important conclusions arise from a study of the early plays and games. One is that they are so widely spread. As a hero of natural communalism, Robin can emerge anywhere and even displace the existing carnival hero. In Aberdeen in 1508 he is described as replacing the previous ritual figure the Abbot of Bon Accord. The early references and tales have a much wider spread than modern Nottingham and its tourist industry would care to admit. For Wyntoun the outlaws are in Inglewood, near Carlisle, and also in Barnsdale. The *Gest* understands Barnsdale to be in Yorkshire, and that has been a common view through the ages, but there is also a Barnsdale in Rutland (between Nottingham and Rockingham), with many local references to the outlaw. Ballads and some prose stories make Robin active throughout the Midlands and the North of England, while place names and place associations locate Robin across most of Britain, with an apparent preponderance in the Southwest, the North Central Midlands, Yorkshire, and Lowland Scotland.

The other feature of interest arising from the plays and games is the clear sense that of all the genres in which the tradition appears, the original and in many ways the authentic genre is theater, here best called performance because of its deep informality. However long Robin Hood stories may become (and there are some three-decker novels) their essence is dramatic: an opening in the forest; a departure or meeting; an encounter in which Robin or one of the outlaws is in danger (often brought about by trickery or disguise as well as courage and skill); a harmonious ending, with either a feast or an agreement.

This structure is ideally suited to the stage. With exciting action and little dialogue, the combination of physical danger and spontaneous heroism in the Robin Hood

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stories has always been popular with actors and audiences. There is a remarkable consistency between the dynamic early playlets or ballads and the modern episode on TV; and there are many structural parallels between the composite ballads like the *Gest* or *A True Tale of Robin Hood* and the full-length epic film.

It may well be that the early ballads have the plays as their sources, rather than the other way round as literary scholars have usually thought. But the ballads soon asserted themselves as a natural genre for the myth, with their quick dramatic action and their effective use of poetic suggestion, whether violent or naturally beautiful in its form. Our good fortune is that these ballads flourished in a period when at least some were recorded, and so were preserved powerful versions of the early outlaw in his pre-gentrified form as the English social bandit.

5. Early Ballads

From before 1600 a small number of important ballads survive and some later texts can be confidently traced to that early period (for details see the separate introductions to each ballad in *Early Ballads and Tales*). The first ballads to survive are *Robin Hood and the Monk*, c. 1450, and *Robin Hood and the Potter*, c. 1500. Both quite full (longer than the later broadsides), they present a forest hero who outwits the forces of the town and the abbey, gaining money and property from the sheriff. Another version of the same structure is in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. The Robin of these texts inhabits the forest with his band; when alone, an outlaw is at risk and needs cunning or heroics to survive, but both are available in plenty. These ballads are fiercer than the friendly Robin of later days — Guy of Gisborne, a monk, and the sheriff all die at the outlaw's hands, though the Potter story is less aggressive and the sheriff survives. Also, there is no charity as such: they rob the rich but give to themselves. Donations to the poor only emerge when Robin is a gentleman, able to afford such charity.

These ballads, and the early plays associated with them, outline a medieval social bandit in full vigor; that is also the basis of the *Gest*, which is a composite of a number of ballad stories and might well be termed a ballad epic. Its date is now thought to be somewhat later than the optimistic c. 1400 of earlier commentaries, and it represents, not unlike Malory's *Monte Dantur* in Caxton's hands, the intersection of popular manuscript materials and the new technology of printing. The *Gest* not only collects comic and violent ballad stories about the heroic forest band, it also adds a narrative about how they help a distressed knight and it does, accordingly, move Robin a little towards gentrification. He holds court in the forest consciously like King Arthur, and if he does not dole out money to the poor, at least

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be "dyde pore men moch god." That comment follows the tragic end of the story, unique until the later survival of the ballad about Robin's death and itself indicating the scope and weight of the story in the *Gest*.

Set as they are in forests close to towns, and resisting consistently what are felt to be the incursive forces represented by sheriff, abbot, and the urban market, these ballads clearly value the natural, the communal, and what is felt to be the organic against aspects of the new centralizing and legislating world. Ideals for these texts lie in the forest, always glimpsed at the beginning and end, in the community that the outlaws form and negotiate as free parties, and in physical strength, skill, and a cheerful cunning that resembles the folkloric art of the trickster. The context is not irreligious — Robin especially has a devotion to Mary, rather than the established church. Nor is it absolutely revolutionary: the king himself is honored and obeyed, if sometimes eluded. But the outlaws do represent clear aspects of resistance and dissidence, and many notes are struck in common with Langland's direct satire and the ironic critiques of Chaucer.

The audience has been a matter of speculation. Some have thought it was close to the discontented peasantry who were central to the 1381 revolt (Hilton, 1976); another view saw the ballads as a set of general complaints from the lower gentry (Holt, 1989). Neither party has accounted for the lack of agrarian and tenurial issues, apart from the unusual episode of the knight in the *Gest*. Another commentator has seen the dynamic of the ballads in the struggle for power in towns themselves and the forest as a fantasy land of freedom (Tardif, 1983). As a result of these debates there now seems general agreement that the audience was not single, that it represented the social mobility of the late Middle Ages, and the myth was diffused across a wide variety of social groupings who were alive to the dangers of increasingly central authority, whether over town, village, or forest (Coss, 1985). Dobson and Taylor have accepted Holt's concept of a "lower gentry" audience, but add: "It seems likely, therefore, that the earliest 'rhymes' of Robin Hood were disseminated not simply through the great households, but also through the medium of fairs where minstrels played to popular audiences" (1995, p. 40).

Robin Hood poems were not the only medieval texts to deal with outlaws in the forest, and Early Ballads and Tales also provides several analogues. *Robyn and Gaudelyn* is a mysterious short ballad, or perhaps lyric, which may be close to both the mythic and the tragic heart of the tradition. *Adam Bell* is a northern parallel telling of three heroes from the Carlisle region in a long and strong story, somewhat simpler in its resolution than the *Gest*; though it was very popular in the broadside period, it is a poem without the flexibility and openness to interpretation that has kept alive the Robin Hood tradition. Equally monologic is the heroic romance of *Gomelyn*, depicting a rough-hewn distressed gentleman from the late fourteenth

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century, who becomes an outlaw chief as a means of regaining his patrimony. The story is both colloquial and concerned with property and is notable partly for being broadly parallel to the knightly section of the *Gest* and also for generating a hero who in later stories actually joins Robin Hood (see *Robin Hood and Will Scarlet*).

These analogues also share with the early Robin Hood texts the same sense that, although they are written down, they are close to oral performance. Rhyme is rarely perfect throughout, and half rhyme is very common. The absence of rhyme in three stanzas in *Robin Hood and the Potter*, lines 93–96, 191–94, 249–52, is probably due to imperfect copying, though the rhyme elsewhere in this ballad is quite erratic. Occasionally the stanza form changes, and not because the scribe or printer has misplaced a line or two: there are numerous six-line stanzas and at least one apparently genuine stanza of five lines (*Adam Bell*, lines 293–97) and one of seven (*Robin Hood and the Potter*, lines 219–25).

With these parallels and on this strong base of a few precious early texts, the tradition of Robin Hood narratives develops. The two manuscript ballads were not printed in the seventeenth century, though *Robin Hood and the Butcher*, a reworking of the *Potter*, reprinted in Ritson (II, 27–32), is a popular broadside and garland text. The few surviving early ballads must represent only a part, probably a small part, of the widespread material referred to by the chroniclers. In a number of cases it is possible to see that ballads surviving later must have had forms at least as early as the sixteenth century, often because they were mentioned or pillaged in the process of gentrification, which, historically speaking, varies the social bandit structure of the early ballads before that tradition continues and develops in printed form in broadside and garland.

6. The Distressed Gentleman

The sixteenth-century chroniclers are the first to give Robin Hood a raised social position and a historical setting which permits his resistance to authority to seem a form of noble behavior in both moral and social terms. This may be in part because Robin was in actuality being dignified: Hall's *Chronicle* tells of two occasions when Henry VIII entered the tradition, once in 1510 when he and his friends played outlaws to excite the ladies, and then in 1515 when a formal Robin Hood pageant entertained the court as it was, very appropriately, passing up Shooters Hill (Knight, 1994, pp. 109–10).

The literary gentrification process took off in the 1590s when the booming London theater, hungry for new subjects, adapted the popular dramatic materials long associated with the hero. At first Robin was just used marginally as a filler in Peele's

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Edward I., where one scene is a Robin Hood play game, or as a defining alterity as in Greene's *George a Greene*, where Robin Hood, the possible rebel, plays second fiddle to George, loyal to both king and town (Nelson, 1973). It was Anthony Munday, friend of Stow the historian, who conceived of the dramatic value of gentrification and told a tragedy of Robin which established the main features of the newly ennobled outlaw. His land is taken, just like that of King Richard and (as in the *Gest*), his reinstatement at court is only the prologue to his betrayal and death.

Full-blown tragedy of a sometimes ponderous kind suits Munday's somber theme, although the comic and tricksterish spirit survives through the presence of John Skelton, presented as waggish poet to Henry VIII and playing both the interlocutor and Friar Tuck. There are two striking features: the presence of Marian, the forest name for Matilda Fitzwater, Robin's consort; now that he is ennobled he needs a lady to provide heirs, while the social bandit is almost always partnerless. If she is in the cast we almost always have a gentrified story, at least until modern times. More surprising is the fact that Prince John is not consistently the villain: Robin's enemies, and the king's, are the corrupt medieval Catholic clergy. Prince John is more like an amiable nuisance, a low-life Laertes to Robin's Hamlet, lecherous but inept, at least until he destroys Marian in *The Death*.

Munday's reconstruction of the myth had many effects. It was dissipated through Martin Parker's *A True Tale of Robin Hood*; it influenced Ben Jonson's ambitious but sadly uncompleted masque *The Sad Shepherd*; and it even, by emulation, drove Shakespeare, writer for a rival company, to produce his own forest outlaw story in *As You Like It*. Most importantly, Munday inspired, directly or indirectly, the metamorphosis by which the story has been reduced in political tension and become an all purpose myth, in that Robin in many later stories, other than the ballads, is more or less a gentleman, never really one of the common people and never at all opposing true hierarchy. That diminution — or perhaps emasculation — of the social-bandit story no doubt has made it seem more acceptable in the context of commercial productions such as the pantomimes and musicals of the nineteenth century and the major films of this century. But before deplored such mercantile conservatism it should be remembered that the village Robin Hood of the plays and games was always capable of being fully involved with the orderly processes of conservative society and only in certain conflicted contexts developed his radical potential.

If gentrification brought the Robin Hood story out of the forests of popular dissent into the halls of settled and conservative society, this did not do much for the story in artistic terms: Munday's play is the best of them (apart from Jonson's splendid fragment), and the dire ballad operas of the eighteenth century, just like Tennyson's *The Foresters* and the feeble Georgian playlets of the early twentieth century, are testimonies to what happens when an art form lacks an inner thematic and political

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tension. Gentrification was a powerful current, but until the nineteenth century it was not found in the mass forms of the tradition. Indeed, one of the main weaknesses of early gentrification texts was that they hardly used any of the traditional and vigorous stories, and so their plots are without the demotic energy and the mythic dimension that derived from the popular forest hero. But that lack of interaction worked both ways: without any major contamination from the distressed gentleman, the popular forms of the ballad in print remained generally true to the medieval image of the hero and his saga.

7. Broadsides, Garlands, and the Mass-Market Outlaw

Of the thirty-eight ballads collected in the 1882–89 edition of Child's great *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, thirty-six appear in the printed tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. This early collection of ballads provided a great source for Robin Hood material. His tradition is the most popular of all the broadside themes: there were plenty of miraculous births, horrid murders, and sea monsters, but they all describe different events and people. The name and fame of Robin Hood are the strongest single focus in the whole wealth of popular singing and reading matter that was sold through the streets of London and sent up and down the country by cart, coach, and hawkers on foot.

The partially autonomous nature of the printed ballads is indicated by the fact that there is relatively little continuity between the late medieval Robin Hood ballads and the staple diet of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Of the early ballads in this anthology, none appeared in broadside or garland form. This is partly a matter of length: the *Gest* and *Adam Bell* are printed texts, but far too long to make into a one-page broadside, or to fit into a garland. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, and *Robin Hood and the Potter* would also, at more than two hundred lines, have been too long. It may be that their medieval themes did not suit the newly urbanized audience; the only one that does appear in print is the town-oriented *Robin Hood and the Potter* in a shortened and adapted form as *Robin Hood and the Butcher*.

Though the form and topics of the broadside and garland ballads differ from the earliest group of Robin Hood texts, the themes of the later ballads show many connections with the medieval period. The largest thematic grouping of Robin Hood's ballads is basically very simple in plot, telling of an encounter between one or more of the outlaws and some stranger. Quite often it is just a fight, which they all enjoy — as in the revealingly entitled *Robin Hood's Delight* (Ritson II, 120–25). Sometimes after the fight the opponent joins the band. Little John, Will Scarlet,

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Friar Tuck, and even Maid Marian become forest outlaws in this way. And Robin never does conspicuously well in the fight: he is sometimes beaten, occasionally humiliated, but usually manages to scrape a draw. His physical quality is not his main power (though he is almost always the best at the skill of archery); his most valued quality is that of a natural leader. The conflicts over leadership and the arguments of the early ballads have been forgotten: Robin's fame is enough for anyone to join his band, and the "Robin Hood meets his match" conflict turns into communalism.

Another notable category is the "prequel," ballads which seem to have been constructed to explain some feature of the tradition. Examples appear to be *Robin Hood and Little John*, which explains how the powerful outlaw joined the existing band: this cannot be ancient because it contradicts the fact that he and Robin alone are mentioned from the very start by the chroniclers. Similarly, ballads tell how Allin a Dale, Will Scarlet, and Marian herself joined the band. Robin's own prequel is given in the early *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham*, which tells how he was provoked into becoming an outlaw.

A few ballads rework the anti-clerical feeling of the old days, and Protestant England obviously enjoys robbing a bishop. But the previous skepticism about kings and the definite hatred of sheriffs is almost completely absent in those days of centralized power. Parker's *A True Tale* ends with a very interesting and sometimes uneasy set of reflections of the need to contain outlawry these days. A small number of ballads seem to preserve quite ancient themes: *The Death of Robin Hood* has some aura of magic and mystery to it, especially in the fragmentary version preserved in Bishop Percy's manuscript, dated at 1650 or just before. *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham* has a ferocity only found in the very early manuscript ballads, as the young Robin shoots down the foresters who mistreat him, and *Robin Hood's Fishing* has economic and social concerns that seem like a maritime update of *Robin Hood and the Potter*. But if those texts look backwards, some ballads are definitely in a newer mode: *Robin Hood and Maid Marian* is for the most part gentrified in theme and tone (with some popular elements), and there is a somewhat inactive and literary mood visible in *Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow*.

Somewhere between old plain style and courtly degeneration lies the style and approach of the professional balladeers. The texts that have clearly been through their hands have the internal rhyme in the third line, giving a pattern-like effect quite foreign to the earlier ballads, often supported by a repeated refrain which implies that singing was the expected medium of delivery. This seems to have been a development: the early texts often lack refrains, and Bronson reports that there were remarkably few tunes attached to Robin Hood ballads (1966, III, 13-14). The language of the broadsides also in some cases moves away from the direct and lucid language of the early ballads towards the cant and catchphrases of the contemporary stage and journalism, as in *Robin Hood and Little John* or, briefly, *Robin Hood and*

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Maid Marian.

Many of the ballads appeared in single-sheet broadside, with strong, even crude, woodcuts at the top of the page. Convenience often superseded art: one woodcut might do for more than one ballad from the same workshop, and sometimes the text was trimmed to fit the sheets. These sold for a halfpenny or a penny, and fortunately for us both Samuel Pepys and Antony Wood were compulsive collectors. Others came later into the safe hands of Francis Douce. Alongside this wealth in the ancient libraries can also be found a physically smaller, yet in its time a more up-market Robin Hood source, which is the garland. Named because it was felt to be an intertwined series of poems honoring the hero, the garlands were a printer's marketing strategy, a kind of Robin Hood omnibus of its day. The early ones just collect twelve or sixteen ballads, and sometimes the same printer will add more in a second edition. But in the eighteenth century they are more likely to have full-page wood engravings and even a lengthy introduction purporting to link these together into a "Life," so suggesting an audience more intellectually ambitious than those who just wanted a broadside text to sing to a well known tune.

Some of the ballads have many versions, such as *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*; others, like *Robin Hood and Maid Marian*, survive in single priceless copies. This was not a gentrified market. In garland form, the ballads went on appearing well into the nineteenth century, especially in the provinces. They overlap the sophisticated novels and liberal romanticism of the reshaped Robin Hood, just as they go back to crabbed manuscripts of the Middle Ages. If it is one of the enigmas of the Robin Hood tradition that we know so little about the language and action of the play game, a compensating richness lies in the wealth of our knowledge about the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century popular ballad tradition, firing as it does its broadsides of pithy outlaw poetry and wearing its garlands of heroic vitality.

In 1993 a new source appeared, and the British Library acquired a manuscript containing nothing but twenty-two Robin Hood ballads. In a pamphlet published by Bernard Quaritch, the bookseller that acquired the manuscript, Arthur Freeman suggested that the date of the handwriting is 1640-70 (1993, p. 5); the British Library experts propose 1650-74, with a preference for the later part of the period. Freeman argued that all the texts preceded those of Child and so should have editorial priority. His dating would make this speculative: the later date makes it fairly unlikely. In any case, collation suggests that a number of the texts are less than authoritative: full details can be found in *Robin Hood: The Foresters Manuscript* (Knight, 1998), but a summary of the main textual issues is appropriate to justify the present volume's treatment of the manuscript.

Some ballads are pastiches of existing texts: *Robin Hood and the Bride* is a weak version of *Robin Hood and Allin a Dole*, and *Robin Hood and the Old Wife* is a variant

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of *Robin Hood and the Bishop*, with the sheriff playing the hostile role. It is conceivable that this was the original, linking to the sheriff's role in the short plays, and that the *Bishop* version is a post-reformation redirection of hostility. But the frequency of pastiche among the early texts in this manuscript makes this an insecure hypothesis. *Robin Hood and the Sherriffe* is a skillful combination of the Little John and sheriff episode in the *Gest* with *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*, a compilation that cannot have been ancient, since the ballad is clearly fairly late. In a similar maneuver *Robin Hood and the King* links the king-in-disguise scene in the *Gest* to the end of Parker's *A True Tale*. If these ballads are suspect because of innovation, others are too faithful to have prime status. The last four ballads in the manuscript appear to be copied from a version of the 1670 garland, and several other ballads appear to be lightly edited versions of existing broadsides.

But in two cases the manuscript has valuable texts, and accordingly they are used in this edition. *Robin Hood and Queen Catherin* is in Child's best text a jerky and sometimes incoherent story (the outlaws' aliases are thoroughly obscure) and his version of *Robin Hood's Fishing* is unclear in the final naval action. Both of these ballads seem to have been clumsily cut to fit a broadside sheet, and the Forresters manuscript has better texts. It also has a version of *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham* (called *Robin Hood and the Forresters*, the first in the source, which provides it its name) that has some better readings than Child's best, but in a manuscript with so much editing and such skilled pastiching it seems bad practice to use a text at best marginally superior. In the case of the other two, the existing texts are so deficient that the Forresters text is worth publishing even if it is edited; this does not in fact appear to be the case as in every instance its good readings and passages appear to be behind the awkwardness of the existing broadsides and it may well be that the manuscript compiler had access to the sources used by the printers of the broadsides themselves. Other interesting Forresters texts are not used here because they seem derived from the texts found in Child. Though the Forresters manuscript has a full and lucid version of *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*, this seems to be an editorialized expansion of the existing texts, and is not employed as copy text in this edition. Similarly, the lengthy version of *Robin Hood and the Pinder of Wakefield*, which Freeman (p. 7) feels to be an important and "entirely new text," seems to be a literary composition showing knowledge of the play *George a Greene* (c. 1592), with some influence from the prose history of the *Pinner* which was in print by 1632, though the only existing copy is from 1706. As this ballad seems "entirely new" in the sense of having a rather late and literary character, it seems preferable to continue to use the text printed by Child from a Wood broadside, which appears to derive from a version that pre-exists Greene's play: a very similar text to this is also in the Forresters manuscript (only the *Pinder* has two ballads, the longer one

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being numbered in the text as 10b).

It remains unclear what were the compiler's intentions. The manuscript looks in some ways like a hand-written garland, and the relation of the final texts to the 1670 garland suggests the link. Yet the first part of the manuscript seems to avoid deliberately the well known versions, which professional garlandeers used, and has rather a set of unique and in some cases, it would seem, nonce-created texts. That suggests someone who is both a connoisseur and a practitioner of the ballads, more in the mold of Sir Walter Scott than the compiler of the Percy manuscript, but whatever speculations are possible about the production of the Forresters manuscript, in this context its importance is that it has some valuable texts for printing or at least collation, and also offers important evidence for the renewed interest in the English outlaw in the early part of the Restoration period, as also seen in the 1661 play, the contemporary *Life*, the 1663 garland, and the number of broadsides that come from this period and so parallel the activity of the Forresters manuscript.

8. Towards the Modern Robin Hood

By the end of the eighteenth century the Robin Hood tradition was in many ways a museum piece. Gentrification had run into the sands of ballad opera, a sub-genre notable for puerile humor and, despite its bourgeois context, servile aristocratism. The early ballads themselves had been excavated first by Thomas Percy (though he only reprinted *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* of the six in his manuscript) and then in 1795 by Joseph Ritson. But much as Ritson admired Robin, it was for reasons without a future: he admired what he saw as a radical spirit, but that view would not survive the widespread revulsion from the French Revolution, and his feeling that here lay the English version of noble savagery would soon be swamped by the more genteel rusticity of the lake poets. And yet, despite those ill-fated positions, from the combination of the gentrified idea (which even Ritson accepted as a principle) and from the newly disseminated ancient stories there arose a conception of the hero and his story, which, by including some crucially new ideas and structures, was able to reinvigorate for the modern world those patterns of critique and dissidence with which the early tradition was thoroughly imbued (Hamawati, 1992, pp. 168-71).

It is true that in 1818 Scott marginalized Robin Hood in his *Ivanhoe*. But Scott's illiterate yeoman Locksley is a formidable figure, firmly involved with the concept of nationalism: he is, more convincingly than Ivanhoe, in essence an English hero. This idea was both developed and more fully focused on Robin Hood by Thomas Love Peacock in his *Maid Marian*, and although this was the least read of Peacock's novellas, in its stage musical version it was the most widely known element of his

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work through the nineteenth century. The combination of Scott's imagination and Peacock's lucidity made very powerful and widely accepted the idea of Robin Hood as a national and anti-French hero, representing an Englishness that was both ancient and strongly independent, a powerful mythic figure on which to found the developing edifice of national identity.

While Scott's nationalism has a decidedly conservative edge, Peacock brought a liberal politics that appealed to many throughout the nineteenth century, and that was given value by Peacock's characteristically cool enlightenment tone. This model of the hero could be accepted by the reform movement in English politics. But the hero was to have wider appeal, both to those who were conservative and those who were more interested in the personal than the political. A generically new, but fully compatible, emotive range of themes was combined with the Scott-Peacock modernized structure to make a potent new combination through what may be the single most crucial intervention in the renovation of the myth.

In one quickly written poem, *Robin Hood* (1818), John Keats shaped, in response to his friend John Hamilton Reynolds' sonnets, Robin the romantic forest dweller, an image of an England less urban, more attractive to the feelings than what was increasingly being felt to be a degraded present (Knight, 1994, pp. 159–66). When Keats wrote "Honour to bold Robin Hood / Sleeping in the underwood," he shaped for many to imitate in poetry, fiction, drama, even pantomime, the essence of greenwood nostalgia. That anti-urban displaced patriotism was enormously attractive to people, and it newly empowered Robin Hood, especially when around the turn of the twentieth century a new syllabus for English was being constructed, heavily coded with nationalism. Robin Hood flourished anew in editions, plays, and reprints firmly in the junior school curriculum — not only in England, but also in America, largely through Howard Pyle's brilliant renovation and illustration of the stories (1883) and through the powerful impact of Augustin Daly's production in America in 1892, with Arthur Sullivan's music, of Tennyson's *The Foresters*.

National, nostalgic, at once both liberal and conservative through the combination of radical action and distressed gentleman status, this new Robin Hood had worldwide appeal: he was the exciting but acceptable outlaw compensating for early forms of urban anomie. The lack of sexual intrigue in the story made it, unlike the Arthur or Tristan myth, highly suitable for schools and early screens, while at the same time the heavy coding of sexuality in the story, from splitting the arrow to the forest world of a hunter, not to mention the form-fitting green tights and the conspicuous handsomeness of actors from Errol Flynn (1938) to Patrick Bergin (1991), meant that the whole myth took on new life in the dynamic world of visual fiction. Five Robin Hood films were made before 1914, and when in 1922 Douglas Fairbanks was persuaded that he would not seem like a plodding Englishman in the part, Allan

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Dwan's sub-D. W. Griffith *Robin Hood* stormed the world of cinema, made Fairbanks a very rich man, and stimulated many later versions — more than sixty in all to the present (Harty, 2000, p. 88), ranging from the classic Hollywood polish of the 1938 Warner's version through many a plodding pastiche, with cowboy ponies or damp woodlands, depending which side of the Atlantic they were made, to the modern exotica of Mel Brooks' *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993), reminiscent of the sixteenth-century friar play in its banal gagging, and the social subversion, if not quite social banditry, of the BBC's late 1980s TV series *Maid Marian*, in the new genre of feminist farce.

9. Bold Robin Hood

The vigor of a cultural tradition can be identified by the way it can be parodied, ironized, clumsily repeated, and journalistically dissipated, yet never somehow lose its inner core of credibility and evaluative significance. Like George Washington or Florence Nightingale, like Sherlock Holmes or Miss Marple, Robin Hood stands for something that is still widely recognized and valued, in spite of the lame and stagey children's anthologies that still appear, and in spite of the stiff rehashings of the myth that recurrently plod across the cinema screen.

To some it is a matter of myth in its most mysterious kind. The editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography* no doubt surprised his readers when, in that age of biographical historicism, he wrote a long entry on Robin Hood proclaiming him to be a mythic figure; when Michael Curtiz made Errol Flynn's cheerful outlaws hide in a tree and make it come to green and surging life, he was touching the same recurrent supernatural element in the hero which seems to persist in spite of all that historicists and dull rewriters of the story can do to extinguish it.

There may be more technically accountable ways to describe that unquenchability of the hero: his story is so simple, so concentrated — just an idea of freedom, and fighting, and the quest for natural and egalitarian harmony — that it can take forms suitable to any period and any audience. Like the much disguised and always elusive hero, the tradition itself glides through the forests of our culture, always ready to appear when there are injustices to discuss, always armed with deadly arrows of humor, vitality, directness, perhaps still tipped with a little magic.

During six hundred years to our knowledge, and no doubt many more that remain out of sight, the tradition of Robin Hood has spoken without the complications of high culture — the self-gratifying sonorities of novel and opera remain inherently foreign to the tradition — but has spoken with a light, trenchant, suggestive, and persuasive voice. The existence of an outlaw always implies there is something wrong

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with the law. The idea of legal inadequacy has changed enormously over time, from the constraints imposed by abbots, foresters, sheriffs, and even kings to the modern bogeymen of international oppression, inadequate families, patriarchy, and business irresponsibility. Whatever the perceived inadequacies of authority through the ages, the figure of Robin Hood has always been available to make them his target. No doubt the polymorphic outlaw will take more shapes in time to come: Rocket Robin Hood on American television and the ecological hero of a recent London production may point the way ahead. There remains something compelling about the image of the calm, witty, well-armed man standing in the forest and about to move suddenly into decisive action in support of true law. It seems possible to predict with confidence that, as his earliest chronicler said, the archetype of the outlaw will continue, in whatever forms he may materialize, to be "commendit god."

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The Chroniclers' Robin Hood

Introduction

Best known for his stirring adventures, Robin Hood is also an object of study by archivists and historians, seeking traces of a real Robin Hood who might, like the equally elusive King Arthur, be the real figure behind the myths — or legends, as such historians would want to call them. In 1852 Joseph Hunter found a man called Robin Hood who was actually a valet to King Edward II in the north of England and assumed that he lay behind some of the story of the *Gest*. But there was no sign that the king's valet was ever thought of as an outlaw. More recently archivists have found other traces of criminals known to the medieval legal authorities as Hood, R.

The earliest contender is one Robert Hod, described as a fugitive, who is mentioned in the York assizes record of 1226: his goods were being confiscated because he owed money to St. Peter's of York (Owen, 1936). The debt is not unlike that of Sir Richard in the *Gest* and certainly consistent with the fierce hostility toward abbeys and rich churchmen through the whole myth. A slightly later reference speaks of William Le Fevre, son of a smith, who was indicted at Reading for larceny in 1261 (Crook, 1984). Nothing very surprising about that, except that in the following year there is another reference to him, and now he is called William Robehod, as if that surname has become appropriate to his condition as a fugitive from justice.

The fact that Robin Hood's name was interpreted in that way in legal circles is clear from a record from Tisbury, Staffordshire for 1439, which says that a certain Piers Venables, of nearby Aston,

gadered and assembled unto hym many misdoers beyng of his clothinge and, in manere of insurrection, wente into the wodes in that contre, like as it hadde be Robyn Hode and his meyne. (Child, 1965, III, 41)

Historians have liked to trace through these references a personalized and historicized process; they feel there must have been a certain Robin Hood who started the legend and others were identified with him: their arguments have been recently summarized by Bellamy (1985, chs. 1 and 2). The question is which was in fact the first reference: which was this notionally real Robin Hood? Only a few years before the miscreant of York comes a legal record of a man called Robert Hood,

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servant to the Abbot of Cirencester, who killed a man called Ralph between 1213 and 1216 (Holt, 1982, p. 54). And in 1354 in the forest of Rockingham, Northamptonshire, a man gave his name as Robin Hood when he was arrested for a forest offence.

The obvious interpretation, unpleasing as it may be to literal-minded historians, is that "Robin Hood" means fugitive from (probably unfair) justice, that like "Santa Claus" it is a name for a role, a mask to be worn in appropriate circumstances (Knight, 1994, pp. 14–15). What the legal references tell us most is not who was the real Robin Hood but how many versions there were and what the circumstances might have been to cause the intriguing changes that the tradition underwent in its quasi-historical forms as well as in its frankly fictional ballads and plays.

This is a message that comes through the references found in a series of chronicles in the late Middle Ages which have something to say about the outlaw. The relevant excerpts will each be printed here with a note about the author and his context, and what he might have understood as the meaning of the outlaw and his activities.

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From Andrew of Wyntoun's *Orygynale Chronicle* (c. 1420)

[The *Orygynale Chronicle* was compiled for Andrew of Wyntoun's patron Sir John of Wemyss in the 1420s in Scotland. Andrew was an Augustinian canon of St. Sers Inch, a religious house set on an island in Loch Leven, and a daughter house of the great St. Andrew's priory. The chronicle is strongly pro-Scottish in tone, especially severe on the malpractices of Edward I in his war against the Scots and his treatment of the national hero William Wallace. In the period of these wars, under the year 1283, Andrew mentions two forest outlaws (*waythmen*, i.e., men who lie in wait) from the long turbulent area of the borders. They operated, it seems, both just south of the border near Carlisle in Ingelwood (meaning English Wood), and much further south in England in Barnsdale. Andrew's apparent approval of their efforts and his report of the common praise of them is no doubt related to the fact that they were enemies of the English crown and its officers. After the battles of Dunbar (1296) and Falkirk (1298) William Wallace and the Scots took to the forests themselves, and many later people saw resemblances between Robin Hood and the Scottish nationalist outlaw (Spence, 1928).]

The reference to Barnsdale is surprising, as it is far to the south, but it has been argued that this may refer to the forest of Barnsdale in Rutland, not that in Yorkshire where the *Gest of Robyn Hode* is set. In the Middle Ages the royal forest of Barnsdale in Rutland was owned by the Earl of Huntington, and this title was closely connected to the royal house of Scotland (Knight, 1994, p. 31). Internal evidence suggests this fact came to Wyntoun's notice; the language of the reference is rather oddly amplified, and it may be that there was an earlier popular jingle which ran:

Lilith Iohun and Robert Hude Waythmen war in Ingilwode.

It may be that Andrew's discovery, through royal contacts, of the Barnsdale Robin Hood might have led him to recast the couplet into the slightly awkward four lines he offers.]

Lilith Iohun and Robert Hude
Waythmen war commendit gud;
In Ingilwode and Bernnysdale
Thai oyssit al this tyme thar trawale.

Forest outlaw; praised
practiced; labor

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From Walter Bower's Continuation of John of Fordun's *Scotichronicon* (c. 1440)

[In the 1440s Bower, like Andrew of Wyntoun, a canon of St. Andrew's Priory and eventually Abbot of Inchcolm (a religious house on an island in the Firth of Forth near Edinburgh) was reworking the chronicle written in Latin some twenty years before by John of Fordun. As well as bringing it up to date he inserted passages, including a lengthy comment on Robin Hood and Little John.

Under the year 1266 he described Robin as a *famosus sicarius* (a well-known cut-throat), a more severe account than Wyntoun's *waythmen* who were *commendir gad*. He also seems critical when he says that "the foolish people are so inordinately fond of celebrating [him] in tragedy and comedy" (trans. Dobson and Taylor, 1976, p. 5). It is interesting to speculate what he meant. The terms do not necessarily refer to drama at this time. Presumably "comedy" refers to the ballads where Robin triumphs, like *Robin Hood and the Monk*, recorded very soon after this. But what does he mean by "tragedies?" The only tragic event in the Robin Hood tradition is the hero's death, and this must imply that by Bower's time the death story is well known. The *Gest*, probably in its present shape by about the mid-fifteenth century, clearly knows of this tradition, which is itself recorded in a mid seventeenth-century ballad, as well as Munday's plays of 1598-99.

Bower places the outlaw in the context of Simon de Montfort's rebellion against Henry III, and refers to Robin as fighting among the "disinherited," the name given to the dissidents led by Simon. This change of date from Wyntoun — which Bower must have known — has the effect of removing the resemblance to Wallace, and Bower is in general much less pro-Scottish than Wyntoun. It also linked Robin Hood with what was eventually to be one of the central fables of English liberalism: in the nineteenth century Simon de Montfort was thought of as the founder of parliament, through forcing a consultative process on the king in the "Provisions of Oxford" in 1258. Popular political culture revived the link that Bower had imagined: G. P. R. James's *Forest Days* (1843) is a rather effective historical novel about Robin the proto-parliamentarian.

Like Langland, Bower testifies to the widespread popularity of the outlaw myth in the mouths of the "foolish people," but he then gives, in Latin prose, a priceless typical version of a Robin Hood story, and it turns out to be one where the church is itself supported by the outlaw. Bower's Latin is quite difficult, not meant for public consumption; it is a message to the learned and perhaps something of a covert sharing of officially disapproved stories. Robin, deep in the forest, celebrates Mass and refuses to be disturbed by the marauding "viscount" or sheriff; he finishes his Mass and then routs the enemy — the motif of a hero mixing devotion and casualness survives in the myth of Drake playing bowls as the Armada approached.

Robin's devotion to the Mass is found in *Robin Hood and the Monk*; the nervousness

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of some of his followers is found again in Martin Parker's *A True Tale of Robin Hood*, and the sheriff's failed excursion to the woods is a frequent feature of the tradition, early and late. But Bower's story is focussed to make Robin a hero of the church, and the fact that he transfers plunder to the church and always supports Mass-attendance conveys a polemical tone suited to Bower's own religious context.]

Then arose the famous murderer, Robert Hood, as well as Little John, together with their accomplices from among the disinherited, whom the foolish populace are so inordinately fond of celebrating both in tragedies and comedies, and about whom they are delighted to hear the jesters and minstrels sing above all other ballads. About whom also certain praiseworthy things are told, as appears in this — that when once in Barnsdale, avoiding the anger of the king and the threats of the prince, he was according to his custom most devoutly hearing Mass and had no wish on any account to interrupt the service — on a certain day, when he was hearing Mass, having been discovered in that very secluded place in the woods where the Mass was taking place by a certain sheriff (viscount) and servant of the king, who had very often lain in wait for him previously, there came to him those who had found this out from their men to suggest that he should make every effort to flee. This, on account of his reverence for the sacrament in which he was then devoutly involved, he completely refused to do. But, the rest of his men trembling through fear of death, Robert, trusting in the one so great whom he worshipped, with the few who then bravely remained with him, confronted his enemies and easily overcame them, and enriched by the spoils he took from them and their ransom, ever afterward singled out the servants of the church and the Masses to be held in greater respect, bearing in mind what is commonly said: "God harkens to him who hears Mass frequently."

(Latin text, Child, III, 41; trans. A. I. Jones.)

From John Major's *Historia Majoris Britanniae* (1521)

[John Major was a Scottish historian and intellectual who, unlike Wynoun and Bower, worked outside the country; he spent many years at the University of Paris, where he became well enough known to be mentioned ironically in Rabelais's *Gargantua* as the author of a treatise on black puddings. He returned to teach at the University of Glasgow in about 1500 but he had apparently already completed his *Historia Majoris Britanniae* (*History of Greater Britain*, though, oddly, it also translates as *Major's History of Britain*). Written in a newly humanist Latin, rather than Bower's old fashioned style, this also has much less Scottish sympathies than his predecessors: he cuts the discussion of Edward I's

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cruelty and sees him as less of a real threat to Scotland than did his predecessors — and also his followers, Hector Boece and David Buchanan.

In addition to reducing the pro-Scottish element of other Scottish historians, Major also relocates the Robin Hood story into the late twelfth century, the much more distant time of King John. This is the first time that the outlaw is linked with the period of King Richard. In later hands this was to re-shape Robin's resistance to authority itself as an act of a noble conservatism, since had King John could be attacked and true kingship defended at the same time. This does not appear to be Major's motif: his redating of the story in the period of John is probably due to the influence of the story of *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, a noble outlaw and enemy of bad authority from that period.

Major's "exceptionally influential eulogy" of Robin (Dobson and Taylor, 1976, p. 5) presents him as a bold but moral hero, only killing in self-defense, a protector of women and the poor. This suggests that Major was familiar with the *Gest* and its presentation of the outlaw, and that accords with the idea that he was not only a humane robber but also a "chief." The Latin word was *dux*, which just means "leader," but can also, as "duke," have aristocratic implications. In this way, while not decisively creating the distressed gentleman who is to be the new "renaissance Robin Hood," Major established the basis for that figure by removing the Scottish — or anti-English — point of view, moralizing his deeds, elevating his character to the edge of gentrification and, perhaps the most important thing, removing any trace of Bower's hero of Catholicism.]

About this time it was, as I conceive, that there flourished those most famous robbers Robert Hood, an Englishman, and Little John, who lay in wait in the woods, but spoiled of their goods those only that were wealthy. They took the life of no man, unless he either attacked them or offered resistance in defence of his property. Robert supported by his plundering one hundred bowmen, ready fighters every one, with whom four hundred of the strongest would not dare to engage in combat. The feats of this Robert are told in song all over Britain. He would allow no woman to suffer injustice, nor would he spoil the poor, but rather enriched them from the plunder taken from the abbots. The robberies of this man I condemn, but of all robbers he was the humanest and the chief. (1892, pp. 156–67)

From Richard Grafton's *Chronicle at Large* (1569)

[Richard Grafton was a printer and scholar whose very influential history summarized Major's version and moved on to give an account which both carried a good deal more detail than had previously been provided and also firmly gentrified the hero. This is the first chronicle which deliberately includes material from the ballads, though the earlier

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chroniclers were clearly aware of the popular tradition. Nevertheless, Grafton presents Robin as a real figure and does not mention Little John: gentrification and elevation of the hero develop together.

This obviously provided a structure for Martin Parker's quasi-biographical *A True Tale of Robin Hood*, and Grafton himself claims authenticity in several ways. The king's price on Robin's head, says Grafton, is to be confirmed "by the recordes in the Exchequer." In the same spirit of verification, the story ends by insisting that Robin's gravestone and memorial cross are available for inspection, and it also claims ancient authenticity on the basis of using as source "an olde and auncient Pamphlet." None of this evidence has survived, and probably never existed. The gravestone was later described and drawn (Holt, 1989, p. 43), but it looks suspiciously like an artist's impression of Grafton's remarks.

No "auncient Pamphlet" has survived which tells Grafton's story of an earl — or perhaps a soldierly man who became an earl — who was disgraced through wastefulness and so became a leader of an outlaw band and an enemy to the king. This sounds more like Fouke than Robin the yeoman, and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* is a possible distant source. The second part of Grafton's story, where Robin is hunted by the king and betrayed by the Prioress, is not found in any previous text, though the *Gest* does touch on these events to some degree.

Grafton certainly consulted sources: his priory is called Birckles probably because he misread a capital *K* (printed or written) in the familiar name Kirklees. It remains conceivable that there was a lost story combining the yeoman outlaw with an aristocrat fallen from grace, but it is more likely that for the "pamphlet" he has in mind the well known *Gest*, perhaps the equally widely distributed *Gameyle*, and that the references to grave, cross and records are based on contemporary hearsay.

Partly through this aura of credibility, Grafton's popularization of a now firmly gentrified hero set the tone for the gentlemanly outlaw who was to appear in play and song and, in some sense, to be absorbed into the mainstream right through into gallant Sir Robin of modern Hollywood. After summarizing Major, Grafton strikes out on his own:

But in an olde and auncient Pamphlet I finde this written of the sayd Robert Hood. This man (sayth he) discended of a nobel parentage: or rather beyng of a base stocke and lineage, was for his manhoode and chivalry advaunced to the noble dignit  of an Erle. Excellyng principally in Archery, or shootyng, his manly courage agreeing therunto: But afterwardes he so prodigally exceeded in charges and expences, that he fell into great debt, by reason wherof, so many actions and sutes were commenced against him, wherunto he answered not, that by order of lawe he was outlawed, and then for a lewde shift, as his last refuge, gathered together a compayne of Roysters and Cutters, and practised robberyes and spoylyng of the kynges subjects, and occupied and frequente the Forestes or wilde Countries. The which beyng certeyfyed

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to the King, and he beyng greatly offended therewith, caused his proclamation to be made that whosoever would bryng him quicke or dead, the king would geve him a great summe of money, as by the recordes in the Exchequer is to be scene: But of this promise, no man enjoyed any benefite. For the sayd Robert Hood, beyng afterwardes troubled with sicknesse, came to a certein Nonry in Yorkshire called Bircklies, where desirying to be let blood, he was betrayed and bled to deth. After whose death the Prioress of the same place caused him to be buried by the high way side, where he had used to rob and spoyle those that passed that way. And upon his grave the sayde Prioress did lay a very fayre stone, wherin the names of Robert Hood, William of Goldesborough and others were graven. And the cause why she buried him there was for that the common passengers and travailers knowyng and seeyng him there buried, might more safely and without feare take their jorneys that way, which they durst not do in the life of the sayd outlawes. And at eyther end of the sayde Tombe was erected a crosse of stone, which is to be seene there at this present (1569, pp. 84-85).



Robin Hood and the Monk

Introduction

Robin Hood and the Monk is preserved in Cambridge University manuscript Ff.5.48. The manuscript is damaged by stains and hard to read and was, it seems, not known to Percy or Ritson, unlike all the other major Robin Hood ballads. It was first printed and given this title by Robert Jamieson in his *Popular Ballads and Songs of 1806* (II, 54–72). The edition itself was quite heavily edited and erroneous, and a better text appeared in C. H. Hartshorne's *Ancient Merrical Tales* in 1829. Nevertheless, Sir Frederick Madden wrote, in a slip preserved in his copy in the British Library, that this was "the worst edited text" he had come across, and he re-collated the whole edition; his version of this ballad then appeared in an appendix in the second edition of Ritson's *Robin Hood* in 1832 as *Robin Hood and the Monk*. Although this title, like that of other early ballads, only refers to the initial enemy, not the sheriff who is the ultimate threat, it still seems better than "A Tale of Robin Hood" used by Hartshorne and Gutch.

The Cambridge manuscript (here called *a*) is written in a "very clear cursive hand" (Dobson and Taylor, 1976, p. 115) and dated some time after 1450. The reference in line 331 to *oxre cumly kyng* (also found in the *Gest*, see note on line 1412) has been taken as referring to the notably handsome Edward IV, which would date the ballad in this form as after 1461; this is by no means impossible, but the phrase was certainly used of Edward III, and the errors in copying could well suggest an earlier text that had been transmitted several times. There is also a single manuscript leaf preserved in *The Bagford Ballads* in the Printed Books collection in the British Library (here called *b*) which also appears to be of the later fifteenth century, and although *a* is obviously the only source for the poem as a whole, it is held in this edition that *b* provides a few preferred readings.

The date is important. Though some have thought the *Gest* is earlier, it is at base a literary compilation, and so *Robin Hood and the Monk* is the oldest extant example of the "tymes of Robin Hood" referred to by Langland in the 1370s, implied by Andrew of Wyntoun in the 1420s, and both described and exemplified by Walter Bower in the 1440s. Bower's Latin summary of a Robin Hood story is the nearest contemporary to this ballad as a narrative, and the two texts share a sense of Robin's deep religious faith as well as suspicion and hostility towards royal officials: both also

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lack the lighthearted tone that is found in *Robin Hood and the Potter* and the *Gest*, and that characterizes most of the later tradition.

Although no direct sources have been proposed, Robin's devotion to the Virgin may provide a clue. In spite of the obvious dangers, Robin is determined to attend Mass in Nottingham "With the myght of mylde Marye" (line 28). After angrily separating from Little John, he goes on to town alone and prays "to God and myld Mary / To bryng hym out save agayn" (lines 69-70). Once in town he enters "Seynt Mary chyrch" and "knelyd down before the rode" (lines 71-72). Arousing the suspicions of a "gret-hedid munke," he is captured by the sheriff and cast into prison. Having learned that Robin has been captured, Little John rallies the spirits of the outlaws by reassuring them that since Robin has "servyd Oure Lady many a day . . . No wyckud deth shal he dye" (lines 133-36). Little John then promises that with the "myght of mylde Mary" he will take care of the treacherous monk and rescue Robin. While Child notes Robin's devotion to the Virgin (III, 96), he does not cite a "miracle of the Virgin" as a potential source. The episodes just summarized closely resemble a type of miracle known as the "knight and the Virgin," of which seven examples were printed by Wynkyn de Worde in the late fifteenth century *The Miracles of Oure Lady*. Two of these short prose miracles (numbers four and six in Peter Whiteford's edition) relate how two knights, captured and imprisoned by their enemies, are delivered out of prison by the intercession of the Virgin.

In spite of its early existence, *Robin Hood and the Monk* did not have a strong influence on the following centuries, though perhaps it inspired the *Gest*'s account of robbing a "fat-hedid monke" (line 364). There were no broadside versions of this ballad and it is absent from the many garlands of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but this story of Robin's arrest in Nottingham and his rescue by Little John and Much has been accepted by all readers as a classic.

Child welcomed *Robin Hood and the Monk* as "very perfection in its kind" (III, 95) and Dobson and Taylor assert that it has "held pride of place as the most distinguished and artistically accomplished of all the Robin Hood ballads" (1976, p. 113). This view appears to stem in part from a sense of antiquity (Child prints it next but one after the *Gest* — *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* intervenes, see p. 168 on its dating), but clearly also from his idea of its originary excellence, especially his admiration of the arresting opening stanzas. This high valuation is tolerant of the fact that the ballad clearly lacks some material: commentators all agree that a substantial passage is missing after line 120, and that this has been caused by the loss of a leaf in the original of this manuscript. The lacuna in the manuscript, like the pages torn from Percy's Folio manuscript, may itself have appeared attractively Gothic in its antique incompleteness.

A dissenting voice on the ballad is that of Holt, who calls it "a blood and thunder

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adventure" and feels that after the return to Sherwood "the remnant of the tale is crude moral comment": overall it is "a shallow tale, but one well and crisply told" (1989, pp. 28-30). More literary-minded commentators usually agree with Gray that this is "an excellent piece of vivid narrative" and, however it was delivered, would be a "splendid performance" (1984, p. 13). In terms of the recurrent motifs found in the outlaw myth, this ballad offers an excellent example of the natural setting which has an implied value, a full statement of the danger of conflict within the band and the consequent dangers of isolation, a strongly developed representation of Robin's devotion to our lady, the hostility between the outlaws and the established church, a brief statement of the dangers of the town (reduced by the loss of material), a mission in disguise (John and Much), the involvement of the king, the frustration of the sheriff, the re-forming of the outlaw band, the establishment of the true values held by the band and their recognition by the king (John's fidelity in particular).

These central motifs, also found in the *Gest* in one form or another and recurrent right through the tradition down to the present, find brisk and memorable realization in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, giving it a stronger social meaning than Child or Dobson and Taylor appreciate, and a much weightier sub-text than Holt envisages. But Holt's point about melodrama has its force. Though the sheriff is not killed in this ballad (as he is in the *Gest* and in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*), the jailer is summarily executed in line 278. This is very like (including some verbal echoes) the rescue of William of Cloudeslye in *Adam Bell*, and also like the rescue of Johnie Armstrong in the border ballad of that name. Jailers, as Child remarks a little ironically, receive short shrift in these narratives (III, 95, footnote). But here even brusquer treatment appears when John and Much catch up with the Monk who has (legally enough) caused the arrest of Robin Hood. After a preliminary sequence of presence, claiming they too are victims of an outlaw, with ferocious vengeance they simply pull down and kill not only the monk but also his boy, a potential witness. This savagery accords with the killing of Guy and the Sheriff in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* and of the sheriff towards the end of the *Gest* — yet they were established villains. There is a casualness about the monk's killing that may seem unsettling, especially when the sheriff is merely humiliated, not killed in the same ballad. This "blood and thunder" element is also found in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* and in *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham* and may be traced to the social bandit tradition.

Against such ferocity, though, is set the innately valuable natural world "in feyre foreste" and "under the grene wode tre," realized in two stanzas of a "fine lyrical introduction" (Gray, 1984, p. 11). The forest setting seems a state of harmony to which the outlaws return after urban disruptions. But just as violence enters this Edenic world, the communal calm of the outlaw band is disrupted by conflict, and the

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argument between John and Robin is the most fully worked out instance of this important theme in the tradition, which here is finally resolved in a specific debate over who should lead the band.

Their dispute focusses, as it tends to do elsewhere, on gambling. As in trades where coin is exchanged for goods (potter or butcher for example), and as with carrying large amounts of money through the forest, the exchange of money through a contest seems to be a threat to harmony in the world of the Robin Hood ballads. This little noted but insistent feature supports the idea of a "natural" economy under threat by some early form of cash nexus.

In social terms, Robin here, as in other early texts, is clearly himself a yeoman, whose leadership of the band is by consent. That is tested and reaffirmed in this ballad, so constructing a dream of yeomanly community and self-protection, a set of values that mesh with the realization of a fully natural world, where towns, cash, letters, royal seals and the institutions of religion and commerce are all to be judged as threatening and, in fiction at least, can be successfully confronted. This appears to relate to the question of audience, discussed in the General Introduction, pp. 7-8.

Robin Hood and the Monk has a consistent and well-managed rhyming pattern, based on the abcb stanza, with an unusually small number of poor thymes (38/40, 48/50, 56/8, 300/302, 332/4) and only rare variation of the rhyme scheme to abab (13-16, 151-54 and, by repetition, 39-42, 315-18). If the rhyming is at a high standard, the diction is somewhat less vigorous than some commentators suggest: cliché or near cliché can be found at 14, 30, 67, 186 and the weak line *The [or For] sothe as I you say* is found no less than six times at 108, 188, 236, 248, 260, 308.

Simple and often direct as it is, the style of *Robin Hood and the Monk* emphasizes the ballad's power, poetic and thematic. Gray draws attention to what he calls the "open ending" of this ballad (1984, p. 17), that is the way in which the king admires the values of the foresters, without either incorporating them (as in *Adam Bell*) or ensuring their defeat (as in *A True Tale of Robin Hood*). This earliest of the surviving ballads, with its fine opening, its speed and directness, its condensed and highly suggestive plot moving between the forest retreat and the threatening outside world, presents in strong form the social challenge of the outlaw myth that has, in various reconstructions, survived to the present.

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- In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,
And leves be large and long.
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
To here the foulys song.
- 5 To se the dere draw to the dale,
And leve the hilles hee,
And shadow hem in the leves grene,
Under the grene wode tre.
- 10 Hit befel on Whitson
Erly in a May mornynge.
The son up feyre can shyne,
And the briddis mery can syng.
- 15 "This is a mery mornynge," seid Litull John,
"Be Hym that dyed on tre;
A more mery man then I am ose
Lyves not in Cristiantē.
- 20 "Pluk up thi hert, my dere mayster,"
Litull John can sey.
"And thynk hit is a full fayre tyme
In a mornynge of May."
- 25 "Ye, on thyng greves me," seid Robyn.
"And does my hert mych woo;
That I may not no solem day
To mas nor malyns goo.
- 30 "Hit is a fournet and more," seid he,
"Syn I my Savyour see;
- woods are bright
fair
bear; birds'
deer
high
shelter themselves
did
*By Christ; Cross
than
Christendom*
*one
woe
Mass nor Maties*
*It's been a fortnight
Since I've been to Mass*

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To day wil I to Notyngham," seid Robyn,
"With the myght of mylde Marye."

Virgin Mary

Than spake Moche, the mylner sun,
Ever more wel hym betyde!
"Take twelve of thi wyght yemen,
Well weppyd, be thi side.
Such on wolde thi selfe slon,
That twelve dar not abyde."

miller's son

May good happen to him!

strong yeomen

Well armed

He who would kill you

Would not dare face those twelve

35 "Of all my mery men," seid Robyn,
"Be my feith I wil soon have,
But Litull John shall beyre my bow,
Til that me list to drawe."

By

carry

Until I choose to shoot

40 "Thou shall beyre thin own," seid Litull Jon,
"Maister, and I wyl beyre myne,
And we well shete a peny," seid Litull Jon,
"Under the grene wode lyne."

shoot arrows for a penny wager

linden trees

45 "I wil not shete a peny," seyd Robyn Hode,
"In feith, Litull John, with the,
But ever for on as thou shetis," seide Robyn,
"In feith I holde the thre."

I bet you three pennies (for one)

50 Thus shet thei forth, these yemen too,
Bothe at buske and brome,
Til Litull John wan of his maister
Five shillings to hose and shone.

two

bush and scrub

for socks and shoes

A ferly strife fel them betwene,
As they went bi the wey;
Litull John seid he had won five shillings,
And Robyn Hode seid schortly nay.

great argument

abruptly

55 With that Robyn Hode lyed Litul Jon,
And smote hym with his hande;
Litul Jon waxed wroth therwith,
And pulled out his bright bronde.

called Little John a liar

struck

grew angry

sword

Robin Hood and the Monk

- 60 " Were thou not my maister," seid Litull John,
 " Thou shuldis by hit ful sore; *pay for it sorely*
 Get the a man wher thou wille,
 For thou getis me no more."
- 65 Then Robyn goes to Notyngham,
 Hym selfe mornyng allone, *grieving*
 And Litull John to mery Scherwode,
 The pathes he knew ilkone. *every one*
- 70 Whan Robyn came to Notyngham,
 Sertenly withouten laym. *Certainly; lie*
 He prayed to God and myld Mary
 To bryng hym out save agayn. *safe*
- 75 He gos in to Seynt Mary chirch,
 And knelyd down before the Rode; *Cross*
 Alle that ever were the church within
 Beheld wel Robyn Hode.
- 80 Beside hym stod a gret-hedid munke,
 I pray to God woo he be! *large-headed*
 Ful sone he knew gode Robyn,
 As sone as he hym se. *wor*
- 85 Out at the durre he ran,
 Ful sone and anon; *door*
 Alle the gatis of Notyngham
 He made to be sparred everychon. *At once*
 gates
 banned
- 90 " Rise up," he seid, " thou prowde schereff,
 Buske the and make the bowne; *Hurry yourself; yourself ready*
 I have spyd the kynggis felon, *(see note)*
 For sothe he is in this town. *truly*
- 95 " I have spyzd the false felon,
 As he standis at his masse;
 Hit is long of the," seide the munke,
 " And ever he fro us passe. *It's your fault*
 If: escaper

Early Ballads and Tales

"This traytur name is Robyn Hode,
 Under the grene wode lynde;
 He robbyt me onys of a hundred pound,
 Hit shalle never out of my mynde."

*linden trees
once*

- 95 Up them rose this prowde schereff,
 And radly made hym yare; *quickly made himself ready*
 Many was the moder son
 To the kyrk with hym can fare. *church; did go*
- 100 In at the durres thei throlly thrast,
 With staves ful gode wone; *doors they strenuously pressed
with plenty of staves*
 "Alas, alas!" seid Robyn Hode,
 "Now mysse I Litull John."
- 105 But Robyn toke out a too-bond sworde, *two-handed sword*
 That hangit down be his kne; *thickest*
 Ther as the schereff and his men stode thyckust,
 Thedurwarde wolde he. *thitherward*
- 110 Thryes thorow at them he ran then,
 For sothe as I yow sey, *Thrice through*
 And woundyt mony a moder son,
 And twelve he slew that day. *Truly*
- His sworde upon the schireff hed
 Sertainly he brake in too; *sheriff's head*
 "The smyth that the made," seid Robyn, *two*
 "I pray to God wyke hym woo! *shee (the sword)*
woe
- 115 "For now am I weppynlesse," seid Robyn, *weaponless*
 "Alasse! agayn my wyll;
 But if I may fle these traytors fro, *Unless*
 I wot thei wil me kyll." *know*
- 120 Robyn in to her churche ran,
 Thro out hem everlikon, *their (see note)*
each one

Robin Hood and the Monk

- Sum fel in swonyng as thei were dede,
And lay stil as any stome;
Non of them were in her mynde
But only Litull Jon.
- 125 "Let be your rule," seid Litull Jon,
"For His luf that dyed on tre,
Ye that shulde be doughty men;
Het is gret shame to se.
- 130 "Oure maister has bene hard bystode
And yet scapyd away;
Pluk up your hertis, and leve this mone,
And barkyn what I shal say.
- 135 "He has servyd Oure Lady many a day,
And yet wil, securly;
Therfor I trust in hir specialy
No wyckud deth shal he dye.
- 140 "Therfor be glad," seid Litul John,
"And let this mournyng be;
And I shal be the munkis gyde,
With the myght of mylde Mary,
And I mete hym," seid Litul John
"We will go but we too.
- 145 "Loke that ye kepe wel owe triail-tre,
Under the levys smale,
And spare non of this venyson,
That gose in thys vale."
- 150 Forthe then went these yemen too,
Litul John and Moche on fere,
And lokid on Moch emys hows;
The hye way lay full nere.
- Litul John stode at a wyndow in the mornynge,
And lokid forth at a stage;

swooning

kept their heads

wailing

*Christ's love
doughty*

beset

*escaped
hearts; lament
listen to*

sarely

take care of the monk

If

tryng or meeting tree

*two
together*

Mach's uncle's house

from an upper room

Early Ballads and Tales

He was war wher the munke came ridyng,
And with hym a litul page.

- 155 "Be my feith," seid Litul John to Moch,
"I can the tel tithyngus gode;
I se wher the munke cumys rydyng,
I know hym be his wyde hode."

tell you good tidings

- 160 They went in to the way, these yemen bothe,
As curtes men and hende; *Like courteous and gracious men*
Thei spyrred tithyngus at the munke,
As they hadde bene his frende. *asked news*

- 165 "Fro whens come ye?" seid Litull Jon,
"Tel us tithyngus, I yow pray,
Of a false owlray,
Was takyn yesterdaiy.

- 170 "He robbyt me and my felowes bothe
Of twenti marke in certen;
If that false owlray be takyn,
For sothe we wolde be fayn." *glad*

"So did he me," seid the munke,
Of a hundred pound and more;
I layde furst hande hym apon,
Ye may thanke me therfore."

- 175 "I pray God thanke you," seid Litull John,
"And we wil when we may;
We wil go with you, with your leve,
And bryng yow on your way.

- 180 "For Robyn Hode hase many a wilde felow,
I tell you in certen;
If thei wist ye rode this way, *knew*
In feith ye shulde be slayn."

Robin Hood and the Monk

- As thei went talking be the way,
The munke and Litull John,
185 John toke the munkis horse be the hede,
Ful sone and anon. *At once*
- Johne toke the munkis horse be the hed,
For sothe as I yow say;
So did Much the litell page.
190 For he shulde not scape away. *escape*
- Be the goleit of the hode
John pulled the munke down;
John was nothymg of hym agast,
He lete hym falle on his crown. *throat-piece*
afraid
- 195 Litull John was so agrevyd,
And drew owt his swerde in hye:
The munke saw he shulde be ded,
Lowd mercy can he crye. *in haste*
- "He was my maister," seid Litull John,
200 "That thou hase browght in bale;
Shalle thou never cum at oure kyng,
For to telli hym tale." *harm*
- John smote of the munkis hed,
No longer wolde he dwell; *struck off*
205 So did Moch the litell page,
For feid lest he wolde tell. *want*
fear
- Ther thei beryed hem bothe,
In nouther mosse nor lyng,
And Litull John and Much in fere
210 Bare the letturs to oure kyng. *buried*
neither bog nor heath
together
- Litull John cam in unto the kyng
He knelid down upon his kne:
"God yow save, my lege lorde,
Jhesus yow save and se! *watch over*

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- 215 "God yow save, my lege kyng!" *lord*
 To speke John was full bolde;
 He gaf hym the letturs in his hand,
 The kyng did hit unfold.
- 220 The kyng red the letturs anon, *immediately*
 And seid, "So mot I the,
 Ther was never yoman in mery Ingland
 I longut so sore to se. *longed*
- "Wher is the munke that these shuld have brought?"
 Oure kyng can say.
 225 "Be my trouth," seid Litell John,
 "He dyed after the way." *along*
- The kyng gaf Moch and Litel Jon
 Twenti pound in sertan,
 And made theim yemen of the crown,
 230 And bade theim go agayn.
- He gaf John the seal in hand,
 The scheref for to bere,
 To bryng Robyn hym to,
 And no man do hym dere. *harm*
- 235 John toke his leve at oure kyng,
 The sothe as I yow say:
 The next way to Notyngham
 To take he yede the way. *nearest
went*
- 240 Whan John came to Notyngham
 The gatis were sparred ychon; *all barred*
 John callid up the porter.
 He answerid sone anon. *at once*
- "What is the cause," seid Litel Jon,
 "Thou sparris the gates so fast?"
 245 "Because of Robyn Hode," seid porter,
 "In depe prison is cast."

Robin Hood and the Monk

- 250 "John and Moch and Wyll Scathlok,
For sothe as I yow say,
Thei slew oure men upon oure wallis,
And sawten us every day." assault

Litull John spryred after the schereff,
And sone he hym fonde;
He oppyned the kyngus privē seell, king's privy seal
And gaf hym in his honde.

255 Whan the scheref saw the kyngus seell,
He did of his hode anon: *He took off his hood*
"Wher is the munke that bare the letturs?"
He seid to Litull John.

260 "He is so fayn of hym," seid Litul John,
"For sothe as I yow say,
He has made hym abot of Westmynster,
A lorde of that abbay."

The scheref made John gode chere,
And gaf hym wyne of the best;
265 At nyght thei went to her bedde, their
And every man to his rest.

When the scheref was on slepe,
Dronken of wyne and ale,
Litul John and Moch for sothe
270 Toke the way unto the gale. jail

Litul John callid up the jayler,
And bade hym rise anon;
He seyd Robyn Hode had brokyn the prison,
And out of hit was gon.

275 The porter rose anon serian,
As sone as he herd John calle;
Litul John was redy with a swerd,
And bare hym throw to the walle. stabbed

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- 280 "Now wil I be jayler," seid Litul John,
And toke the keyes in honde;
He toke the way to Robyn Hode,
And sone he hym unbonde.
- 285 He gaf hym a gode swerd in his hond,
His hed ther with to kepe, *protect*
And ther as the wallis were lowyst
Anon down can thei lepe. *did*
- 290 Be that the cok began to crow,
The day began to spryng;
The scheref fond the jaylier ded,
The comyn bell made he ryng. *town bell*
- 295 He made a crye thorouout al the town,
Wheder he be yoman or knave, *proclamation*
That cowthe bryng hym Robyn Hode,
His warison he shuld have. *could reward*
- 300 "For I dar never," seid the scheref,
"Cum before oure kyng;
For if I do, I wot certen *I know for certain*
For sothe he wil me heng." *hang*
- 305 The scheref made to seke Notyngham,
Bothe be strete and styne, *search alleys*
And Robyn was in mery Scherwode,
As light as lef on lynde. *carefree; tree*
- 310 Then bespake gode Litul John,
To Robyn Hode can he say,
"I have done the a gode turne for an ill,
Quit me whan thou may. *Repay*
- "I have done the a gode turne," seid Litul John,
 "For sothe as I the say;
 I have brought the under the grene-wode lyne;
 Fare wel, and have gode day."

Robin Hood and the Monk

"Nay, be my trouth," seid Robyn.

"So shall hit never be;

I make the maister," seid Robyn,

"Of alle my men and me."

- 315 "Nay, be my trouth," seid Litull John,
"So shalle hit never be;
But lat me be a felow," seid Litull John,
"No noder kepe I be."

Nothing else do I care to be

- 320 Thus John gate Robyn Hod out of prison,
Sertan withoutyn layn;
Whan his men saw hym hol and sounde,
For sothe they were full fayne.

be

glad

- 325 They filled in wyne and made hem glad,
Under the levys smale,
And yete pastes of venvyson,
That gode was with ale.

ate pasties

- 330 Than wordc came to oure kyng
How Robyn Hode was gon,
And how the scheref of Notyngham
Durst never loke hym upon.

Then bespake oure cumly kyng.

handsome

In an angur bye:

"Litull John hase begyled the scheref,
In faith so base he me.

- 335 "Litul John has begyled us bothe,
And that full wel I se;
Or ellis the scheref of Notyngham
Hye hongut shulde he be.

High hanged

- 340 "I made hem yemes of the crowme,
And gaf hem fee with my bond;
I gaf hem grith," seid oure kyng.
"Thorowout all mery Ingland.

money

pardon

Early Ballads and Tales

- 'I gaf theym grith,' then seid oure kyng;
'I say, so mot I the,
345 For sothe soch a yeman as he is on
In all Ingland ar not thre.

'He is trew to his maister,' seid oure kyng;
'I sey, be swete Seynt John,
350 He lovys better Robyn Hode
Then he dose us ychon.
- 'Robyn Hode is ever bond to hym,
Bothe in strete and stalle;
Speke no more of this mater,' seid oure kyng,
'But John has begyled us alle.'
- 355 Thus endys the talkyng of the munke
And Robyn Hode I wysse;
God, that is ever a crowned kyng,
Bryng us alle to His blisse!

security

so may I prosper

Than; each of us

obligated

stable



Notes

- 1 somer. The season is said in lines 9–10 to be Whitsuntide in May. Whitsun usually falls in late May, by which time many wild flowers are in bloom (hence the name "White" Sunday). Although many commentators link Robin Hood plays and games with May Day, the earliest references make it clear that late May, and so early summer, is the time when Robin Hood rituals occurred (Knight, 1994, pp. 103–04). Although the *reverdie* or "regreening" theme is associated with spring as in the opening of the *Canterbury Tales*, that actually refers to late spring, when April is largely over; and poems other than the Robin Hood ballads celebrate early summer, like the lyric "Summer is ycumen in."
- shawes. The early Robin Hood ballads locate the outlaws in the opening stanzas in a green forest setting, as if this is the validating context for their action.
- 9 Whitson. Jamieson read "Whitsonryde" and Madden accepted Hartshorne's "Whitson tide" in his re-collation of the manuscript against Hartshorne's edition. Child agreed, but said the last four letters were "no longer legible." However, there is no sign in the manuscript, including under ultra-violet light, that they were ever present.
- 13 In the early ballads, Robin Hood's meyné or company consists of three named characters, Little John, Much the Miller's son, and William Scarlock or Scathelock (both names imply Will is good at effecting violent entry), plus a group of unnamed wight yemen, ranging in number from twelve to one hundred and forty. Little John is second in command, a major character in his own right.
- 14 The oath *Be Hym that dyed on tre* is both an asseveration and a line-filler, often used to provide one of the b rhymes in a four-line stanza rhyming abcb. For another example see line 126 and, with the same rhyme scheme, the *Gest*, lines 405, 439, 1227, 1363.
- 21 *Ye*. Dobson and Taylor emend the manuscript to *yea*, but *ye* is a possible form for a positive response, modern *yes*, and the emendation is unnecessary.

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- 24 Matins is the first of the canonical hours of the day. It was originally sung soon after midnight, but "matins with lauds" came to be the office associated with daybreak, which is the sense here.
- 25 *he*. MS: *h*. The vowel has become invisible.
- 29 Much the Miller's son is one of Robin's three named companions in early ballads, where he is a more forceful and less youthful figure than in recent films. When Robin announces his intention to attend Mass in Nottingham, Much advises him to be cautious and to take twelve yeomen with him for protection — similar advice is given Robin by Little John in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* and by Will in *Robin Hood's Fishing* and *The Death of Robin Hood*. The hero's rash isolation appears to invite danger.
- This line begins a six-line stanza, of the kind identified in this edition in *Robin Hood and the Potter* at lines 208 and 254, and elsewhere; see the discussion in the General Introduction, p. 7 and the note on lines 141–44 below.
- 30 *beryde*. The last four letters are very hard to decipher, but this seems the most likely reading.
- 42 MS: *lyne*. Parallel usages indicate this refers to the forest trees, not the "line" of the forest; see line 92 where the spelling *lynde* makes it clearer that the reference is to trees, probably trees in general, not specifically the lime-trees indicated by the word.
- 51 The argument between Robin and Little John begins in line 37, when Robin orders John to carry his bow, and he refuses. The theme of internal strife which threatens the solidarity of the outlaw band also occurs in the *Gest*, where Little John becomes angry for no clear reason (line 442) and also in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, where John orders Robin to wait under a tree while he interrogates the mysterious stranger: Robin loses his temper and threatens John. They separate, Little John is captured, and eventually rescued by Robin, the reverse of events here.
- 61 MS: *wille*. Only the first *w* is now legible. Hartshorne and Madden, and Child, both read it as the grammatically correct *wilt*, but the space suggests four letters rather than three: *thow wille* could either be read as a very precise subjunctive or as a loose usage and is accepted here.

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- 72 MS: *kneþd*. Child prints *kneaded*, presumably a minor error.
- 75 When Robin goes to St Mary's church in Nottingham (the city church, very close to the market he visits as a potter), he is recognised by a *gryf-hedid* monk, whom Robin has robbed of one hundred pounds. The scene is reminiscent of the episode in the *Geſt* when Robin steals eight hundred pounds from a *fur-hedid* monk (line 364), who is the cellarer of St Mary's Abbey, York.
- 83-86 By reporting to the sheriff the presence of Robin Hood in the church, the monk has violated the ancient privilege of sanctuary. The betrayal is particularly heinous because Robin was attending mass when he was discovered. As the following excerpt makes clear, even felons were protected by sanctuary: "There are some felons who, when they are liable to arrest, flee to a church or some other sacred place, whence they must not be drawn or thrust forth, lest laymen who draw them forth incur sentence of excommunication or clergy who thrust them forth incur the taint of irregularity by their rash act. For it has been enacted that the English church shall have its rights and franchises unimpaired and also that the peace of the church and the land shall be preserved inviolate and that equal justice shall be dispensed to all men alike" (Harry Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents 1189-1327*, vol. III [London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968], p. 567).
- In describing Robin Hood to the sheriff, the monk uses the term *kynggis felon* "king's felon." In English law there were two types of legal proceedings or pleas: criminal and civil. Criminal offenses "appertain to the crown of the lord king," while civil charges "fall within the jurisdiction of the sheriffs of shires." Criminal charges included "tending to the death of the king, or the moving of a sedition against his person or his realm or in his army" and "a breach of the king's peace: homicide, arson, robbery, rape, falsifying . . ." Civil actions were handled in shire courts and dealt with questions of status and dower, breach of fine, performance of homage, debts owed by lay persons, and the right of freehold and ownership (David C. Douglas and George W. Greenaway, eds., *English Historical Documents 1042-1189*, vol. II [London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968], pp. 462-63).
- 85 The phrase *the kynggis felon* indicates that Robin Hood has been proclaimed outlaw, and so can be captured at will; the monk also has a personal grievance, see lines 77-78 and 171-74.

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- 95 MS: *sckereff*. Child prints "shereff," presumably in error.
- 103 *too-hond*. The first part of the word is very hard to read, but does seem much the same as the clearer *too* in line 142. Robin and his men often fight with swords; the bow was not a hand-to-hand weapon, and military archers usually carried a sword for close fighting.
- 107 MS: *thorow at*. Child emends to *thorowout*, but the original makes sense — Robin runs both through and at them, much as William of Clowdeslye does, see *Adam Bell*, line 142.
- The last word in this line is hard to read; indeed there may not have been a word there at all. Hartshorne, Madden and Dobson, and Taylor leave *then* out; if, as seems likely, *thorow at* is trisyllabic, the meter does not require another word. Child printed *then*; the enigmatic marks could as easily be read as *wel*, but that would strain the sense improbably. On the assumption that a word did exist here, it seems best to accept Child's reading as being either correct or a probable emendation.
- 108 There is another word before *For sothe*. Hartshorne printed *Then*, and Madden apparently agreed. Dobson and Taylor (1976, p. 117) guess at *As*, but under ultra-violet light it appears to be *Ffor*. It can hardly mean *Four*, as a rhetorical *correctio* of *Thryes* in the previous line; this is a familiar, if weak, line, and presumably the second *for* must be an error.
- 112 The motif of the broken sword is a common theme in epic and heroic literature. In the *Aeneid* (Book XII, lines 969–82) Turnus's sword shatters on Aeneas's armor; in Prudentius's *Psycharomachia*, Ira's sword breaks as she strikes the helmet of Patientia (v. 145); in *Beowulf*, the hero's sword *Naegling*, breaks in the fight with the dragon (line 2680); and in Malory's *Le Morte Durthur*, Balin's sword "burst in sunder" when it was struck by King Pellam's weapon. There is no sense here that Robin should be fighting with a bow rather than a sword: he and his fellow often fight with swords in the early ballads. The bow is seen primarily as a weapon for hunting or displaying skill.
- 119 This line is very hard to read. Child offers: *Robin in the churche ran*, which makes sense though as Dobson and Taylor note, it might be expected he would run out of the church (1976, p. 117). Madden thought it read *Robyn in to the churche ran* (he was correcting Hartshorne's error *Robyns men*). Under ultra-

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violet light the manuscript appears to read *Robin is to . . . churche ran*; the short word before *churche* does not begin with *r* but may start with *h*. It could be *her*, which might refer to Our Lady or perhaps the *hem* of the next line; the action may suggest he is seeking sanctuary. But the reading is very indistinct, and in any case what follows is absent.

- 120 There is a gap in the narrative here, between the bottom of the verso of one leaf and the top of the recto of the next; in the interim we would have been told how Robin is captured and how the outlaws hear of it (probably through a boy carrying the message). Evidently a single leaf has been lost, carrying probably 48 lines (24 to the page is the average in this poem). As the poem continues the scene has changed to Sherwood where news of this disaster has just arrived, and all but Little John are deeply upset.

- 141-42 "And I mete hym," said Little John
 "We will go but we too.

Child prints these two lines in reverse order (presumably an error) as if they are lines 2 and 3 of a damaged stanza (there is no gap in the MS). Dobson and Taylor accept this, and complete the stanza with some ingenuity:

Then spake Much the mynher son
"We will go but we too."
"And I mete hym," said Little John,
"I truste to wyrke hym woo." (1976, p. 118)

Lucid as this might be, it is highly suppositional, and the two lines are still in the wrong order. In fact the two lines, if printed in their manuscript order, make good sense as the end of a six-line stanza, albeit one where the rhyme is weak (*be, Mary, and too*, though if the last were its variant form *twey* this would be a better, though still imperfect, rhyme). This sort of uneven stanza is by no means uncommon in this and other poems, and it seems better to leave the MS just as it is. The sense of the two lines is that John and the Monk will have a one-to-one encounter. See the similar usage in *Robin Hood and the Potter*, line 61: *Togeder then went thes to yemen.*

- 155 MS: *my.* Inserted above line by scribe.

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- 165 This is a very short line: to fill it out Child adds *cattif Robin Hode*. But the drama of the short line and the resultant multiple rhyme is rather effective and here has been retained; Hartshorne and Madden accepted it as such. Jamieson filled out with *we wold seyn here*.
- 171 MS: *me*. Inserted above line by scribe.
- 195 MS: *so*. Child emends to *sore*, but this is not needed: *so* can act as a general intensive in Middle as in Modern English.
- 197 MS: *The*. Child has *This*, perhaps an error rather than an unnecessary emendation.
- 198 *can*. Dobson and Taylor note that *can* has the force of *gan*, which they translate as *began* (1976, p. 118). But it is used here and elsewhere as a past auxiliary, parallel to *did*.
- 207 MS: *hym*. An error for the plural *hem*.
- 211 This line is missing in the text but is easily reconstructed as here, though Child leaves it blank; Hartshorne does not leave a gap, treating this as a three line stanza.
- 229 MS: *theim*. The *i* is very indistinct, but as it is a little clearer in the following line, it seems best to accept Child's reading of the MS here. Madden's collations correct Hartshorne to *theime* in line 229 but not in line 230.
- 245 Child inserts *the* before *porter*, but this is not necessary in the sometimes condensed style of the ballads. Jamieson included *the*, so did Hartshorne, and Madden either accepted this as editing or did not notice it in his collation.
- 246 Prison conditions in the time of Edward II (1307-27) could be brutal. In an excerpt from the *Life of Edward the Second*, the Monk of Malmesbury describes the treatment meted out to one who would not plead: "The prisoner shall sit on the cold, bare floor, dressed only in the thinnest of shirts, and pressed with as great a weight of iron as his wretched body can bear. His food shall be a little rotten bread, and his drink cloudy and stinking water. The day on which he eats he shall not drink, and the day on which he has drunk he shall not taste bread. Only superhuman strength survives this punishment beyond the fifth or sixth

Robin Hood and the Monk

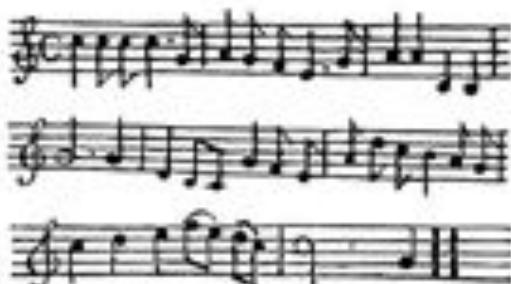
day" (Harry Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents 1189-1327*, [New York: Oxford University Press, 1975], III, 566-67).

- 249 MS: *oure*. Whereas Child prints the first possessive as *oure* and the second as *our*, it is clear that the second is also *oure*.
- 270 MS: *the* (first instance). It might seem more idiomatic if this were a plural possessive (*took their way*), but *the way* is a common idiom (see line 237 and, with slightly different reference, line 225). In any case the plural would be *her*, so this can hardly be a scribal shortening.
- MS: *gale*. Child's *jale* may be an emendation, but he does not note the fact.
- 273 MS: *the*. This is the first of several readings taken here from the fragmentary *b* manuscript; Child merely reports them as variants to *a*, but in several cases they seem sharper and probably original and, unless apparently erroneous, will be preferred, as here.
- 278 MS *b*: *throw to*. A more dramatic reading from *b*; *a* just has *to*.
- 279 MS *b*: *jayler*. Where *a* repeats *porter*, *b* has a sharper variation.
- 280 MS *b*: *toke*. Fragment *b* has the past tense and narration, where *a* has the present tense *toke* and, presumably, continues John's direct speech. There is little between them, and the repetition of *toke* in the next line might seem against *b* apart from its other qualities hereabouts, but there seems little reason to prefer *a* here.
- 284 MS *b*: *ther with to kepe*. The *a* reading *with for to keepe* seems clumsy against this *b* reading.
- 285 MS *b*: *wallis were*. The *a* reading *walle was* seems vaguer than *b* here.
- 300 MS: *rye*. This reading (only in *a*; *b* lacks these lines) makes a poor rhyme with *lynde* and to use the easily lost plural *styne* makes them closer.
- 305 MS *b*: *ill*. The *b* is metrically better than *a*'s "evyll."

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- 306 MS b: *me*. This is a better reading than a's *Quyte the* (though *acquit yourself* does make sense).
- 308 MS b: *the*. The *a* reading *yow* is less likely as the pronoun John would use at this point, both because they are friends and because they have been quarrelling; in the next line both texts use *the*.
- 309 MS b: *the*. This is metrically better than *a*'s reading, which lacks *the*.
- 311 Here and in line 313 the *b* version has simply "Robyn," which seems better suited to this personal exchange, than the full name, as in *a* and printed by Child.
- 314 A word is crossed out before *me*; it appears to be *and* written again accidentally, but the *d* is not finished.
- 331 MS: *cure cumly kyng*. The phrase occurs six times in the *Gest*. See note to line 1412; he is identified there as Edward, but it is not clear which one of that name.
- 358 MS: *alle*. The manuscript appears to read this, not Child's *all*.

The scribe has written *Amen* at the end.



Robin Hood and the Potter

Introduction

The ballad survives only in one manuscript, Cambridge E.x.4.35, a collection of popular and moral poems dated around 1500. It is written in what Dobson and Taylor call "a clear bastard hand" (1976, p. 123) and the text is complete, though at line 271 a line appears to be missing through scribal error. Child thought there were other gaps, but if a six-line stanza is acceptable (as is found elsewhere), and since there is no break in the sense, all the other gaps he identified disappear except that before line 224, and that too may be the result of an irregular stanza.

Like the other early manuscript ballad, *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter* plays no part in the popular printed tradition, though *Robin Hood and the Butcher*, based closely on this ballad, is in both Pepys's and Wood's collections and also in the earliest surviving garlands of 1663 and 1670. Although this Potter version was not reprinted until Ritson's edition of 1795, which gave it its present name (as in other early ballads, the title focusses on the first action, before the encounter with the sheriff is developed from it), the story was clearly well known, since Copland's edition of the *Gest* (c. 1560) also prints two short plays, one of which is a dramatized encounter with a potter that begins like the ballad.

The relation between the play and the ballad has been misunderstood. Child said the play was "founded on" the ballad (III, 108) and this is also the conclusion come to by Steadman, as is suggested by the title of his essay on "The Dramatization of the Robin Hood Ballads" (1919); the same view has been proffered by Simeone (1951, p. 266) and Nelson (1973, pp. 47–51). Ritson's comment is somewhat subtler, saying the play "seems allusive to the same story" (1795, p. 60). In fact the plays and ballads are generically different treatments of the same themes, covering the issues central to the myth to different degrees and in genre-appropriate ways (Knight, 1994, pp. 112–13). The Potter play has a quite different narrative from the parallel ballad; it shapes a vivid dramatic action which, as in most of the early plays, leads up to a good rousing fight as finale.

The events and structure of the ballad are a good deal more complex. There are three sections, here represented as fitts, as suggested by the language of the texts (see lines 119–20, 237). Fitt 1 occurs in the greenwood, and is basically a "Robin Hood meets his match" sequence. Fitt 2 transfers the action to Nottingham, with Robin in

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disguise. He encounters the sheriff, and this is fleshed out with an archery competition, as found in the *Gest* and in the later ballad *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*. Pitt 3 sees the return to the greenwood, where the sheriff is surprised and the outlaws gather about Robin at the sound of his horn.

Among these familiar events are a set of themes central to the myth. Major features are: Robin is a yeoman among yeomen; recurrent suspicion of the towns and its activities; Robin's innate skill at archery; the full and free ethics of the forest. These mesh fully with the values found in other early texts, a fact which seems to contradict Holt's view that this is a "tale very dependent on comic situations" (1989, p. 34), but *Robin Hood and the Potter* also adds some other themes. The generosity and honesty characteristic of Robin in other early texts are here interwoven with more obvious aspects of the trickster: this is, as Dobson and Taylor note, "more deliberately light-hearted" than parallel texts (1976, p. 124), and the humor of the outlaws, the wry responses of Robin and the ironic tricking of the Sheriff are all stressed and realized with buoyant humor: presumably it is this element that Holt downgrades as "trite" (1989, p. 34).

This text makes specific the suspicion of towns and business practices touched on elsewhere, as when in the *Gest* Little John refuses to measure cloth like a draper, or when Robin returns the knight's repayment to honor them both. Robin is a comically bad marketeer, and the canny folk of Nottingham throng to buy his pots (*Robin Hood and the Butcher* relishes this motif): Robin's largesse is continued when he pays the potter with reckless generosity for his whole cartload at the end. Throughout the ballad the world of mercantile values is mocked and dismissed.

With the same sense of excess, Robin smashes the feeble townsmen's bows offered to him by the sheriff, trounces professional marksmen and thoroughly trivializes the threat of the sheriff — who is found much more deadly in other texts, where his own death is a reflex of that threatening personality. The conflict with the sheriff is also, it seems, fought in part on the terrain of masculinity: *Robin Hood and the Potter* is the only early text which shows Robin in relation with any woman (except the Virgin Mary and the treacherous Prioress). The text seems deliberately to insinuate that the sheriff's wife is more than a little interested in the powerful potter. When they first meet she speaks more respectfully than might be expected, addressing the quasi-potter as "sir" and by the end of the ballad she compares this enigmatic masculine figure favorably to her mocked husband: Holt saw in this contact "a distant distorted echo of courtly love" (1989, p. 126).

These thematic features might well be held to compensate in their complexity for what has been seen as a relative simplicity in style. Dobson and Taylor find this "a much less skilful work of literary composition" than other early texts (1976, p. 124) and Ritson went so far as to say "the writing is evidently that of a vulgar and

Robin Hood and the Potter

"illiterate person" (1795, p. 60). There is a fairly limited use of cliché and line filler (lines 30, 52, 54, 62, 102, 122, 166, 226, 252, 275, 314), but the rhyme pattern is decidedly irregular, exhibiting various departures from the standard abcb: either incomplete rhyme (114/6, 134/6, 193/5, 201/3, 234/6, 254/6, 282/4), rhyme varied to abac (33-36, 53-56, 77-80, 101-04, 117-20, 200-03, 245-48), varied to abc (85-88), or even abbc (89-92, 168-71, 293-96?), at times a lack of rhyme altogether (93-96, 191-94, 249-52) and the last of these variants, full rhyme abab (1-4, 37-40, 57-60, 137-40, 176-79, 208-11, 214-17, 225-28, 233-36, 259-62; because of the possibility of half rhyme being acceptable, some of the abac and abc cases could be taken as abab).

Less than polished as the ballad certainly is in terms of style, it also has, as Dobson and Taylor remark a "direct form of address" (1976, p. 124). It uses dialogue more than other early Robin Hood ballads (55% of the lines, as against 45% in *Robin Hood and the Monk* and 50% in *Robin Hood and Gay of Gisborne*, the other two dialogue-heavy texts). In keeping with that it is notable for a rapid change of viewpoint, especially in the opening greenwood sequence. This dramatic yet simple quality has led to the connection of the ballad to the minstrel style, that is a rather casual technique based on direct communication and emotive effects, assumed to indicate a popular context. But it is notable that this technically simple ballad has some complexities. Though Robin Hood is firmly a yeoman, he is also, as in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, noted for his quality of being *cortex and free*, the latter adjective having both its senses of lordly generosity and yeomanly independence. The tone and impact of the ballad may well show more art than has sometimes been assumed: its plot is quick-moving and highly effective, its tone vigorous and direct, with a strong and well-maintained level of irony. Gray, in connection with these elements, sees aspects of the fabliau behind the ballad (1984, p. 18).

These subtleties may also be thematic. At the beginning and end the ballad asserts the elusive value of *god yemanrey*, and it may well be that this text, like other early Robin Hood ballads, is something of an exploration and realization of just what these values might be. As with other newly formed genres, they may relate to new social formations: Tardif has argued for the importance of disaffected craftsmen in the formation of the Robin Hood genres (1983, pp. 131-32). This ballad appears to develop some values consistent with this thesis, promulgating ideas of a newly identified social stratum, neither serf nor lord, interested in communal values and threatened by a new world of towns and laws imposed from a distance. For them the youthful, witty, brave, and cunning hero, representing and leading his band of near equals, is a good deal more than trite, and his mythic values come strongly through a text whose literary surface is simple and, therefore, capable of wide diffusion.

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Robin Hood and the Potter

Fitt 1

In schomer, when the leves spreng.
 The bloschoms on every bowe,
 So merey doyt the berdys syng
 Yn wodys mercy now.

summer
 blossoms
 merry do
 completely joyful

5 Herkens, god yemen,
 Comley, cortey, and god,
 On of the best that yever bare bowe,
 Hes name was Roben Hode.

Listen
 Fair, well-bred, and good
 One; ever bare

10 Roben Hood was the yemans name,
 That was boyt cortey and fre;
 For the liffe of owre ladey,
 All wemen werschepyd he.

both courteous and generous
 love of our lady (Virgin Mary)
 honored

15 Bot as the god yeman stod on a day,
 Among hes mery maney,
 He was ware of a proud potter,
 Cam dryfing owyr the leye.

But
 his merry band of men
 aware
 Came hastering over the open land

20 "Yonder comet a prod potter," seyde Roben,
 "That long hayt hantyd this wey;
 He was never so cortey a man
 On peney of pawage to pay."

comes a proud
 has regularly passed
 courteous
 One penny of road-toll to pay

"Y met hem bot at Wentbreg," seyde Lytyll John,
 "And therefore yeffell mot he the!
 Seche thre strokes he me gafe,
 Yet by my seydys cleffe they.

Wensbridge
 evil may he thrive (damn him)!
 Such; gave
 The blows are still splitting my sides

Robin Hood and the Potter

- 25 "Y ley forty shillings," seyde Lytyll John,
"To pay het thes same day.
Ther ys nat a man among hus all
A wed schall make hem leye." *I wager it us*
Who can force him to make a payment
- 30 "Here ys forty shillings," seyde Roben.
"More, and thow dar say,
That Y schall make that prowde potter.
A wed to me schall he ley." *if you dare gamble (it) I shall He shall make me a payment*
- 35 There thes money they leyde.
They toke het a yeman to kepe;
Roben before the potter he breyde,
And bad hem stond stell. *laid down gave it to jumped ordered him to stand still*
- 40 Handys apon hes hors he leyde,
And bad the potter stonde foll stell;
The potter schortleley to hem seyde,
"Felow, what ys they will?" *upon absolutely still briefly what is thy will*
- 45 "All thes thre yer, and more, potter," he seyde,
"Thow hast hantyd thes wey,
Yet were tow never so cortys a man
On peney of pavage to pay." *regularly passed were you never One; road-toll*
- 50 "What ys they name," seyde the potter,
"For pavage thow aske of me?"
"Roben Hod ys mey name,
A wed schall thow leffe me." *A payment you shall leave me*
- 55 "Wed well y non leffe," seyde the potter,
"Nor pavag well Y non pay:
Awey they honde fro mey hors!
Y well the tene eyls, be mey fay." *I will not leave a payment Nor will I pay a toll from my I will do thee evil otherwise, by my faith*
- The potter to hes cart he wens.
He was not to seke;
A god to-hande staffe therowt he hent,
Befor Roben he leppyd. *did not hide good two-handed; took out Before; leaped*

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- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| | Roben hewe with a swerd bent,
A bokeler en hes honde; | pulled out a sword
buckler |
| 60 | The potter to Roben he went,
And seyde, "Felow, let mey hors go." | |
| | Togeder then went thes to yemen,
Het was a god seyt to se; | these two
good sight |
| | Thereof low Robyn hes men,
There they stod onder a tre. | Robin's men laughed
Where |
| 65 | Leytell John to hes fellow he seyde,
"Yend potter well stefleley stonde":
The potter, with an acward stroke,
Smot the bokeler owt of hes honde. | That; will staunchly stand
with a back-handed stroke
Struck |
| 70 | And ar Roben meyt get het agen
Hes bokeler at hes fette,
The potter yn the neke hem toke,
To the gronde sone he yede. | before; might get it
feet
hit him on the neck
at once he fell |
| 75 | That saw Roben hes men,
As they stod onder a bow;
"Let us helpe owre master," seyde Lytell John,
"Yonder potter," seyde he, "els well hem slo." | Robin's men saw that
bough [of a tree]
will him slay |
| 80 | Thes wight yemen with a breyde,
To thes master they cam.
Leytell John to hes master seyde,
"Ho haes the wager won?" | These strong; rash
this
his
Who has |
| | "Schall Y haffe yowre forty shillings," seyde Lytl John,
"Or ye, master, schall haffe myne?" | Will I have |
| | "Yeff they were a hundred," seyde Roben,
"Y feythe, they ben all theyne." | If
In faith, they are |
| 85 | "Het ys fol leytell cortesey," seyde the potter,
"As I hafe harde weyse men saye,
Yeffe a pore yeman com drywyng over the way,
To let hem of hes gorney." | It is very discourteous
heard
If; driving
hinder him; journey |

Robin Hood and the Potter

- 90 "Be mey trowet, thow seys soyt," seyde Roben,
 "Thow seys god yemenarey;
 And thow dreyfle forthe yevery day,
 Thow schalt never be let for me."
 By my faith: speak truth
 You speak good yemanary
 If thou go forth
 be delayed
- 95 "Y well prey the, god potter,
 A felischepe well thow haffe?
 Geffe me they clothynge, and thow schalt
 hafe myne;
 Y well go to Notynggam."
 I will ask thee
 Will you have a fellowship
 Give
- 100 "Y grant thereto," seyde the potter.
 "Thow schalt feynde me a felow gode;
 Bot thow can sell mey pottys well,
 Com ayen as thow yede."
 Unless
 went
- 105 "Nay, be mey trowt," seyde Roben,
 "And then Y bescro mey hede,
 Yeffe Y bring eney pottys ayen,
 And eney weyfle well hem chepe."
 truth
 beskrew (curse) myself
 If
 If any wife will buy them
- 110 Than spake Leytell John,
 And all hes felowhes heynnd,
 "Master, be well ware of the scrafle
 of Notynggam,
 For he ys leytell howr frende."
 friendly fellow
 wary; sheriff
 little our friend
- 115 "Thorow the helpe of Howt Ladey,
 Felowhes, let me alone.
 Heyt war howte!" seyde Roben,
 "To Notynggam well Y gon."
 With: Our Lady
 Gee up!
 will I go
- 120 Robyn went to Notynggam,
 Thes pottys for to sell;
 The potter abode with Robens men,
 There he fered not cyllie.
 stayed
 fared well
- 125 Tho Roben droffe on hes wey,
 So meray ower the londe:
 hastened

- 120 Her es more, and affter ys to saye,
The best ys beheynde. *is yet to come*

Fitt 2

When Roben cam to Notynggam,
The soyt yef Y scholde saye.
He set op hes hors anon,
And gaffe hem hotys and haye.

*If I were to tell the truth
stabbed
gave him oats and hay*

- 125 Yn the medys of the towne,
There he schowed hes ware;
"Pottys! pottys!" he gan crey foll sone,
"Haffe hansell for the mare!"

*In the midst
showed his wares
began to shout at once
Have a present the more you buy*

- 130 Foll effen agenest the screffleys gate
Schowed he hes chaffare;
Weyffes and wedowes abowt hem drow,
And chepyd fast of hes ware.

*Right against; sheriff's
merchandise
Wives; drew about him
quickly purchased*

- 135 Yet "Pottys, gret chepe!" creyed Robyn.
"Y loffe yeffell thes to stonde."
And all that say hem sell
Seyde he had be no potter long.

*great bargain?
I hate to leave these standing
saw him selling
he had not been a potter long*

- 140 The pottys that were worthe pens feyffle,
He solde them for pens thre;
Preveley seyde man and weyffe,
"Ywnder potter schall never the."

*five pence
Privately; woman
Yonder; prosper*

- Thos Roben solde foll fast,
Tell he had pottys bot feyffle;
Op he hem toke of hes car,
And sende hem to the screffleys weyfe.

*Till; five
He took them up from his cart
wife*

- 145 Thereof sche was foll fayne,
"Gerecamarsey," seyde sche, "sir, than.

*very happy
Thank you*

Robin Hood and the Porter

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | When ye com to thes contré ayen,
Y schall bey of the pottys, so mo Y the." | these parts again
buy from you; as I may prosper |
| 150 | "Ye schall haffe of the best," seyde Roben,
And sware be the Treneyté.
Foll cortesley sche gan hem call,
"Com deyne with the screfe and me." | Trinity
With full courtesy; him
Come dine; sheriff |
| 155 | "God amarsey," seyde Roben,
"Yowre bedyng schall be doyn."
A mayden yn the pottys gan bere,
Roben and the screffe weyfle folowed anon. | God thank you
bidding; done
bare the pots in
at once |
| 160 | Whan Roben yn to the hall cam,
The screffe sone he met;
The potter cowed of corteysey,
And sone the screffe he gret. | sheriff at once
understood courtesy
greeted |
| | "Lo, ser, what thes poster hayt geffe yow and me,
Feyffe pottys smalle and grete!" | Look sir; has given |
| | "He ys foll welcom," seyd the screffe,
"Let os was, and to mete." | Five
very
Let's wash and [go] to food |
| 165 | As they sat at her methe,
With a nobell chere,
To of the screffes men gan speke
Of a gret wager. | their food
noble cheer
Two; began to
win |
| 170 | Of a schotyng, was god and feyne,
Was made the tother daye,
Of forty shillings, the soyt to saye,
Who scholde thes wager gayne. | Of a shooting match; fine
other
the truth to tell
win |
| 175 | Styll than sat thes prowde potter,
Thos than thowt he,
As Y am a trow Cersyn man,
Thes schotyng well Y se. | Silent
Thus; thought
true Christian
will I see |

Early Ballads and Tales

- Whan they had fared of the best,
With bred and ale and weyme.
To the bolyys the made them prest,
With bowes and bolyys foll feyne.
- The screffles men schot foll fast,
As archares that weren prowe,
There cam non ner ney the marke
Bey halffe a god archares bowe.
- Still then stod the growde potter,
Thos than seyde he:
"And Y had a bow, be the Rode,
On schot scholde yow se."
- "Thow schall haffe a bow," seyde the screffe,
"The best that thow well cheys of thre;
Thou semyst a stalward and a stronge,
Asay schall thow be."
- The screffe commandyd a yeman that stod hem bey
After bowhes to weynde;
- 195 The best bow that the yeman browthe
Roben set on a stryng.
- "Now schall Y wet and thow be god,
And polle het op to they nere."
"So god me helpe," seyde the growde potter,
"Thys ys bot ryght weke gere."
- To a quequer Roben went,
A god bolt owthe he toke;
So ney on to the marke he went,
He fayled not a fothe.
- 205 All they schot a bowthe agen.
The screffles men and he;
Off the marke he welde not fayle,
He cleffed the preke on thre.
- dined
wine
targets they harried
arrows
- shot very quickly
archers; skillful
nearer the mark
By half the length of
- Still
Thus
If: by Christ's Cross
One shot you would see
- will choose
seem
Tested
- To go for bows*
brought
fitted a string
- know if you are any good*
pull it up to your ear
- but very feeble tackle*
- quiver
good arrow he took out
near to the mark
didn't miss by a foot
- a round again
- would not miss
cleft; peg into three pieces

Robin Hood and the Power

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 210 | The scrafles men showt gret schame
The potter the mastry wan;
The scrafle lowe and made god game.
And seyde, "Potter, thow art a man.
Thow art worthey to bere a bowe
Yn what plas that thow goe?" | thought (i.e., felt) great shame
won the contest
laughed
<i>In whatever place</i> |
| 215 | "Yn mey cart Y haffe a bow,
For soyt," he seyde, "and that a godde;
Yn mey cart ys the bow
That gaffe me Robyn Hode." | <i>my</i>
<i>In truth; it's a good one</i>
<i>Robin Hood gave me</i> |
| 220 | "Knowest thow Robyn Hode?" seyde the scrafle,
"Potter, Y prey the tell thow me."
"A hundred tornes Y haffe schot with hem,
Under hes tortyll-tre." | <i>bouts</i>
<i>tryning tree</i>
<i>rather than have</i> |
| 225 | "Y had lever nar a hundred ponde," seyde the scrafle,
And sware be the Trinity,
"That the fals outelawe stod be me." | |
| | "And ye well do affyr mey red," seyde the potter,
"And boldeley go with me,
And so morow, or we het bred,
Roben Hode well we se." | <i>If you will follow my counsel</i>
<i>boldly</i>
<i>before we eat</i> |
| 230 | "Y well queyt the," kod the scrafle,
"And swere be God of meythe."
Schetyng thay left, and hom they went,
Her soper was reddy deythe. | <i>I will reward thee, said</i>
<i>almighty</i>
<i>They stopped shooting</i>
<i>Their supper was prepared</i> |
| | Fitt 3 | |
| 235 | Upon the morrow, when het was day,
He boskyd hem forthe to reyde;
The potter hes cart forthe gan ray,
And wolde not lefie behynde. | <i>it</i>
<i>He got himself ready to ride</i>
<i>began to make ready his cart</i>
<i>leave (it) behind</i> |

四九三

- Upon the morrow, when het was day,
He boskyd hem forthe to reyde;
The potter hes cart forthe gan ray,
And wolde not leffe beheynde.
*He got himself ready to ride
began to make ready his cart
leave (iii) behind*

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- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | He toke leffe of the screffys wyffe,
And thankyd her of all thyng:
"Dam, for mey loffe and ye well thys were,
Y geffe yow here a golde ryng." | took leave
if you will wear this |
| 240 | "Gramarsey," seyde the weyffe,
"Sir, God eylde het the."
The screffys hart was never so leythe,
The feyre foreyst to se. | Many thanks
God reward you for it
light |
| 245 | And when he cam yn to the foreyst,
Under the leffes grene,
Berdys there sange on bowhes prest,
Het was gret goy to se. | Birds sang freely on boughs there
great joy |
| 250 | "Here het ys merry to be," seyde Roben,
"For a man that had hawt to spende;
Be mey horne ye schall awet
Yeff Roben Hode be here." | To be here is merry
who had anything to spend
By my horn you shall discover |
| 255 | Roben set hes horne to hes mowthe,
And blow a blast that was foll god;
That herde hes men that there stode,
Fer downe yn the wodde. | heard his |
| | "I her mey master blow," seyde Leystell John,
They ran as they were wode. | crazy |
| 260 | Whan thay to thar master cam,
Leystell John wold not spare;
"Master, how haffe yow fare yn Notynggam?
How haffe yow solide yowre ware?" | hold back
how did you fare
did you tell |
| 265 | "Ye, be mey trowthe, Leytyll John,
Loke thou take no care;
Y haffe browt the screffe of Notynggam,
For all howre chaffare." | Little
brought
As a result of our business |
| | "He ys foll welcom," seyde Lytyll John,
"Thes tyding ys foll godde." | very
news |

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- 270 The screffe had lever nar a hundred ponde
He had never seen Roben Hode. rather than
- "Had I west that befforen,
At Notynggam when we were.
Thow scholde not com yn feyre forest
Of all thes thowsande eyre." *Had I known that before*
years
- 275 "That wot Y well," seyde Roben,
"Y thanke God that ye be here;
Thereffore schall ye leffe yowre hors with hos,
And all yowre hother gare." *I know that well*
leave; us
your other gear
- 280 "That fend I Godys forbod," kod the screffe,
"So to lese mey godde."
"Hether ye cam on hors foll hey,
And hom schall ye go on fote;
And gret well they weyffe at home,
The woman ys foll godde." *May God forbid that, said*
So to lose my goods
Hither you came high upon a horse
greet; your wife
- 285 "Y schall her sende a wheyt palffrey,
Het hambellit as the weynde.
Nere for the loffe of yowre weyffe,
Off more sorow scholde yow seyng." *white palffrey*
It trots; wind
Were it not
you should sing
- 290 Thes parted Robyn Hode and the screffe;
To Notynggam he toke the waye;
Hes weyffe feyre welcomed hem hom.
And to hem gan sche saye: Thus
- "Seyr, how haffe yow fared yn grene foreyst?
Haffe ye browt Roben hom?" *how did you fare*
brought
- 295 "Dam, the devyll spede hem, bothe bodehy and bon;
Y haffe hade a foll gret skorne." *Lady, the devil take him*
full great harm
- 300 "Of all the god that Y haffe lade to grene wod,
He hayt take het fro me;
All bot thes feyre palffrey,
That he hayt sende to the." *Of all the property I had taken*
has taken it from me
All but this
has

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- With that sche toke op a lowde lawhyng,
And sware be Hem that dyed on tre.
"Now haffe yow payed for all the pottys
That Roben gaffe to me." *let out a loud laugh
swore by*
- 305
- "Now ye be com hom to Notynggam.
Ye schall haffe god ymowe."
Now speke we of Roben Hode,
And of the pottyr ondyt the grene bowhe. *plenty of property
under*
- 310 "Potter, what was they pottys worthe
To Notynggam that Y ledde with me?"
"They wer worthe to nobellys," seyde he,
"So mot Y treyffe or the;
So cowde Y had for tham,
And Y had be there." *that I took with me
two nobles
So may I thrive or prosper
So [much] could I have had
If I had been there*
- 315
- "Thow schalt hafe ten ponde," seyde Roben,
"Of money feyre and fre;
And yever whan thow comest to grene wod,
Wellcom, potter, to me." *pounds
always*
- 320 Thes partyd Robyn, the scrafte, and the potter,
Onderneithe the grene wod tre;
God haffe mersey on Roben Hodys sole,
And saffe all god yemanrey! *Thus
soul*



Notes

- 4 MS: *merey now*. This is not "merry now," which has little meaning, but is a spelling variant of *merey ynow*, a familiar phrase in this context which means "completely joyful"; *enough* in Middle English means "as much as is appropriate."
- 6 MS: *cotessey*. Child emends to the required adjective *coteys*.
- 12 MS: *werschep ye*. Child emends both tense and pronoun to *werschepyd he*; both changes seem necessary.
- 16 MS: *lefe*. An easy error for *leye* (see line 28). Child spells it *ley*, but the simplification of spelling is not necessary.
- 21 Wentbridge is a small town on the River Went near the Yorkshire Barnsdale; see note on the *Gest*, lines 69–70, for a discussion of locations.
- 24 MS: *Yet they cleffe by my seydes*. The scribe has clearly misremembered the order of the elements of the line and so lost the rhyme. Child reorders the line to *Yet by my seyds cleffe they*, that is "The blows are still splitting my sides," and this is accepted.
- 27 MS: *hyr*. Emended by Child to *har*; the error was presumably influenced by *ys* earlier in the line.
- 28 MS: *hem leffe*. The same misreading as in line 16 has again lost the rhyme. The sense is the same here: to leave a pledge or to lay a pledge. Child emends *leffe* to *ley* to preserve the rhyme, and this is accepted, though as in 16 the spelling *leye* is preferred.
- 41 MS: *he seyde*. The final attribution to a speaker makes the line very long, but there are similar lines elsewhere, especially in this ballad (lines 81, 222, 225) and the *Gest* (lines 310, 442, 630, 758). There seems no good reason to omit *he seyde*.

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- 65 MS: *ffelow he*. Child makes this *ffellowhes*, interpreting the *he* as part of the noun, and adding *s* because John seems to be addressing more than one companion. There is not much space between the *w* and the *h*, but more than is usual in a continuous word, and *he* must be the pronoun. Dobson and Taylor treat it as such, but also accept Child's notion of a plural audience, and read *ffelows he seyde*. But the singular idiom is common, and emendation is not necessary.
- The line begins with a large capital *L*, presumably because it is at the top of a new page in the MS.
- 67 MS: *a coward stroke*. Child emends to *awurd*, meaning "backhand." Though *coward* makes sense as "a cowardly blow," it is unlikely, in view of the rest of the ballad, that the Potter would be represented as cowardly. Child's emendation is accepted, and it is also assumed that in misreading *awurd* as *coward* the scribe also changed *an* to *a*. Robin himself defeats Guy with "an awkward stroke" (see *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, line 159).
- 76 MS: *hel*. Child emends to *els*.
- MS: *sclo*. Child emends to *slō*; this scribe has a tendency to add an unnecessary *c* after *s*. Compare line 233.
- 77 MS: *Thes went yemen*. Child inverts the two words to *yemen went*, but the verb *cam* follows in the next line. It is more likely that the scribe has miswritten *wight*, a very familiar word in this context; this would also maintain the rhythm better than Child's emendation.
- 78 *ther*. Child emends unnecessarily to *ther*, but *thes* is simply a form of "this," as in line 77. See also *her* in line 79, which means "his."
- 87 MS: *over*. Child reads *on*, but the manuscript clearly has *ou* with an abbreviation mark.
- 100 MS: *yede*. Child emends to *yode* to improve the rhyme, but although rhymes in general in this ballad are better than in the *Gest*, this is unnecessary.
- 103 MS: *eney*. Child reads *eny*, presumably a minor error.

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- 109–12 Child reorders these lines, as he feels they do not make sense in the existing order: he prints:

"Heyt war howte!" seyde Roben,
"Piclowthes, let me alone;
Thorow the heipe of Howr Ladey
To Notynggam well y gon."

As Dobson and Taylor note (1976, p. 127), the re-arrangement seems "hardly necessary." Although the stanza's first two lines are rather condensed, it does make sense overall, and is printed here as in the manuscript. In the first line of the stanza Robin appeals to Mary to help against the sheriff, and so (line two) feels his fellows can allow him to go alone; then in line three he stirs up his horse to head off to (line four) Nottingham.

- 113–16 This stanza is wrongly located in the text after line 96 — presumably the scribe's eye has skipped from Nottingham in line 96 to Nottingham in line 113. The fact that the stanza begins a new page may have facilitated the error.
- 121 The language suggests this is an obvious place to begin a new fitt, as Ritson does (1795, p. 64); Child's text has an extra space here (though not at line 234, here taken as the start of Fitt 3). The MS does not mark a new fitt in either place.
- 143 MS: *car*. Child reads *care*, feeling there is an abbreviated *e*; but if so (and it is not clear) this would be an erroneous spelling of this word for *cart*. Dobson and Taylor print *car* (1976, p. 128).
- 146 As Child reports, after *sche* there is a "character" in the manuscript, which he expands to *ser* and also relocates after *Gereamarsey*. Here it is expanded as *sir*. Dobson and Taylor reject this and merely print a stray apostrophe after *sche* (1976, p. 231). However the abbreviation is clear and is also used in line 243. Child presumably moves it (with *than*) to improve the rhyme, but in the light of the uncertain rhymes found in this ballad, there seems insufficient reason to move it: the later usage in line 243 has the same structure, separating *sir* from *Gereamarsey*, and the line is printed here as it stands. It might seem unusual for a sheriff's wife to address a potter she has just met as "sir," though less so in line 243, after he has given her a gold ring. Perhaps the implication is that Robin from the start is identified by the wife as more than a mere potter, leading to the slight sexual rapport suggested between them later on.

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- 148 MS: *the* (first instance). Child emends to *they* (=thy), but it would be a strangely intimate (or perhaps rude) thing for a sheriff's wife to say to a tradesman — especially when she has just called him *sir*. There is no need for any personal pronoun.

MS: *of the*. Crossed out after *pottys*.

- 151 *sche*, MS: *he*.

- 161 As with line 65, a large initial *L* starts the line, presumably because it begins a new page.

- 164 *to*. MS: *to to*. Child emends to *go to*, but it is more likely that the Middle English idiom "let us to meat" is used, and "to" has been accidentally repeated.

When the sheriff suggests that they wash their hands before eating the meal, he is following a custom of "civilized" behavior that originated in the banquet hall of the medieval court. Since food was served in communal bowls, diners picked it out with their hands; hence, the need for clean hands. As Norbert Elias observes, in *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* (New York: Urizen Books, 1978), table manners were adopted by the bourgeois during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (p. 62). This display of "courtly" manners is paralleled by the sheriff's wife calling Robin "sir" and by Robin's gifts to her of five pots, a gold ring, and a white palfrey. For other hand-washing references, see line 125 and line 922 in the *Gest* and line 527 in *Adam Bell*.

- 169 *schoryng*. Since English armies recruited their archers from rural levies and city militias, the populace was required to own bows and arrows and to practice archery. In the *Statute of Winchester* of 1285, Edward I "commanded that every man have in his house arms for keeping the peace" and be "sworn to arms according to the amount of his lands and of his chattels." All men having land worth between 40 and 100 shillings a year were required to own a sword, bow and arrows, and a knife (Harry Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents 1189-1327*, vol. III [New York: Oxford University Press, 1975], 461-62). In a royal writ, dated 1363, King Edward III ordered all the sheriffs in England to proclaim "that everyone in the shire, on festival days when he has holiday, shall learn and exercise himself in the art of archery, and use for his games bows and arrows, or crossbolts or bolts" (Alec R. Myers, ed., *English Historical Documents 1327-1485* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1969], IV, 1182). To encourage practice and to identify expert marksmen, municipal and shire competitions

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were routinely held. In addition to the match in *Robin Hood and the Potter*, there are four other competitions described in the *Gest* (578-89, 1130-81, 1586-1614) and in *Adam Bell* (612-51). More informal archery matches include the games of *placke buffet* (*Gest*, 1690-1705) and *shete a peny* (*Robin Hood and the Monk*, 41-50). For a detailed treatment of the history of archery, including a chapter on Robin Hood, see Jim Bradbury, *The Medieval Archer* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1985).

- 170 MS: *the tho ther*. Child prints as *the shorher*, which Dobson and Taylor accept (1976, p. 129), but this is not a dialectical variant but an error: emend to *the rother*.
- 172 MS: *wen*. The rhyme has been lost, and the original was probably *gyne*, with the half-rhyme common in this ballad.
- 179 MS: *potrys*. Presumably this reading was influenced by the trade Robin has assumed, but it cannot make sense. Child's emendation to *bottys*, that is "bets," is sensible.
- 180 MS: *bolt yr*; *boltys*.
- 182 MS: *goode*. Child accepts this as the final word in the line, with a consequent failure to rhyme; however, this is so common a cliché (often as *ful goode*) that a scribe has obviously slipped into it and spoiled the rhyme: the rarer word *prowe* provides a good rhyme and is accepted here. The equally familiar *good ynow*, which would rhyme, would be metrically very clumsy.
- 198 In his note Child speculates whether *show* should be inserted after *And*, but he does not print this, and it is unnecessary.

The long bow was very hard to pull to its full extent; the sheriff thinks this will test whether the "potter" is really a Bowman. In fact the sheriff's bows are too weak for Robin's mighty arm: this sense of his special strength underlies the well-known proverb "Many men speak of Robin Hood who never bent his bow."

- 205 MS: *a bowthe*. As in the *Gest*, Child treats this like an adverb, modern *about*, meaning *in turn*. But the MS does separate the *a* from *bowthe* (as is noted by Child at the end of his collations). This is more likely, here and elsewhere, to be a noun phrase, meaning "a round (of a contest)," from which the sense "in turn" develops.

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- 213 There is disturbance in this passage through to line 224. Lines 213–14 are, most unusually, a couplet, with the same rhyme as the following stanza. Line 217 unemended lacks a rhyme in the MS; there may be a line missing after line 223. These problems can be made to disappear by a tissue of emending and reordering; however the policy here has been to print as much of the existing text as possible and show how it does in fact make sense, though metrically unusual.
- 218 MS: *That Robyn gaff me*. This is metrically poor and has lost the rhyme. As this stanza appears, apart from this problem, coherent, it would seem the scribe has remembered the line the wrong way round because it is a little strained for rhyme, as in Child's convincing emendation to *That gaffe me Robyn Hode*.
- 225 Child feels a line is missing in the manuscript before this line (though no gap occurs) and he leaves a blank. But there is no gap in the sense, and the rhyme runs on from the previous stanza (as emended). This may well be a rare seven-line stanza (see General Introduction, p. 9), perhaps produced as a scribe tried to rework a passage damaged in the original. The text is left as it stands.
- 226 MS: *the B* crossed out after *seyde*.
- 230 MS: *well*, not *wel* as Child has it.
- 231 *meythe*. MS: *meythay*.
- 233 *soper*. MS: *scoper*.
- 247 MS: *Yonder*. Child accepts this reading but it does not make sense unless it is seen as a strange spelling of *Under*: that would make a very familiar statement in the outlaw ballads, and emendation seems appropriate.
- 252 *ye*. MS: *he*. Child emends to "I." Dobson and Taylor read "he" with "I" in brackets as a possible emendation. But the obvious reading, easily misread as "he," is *ye*.
- 258–59 Child treats these lines as if they are the first and last of a fragmentary stanza, but in fact they fit easily as the end of a six line stanza. They do however start a new page, with a large capital *I*.
- 264 *Leydill*. MS: *I leydy*. Child's emendation.

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- 270 Note the ironic repetition from line 223, when the sheriff thought meeting Robin Hood worth £100.
- 272-73 The manuscript has the line *He had west that befforen* after line 269, so lacking a rhyme for line 268. Child, assuming the scribe has jumped from *He had* in line 270 to *Had I* in line 271, has reconstructed the lost line and this fine piece of editing is accepted.
- 275 After *thes* is a canceled abbreviation for five hundred.
- 280-81 Child regards these two lines as the beginning of a fragmentary stanza, but in fact they fit as the start of a six-line stanza, with, as is common in the four-line stanza, the speaker changing after two lines.
- 286 Before this stanza the text includes the lines:
*Y schall her sende a wheyt palffrey
That ambelles be mey ffley*
As Child notes, the scribe mistook the rhyme and started the stanza again, so the lines should be dropped.
- 297 After *hade*, *haffe* is crossed out.
- 308 The manuscript repeats line 305 after this line, an "eyeskip" error.
- 309 MS: *bowhes*. This is a more common version of this familiar statement, but the rhyme calls for emendation to the singular, as found in Child.
- 312 MS: *to nobellys*. Two nobles was thirteen shillings and four pence (i.e., two thirds of a pound), quite a large sum. The ten pounds Robin provides would have been something like a year's wages.
- 314 Child inserts *haffe* before *had* presumably on grammatical grounds, but *cowde Y had* is idiomatic Middle English and is retained.
- 315 MS: *be there*. Child inverts the words to *there be* for a better rhyme, but this is not necessary.
- 323 After this line the original scribe has added *Expleycyt Robyn Hode*.

A Gest of Robyn Hode

Introduction

The "most substantial and most ambitious" of the early Robin Hood texts (Gray, 1984, p. 22) was first recorded in printed form early in the first half of the sixteenth century, and its popularity is shown by the existence of "a dozen printed editions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (Fowler, 1980, p. 1769). There is no manuscript version, and the best text is a set of substantial fragments (formerly called the Lettersnijder edition), printed by Jan van Doesbroch in Antwerp around 1510, here called *a* (Fowler, 1980, p. 1769) and now in the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. The other early edition was by Wynkyn de Worde, which may have been in print before the Antwerp text. This was used as a basis by Ritson and Gutch, but Child and Dobson and Taylor used "Lettersnijder" and filled it out from Wynkyn, here called *b*. This choice appears correct, as Wynkyn has more errors and seems less close to their exemplar than the Antwerp text. Child consulted several other early fragments, some from a text printed by Richard Pynson about 1530 and some in the Douce collection (Bodleian Library, Oxford). These four texts are referred to in the notes as "early texts," while the popular edition by William Copland of about 1560 and its successor by Edward White (later sixteenth century) are referred to as "later texts" which sometimes cast light on how the earlier material was understood. The text printed here is derived from a new collation of the two earliest sources, Antwerp and Wynkyn, while consulting the early fragments and later editions for possible correction of the earlier sources (see notes for details of the sources used when the *a* text is not followed).

The date of the *Gest* is not clear; the often repeated idea of an origin about 1400 or even earlier is almost certainly wrong. When Child said there were "a number of Middle English forms" in the poem he meant linguistic forms, and he suggested they "may have been relics" of the ballads from which the poem was then held to be based, or, he went on, the poem itself "may have been put together as early as 1400, or before" (III, 40). This is a good deal more cautious than Gutch's confident statement that the poem dated "from the time of Chaucer or before" (1847, I, vii), which Child was implicitly criticizing. Nevertheless his words have been taken as confirmation of 1400 as a base date for the *Gest*, perhaps because of its resemblance in length and style to *Gamelyn* (undoubtedly of the Chaucerian period), and no doubt

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in part through a desire to find antiquity in the popular myth.

Various improbabilities are involved in the idea of an early date for the *Gest*. It would mean that this compilation had survived from half a century before the earliest of its components (*Robin Hood and the Monk*) and for a century before any others. It would also mean that a long text on this popular subject survived without trace in manuscript for a century and, when printed, was still in an unvaried and undamaged form. As Fowler comments, the poem "is unlikely to have had a long life before finding its way into print" (1980, p. 1769). These considerations as well as some linguistic evidence on the survival of Child's "Middle English forms" (see Knight, 1994, pp. 47–48) suggest a date in the mid-fifteenth century. Holt has recently suggested c. 1450 to be a "safer date" than 1400 (1995, p. 30).

If the date of the text itself is less than certain, equally obscure is the date of the events within it. Historians have often felt its legal, social, and military structures belong to the thirteenth century (Maddicott, 1978; for a summary discussion see Holt, 1989, pp. 75–81), but this overlooks the atemporal character of medieval narrative (Malory's text deals with trial by battle in quite ancient forms, not to mention its fantasies of feudalism). Similarly fictional is the setting: the *Gest* operates in the Yorkshire Barnsdale, very clearly specified as such (see note to lines 69–70), and yet Little John can hurry from Nottingham, fifty miles distant, to rejoin his companions in less than a day: apparently they are in Sherwood, but that name is not used in the *Gest*. Child argues (III, 51) that two separate ballad cycles have been condensed, but the Robin Hood geography is usually general, even vague, in this way and the apparent problem is only created by the unusually specific reference to the Yorkshire Barnsdale in this text.

The audience of the poem has been a matter of dispute in recent years. Earlier commentators did not concern themselves with such mundane issues, assuming either that ballads served some antique organic community now lost in the mists of time, or that the author communicated directly to the present through what Child called, in an unusually vague moment, "the ballad-muse" (III, 42). A more historically attuned approach led to greater specificity: Rodney Hilton in particular argued strongly for a continuity between the Robin Hood ballads including the *Gest* and the dissident forces typified in the so-called Peasants' Revolt of 1381 (1958). This was supported by Maurice Keen in the first edition of his book on *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend* (1961). J. C. Holt attacked that generally radical affiliation in an article by asserting, with some reason, that rural and peasant issues are nowhere found within the text, and proposing that the dissident audience was in fact the lower gentry, their hangers-on and higher servitors (1960). Dobson and Taylor largely accept this, but still claim that Robin Hood is "a yeoman hero for a yeoman audience" (1976, p. 34). Keen later agreed (1976). Holt returns to the issue in his

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book, devoting a whole chapter to very full detail intended to prove the essentially conservative character of the audience and the texts, which are held to embody the anxiety of the lesser land-owning gentry and their affiliations (1989, pp. 109–58). This argument seems open to Holt's own techniques of rejection through lack of internal evidence, in that only the knight in the *Gest* has tenurial problems on his mind and the rest of the characters resist all kinds of service, unless to Robin Hood.

Recent arguments have sophisticated Hilton's original argument about the texts as providing for an audience interested in some form of political resistance. Peter Coss (1985) rests his case on the concept of "cultural diffusion" and Richard Tardif (1983) explored the mediation of contemporary conflict by relating the strains of the texts to urban problems, seeing the greenwood as a place of imagined freedom for displaced craftsmen. That, unlike the peasant or lower gentry argument, certainly meshes with the bookish character of the texts — in manuscript and printed form long before other ballads, and in their earliest occurrences not often obviously connected with tunes.

The audience remains unclear, but commentators seem now agreed that it was probably mixed. The story of the *Gest* links Robin and his varied band with a knight, a cook, and the king. Fictions of social harmony can hardly reach further, and they appear to be newly focused versions (focused in a more class-conscious and wide-ranging way) of the images of natural community that were at the core of the older Robin Hood plays and games. Audiences, like the politics and the themes of the ballads, appear to be flexible and multiple.

The only major source suggested for the *Gest* is the Robin Hood ballads themselves, and scholars have often pointed out how the rescue of the knight from Nottingham has resemblances to *Robin Hood and the Monk*, how John tricks the sheriff much as Robin does in *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and the final stanzas relate to *The Death of Robie Hood* in some way — although that is a later ballad, no one has agreed with D. C. Fowler that it was itself inspired by these stanzas in the *Gest* (1968, pp. 79–80). William Clawson (1909, pp. 125–27) provided a schema of how twelve ballads had been gathered into the *Gest*, but the argument was weakened by the fact that only four reasonably close contacts with existing ballads can be found; these links are explored in detail by Dobson and Taylor (1976, pp. 74–78). However, there are as many parallels, as noted by Child (III, 43), between episodes in the story and the outlaw legends of Fulk Fitzwarin and Eustace the Monk.

In addition to the ballad sources, Clawson convincingly demonstrates that a "miracle of the Virgin" must account for the lengthy episode of the impoverished knight, Sir Richard of the Lee, who offers the Virgin as his surety for the loan of four hundred pounds from Robin Hood (1909, pp. 25–41). While no exact source has been located, two Middle English versions of *The Merchant's Surety*, dating c. 1390

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and c. 1450, provide some similarities in plot and diction: both the knight and the merchant Theodorus love the Virgin; both are impoverished (due to different circumstances); both are required to pledge security for a loan; both offer the Virgin as their *borowe/borwe*; and both swear that they will repay the loan on a certain day. While these parallels are suggestive, there are major differences, particularly the ways in which the two loans are repaid. To explain these differences, Clawson suggests that the *Gest* poet drew his ending from an *exemplum* in which "the person [Robin] to whom the money is due takes it from a monk [the high cellarer of St. Mary's abbey] whom he regards as the earthly representative of the saint or deity [the Virgin] and as the instrument of the return of the loan" (p. 26). While elements of a "miracle" are certainly present, the positing of an unknown *exemplum* is not very convincing. If there is a lost source, it may be related to another group of miracles of the "knight and Virgin" type, seven prose examples of which were printed by Wynkyn de Worde in the late fifteenth-century *The Miracles of Oure Lady*. Here are enough similarities to suggest that the *Gest* poet was familiar with this sub-genre. The eighth miracle in Peter Whiteford's edition describes: "How a knyght fyll to povertie, & by the devyll was made ryche, & by the merytes of his wyfe was, by our Lady, restored agayn to good and vertuouse lyvynge" (p. 49). Of interest too is the twenty-seventh miracle, which opens with the sentence: "In a wood was a certayn theef that robbed men & kylled them that came by" (p. 61). For additional parallels, see the Introduction to *Robin Hood and the Monk*.

The construction of the *Gest* has been considered by some to be clumsy and artificial (Holt, 1989 p. 17), while others have regarded it more favorably, ranging from Clawson's very general praise of its "admirable artistic skill" (1909, p. 128) to Gray's more measured sense that the text has "excellent scenes," that "the construction has been neatly done" and that "the 'loose ends' that have been noticed would not be as obvious in oral performance (of whatever kind) as they are to a reader of the printed page" (1984, p. 23).

As has often been observed, the overall structure is triune — "a three-ply web" as Child calls it (III, 50). Fitts 1 and 2 deal with the impoverished knight who is lent money by Robin to regain his lands from the rapacious church; in the later part of Fitt 4 the same knight returns to repay Robin. In the "interlaced" episode, Fitt 3 and the first part of Fitt 4, Little John, whom Robin has sent to serve and help the knight, is sought as a servitor by the sheriff: he leaves the sheriff's house disgruntled by his poor treatment, brings with him the Cook, and then traps the sheriff into entering the forest and losing his possessions. The second part of the *Gest* starts in Fitt 5 with the Sheriff's archery contest and trap, after which the outlaws take refuge with the knight of Fitt 1. He is then, Fitt 6, kidnapped by the sheriff and rescued by the outlaws, who kill the sheriff. As Dobson and Taylor note, the *Gest* is "not so

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much a single unified work as a weaving together of various tales" (1995, p. 37).

These stories, interwoven as they are, involve adventures coming to and spreading out from Robin's forest base, much as knightly adventures do in Arthur's court, and the text seems aware of the connection, presenting as it does Robin's desire to have an adventure before he can feast, in a deliberate reference — perhaps, as Child suggests, a "humorous imitation" III, 51. Arthurian stories climax with royal praise for the hero, and this is also the case here, but for that to happen the king has to come to the forest; Pitts 7 and 8 offer a version of the well known "King and Subject" theme in which the King in disguise meets, then in some way conflicts with, one of his subjects, and the result is honor both to the king's flexibility and also the subject's deep-seated loyalty. In the *Gest* King Edward meets, engages with, and at least symbolically joins the forest outlaws. But, different from *Adam Bell*, his offer for Robin to join his court is not successful, and the poem ends with Robin's return to the greenwood, unhappy with the inactive and expensive nature of court life. The last stanzas, more a palinode than a climax, sketch in the story of Robin's death. Like other heroes he is betrayed by someone close to him and leaves a shrine and a noble memory.

Those like Holt who find this episodic structure clumsy appear to be thinking of the neatly motive-oriented procedure of the conventional novel rather than the more open and situation-oriented pattern of medieval narrative: the poem's episodic structure actually operates very well to focus and dramatize its presentation of major points, such as the angry frustration of the abbot, the delayed fidelity of the knight, the sheriff's discomforting, the royal revelation. These set-pieces dramatize in almost ritual form the interplay of values within the text and construct a level of complexity different from, and in some senses reaching further than, the novel's concern with humanist individuality.

In terms of poetic form, the text is not complex, but has its own modes of persuasive force. The rhyme is generally steadier than in parallels like *Robin Hood and the Potter* and *Adam Bell*. Weak or half rhymes are few — 35 in all, of which 12 could be resolved by a dialectal variant. Only one stanza rhymes abab (lines 45–48), and one other does so by repetition (lines 101–04). Unlike the other early ballads, unduly long lines are very rare (lines 537 and 631) and weak lines are a good deal rarer than in the parallels — about 35 in the whole poem, with a curious clustering of them around line 1200, in the rescue of Sir Richard sequence (was a casually rhymed ballad perhaps being re-used?). The most striking feature of the rhyme scheme is the common retention of the rhyme sound from one stanza to another, in effect creating an eight line stanza. In fairly simple diction like that of this poem, the number of rhymes available is not enormous and so this repetition must sometimes occur by sheer chance, but over ten percent of the stanzas contribute to this laisse-

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like effect, so emphasizing the lyrical or performance quality of a text normally thought to be somewhat prosaic.

Equally unpoetic, in terms of usual expectation, is the diction and the type of imagery offered. The language is limited in vocabulary and range, and most striking of all, there are very few images or even descriptions in the whole poem. But what might seem uninspired and unimaginative from a Shakespearean viewpoint can also have a curious potency. Gray speaks of the "constant repetition of stereotypical value words" in the poem (1984, p. 25) and a set of strong and generalized positions is created through recurrent evaluative descriptions. The sheriff is consistently *proude* (23 times), the knight is recurrently described as *gentyil* (19 times), while Robin and sometimes his men are *gode* (17 times), though the men are also manly, *wight* (7 times) and occasionally *mervy* (3 cases). Robin is only once *curyey* and *gentyil*, suggesting limits to his social aspirations and those of the poem (a point against Holt's interpretation of audience). Interestingly, he is once given the sheriff's epithet *proude*, right at the beginning of the poem when his component values are being established. Another, perhaps more casually, shared adjective is *dere* — used once of Mary, God, and Robin as Little John's master.

These terms lay out, almost allegorically, the forces at work: bureaucratic pride versus a yeoman goodness which supports enfeebled gentility. The stereotypical adjectives very noticeably cluster twice, first when Robin lays down his rules for engagements with the world (lines 3–24) and then again when he finally returns to the forest (lines 1777–96). Framing the narrative as they do, these evaluative summaries construct a striking social triangle of the proud, the genteel, and the good, with the *wight* power of the outlaws resolving the conflict in the favor of the last two.

Some have felt the text also benefits from an ironic touch. Both Child and Gray find the Arthur references light-hearted (III, 51; 1984, pp. 26–27), and Gray also sees irony in the play on Mary as a faithful guarantor, as well as more direct comedy in Little John's buffoonish cloth measuring (lines 290–97) and his cartoon-like adventures both against and with the sheriff's cook (1984, pp. 27–29). Irony is certainly one of the poem's weapons, especially in the humiliation of abbott and sheriff, yet Robin as a trickster seems more fully figured in other texts (*Robin Hood and the Cartal Friar* and *Robin Hood and Allin a Dale*, for example), and the overall tone of the poem seems earnest, relieved occasionally by some sardonic irony, not unlike other texts of this kind, from *Gumelyn* to *Chevy Chase*.

Bessinger described the poem as "class conscious" and "anti-ecclesiastical" like other major late medieval texts from the pens of Chaucer, Langland and Gower (1974, p. 364). Its relation with the ballads often tends to obscure that weighty and valid connection. The poem certainly has a strong and recurrent satirical force; Kaeuper said it was "a running commentary on the corrupt power of the sheriff in

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local society, and it provides a visit by a corrupt chief justice from Westminster as well" (1988, pp. 335-36). But the *Gest* is not only a social commentary; as Keen, a historian who has strongly elucidated the political aspect of the poem, has observed, it also has a "wide variation of mood" (1961, p. 116), and this mobile character is both part of its quality and a sign of its direct relation to the multivalent outlaw myth. The poem is at times almost mystical in its creation of the greenwood and its value, at other times a knockabout comic morality. In that variety it shares the dual thrust of the local and ritual Robin Hood plays. But it also expresses in some detail a sense of the wrongs imposed by the alienated authorities of church, town, and state, and in that sense it connects with fully developed strains of the period and the tensions basic to the outlaw myth.

In terms of the Robin Hood texts, the *Gest* does not raise any themes which are not touched elsewhere, but it raises them at length, in coherent relation with each other, and with a confident narrative and poetic technique. Child, in his characteristic mode, both scholarly and appreciative, remarked that the *Gest* at one point appeared to be deploying a theme found in *Falk Fugwarin* and other outlaw analogues: but, he added, "the story is incomparably better here than elsewhere" (III, 53). Gray speaks persuasively of the effectiveness of the poem in its performative context, and also of its capacity to touch the mythic potential of the Robin Hood tradition (1984, p. 38). Different from the ballads as it is, the *Gest* is nevertheless not unfaithful to their tradition or their style, in both form and content. While its elaborated narrative and interlocking events must in some sense lack the pared-down mystery of the sparer and starker of the ballads, the *Gest* gives full weight to just what makes this elusive hero so *gode*. The author of the *Gest* shares with that other fifteenth-century compiler, Sir Thomas Malory, the ability to combine and develop materials of high potency and complexity into a generically new whole of great future impact, which manages to convey and even enhance the source materials' innate values and power.

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The First Fytte

Lythe and listin, gentilmen,
That be of frebore blade;
I shall you tel of a gode yeman,
His name was Robyn Hode.

*Attend
freeborn blood*

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 5 | Robyn was a prude outlaw,
Whyles he walked on grounde:
So curteyse an outlawe as he was one
Was nevere non founde. | prude |
| 10 | Robyn stode in Bernesdale,
And lenyd hym to a tre,
And bi hym stode Litell Johann.
A gode yeman was he. | stood
leaned against |
| 15 | And alsoo dyd gode Scarlok,
And Much, the millers son:
There was none ynch of his bodi
But it was worth a grome. | mon |
| 20 | Than bespake Lytell Johann
All untoo Robyn Hode:
"Maister, and ye wolde dyne besy me
It wolde doo you moche gode." | spoke
<i>if you would dine early</i>
much |
| | Than bespake hym gode Robyn:
"To dyne have I noo lust,
Till that I have som bolde baron,
Or som unkouth gest. | desire
strange visitor |

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 25 "Here shal come a lord or sire
 That may pay for the best,
 Or som knyght or squyer,
 That dwelleth here bi west." squire
- 30 A gode maner than had Robyn;
 In londe where that he were,
 Every day or he wold dyne
 Thre messis wolde he here. custom
before
masses; bear
- 35 The one in the worship of the Fader,
 And another of the Holy Gost,
 The thirde of Our dere Lady,
 That he loved allther moste. Virgin Mary
the most of all
- 40 Robyn loved Oure dere Lady:
 For dout of dydly synne,
 Wolde he never do compani harme
 That any woman was in. fear; of deadly sin
- "Maistar," than sayde Lytil Johnn,
 "And we our borde shal sprede,
 Tell us wheder that we shal go,
 And what life that we shall lede. if; table
where
- 45 "Where we shall take, where we shall leve,
 Where we shall abide behynde;
 Where we shall robbe, where we shal reve,
 Where we shall bete and bynde." despoil
beat and tie up
- 50 "Theroft no force," than sayde Robyn.
 "We shall do well inowe;
 But loke ye do no husbonde harme,
 That tilleth with his plough. no matter
enough
small farmer
- 55 "No more ye shall no gode yeman
 That walketh by grene wode shawe,
 Ne no knyght ne no squyer
 That wol be a gode felawe. thicker
companion

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- "These bisshoppes and these archebisshoppes,
 Ye shall them bete and bynde;
 The hye sherif of Notyngham,
 Hym holde ye in your mynde." high
- 60
- "This worde shalbe holde," sayde Lytell Johnn,
 "And this lesson we shall here:
 It is fer dayes, God sende us a gest,
 That we were at oure dynere!" kept
learn
far on in the day; guest
- 65
- "Take thy gode bowe in thy honde," sayde Robyn;
 "Late Much wende with the:
 And so shal Willyam Scarlok,
 And no man abyde with me." *Let; go; thee*
- 70
- "And walke up to the Saylis, *(see note)*
 And so to Watlinge Strete,
 And wayte after some unkuth gest,
 Up chaunce ye may them mese. *look for; unknown
Upon, by*
- 75
- "Be he erle, or ani baron,
 Abbot, or ani knyght,
 Bringhe hym to lode to me;
 His dyner shall be dight." earl
with
ready
- 80
- They wente up to the Saylis,
 These yeman all thre;
 They loked est, they loke weest;
 They myght no man see.
- But as they loked in to Bernysdale,
 Bi a derne strete. *secret way*
- 85
- Than came a knyght ridinghe,
 Full sone they gan hym mete. *At once; did meet him*
- All dreri was his semblaunce,
 And lytell was his prude; *sad; appearance*
- His one fote in the styrop stode,
 That othere wavyd beside. *stirrup*

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- His hode hanged in his iyn two;
90 He rode in symple aray.
A soriar man than he was one
Rode never in somer day.

hood; eyes
array (clothing)
sorier

Litell Johann was full curteyes,
And sette hym on his kne:
95 "Welcom be ye, gentyll knyght,
Welcom ar ye to me.

went down

"Welcom be thou to grene wode,
Hende knyght and fire;
My maister hath abiden you fastinge,
100 Syr, al these oures thre."

Courteous; noble
awaited you without food
hours

"Who is thy maister?" sayde the knyght;
Johann sayde, "Robyn Hode."
"He is gode yoman," sayde the knyght,
"Of hym I have herde moche gode.

105 "I graunte," he sayde, "with you to wende,
My bretherne, all in fere;
My purpos was to have dyned to day
At Blith or Dancastere."

in company

Furth than went this gentyl knight,
110 With a carefull chere;
The teris oute of his iyen ran,
And fell downe by his lere.

sorrowful expression
tears; eyes
face

They brought hym to the lode door,
Whan Robyn hym gan see,
115 Full curtesly dyd of his hode
And sette hym on his knee.

hat door
took off
kneled down

"Welcome, sir knyght," than sayde Robyn,
"Welcomme art thou to me;
I have abyden you fastinge, sir,
120 All these ouris thre."

hours

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- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | Than answered the gentyll knight,
With wordes fayre and fre:
"God the save, goode Robyn.
And all thy fayre meyne." | three
company |
| 125 | They wasshed togeder and wyped bothe,
And sette to theyr dynere;
Brede and wyne they had right yngouche,
And noumbles of the dere. | dried (their hands)
dinner
in plenty
organ meats (sweetbreads) |
| 130 | Swannes and fessauntes they had full gode,
And soules of the ryvere;
There fayled none so litell a birde
That ever was breed on bryte. | pheasants
birds; river-bank
lacked
branch |
| 135 | "Do gladly, sir knight," sayde Robyn;
"Gramarcy, sir," sayde he,
"Such a dinere had I nat
Of all these wekys thre. | Eat well
Grant mercy, thank you
weeks |
| 140 | "If I come ageyne, Robyn,
Here by thys contré,
As gode a dyner I shall the make
As that thou haest made to me." | thee |
| | "Gramarcy, knyght," sayde Robyn.
"My dyner whan that I it have;
I was never so gredy, bi dere worthy God,
My dyner for to crave. | hungry |
| 145 | "But pay or ye wende," sayde Robyn;
"Me thynketh it is gode ryght;
It was never the maner, by dere worthi God,
A yoman to pay for a knyght." | before you go
custom |
| 150 | "I have nought in my coffers," saide the knyght,
"That I may profer for shame."
"Litell Johnn, go loke," sayde Robyn,
"Ne let nat for no blame. | money chest
delay |

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- "Tel me truth," than saide Robyn,
 "So God have parte of the."
 155 "I have no more but ten shelynges," sayde the knyght,
 "So God have part of me."
- "If thou hast no more," sayde Robyn,
 "I woll nat one peny,
 And yf thou have nede of any more,
 160 More shall I lend the.
- "Go nowe furth, Littell Johnn,
 The truth tell thou me:
 If there be no more but ten shelinges,
 No peny that I se."
 165 (see note)
- Lyttell Johnn spred downe hys mantell
 Full fayre upon the grounde,
 And there he fonde in the knyghtes cofer
 But even halfe pounde.
 170 Littell Johnn let it lye full stylle,
 And went to hys maysteer lowe.
 "What tidynges Johnn?" sayde Robyn;
 "Sir, the knyght is true inowe."
 175 "Fyll of the best wine," sayde Robyn,
 "The knyght shall begynne;
 Moche wonder thinketh me
 Thy clothynge is so thin.
 180 "Tell me one worde," sayde Robyn,
 "And counsel shal it be:
 I trowe thou warie made a knyght of force,
 Or ellis of yemanry.
 185 "Or ellis thou hast bene a sorri husbande,
 And lyved in stroke and strife,
 An okerer or ellis a lechoure," sayde Robyn,
 "Wyth wronge hast led thy lyfe."

protect
shillings

(see note)

money chest
ten shillings

alone
master, i.e., Robin
news
enough

Much
threadbare

by compulsion (see note)
else

miserable
conflict and strife
assurer; lecher

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- 185 "I am none of those," sayde the knyght,
 "By God that made me;
 An hundred wynter here before
 Myn auncetres knyghtes have be. ancestors
- 190 "But oft it hath befal, Robyn,
 A man hath be disgrate, *disgraced (deprived of status)*
 But God that sitteth in heven above
 May amende his state. Unless
- 195 "Withyn this two yere, Robyne," he sayde,
 "My neghbours well it wende, knew
 Foure hundred pounde of gode money
 Ful well than myght I spende.
- 200 "Nowe have I no gode," saide the knyght, possessions
 "God hath shaped such an ende,
 But my chyldren and my wylfe,
 Tyll God yt may amende."
- 205 "In what maner," than sayde Robyn,
 "Hast thou lorne thy rychesse?" lost
 "For my greate foly," he sayde,
 "And for my kyndnesse. kindness
- 210 "I hadde a sone, forsooth, Robyn,
 That shulde have ben myn ayre, heir
 Whanne he was twenty wynter olde,
 In felde wolde just full fayre. joust
- 215 "He slew a knyght of Lancaster,
 And a squyer bolde;
 For to save hym in his ryght
 My godes beth sette and sold. goods
- 220 "My londes beth sette to wedde, Robyn, pledged as security
 Untyll a certayn day,
 To a ryche abbot here besyde
 Of Seynt Mari Abbey."

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- "What is the som?" sayde Robyn; 1388
"Trouth than tell thou me."
"Sir," he sayde, "foure hundred pounde;
220 The abbot told it to me." counted
- "Nowe and thou lese thy lond," sayde Robyn. lose
"What woll fall of the?"
"Hastely I wol me buske," sayde the knyght, hurry
"Over the salte see,
- 225 "And se where Criste was quyke and dede,
On the mount of Calveré; alive
Fare wel, frende, and have gode day;
It may no better be."
- Teris fell out of hys iyen two; Tears; eyes
230 He wolde have gone hys way.
"Farewel, frende, and have gode day;
I ne have no more to pay."
- "Where be thy frendes?" sayde Robyn.
"Syr, never one wol me knowe:
235 While I was ryche ynowe at home
Great boaste than wolde they blowe. boast; spread
- "And nowe they renne away fro me, run
As bestis on a rowe;
They take no more hede of me notice
240 Thanne they had me never sawe."
- For ruthe thanne wept Litell Johas,
Scarlok and Muche in fere; pity together
"Fyl of the best wyne," sayde Robyn,
"For here is a symple chere. Fill your cups with hospitality
- 245 "Hast thou any frende," sayde Robyn,
"Thy borowe that wolde be?" security (guarantee)
"I have none," than sayde the knyght,
"But God that dyed on tree." Except; the Cross

Early Ballads and Tales

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------------------|
| | "Do away thy japis," than sayde Robyn,
"Thereof wol I right none;
Wenest thou I wolde have God to borowe,
Peter, Poule, or Johnn? | jokes
Think you |
| 250 | "Nay, by Hym that me made,
And shope both sonne and mone,
Fynde me a better borowe," sayde Robyn,
"Or money getest thou none." | created
security |
| 255 | "I have none other," sayde the knyght,
"The sothe for to say,
But yf yt be Our dere Lady;
She fayled me never or thys day." | Unless
failed; before |
| 260 | "By dere worthy God," sayde Robyn,
"To seche all Englonde thorowe,
Yet fonde I never to my pay
A moche better borowe. | pleasure
security |
| 265 | "Come nowe furth, Litell Johnn.
And go to my tresouré,
And bringe me fourre hundered pound.
And loke well tolde it be." | counted |
| 270 | Furth than went Litell Johnn,
And Scarlok went before;
He tolde oute fourre hundred pounde
By eightene and two score. | counted
twenty twenties |
| 275 | "Is thys well tolde?" sayde litell Much;
Johnn sayde, "What greveth the?
It is almus to helpe a gentyll knyght,
That is fal in poverté. | aims, charity
fallen |
| 280 | "Master," than sayde Lityll John,
"His clothinge is full thynne;
Ye must gyve the knight a lyveray,
To lappē his body therin. | livery (suit of clothing)
wrap |

A Gest of Robyn Hode

"For ye have scarlet and grene, mayster,
And many a riche array;
Ther is no marchaunt in mery Englund
So ryche, I dare well say."

clothing

- 285 "Take hym thre yerdes of every colour.
And loke well mete that it be."
Lytell Johnn toke none other mesure
But his bowe-tree,
- Give
measured
- 290 And at every handfull that he met
He leped foote three.
"What devylles drapar," sayid litell Muche,
"Thynkest thou for to be?"
- measured*
added
draper (a dealer in cloth)
- 295 Scarlok stode full stil and loughe,
And sayd, "By God Almyght,
Johnn may gyve hym gode mesure,
For it costeth hym but lyght."
- laughed*
little
- 300 "Mayster," than said Litell Johnn
To gentyll Robyn Hode,
"Ye must give the knight a hors,
To lede home this gode."
- carry; goods*
- 305 "Take hym a gray coursar," sayde Robyn,
"And a saydle newe:
He is Oure Ladye's messangere;
God graunt that he be true."
- Give: *courser (swift horse)*
saddle
- 310 "And a gode palfrey," sayde lytell Much,
"To mayntene hym in his right."
"And a peyre of bootes," sayde Scarlock,
"For he is a gentyll knight."
- saddle horse*
boots
- "What shalt thou gyve hym, Litell John?" said Robyn.
"Sir, a peyre of gilt sporis clene,
To pray, for all this company,
God bringe hym oute of tene."
- shining spurs*
sorrow

Early Ballads and Tales

- "Whan shal mi day be," said the knight,
"Sir, and your wyll be?" repayment day
if
315 "This day twelve moneth," saide Robyn,
"Under this grene-wode tre.

"It were greate shame," sayde Robyn,
"A knight alone to ryde,
Withoutte squyre, yoman, or page.
320 To walke by his syde.

"I shall the lende Litell John, my man,
For he shalbe thy knave;
In a yemans stede he may the stande,
If thou greate nede have." thee
servant
place; serve thee

The Seconde Fytte

- 325 Now is the knight gone on his way;
This game hym thought full gode;
Whanne he loked on Bernesdale
He blesyd Robyn Hode.

And whanne he thought on Bernysdale,
330 On Scarlok, Much, and Johnn,
He blyssyd them for the best company
That ever he in come. came

Then spake that gentyll knyght,
To Lytel Johan gan he saye,
335 "To-morrowwe I must to Yorke toun,
To Saynt Mary abbay.

"And to the abbot of that place
Foure hondred pounde I must pay;
And but I be there upon this nyght
340 My londe is lost for ay." forever

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- The abbot sayd to his covent,
There he stode on grounde,
"This day twelue moneth came there a knyght
And borrowed fourre hondred pounde.
- convent, body of monks
Where
- 345 "He borrowed fourre hondred pounde,
Upon all his londe fre;
But he come this ylike day
Dysheryte shall he be."
- Unless; some
Disinherited
- 350 "It is full erely," sayd the prouare,
"The day is not yet ferre gone;
I had lever to pay an hondred pounde,
And lay downe anone.
- prior (monk ranking under the abbot)
would rather
(see note)
- 355 "The knyght is ferre beyonde the see,
In Englonde ryght,
And suffreth honger and colde,
And many a sory nyght.
- England's cause*
- 360 "It were grete pytē," said the prouare.
"So to have his londe;
And ye be so lyght of your consyence,
Ye do to hym moch wronge."
- easy
- "Thou arte ever in my berde," sayd the abbot,
"By God and Saynt Rychere."
With that cam in a fat-hedded monke,
The heigh selerer.
- in my way
cellarmaster (chief steward)
- 365 "He is dede or hanged," sayd the monke,
"By God that bought me dere,
And we shall have to spende in this place
Fourre hondred pounde by yere."
- redeemed me at a high price*
- 370 The abbot and the by selerer
Sterte forthe full bolde,
The justyce of Englonde
The abbot there dyde holde.
- Leaped
chief justice
control

Early Ballads and Tales

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | The bye justyce and many mo
Had take in to theyr honde
Holy all the knyghtes det.
To put that knyght to wronge. | Wholly
humiliate |
| 375 | They demed the knyght wonder sore,
The abbot and his meyné:
"But he come this ylike day
Dysbertye shall he be." | judged; severely
company
But if (Unless); some |
| 380 | "He wyll not come yet," sayd the justyce,
"I dare well undertake."
But in sorowe tyme for them all
The knyght came to the gate. | swear
as a disappointment |
| 385 | Than bespake that gentyll knyght
Untyll his meyné:
"Now put on your symple wedes
That ye brought fro the see." | To
clothing
from overseas |
| 390 | They put on their symple wedes,
They came to the gates anone;
The porter was redy hymselfe,
And welcomed them everychone. | everyone |
| 395 | "Welcome, syr knyght," sayd the porter,
"My lorde to mete is he,
And so is many a gentyll man,
For the love of the." | at dinner |
| 400 | The porter swore a full grete othe,
"By God that made me,
Here be the best coressed hors
That ever yet sawe I me. | bodied (built) |
| | "Lede them in to the stable," he sayd,
"That eased myght they be."
"They shall not come therin," sayd the knyght,
"By God that dyed on a tre." | |

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 405 Lordes were to mete isette
In that abbotes hall;
The knyght went forth and kneeled downe,
And salued them grete and small. *seated at dinner*
greeted
- 410 "Do gladly, syr abbot," sayd the knyght,
"I am come to holde my day."
The fyrist word the abbot spake,
"Hast thou brought my pay?"
- 415 "Not one peny," sayd the knyght.
"By God that maked me."
"Thou art a shrewed dettour," sayd the abbot; *cursed*
"Syr justyce, drynke to me.
- 420 "What doost thou here," sayd the abbot,
"But thou haddest brought thy pay?" *Unless*
"For God," than sayd the knyght,
"To pray of a lenger daye." *To beg for*
- 425 "Thy daye is broke," sayd the justyce, *You missed your appointed payment*
"Londe getest thou none."
"Now, good syr justyce, be my frende,
And fende me of my sone!" *defend me from my enemies*
- 430 "I am holde with the abbot," sayd the justyce, *remained by*
"Both with cloth and fee."
"Now, good syr sheryf, be my frende!"
"Nay, for God," sayd he.
- 435 "Now, good syr abbot, be my frende,
For thy curteysé,
And holde my londes in thy honde
Tyll I have made the gree! *paid my debt to you*
- "And I wyll be thy true seruaunte,
And trewely serve the,
Tyl ye have foure hondred pounde
Of money good and free."

Early Ballads and Tales

- The abbot sware a full grete othe,
 "By God that dyed on a tree,
 Get the londe where thou may,
 For thou getest none of me." thee
- 440
- "By dere worthy God," then sayd the knyght,
 "That all this worlde wrought,
 But I have my londe agayne,
 Full dere it shall be bought. Unless
Someone will suffer for it
- 445 "God, that was of a mayden borne,
 Leve us well to sped!
 For it is good to assay a frende
 Or that a man have need." Grant; to succeed
try out
Before
- 450 The abbot lothely on hym gan loke,
 And vylaynesly hym gan call:
 "Out," he sayd, "thou false knyght,
 Spede the out of my hall!" with hatred
vilely
Harry
- 455 "Thou lyest," then sayd the gentyll knyght,
 "Abbot, in thy hall;
 False knyght was I never,
 By God that made us all."
- Up then stode that gentyll knyght.
 To the abbot sayd he,
 "To suffre a knyght to knele so longe,
 Thou canst no curteysye. You know no good manners
- 460
- "In joustes and in tournement
 Full ferre than have I be.
 And put my selfe as ferre in press
 As ony that ever I se." for
in as great danger
only
- 465 "What wyll ye gyve more," sayd the justice,
 "And the knyght shall make a releyse?
 And elles dare I safly swere
 Ye holde never your londe in pees." If: release his claim
confidently
peace

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 470 "An hondred pounde," sayd the abbot;
The justice sayd, "Gyve hym two."
"Nay, be God," sayd the knyght,
"Yit gete ye it not so. Yet
- 475 "Though ye wolde gyve a thousand more,
Yet were ye never the nere; no nearer success
Shall there never be myn heire heir
Abbot, justice, ne frere."
- 480 He stert hym to a borde alone,
Tyll a table rounde, table
And there shoke oute of a bagge
Even four hundred pound. Exactly
- 485 "Have here thi golde, sir abbot," saide the knight,
"Which that thou lentest me;
Had thou ben curtes at my comyng,
Rewarded shuldest thou have be." courteous
- 490 The abbot sat styl, and ete no more,
For all his ryall fare; royal food
He cast his hede on his shulder,
And fast began to stare. fixedly
- 495 "Take me my golde agayne," saide the abbot,
"Sir justice, that I toke the." Give
"Not a peni," said the justice.
"Bi God that dyed on tree."
- 500 "Sir abbot and ye men of lawe,
Now have I holde my daye;
Now shall I have my londe agayne,
For ought that you can saye."
- The knyght stert out of the dore,
Aways was all his care,
And on he put his good clothynge,
The other he lefte there.

Early Ballads and Tales

- He wente hym forth full mery syngynge, singing
 As men have tolde in tale;
 His lady met hym at the gate,
 At home in Verysdale.
- 505 "Welcome, my lorde," sayd his lady; possessions
 "Syr, lost is all your good?"
 "Be mery, dame," sayd the knyght,
 "And pray for Robyn Hode,
- 510 "That ever his soule be in blysse: trouble
 He holpe me out of tene;
 Ne had he his kyndenesse,
 Beggers had we bene.
- 515 "The abbot and I accorded ben, are in agreement
 He is served of his pay.
 The god yoman lent it me,
 As I cam by the way."
- This knight than dwelled fayre at home,
 The sothe for to saye.
 Tyll he had gete four hundred pound,
 Al redy for to pay.
- 520 He purveyed him an hundred bowes, provided
 The strynges well idyght, fixed
 An hundred shefe of arowes gode,
 The hedys burneshed full bryght; points
- 525 And every arowe an elle longe, ell (45 inches)
 With peacock wel idyght, peacock (feathers); fixed
 Incocked all with whyte silver; Grooved at the end (see note)
 It was a semely syght. fine
- 530 He purveyed hym an hundredth men,
 Well harnesssed in that stede.
 And hym selfe in that same sete,
 And clothed in whyte and rede.

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | He bare a launsgay in his honde,
And a man ledde his male,
And reden with a lyght songe
Unto Bernsydale. | <i>light lance</i>
<i>carried his trunk</i>
<i>rode</i> |
| 535 | But at Wentbrydge ther was a wrastelyng,
And there taryed was he,
And there was all the best yemen
Of all the west countree. | <i>delayed</i> |
| 540 | A full fayre game there was up set,
A whyte bulle up i-pyght,
A grete courser, with sadle and brydil,
With golde burnyssh full bryght. | <i>placed</i> |
| 545 | A payte of gloves, a rede golde ryng.
A pype of wyne, in fay;
What man that bereth hym best i-wys
The prycce shall bere away. | <i>cask; in truth</i>
<i>indeed</i>
<i>prize</i> |
| 550 | There was a yoman in that place,
And best worthy was he,
And for he was ferre and frembde bested,
Slayne he shulde have be. | (see note) |
| 555 | The knyght had ruthe of this yoman,
In place where he stode;
He sayde that yoman shulde have no harme,
For love of Robyn Hode. | <i>pity</i> |
| 560 | The knyght presed in to the place,
An hundredth folowed hym in fere,
With bowes bent and arowes sharpe,
For to shende that companye. | <i>together</i>
<i>destroy</i> |
| | They shulderd all and made hym rome,
To wete what he wolde say;
He toke the yeman bi the hande,
And gave hym al the play. | <i>gathered together; made room for him</i>
<i>know</i>
<i>made him champion</i> |

Early Ballads and Tales

- 565 He gave hym fyve marke for his wyne,
There it lay on the molde,
And bad it shulde be set a broche,
Drynke who so wolde.
*mark, two-thirds of a pound
ground
tapped and set running*
- 570 Thus longe taried this gentyll knyght,
Tyll that play was done;
So longe abode Robyn fastinge,
Thre houres after the none.
*game, sport
noon*

The Thirde Fytte

- 575 Lyth and lystyn, gentilmen,
All that nowe be here,
Of Litell Johann, that was the knyghtes man,
Goode myrrh ye shall here.
*servant
hear*
- 580 It was upon a mery day
That yonge men wolde go shete,
Litell Johann fet his bowe anone,
And sayde he wolde them mete.
*shooting
fetched; at once*
- Thre tymes Litell Johann shet abooute,
And alwey he slet the wande:
The proude sherif of Notingham
By the markes can stande.
*split the stick stuck in the ground
Stood by the targets*
- 585 The sherif swore a full greate othe:
"By Hym that dyede on a tre,
This man is the best arschere
That ever yet sawe I me.
archer
- 590 "Say me nowe, wight yonge man,
What is nowe thy name?
In what countré were thou borne,
And where is thy wonyng wane?"
*brave (strong)
region
dwelling place*

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | "In Holdernes, sir, I was borne,
Iwys al of my dame;
Men cal me Reynolde Grenelaf
Whan I am at hame." | (in east Yorkshire)
mother |
| 595 | "Sey me, Reynolde Grenelaf,
Wolde thou dwell with me?
And every yere I woll the gyve
Twenty marke to thy fee." | |
| 600 | "I have a maister," sayde Litell Johnn,
"A curteys knight is he;
May ye leve gete of hym,
The better may it be." | permission |
| 605 | The sherif gate Litell John
Twelve monethes of the knight:
Therefore he gave him right anone
A gode hors and a wight. | got
at once
<i>A good strong horse</i> |
| 610 | Nowe is Litell John the sherifes man
God lende us well to spede!
But alwey thought Lytell John
To quyte hym wele his mede. | <i>May God grant us to succeed!</i>
<i>To pay him his just desert</i> |
| 615 | "Nowe so God me helpe," sayde Litell John,
"And by my true leutye,
I shall be the worst servaunt to hym
That ever yet had he." | fidelity |
| 620 | It fell upon a Wednesday
The sherif on huntyng was gone,
And Litel John lay in his bed,
And was forlete at home. | forgotten (left) |
| | Therefore he was fastinge
Til it was past the none.
"God sir stuard, I pray to the,
Gyve me my dynere," saide Litell John. | without food
<i>keeper of the hall</i> |

Early Ballads and Tales

- 625 "It is longe for Grenelefe
 Fastinge thus for to be;
 Therfor I pray the, sir stuard,
 Mi dyner gif thou me."
- 630 "Shalt thou never eate ne drynke," saide the stuard,
 "Tyll my lorde be come to towne."
 "I make myn avowe to God," saide Litell John,
 "I had never to crake thy crowne." *I would rather*
- 635 The boteler was full uncurteys,
 There he stode on flore;
 He start to the bostery
 And shet fast the dore. *butler*
- 640 Lytell Johann gave the boteler such a tap
 His backe were nere in two;
 Though he lived an hundred ier,
 The wors shuld he go. blow
years
walk
- 645 He sporned the dore with his fote,
 It went open wel and fyne,
 And there he made large lyveray,
 Bothe of ale and of wyne. *kicked*
took a big helping
- 650 "Sith ye wol nat dyne," sayde Litell John,
 "I shall gyve you to drinke,
 And though ye lyve an hundred wynter,
 On Lytel Johann ye shall thinke."
- 655 Litell John eate, and Litel John drank.
 The while that he wolde;
 The sherife had in his kechyn a coke,
 A stout man and a bolde. *cook*
- "I make myn avowe to God," saide the coke,
 "Thou arte a shrewde bynde
 In ani hous for to dwel,
 For to aske thus to dyne." *cursed servant*

A Gest of Robyn Hode

And there he lent Litell John
God strokis thre;

*gave
Good*

"I make myn avowe to God," sayde Lytell John,

660 "These strokis lyked well me.

"Thou arte a bolde man and hardy,

And so thinketh me;

And or I pas fro this place

*before
Tested*

Assayed better shalt thou be."

665 Lytell Johann drew a ful gode sword,
The coke toke another in hande;
They thought no thyng for to fle,
But stify for to stande.

*They didn't think of fleeing
unyielding*

There they faught sore togedere

670 Two myle way and well more;
Myght neyther other harme done,
The mountmaunce of an owre.

The time it takes to walk two miles

For the period of an hour

"I make myn avowe to God," sayde Litell Johann,

"And by my true lewté,

loyalty

675 Thou art one of the best swordemen
That ever yit sawe I me.

"Cowdest thou shote as well in a bowe,
To grene wode thou shuldest with me,
And two times in the yere thy clothinge
680 Chaunged shulde be,

Could

"And every yere of Robyn Hode
Twenty merke to thy fe."

*from
as thy fee*

"Put up thy swerde," saide the coke,
"And fellowes woll we be."

685 Thanne he set to Lytell Johann.
The nowmblies of a do,
Gode brede, and full gode wyne;
They ete and drank theretoo.

*fetched
sweetbreads of a doe*

Early Ballads and Tales

- 690 And when they had dronkyn well,
Theyre trouthes togeder they plight,
That they wolde be with Robyn
That ylike same nyght. very
- 695 They dyd them to the tresoure hows,
As fast as they myght gone;
The lokkes, that were of full gode stelle,
They brake them everichone. went; treasure-house
locks; steel
everyone
- 700 They toke away the silver vessell,
And all that thei might get;
Pecis, masars, ne sponis. Dishes, drinking cups, nor spoons
Wolde thei not forget.
- 705 Also they toke the gode pens,
Three hundred pounde and more,
And did them streyte to Robyn Hode,
Under the grene wode bore. pence
went straight
ancient wood
- 710 "God the save, my dere mayster,
And Criste the save and se!" watch over thee
And thanne sayde Robyn to Litell Joham,
"Welcome myght thou be."
- 715 "Also be that fayre yeman
Thou bryngest there with the;
What tydynge fro Notyngham?
Lynill Joham, tell thou me." is (welcome)
news
- 720 "Well the gretith the proude sheryf,
And sende the here by me
His coke and his silver vessell,
And thre hundred pounde and thre." greet thee
- 725 "I make myne avowe to God," sayde Robyn,
"And to the Trenyté,
It was never by his gode wyll
This gode is come to me." Trinity
(the sheriff's) good will
These possessions

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------|
| | Lytyll Johann there hym bethought
On a shrewde wyle;
Fyve myle in the forest he ran;
Hym happed all his wyll. | <i>crafty trick</i> |
| 725 | Than he met the proude sheref,
Huntyng with houndes and horne;
Lytell Johann coude of courtesye,
And knelyd hym beforne. | <i>knew about</i> |
| 730 | "God the save, my dere mayster,
And Criste the save and se!" | <i>watch over you</i> |
| | "Reynolde Grenelefe," sayde the shyref,
"Where hast thou nowe be?" | |
| 735 | "I have be in this forest;
A fayre syght can I se;
It was one of the fayrest syghtes
That ever yet sawe I me. | |
| | "Yonder I sawe a ryght fayre harte,
His coloure is of grene;
Seven score of dere upon a herde
Be with hym all bydene. | <i>male deer</i> |
| 740 | | <i>together</i> |
| | "Their tyndes are so sharpe, maister,
Of sexye, and well mo.
That I durst not shote for drede,
Lest they wolde me slo." | <i>antlers</i> |
| | | <i>slay</i> |
| 745 | "I make myn avowe to God," sayde the shyref,
"That syght wolde I sayne se."
"Buske you thyderwarde, mi dere mayster,
Anone, and wende with me." | <i>gladly</i> |
| | | <i>Rasset</i> |
| | | <i>go</i> |
| 750 | The sherif rode, and Litell Johann
Of sote he was full smerte,
And whane they came before Robyn,
"Lo, sir, here is the mayster-herte." | <i>nimble</i> |

Early Ballads and Tales

Still stode the proude sherif,

A sory man was he;

755 "Wo the worthe, Raynolde Grenelefe,

Thou hast betrayed nowe me."

"I make myn avowe to God," sayde Litell Johnn,

"Mayster, ye be to blame;

I was mysserved of my dynere

badly provided with

760 "Whan I was with you at home."

Sone he was to souper sette,

And served well with silver white,

And whan the sherif sawe his vessell,

For sorowe he myght nat etc.

765 "Make glad chere," sayde Robyn Hode,

"Sherif, for charité,

And for the love of Litell Johnn

Thy lyfe I graunt to the."

Whan they had souped well,

770 The day was al gone;

Robyn commaunded Litell Johnn

To drawe of his hosen and his shone,

To take off: shoes

His kirtell, and his cote of pie,

tonic: parti-colored cloak

That was fured well and fine,

775 And toke hym a grene mantel,

To lapp his body therin.

gave

To wrap

Robyn commaundyd his wight yonge men,

Under the grene wode tree,

They shulde lye in that same sute,

(dressed) the same

780 That the sherif myght them see.

All nyght lay the proude sherif

In his breeche and in his schest;

No wonder it was, in grene wode,

Though his sydes gan to smerte.

breeches; shirt

hart

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 785 "Make glade chere," sayde Robyn Hode.
"Sheref, for charité,
For this is our ordre iwys,
Under the grene wode tree."
- 790 "This is harder order," sayde the sherif,
"Than any ankir or frere;
For all the golde in mery Englonde
I wolde nat longe dwell her." anchorite (religious hermit)
here
- 795 "All this twelve monthes," sayde Robyn,
"Thou shalt dwell with me;
I shall the teche, proude sherif,
An outlawe for to be."
- 800 "Or I be here another nyght," sayde the sherif,
"Robyn, nowe pray I the,
Smythe of mij hede rather to-morowe,
And I forgyve it the. Before
Strike off my head
- 805 "Lat me go," than sayde the sherif,
"For saynte charité,
And I woll be thy best frende
That ever yet had ye."
- 810 "Thou shalt swere me an othe," sayde Robyn,
"On my bright bronde:
Shalt thou never awayte me scathe,
By water ne by lande. oath
sword
plot me harm
- 815 "And if thou fynde any of my men,
By nyght or day,
Upon thyn othe thou shalt swere
To helpe them that thou may." *as far as*
- 820 Now hathe the sherif sworne his othe,
And home he began to gone;
He was as full of grene wode
As ever was hepe of stone. *hip (fruit) with stone*

The Fourth Fytte

The sherif dwelled in Notingham
He was fayne he was agone,
And Robyn and his mery men
Went to wode alone.

glad

820 at once

"Go we to dyner," sayde Littell Johnn;
Robyn Hode sayde, "Nay,
For I drede Our Lady be wroth with me,
For she sent me nat my pay."

angry

825 "Have no doute, maister," sayde Litell Johnn,
"Yet is nat the sonne at rest;
For I dare say, and savely swere,
The knight is true and trusse."

safely

830 "Take thy bowe in thy hande," sayde Robyn,
"Late Much wende with the,
And so shal Wylyam Scarlok,
And no man abyde with me.

go

835 "And walke up under the Sayles,
And to Watlynge-strete,
And wayte after such unketh gest;
Up-chaunce ye may them mete.

look for; unknown
By chance

840 "Whether he be messengere,
Or a man that myrthes can,
Of my good he shall have some,
Yf he be a pore man."

minstrel who entertains

Forth then stert Lytel Johan,
Half in tray and tene,
And gyrded hym with a full good swerde,
Under a mantel of grene.

anger and annoyance

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 845 They went up to the Sayles.
These yemen all thre;
They loked est, they loked west,
They myght no man se.
- 850 But as they loked in Bernysdale,
By the hye waye,
Than were they ware of two blacke monkes,
Eche on a good palferay. *Benedictine monks*
- 855 Then bespake Lytell Johan,
To Much he gan say.
"I dare lay my lyfe to wedde,
The monkes have brought our pay." *as a pledge*
- 860 "Make glad chere," sayd Lytell Johan,
"And dresse our bowes of ewe,
And loke your hertes be seker and sad,
Your strynges trusty and trewe." *make ready
sure and steadfast*
- "The monke hath two and fifty
And seven somers full stronge;
There rydeth no bysshop in this londe
So ryally, I understand." *fifty-two men
rumpers (pack horses)*
- 865 "Brethern," sayd Lytell Johan,
"Here are no more but we thre;
But we brynge them to dyners,
Our mayster dare we not se." *royally*
- 870 "Bende your bowes," sayd Lytell Johan,
"Make all you prese to stonde;
The formost monke, his lyfe and his deth,
Is closed in my honde." *that crowd stop
contained*
- 875 "Abyde, chorle monke," sayd Lytell Johan,
"No ferther that thou gone;
Yf thou doost, by dere worthy God,
Thy deth is in my honde." *chief (crude, low-born)
go*

Early Ballads and Tales

- "And evyll thryfte on thy hede," sayd Litell Johan.
 "Ryght under thy hattes bonde,
 For thou hast made our mayster wroth,
 He is fastynge so longe."
 880
- "Who is your mayster?" sayd the monke;
 Lytell Johan sayd, "Robyn Hode."
 "He is a stronge thefe," sayd the monke,
 "Of hym herd I never good."
 885
- "Thou lyest," than sayd Lytell Johan,
 "And that shall rew the;
 He is a yeman of the forest,
 To dyne he hath bode the."
 890
- Much was redy with a bolte,
 Redly and anone;
 He set the monke so-fore the brest,
 To the grounde that he can gone.
 895
- Of two and fyfty wyght yonge yemen
 There abode not one,
 Saf a lytell page and a grome,
 To lede the somers with Lytel Johan.
 900
- They brought the monke to the lodge dore,
 Whether he were loth or lese,
 For to speke with Robyn Hode,
 Maugré in theyr tethe.
 905
- Robyn dyde adowne his hode,
 The monke whan that he se;
 The monke was not so curteys,
 His hode then let he be.
 910
- "He is a chorle, mayster, by dere worthy God."
 Than sayd Lytell Johan.
 "Thereof no force," sayd Robyn,
 "For curteysy can he none.
 915

evil neck

hat-band

angry

make you sorry

bidden (commanded)

arrow

Quickly and at once

aimed at; before

So that he dismounted

Except; groom

pack horses

Whether he liked it or not

In spite of them

lowered his hood

saw

left in place

no matter

knows

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 910 "How many men," sayd Robyn,
"Had this monke, Johan?"
"Fyfty and two whan that we met,
But many of them be gone."
- 915 "Let blowe a horne," sayd Robyn,
"That felawshyp may us knowe."
Seven score of wyght yemen
Came prycyng on a rowe. harryng
- 920 And everych of them a good mantell
Of scarlet and of raye.
All they came to good Robyn.
To wytte what he wolde say. know
- They made the monke to wasshe and wype,
And syt at his denere.
Robyn Hode and Lytell Johan
They served him both in fere. in company
- 925 "Do gladly, monke," sayd Robyn.
"Gramercy, syr," sayd he. Eat with pleasure
"Where is your abbay, whan ye are at home,
And who is your avowē?" Thank you patron
- 930 "Saynt Mary abbay," sayd the monke,
"Though I be symple here." humble
"In what offyce?" sayd Robyn.
"Syr, the hye selerer." chief steward
- 935 "Ye be the more welcome," sayd Robyn.
"So ever mote I the. So may I always prosper
Fyll of the best wyne," sayd Robyn.
"This monke shall drynke to me.
- 940 "But I have grete mervayle," sayd Robyn,
"Of all this longe day,
I drede Our Lady be wroth with me,
She sent me not my pay."

Early Ballads and Tales

"Have no doute, mayster," sayd Lytell Johan,
"Ye have no nede, I saye;
This monke it hath brought, I dare well swere,
For he is of her abbay."

- 945 "And she was a borowe," sayd Robyn.
"Betwene a knyght and me,
Of a lytell money that I hym leant,
Under the grene wode tree.

security

- 950 "And yf thou hast that sylver i-brought,
I pray the let me se,
And I shall helpe the effsones,
Yf thou have nede to me."

in return

- 955 The monke swore a full grete othe,
With a sory chere,
"Of the borowehode thou spekest to me,
Herde I never ere."

miserable countenance

security

- 960 "I make mym avowe to God," sayd Robyn,
"Monke, thou art to blame,
For God is holde a ryghtwys man,
And so is His dame.

"Thou toldest with thym owne tonge,
Thou may not say nay,
How thou arte her seruaunt,
And servest her every day.

- 965 "And thou art made her messengere,
My money for to pay:
Therfore I can the more thanke
Thos arte come at thy day.

may thank thee more

- 970 "What is in your cofers?" sayd Robyn,
"Trewe than tell thou me."
"Syr," he sayd, "twenty markes,
Al so mote I the."

As I may prosper

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- "Yf there be no more," sayd Robyn,
"I wyll not one penye.
975 Yf thou hast myster of ony more, *need*
Syr, more I shall lende to the.
- "And yf I fynde more," sayd Robyn,
"Iwys thou shalte it for gone, *forgo*
For of thy spendyng sylver, monke, *traveling expenses*
980 Thereof wyll I ryght none.
- "Go nowe forthe, Lytell Johan,
And the trouth tell thou me:
If there be no more but twenty marke,
No peny that I se."
985 Lytell Johan spred his mantell downe,
As he had done before,
And he tolde out of the monkes male *traveling chest*
Eyght hundred pounde and more.
- Lytell Johan let it lye full stylle,
990 And went to his mayster in hast.
"Syr," he sayd, "the monke is trewe ynowe,
Our Lady hath doubled your cast." *doubled your throw (the knight's loan)*
- "I make myn avowe to God," sayd Robyn,
"Monke, what tolde I the?
995 Our Lady is the trewest woman
That ever yet founde I me.
- "By dere worthy God," sayd Robyn,
"To seche all Englond thorow,
Yet founde I never to my pay
1000 A moche better borow.
"Fyll of the best wyne, and do hym drynke," sayd Robyn,
"And grete well thy lady hende, *greet; gracious*
And yf she have nede to Robyn Hode,
A frende she shall hym fynde.

Early Ballads and Tales

- 1005 "And yf she nedeth ony more sylver,
Come thou agayne to me,
And, by this token she hath me sent,
She shall have such thre." *three times the amount*
- 1010 The monke was goynge to London-ward,
There to holde grete mote, *meeting*
The knyght that rode so hye on hors,
To bryng hym under fote.
- 1015 "Whether be ye away?" sayd Robyn.
"Syr, to maners in this londe,
Too reken with our reves,
That have done moch wronge." *Sir [i.e., Robyn]; manors
To deal with our bailiffs*
- 1020 "Come now forth, Lytell Johan,
And harken to my tale;
A better yeman I knowe none,
To seke a monkes male. *search; baggage*
- 1025 "How moch is in yonder other corser?" sayd Robyn.
"The sooth must we see." *horse
truth*
"By Our Lady," than sayd the monke,
"That were no curtesysc.
- 1030 "To bydde a man to dyner,
And syth hym bete and bynde." *ask
afterwards*
"It is our olde maner," sayd Robyn.
"To leve but lytell behynde." *To waste little*
- 1035 The monke toke the hors with spore,
No lenger wolde he abyde: *spurned his horse*
"Aske to drynke," than sayd Robyn.
"Or that ye forther syde." *Ask permission
Before*
- "Nay, for God," than sayd the monke,
"Me reweth I cam so nere;
1035 For better chepe I myght have dyned
In Blythe or in Dankestere." *more cheaply*

A Gest of Robyn Hode

"Grete well your abbot," sayd Robyn,
"And your pryor, I you pray,
And byd hym send me such a monke
1040 To dyner every day."

Now lete we that monke be stylle,
And speke we of that knyght:
Yet he came to holde his day,
Whyle that it was lyght.

1045 He dyde him streyt to Bersysdale,
Under the grene wode tre,
And he founde there Robyn Hode,
And all the mery meynē.

took himself
company

1050 The knyght lyght doun of his good palfrey;
Robyn whan he gan see,
So curteysly he dyde adoun his hode,
And set hym on his knee.

dismounted

1055 "God the save, Robyn Hode,
And all this company."
"Welcome be thou, gentyll knyght,
And ryght welcome to me."

1060 Than bespake hym Robyn Hode,
To that knyght so fre:
"What nede dryveth the to grene wode?",
I praye the, syr knyght, tell me.

"And welcome be thou, gentyll knyght,
Why hast thou be so longe?"
"For the abbot and the hye justyce
Wolde have had my londe."

1065 "Hast thou thy londe agayne?" sayd Robyn;
"Treuth than tell thou me."
"Ye, for God," sayd the knyght,
"And that thanke I God and the.

Early Ballads and Tales

- "But take not a grefe, that I have be so longe; *Don't be offended*
1070 I came by a wrastelynge,
And there I holpe a pore yeman,
With wronge was put behynde." *downgraded*
- "Nay, for God," sayd Robyn.
"Syr knyght, that thanke I the;
1075 What man that helpeth a good yeman,
His frende than wyl I be."
- "Have here foure hondred pounde," than sayd the knyght,
"The whiche ye lent to me,
And here is also twenty marke
1080 For your curteysy."
- "Nay, for God," than sayd Robyn,
"Thou broke it well for ay, *enjoy it forever*
For Our Lady, by her selerer, *wine steward*
Hath sent to me my pay.
- 1085 "And yf I toke it i-twyse, *twice*
A shame it were to me,
But trewely, gentyll knyght,
Welcom arte thou to me."
- Whan Robyn had tolde his tale,
1090 He leugh and had good chere: *laughed*
"By my trouthe," then sayd the knyght,
"Your money is redy here." *available*
- "Broke it well," sayd Robyn, *Enjoy it*
"Thou gentyll knyght so fre, *generous*
1095 And welcome be thou, gentyll knyght,
Under my trystell-tree. *meeting tree*
- "But what shall these bowes do?" sayd Robyn,
"And these arowes ifedred fre?" *finely feathered*
"By God," than sayd the knyght,
1100 "A pore present to the."

A Gest of Robyn Hode

"Come now forth, Lytell Johan,
And go to my treusuré,
And brynge me there fourre hondred pounde;
The monke over-tolde it me." over-paid

1105 "Have here fourre hondred pounde,
Thou gentyll knyght and trewe,
And bye hors and harnes good,
And gylte thy spores all newe." gild

1110 "And yf thou fayle ony spendynge,
Com to Robyn Hode.
And by my trouth thou shalt none fayle,
The whyles I have any good." while

1115 "And broke well thy fourre hondred pound,
Whiche I lest to the.
And make thy selfe no more so bare,
By the counsell of me."

Thus than holpe hym good Robyn,
The knyght all of his care:
God, that syt in heven by,
1120 Graunte us well to fare!

The Fift Fytte

Now hath the knyght his leve i-take,
And wente hym on his way;
Robyn Hode and his mery men
Dwelled stylly full many a day. quietly

1125 Lyth and lystem, gentil men,
And herken what I shall say,
How the proud sheryfe of Notyngham
Dyde crye a full fayre play.

Early Ballads and Tales

- That all the best archers of the north
1130 Sholde come upon a day,
And that shoteth allther best
The game shall bere away. *best of all*
- He that shoteth allther best,
Furthest, fayre and lowe,
1135 At a payre of fynly buttis,
Under the grene wode shaw.
Whoever; best of all
fine buttis
thicker
- A ryght good arowe he shall have,
The shaft of sylver whyte,
The hede and the feders of ryche rede golde,
1140 In Englond is none lyke.
- This than herde good Robyn,
Under his trystell-ree:
"Make you redy, ye wyght yonge men;
That shotynge wyl I se.
- 1145 "Buske you, my mery yonge men,
Ye shall go with me,
And I wyl wete the shryves fayth,
Trewē and yf he be." *Hurry*
test
- Whan they had theyr bowes i-bent,
1150 Theyr takles fedred fre,
Seven score of wyght yonge men
Stode by Robyns kne. *finely feathered arrows*
- Whan they cam to Notyngham,
The buttis were fayre and longe,
1155 Many was the bolde archere
That shot with bowes stronge.
- "There shall but syx shote with me;
The other shal kepe my hede,
And stande with good bowes bent,
1160 That I be not desceyved." *protect my head*

A Gest of Robyn Hode

The fourth outlawe his bowe gan bende,
And that was Robyn Hode,
And that behelde the proud sheryf,
All by the but he stode.

- 1165 Thryes Robyn shot a bout,
And alway he slist the wand,
And so dyde good Gylberte
Wyth the Whyte Hande. *a match*
sli
- 1170 Lytell Johan and good Scatheloke
Were archers good and fre;
Lytell Much and good Reynolde,
The worsie wolde they not be.
- 1175 Whan they had shot a boute,
These archours fayre and good,
Evermore was the best,
For soth, Robyn Hode.
- 1180 Hym was delyvered the good arowe,
For best worthy was he;
He toke the yefte so carneysly,
To grene wode wolde he. *He was given*
prize (gift)
- They cryed out on Robyn Hode,
And grete hornes gan they blowe:
"Wo worth the, treason!" sayd Robyn,
"Full evyl thou art to knowe." *demanded the arrest of*
Misery come to you!
- 1185 "And wo be thou! thou proude sheryf,
Thus gladdynge thy gest;
Other wyse thou behote me
In yonder wylde forest. *pleasing thy guest*
promised
- 1190 "But had I the in grene wode,
Under my trysell-tre,
Thou sholdest leve me a better wedde
Than thy trewe lewté." *pledge*
sworn trust

Early Ballads and Tales

- Full many a bowe there was bent,
And arowes let they glyde;
- 1195 Many a kystell there was rent,
And hurt many a syde.
- Knee-length tonic
- The outlawes shot was so stronge
That no man myght them dryve,
And the proud sheryfes men,
- 1200 They fled away full blyve.
- Barrage of shooting
quickly
- Robyn sawe the busshement to-broke,
In grene wode he wolde have be;
Many an arowe there was shot
Amonge that company.
- ambush
- 1205 Lytell Johan was hurtie full sore,
With an arowe in his kne,
That he myght neyther go nor ryde;
It was full grete pyté.
- "Mayster," then sayd Lytell Johan,
1210 "If ever thou lovest me,
And for that ylike Lordes love
That dyed upon a tre,
- same
- "And for the medes of my servyce,
That I have served the,
- 1215 Lete never the proude sheryf
Alyve now fynde me.
- Rewards
- "But take out thy browne swerde,
And smyte all of my hede,
And gyve me woundes depe and wyde,
1220 No lyfe on me be lefte."
- Blood-stained
- "I wolde not that," sayd Robyn,
"Johan, that thou were slawe,
For all the golde in mery Englonde,
Though it lay now on a rawe."
- slain
in a rawe

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 1225 "God forbede," sayd Lytell Much,
"That dyed on a tre,
That thou sholdest, Lytell Johan,
Parte our company." Leave
- 1230 Up he toke hym on his backe;
And bare hym well a myle;
Many a tyme he layd hym downe,
And shot another whyle.
- 1235 Then was there a fayre castell, castle
A lytell within the wode;
Double-dyched it was about,
And walled, by the Rode. by the Cross
- 1240 And there dwelled that gentyll knyght,
Syr Rychard at the Lee,
That Robyn had lent his good, given his property
Under the grene wode tree.
- 1245 In he toke good Robyn,
And all his company:
"Welcome be thou, Robyn Hode,
Welcome arte thou to me,
- 1250 "And moche I thanke the of thy comfort,
And of thy carteysye,
And of thy grete kyndenesse,
Under the grene wode tre.
- 1255 "I love no man in all this worlde
So much as I do the;
For all the proud sheryf of Notyngham, Despite
Ryght here shalt thou be.
- 1260 "Shyt the gates, and drawe the brydge,
And let no man come in,
And arme you well, and make you redy,
And to the walles ye wynne. Shut
make your way

- "For one thynge, Robyn, I the behote;
I swere by Saynt Quynytne,
These forty dayes thou wonnest with me.
To soupe, ete, and dyne."
*promise
Quynytne
dwell*
- Bordes were layde, and clothes were spredd,
Redely and anone:
Robyn Hode and his mery men
To mete can they gone.
- The Sixth Fytte**
- 1265 Lythe and lysten, gentylmen,
And herkyn to your songe,
Howe the proude shyref of Notyngham,
And men of armys stronge
- Full fast cam to the hye shyref,
The contré up to route,
And they beset the knyghtes castell,
The walles all aboute.
*To raise the countryside
besieged*
- 1275 The proude shyref loude gan crye,
And sayde, "Thou traytour knight,
Thou kepest here the kynges enemys,
Agaynst the lawe and right."
- "Syr, I wyll avowe that I have done,
The dedys that here be dyght,
Upon all the landes that I have,
As I am a trewe knyght.
*openly acknowledge what
done*
- 1280 "Wende furth, sirs, on your way,
And do no more to me
Tyll ye wyt oure kynges wille,
What he wyll say to the."
*Go forth
know*

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 1285 The shyref thus had his awnere,
Without any lesyng;
Furth he yede to London towne,
All for to tel our kinge. lyng
went
- 1290 Ther he tellede him of that knight,
And eke of Robyn Hode,
And also of the bolde archars,
That were soo noble and gode.
- 1295 "He wyll avowe that he hath done,
To mayntene the outlawes stronge;
He wyll be lorde, and set you at nought,
In all the northe londe."
- 1300 "I wyl be at Notyngham," saide our kyng,
"Within this fourteenyght, formight (14 days)
And take I wyll Robyn Hode,
And so I wyll that knight.
- 1305 "Go nowe home, shyref," sayde our kyng,
"And do as I byd the.
And ordeyn gode archers ynowe,
Of all the wyde contré." organize; enough (i.e., many)
From
- 1310 The shyref had his leve i-take,
And went hym on his way,
And Robyn Hode to grene wode,
Upon a certen day.
- 1315 And Lytel John was hole of the arowe
That shot was in his kne,
And dyd hym streyght to Robyn Hode,
Under the grene wode tree. whole (i.e., healed)
- 1320 Robyn Hode walked in the forest,
Under the levys grene;
The proude shyref of Notyngham
Thereof he had grete tene. recreation

Early Ballads and Tales

- The shyref there fayled of Robyn Hode,
He myght not have his pray;
Than he awayted this gentyll knight,
Bothe by nyght and day.
- missed
prey, quarry
watched for
- 1320
- Ever he wayted the gentyll knyght,
Syr Richarde at the Lee,
As he went on haukyng by the ryver-syde,
And lete haukes flee.
- 1325 Toke he there this gentyll knight,
With men of armys stronge,
And led hym to Notyngham warde,
Bounde bothe fote and hande.
- toward Nottingham
- 1330 The sheref sware a fall grete othe,
Bi Hym that dyed on Rode,
He had lever than an hundred pound
That he had Robyn Hode.
- the Cross
would rather
- 1335 This harde the knyghtes wylc.
A fayr lady and a free;
She set hir on a gode palfrey,
To grene wode anone rode she.
- heard
- Whanne she cam in the forest,
Under the grene wode tree,
Fonde she there Robyn Hode,
And al his fayre mené.
- company
- 1340
- "God the save, gode Robyn,
And all thy company;
For Our dere Ladyses sake,
A bone graunte thou me."
- boon, favor
- 1345 "Late never my wedded lorde
Shamefully slayne be;
He is fast bowne to Notyngham warde,
For the love of the."
- Let
Because he supported you

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- | | | |
|------|--|----------------------------|
| | Anone than saide goode Robyn | <i>At once</i> |
| 1350 | To that lady so fre,
"What man hath your lorde take?"
"The proude shirife," than sayd she. | |
| | "The shirife hant hym take," she sayd,
"For soth as I the say; | |
| 1355 | He is nat yet thre myles
Passed on his way." | |
| | Up than sterte gode Robyn, | |
| | As man that had ben wode: | <i>furious</i> |
| | "Buske you, my mery men, | |
| 1360 | For Hym that dyed on Rode. | <i>Harry
the Cross</i> |
| | "And he that this sorowe forsaketh, | |
| | By hym that dyed on tre, | <i>this sad case</i> |
| | Shall he never in grene wode | |
| | No lenger dwel with me." | |
| 1365 | Sone there were gode bowes bent,
Mo than seven score;
Hedge ne dyche spared they none
That was them before. | |
| | "I make myn avowe to God," sayde Robyn, | |
| 1370 | "The sherif wolde I fayne see,
And if I may hym take,
I quyte shall it be." | <i>Revenged</i> |
| | And whan they came to Nottingham, | |
| | They walked in the strete, | |
| 1375 | And with the proude sherif iwy
Sone can they mete. | |
| | "Abide, thou proude sherif," he sayde, | |
| | "Abide, and speke with me; | |
| | Of some tidinges of oure kinge | |
| 1380 | I wolde fayne here of the. | |

Early Ballads and Tales

"This seven yere, by dere worthy God.
 Ne yede I this fast on fote;
 I make myn avowe to God, thou proude sherif,
 It is nat for thy gode."

went

- 1385 Robyn bent a full goode bowe,
 An arrowe he drowe at wylle;
 He hit so the proude sherife
 Upon the grounde he lay full still.

- 1390 And or he myght up aryse,
 On his fete to stonde,
 He smote of the sherifs hede
 With his bright bronde.

before

off

- 1395 "Lye thou there, thou proude sherife,
 Evyll mote thou cheve!
 There myght no man to the truse
 The whyles thou were a lyve."

Baddy may you end!
trust in you

- 1400 His men drewe out theyr bryght swerdes,
 That were so sharpe and kene,
 And layde on the sheryves men,
 And dryved them downe bydene.

forthwith

Robyn sten to that kayght,
 And cut a two his bonde,
 And toke hym in his hand a bowe,
 And bad hym by hym stonde.

leapt
in two

bade

- 1405 "Leve thy hors the behynde,
 And lerne for to renne;
 Thou shalt with me to grene wode,
 Through myre, mosse, and fenne.

mire, moss, and fen

- 1410 "Thou shalt with me to grene wode,
 Without ony leasyng,
 Tyll that I have gete us grace
 Of Edwarde, our comly kynge."

lying

handsome

A Gest of Robyn Hode

The Seventh Fytte

- The kynge came to Notynghame,
With knyghtes in grete araye. *in great force*
- 1415 For to take that gentyll knyght
And Robyn Hode, and yf he may.
- He asked men of that countre
After Robyn Hode,
And after that gentyll knyght.
1420 That was so bolde and stout.
- Whan they had tolde hym the case
Our kyng understande ther tale,
And seased in his honde
The knyghtes londes all. *seized*
- 1425 All the compasse of Lancasshyre
He went both ferre and nere,
Tyll he came to Flomton Parke;
He faylyd many of his dere. *Through the whole misord*
- There our kyng was wont to se
Herdes many one,
He could unneth fynde one dere,
1430 That bare ony good horne. *scarcely*
- The kyng was wonder wroth withall,
And swore by the Trynyté,
"I wolde I had Robyn Hode,
1435 With eyen I myght hym se.
- "And he that wolde smye of the knyghtes heðe,
And brymge it to me,
He shall have the knyghtes londes.
1440 Syr Rycharde at the Le. *cut off*

Early Ballads and Tales

"I gyve it hym with my charter,
And sele it my honde,
To have and holde for ever more,
In al mery Englondē."

seal

- 1445 Than bespake a fayre olde knyght,
That was treue in his fay:
"A, my legee lorde the kynge,
One worde I shall you say.

true in his faith

liege (feudal superior)

- 1450 May have the knyghtes loades,
Whyle Robyn Hode may ryde or gone,
And bere a bowe in his bondes,

- 1455 "That he ne shall lese his hede,
That is the best ball in his hode:
Give it no man, my lorde the kynge,
That ye wyll any good."

- 1460 Half a yere dwelled our comly kynge
In Notymgham, and well more;
Coude he not here of Robyn Hode,
In what countrē that he were.

But alwey went good Robyn
By halke and eke by hyll,
And alway slew the kynges dere,
And welt them at his wyll.

hiding place

used

- 1465 Than bespake a proude fostere,
That stode by our kynges kne:
"Yf ye wyll se good Robyn,
Ye must do after me.

forester

according to

- 1470 Take fyve of the best knyghtes
That be in your lede,
And walke downe by yon abbay,
And gete you monkes wede.

group

garment or habit

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- "And I wyll be your bedesman,
And lede you the way." religious guide
- 1475 And or ye come to Notyngham.
Myn hede then dare I lay before
wager
- "That ye shall mete with good Robyn,
On lyve yf that he be;
Or ye come to Notyngham,
With eyen ye shall hym se." Before
- 1480 Full hastily our kyng was dyght,
So were his knyghtes fyve,
Everych of them in monkes wude,
And hasted them thyder blyve. clothed
quickly
- 1485 Our kyng was grete above his cole, *cowf* (*a monk's hood worn round the neck*)
A brode hat on his crowne, *top of head*
Ryght as he were abbot-lyke,
They rode up into the towne.
- 1490 Styf botes our kyng had on.
Forsoth as I you say;
He rode syngynge to grene wode,
The covent was clothed in graye. singing
group of "monks"
- 1495 His male-hors and his grete somers
Followed our kyng behynde.
Tyll they came to grene wode,
A myle under the lynde. baggage horse; pack horses
woods
- 1500 There they met with good Robyn,
Stondynge on the waye.
And so dyde many a bolde archere,
For soth as I you say.
- Robyn toke the kymges hors,
Hastely in that stede,
And sayd, "Syr abbot, by your leve,
A whyle ye must abyde. place

Early Ballads and Tales

- 1505 "We be yemen of this foreste,
Under the grene wode tre;
We lyve by our kynges dere,
Under the grene wode tre.
- 1510 "And ye have chyrches and reates both,
And gold full grete pleasé;
Gyve us some of your spendynge,
For saynt charyté."
- 1515 Than bespake our cumly kyng,
Anone than sayd he:
"I brought no more to grene wode
But forty pounde with me.
- 1520 "I have layne at Notyngham
This fourtynight with our kyng,
And spent I have full moche good,
On many a grete lordynge.
- "And I have but forty pounde.
No more than have I me;
But yf I had an hondred pounde,
I vouch it halfe on the." *mayed
fornight (14 days)*
promise half to thee
- 1525 Robyn toke the forty pounde,
And departed it in two partye;
Halfendell he gave his mery men,
And bad them mery to be. *divided it into two parts
Half*
- 1530 Full cartesly Robyn gan say;
"Syr, have this for your spendyng;
We shall mete another day."
"Gramercy," than sayd our kyng.
- 1535 "But well the greteth Edward, our kyng,
And sent to the his seale, *sends*
And byddeth the com to Notyngham,
Both to mete and meat." *food and meat*

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- He toke out the brode targe,
And sone he lete hym se;
Robyn couid his courteysy,
1540 And set hym on his kne.

shield (see note)
at once
knew his manners
- "I love no man in all the worlde
So well as I do my kynge;
Welcome is my lordes seale;
And, monke, for thy tydynge.

1545 "Syr abbot, for thy tydnges,
To day thou shalt dyne with me,
For the love of my kynge.
Under my trystell-tre."

Forth he lad our comly kynge,
1550 Full fayre by the honde;
Many a dere there was slayne,
And full fast dyghtande.

prepared
- Robyn toke a full grete horne,
And loude he gan blowe;
1555 Seven score of wyght younge men
Came redy on a rowe.

All they kneeled on theyr kne,
Full fayre before Robyn;
The kynge sayd hym selfe untyll,
1560 And swore by Saynt Austyn.

to himself
St. Augustine
- "Here is a wonder semely syght;
Me thynketh, by Goddes pyne,
His men are more at his byddynge
Then my men be at mym."

1565 Full hastly was theyr dyner idyght,
And thereto gan they gone;
They served our kynge with al theyr myght,
Both Robyn and Lytell Johan.

prepared

Early Ballads and Tales

- 1570 Anone before our kynge was set
 The faste veyson,
 The good whyte brede, the good rede wyne,
 And therto the fyne ale and browne.
- "Make good chere," said Robyn,
 "Abbot, for charyté,
 1575 And for this ylike tydynge,
 Blyssed mote thou be. *may*
- "Now shalte thou se what lyfe we lede,
 Or thou hens wende; *Before you go away*
 Than thou may ensourme our kynge,
 1580 Whan ye togyder lende." *dwell*
- Up they sterte all in hast,
 Theyr bowes were smartly bent; *haste*
 Our kynge was never so sore agast,
 He wende to have be shente. *He thought he would be killed*
- 1585 Two yerdes there were up set,
 Thereto gan they gange; *rods*
 By fyfty pase, our kynge sayd,
 The merkes were to longe. *they began to go*
- 1590 On every syde a rose-garlonde, *a small target*
 They shot under the lyne; *trees*
 "Who so fayleth of the rose-garlonde," sayd Robyn,
 "His takyll he shall tyme. *misses*
 1595 "And yelde it to his mayster,
 Be it never so fyne;
 For no man wyll I spare,
 So drynke I ale or wyne:
- "And bere a buffet on his hede,
 Iwys ryght all bare." *blow (cuff)*
 And all that fell in Robyns lotie,
 1600 He smote them wonder sare. *fell to Robin (to strike)*
 struck; sorely

A Gest of Robyn Hode

Twyse Robyn shot a boute,
And ever he cleved the wande,
And so dyde good Gylberte
With the Whyte Hande.

Twice
split

- 1605 Lytell Johan and good Scathelocke,
For nothynge wolde they spare;
When they fayled of the garlonde,
Robyn smote them full sore.

- 1610 At the last shot that Robyn shot,
For all his frendes fare,
Yet he fayled of the garlonde,
Thre fyngers and mare.

success

missed the target

By more than three fingers' width

- 1615 Than bespake good Gylberte,
And thus he gan say:
"Mayster," he sayd, "your takyll is lost,
Stand forth and take your pay."

punishment

- 1620 "If it be so," sayd Robyn,
"That may no better be,
Syr abbot, I delyver the myn arowe,
I pray the, syr, serve thou me."

"It falleth not for myn ordre," sayd our kyng,
"Robyn, by thy leve,
For to smyte no good yeman,
For doute I sholde hym greve."

permission

fear

- 1625 "Smyte on boldly," sayd Robyn,
"I give the large leve."
Anone our kyng, with that worde,
He folde up his sleeve,

full permission

folded

- 1630 And sych a buffet he gave Robyn,
To grounde he yede full nere:
"I make myn avowe to God," sayd Robyn,
"Thou arte a stalworthe frere."

stalwart (strong) brother

Early Ballads and Tales

- "There is pith in thyn arme," sayd Robyn,
"I trowe thou canst well shete."
Thus our kynge and Robyn Hode
Togeder gan they mete.
- Robyn behelde our comly kynge
Wystly in the face,
So dyde Syr Rycharde at the Le,
And kneled downe in that place.
- And so dyde all the wylde outlawes,
Whan they see them knele:
"My lorde the kynge of Englonde,
Now I knowe you well."
- "Mercy then, Robyn," sayd our kynge.
"Under your trystyll-tre,
Of thy goodnesse and thy grace,
For my men and me!"
- "Yes, for God," sayd Robyn.
"And also God me save,
I aske mercy, my lorde the kynge,
And for my men I crave."
- "Yes, for God," than sayd our kynge,
"And thereto sent I me,
With that thou leve the grene wode,
And all thy company.
- "And come home, syr, to my courte,
And there dwell with me."
"I make myn avowe to God," sayd Robyn.
"And ryght so shall it be,
- "I wyll come to your courte,
Your servyse for to se,
And bryngye with me of my men
Seven score and thre.

force

I warrant; shoot

Intently

I assent

Provided

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 1665 "But me lyke well your servyse,
I come agayne full soone.
And shote at the donne dere,
As I am woste to done."
- Unless; pleases me
brown
accustomed*

The Eighth Fytte

- "Haste thou ony grene cloth," sayd our kynge,
1670 "That thou wylte sell nowe to me?"
"Ye, for God," sayd Robyn,
"Thyrty yerdes and thre."

"Robyn," sayd our kynge,
"Now pray I the,
1675 Sell me some of that cloth,
To me and my meynyt."

"Yes, for God," then sayd Robyn,
"Or elles I were a sole:
Another day ye wyl me clothe,
1680 I trowe, ayenst the Yole."

The kynge keste of his cole then,
A grene garment he dyde on,
And every knyght had so, iwyx,
Another hode full sone.
- company
fool
for Christmas
cast off his coat*
- 1685 Whan they were clothed in Lyncolne grene,
They keste away theyr graye:
"Now we shall to Notyngham,"
All thus our kynge gan say.
- Theyr bowes bente, and forth they went,
1690 Shotynge all in fere,
Towarde the towne of Notyngham,
Outlawes as they were.
- together
or if*

Early Ballads and Tales

- Our kynge and Robyn rode togyder,
For sooth as I you say,
- 1695 And they shote plucke buffet,
As they went by the way.
- And many a buffet our kynge wan
Of Robyn Hode that day,
- 1700 And nothymge spared good Robyn
Our kynge in his pay.
- "So God me helpe," sayd our kynge,
"Thy game is nouȝt to lere;
I sholde not get a shote of the,
Though I shote all this yere."
- 1705 All the people of Notyngham
They stode and behelde;
They sawe nothynge but manuels of grene
That covered all the felde.
- Than every man to other gan say,
"I drede our kynge be alone;
- 1710 Come Robyn Hode to the towne, iwyd
On lyve he lefe never one."
- Full hastily they began to flee,
Both yemen and knaves,
- 1715 And olde wyves that myght evyll goo,
They hopped on theyr staves.
- The kynge loughe full fast,
And commaunded theym agayne;
- 1720 When they se our comly kynge,
I wys they were full fayne.
- They ete and dranke and made them glad,
And sange with notes hye;
- Than bespake our comly kynge
To Syr Rycharde at the Lee.
- received
- not (hard) to learn
- slain
- Alive
- hardly walk
- hopped on their crutches
- laughed very much
- gave them orders
- saw
- pleased

A Gest of Robyn Hode

- 1725 He gave hym there his londe agayne,
A good man he bad hym be;
Robyn thanked our comly kynge,
And set hym on his kne. *kneeled down*
- 1730 Had Robyn dwelled in the kynges courte
But twelve monethes and thre, *Only*
That he had spent an hondred pounde,
And all his mennes fe. *payment*
- 1735 In every place where Robyn came
Ever more he layde downe, *paid out*
Both for knyghtes and for squyres,
To geve hym grete renowne.
- 1740 By than the yere was all agone
He had no man but twayne,
Lytell Johan and good Scathelocke,
With hym all for to gone.
- Robyn sawe yonge men shote
Foll ferre upon a day. *far*
"Alas!" than sayd good Robyn,
"My welthe is went away. *wealth*
- 1745 "Somtyme I was an archere good,
A styffe and eke a stronge;
I was comted the best archere
That was in mery Englonde. *handy reckoned*
- 1750 "Alas!" then sayd good Robyn,
"Alas and well a woo!
Yf I dwele lenger with the kyng,
Sorowe wyll me sloo." *slay*
- 1755 Forth than went Robyn Hode
Tyll he came to our kyng:
"My lorde the kyng of Englonde,
Graunte me myn askynge."

Early Ballads and Tales

- "I made a chapell in Bernysdale,
That semely is to se,
It is of Mary Magdaleyme,
1760 And thereto wolde I be.
- "I myght never in this seven nyght
No tyme to slepe ne wynke,
Nother all these seven dayes
Nother eate ne drynke." Neither
- 1765 "Me longeth sore to Bernysdale,
I may not be therfro;
Barefote and wolwarde I have byght
Thyder for to go." with wool near the skin; vowed
- "Yf it be so," than sayd our kymge,
1770 "It may no better be,
Seven nyght I gyve the leve,
No lengre, to dwell fro me."
- "Gramercy, lorde," then sayd Robyn,
And set hym on his kne;
1775 He toke his leve courteysly.
To grene wode then went he.
- Whan he came to grene wode,
In a mery mornynge,
There he herde the notes small
1780 Of byrdes mery syngynge. delicate
- "It is ferre gone," sayd Robyn. long ago
"That I was last here;
Me lyste a lytell for to shote
At the donne dere." It pleases me
brown
- 1785 Robyn slew a full grete harte,
His horne than gan he blow,
That all the outlawes of that forest
That horne could they knowe. they recognized

A Guest of Robyn Hode

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------------|
| | And gadred them togyder,
In a lytell throwe;
Seven score of wyght yonge men
Came redy on a rowe. | while |
| 1790 | And fayre dyde of theyr hodes,
And set them on theyr kne:
"Welcome," they sayd, "our mayster,
Under this grene wode tre." | |
| 1795 | Robyn dwelled in grene wode,
Twenty yere and two;
For all drede of Edwarde our kynge,
Agayne wolde he not goo. | |
| 1800 | Yet he was begyled, iws,
Through a wycked woman,
The pnyoresse of Kyrkely,
That nyc was of hys kynne, | near; kin |
| 1805 | For the love of a knyght,
Syr Roger of Donkesly,
That was her owne speciall;
Full evyll mose they the! | favorite
prosper |
| 1810 | They toke togyder theyr counsell
Robyn Hode for to sle,
And how they myght best do that dede,
His banis for to be. | slay
murderers |
| 1815 | Than bespake good Robyn.
In place where as he stode,
"To morow I maste to Kyrkely,
Craftely to be leten blode." | Skilfully |
| 1820 | Syr Roger of Donkestere,
By the pnyoresse he lay,
And there they betrayed good Robyn Hode,
Through theyr false playe. | |

Early Ballads and Tales

Cryst have mercy on his soule,
That dyded on the Rode!
For he was a good outlawe,
And dyde pore men moch god.

Cross



Notes

- 3 *yoman* denotes a broad social rank below knights and squires, ranging from a small landowning farmer to an attendant, servant, or lesser official in a royal or noble household (Middle English *yoman*, perhaps contraction of *yongman*); for the relevance of the term to the audience of the Robin Hood materials, see General Introduction, pp. 9–11.
- 5 *outlaw*. A person excluded from legal protection and rights (Old English *utlaga*, from Old Norse *utlagi*). Although the term “outlaw” was applied to anyone who had committed a serious crime — robbery, murder, or rape, the term had a more limited meaning in medieval law. The sentence of outlawry was reserved for those criminals who refused to appear for trial in court: “They become outlaws when, having been lawfully summoned, they do not appear, and are awaited and even sought for throughout the lawful and appointed terms, and yet they do not present themselves for trial” (David C. Douglas and George W. Greenaway, eds., *English Historical Documents 1042–1189*, [London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968], II, 552). Given the harsh punishments that awaited the convicted felon — blinding, loss of limb, or castration — it is not surprising that many fled to the forest or abroad to escape judgment.
- 6–7 Apart from *as he was one* these lines are missing in *a*, the “Lettersnijder” text, and as with other gaps in this source are provided from *b*, Wynkyn de Worde’s edition.
- 9 *Bernesdale* or *Bernysdale* are medieval spellings of Barnsdale. This has long been identified as a tract of land in the West Riding of Yorkshire: the most recent discussion is by Holt (1989, pp. 83–87). As he notes, however, “there was no forest or chase,” and he speculates that the three major locations of the myth — Barnsdale, Sherwood Forest, and Nottingham — “are all confounded.” More recently Knight (1994, pp. 29–32) has identified another ancient Barnsdale in Rutland, being a royal forest with other Robin Hood references nearby and even some association with the Earls of Huntingdon before that link was made in literary form in the late sixteenth century. The *Gest*, however,

Early Ballads and Tales

clearly links Barnsdale with named places in Yorkshire, see lines 69–70. It does not mention Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire, but does set part of the story in Nottingham, see note to line 59.

- 24 *gest*. Like King Arthur in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and many other romances, Robin Hood refuses to eat "until something strange and wonderful happens, until he is provided with an appropriately distinguished or unusual guest" (Dobson and Taylor, 1976, p. 32). Though the word *Gest* in the title of the poem refers to an event or deed (from Latin *res gestae*, "things done," as used in the French epic *Chansons de geste*), this context clearly uses the other word *gest*, meaning "guest," see lines 63–64, 835.
- 25 This line is missing in all the sources, and Child leaves it blank. It is supplied here on the model of similar passages in early ballads, though it is conceivable that, as the rhymes are the same in the two stanzas, it might have originally been an irregular seven-line stanza.
- 27 Child inserts *som* again before *squier*, presumably on metrical grounds; it appears in the later texts, but is not necessary.
- 35 Robin here reveals his special devotion to the Virgin Mary. The Marian cult is of course one of the major features of Roman Catholicism, and it reached its apogee in Western Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Robin's devotion to the Virgin, and to all women (lines 39–40), has an ironic poignancy when we recall that he is murdered by a religious woman, the prioress of Kyrkely priory. The allusion to the Virgin is also significant because a "miracle of the Virgin" underlies one of the central episodes in the *Gest* — Robin's loan of four hundred pounds to Sir Richard. See the Introduction and note to line 255.
- 57 Robin's outlawry is directed primarily at civil and ecclesiastical oppression and corruption. While he is a devoted Christian (see lines 31–37), he targets local officials and religious orders for abusing their authority and for usury, the lending of money at an exorbitant or illegal rate of interest; for a summary see Dobson and Taylor, 1976, pp. 30–31.
- 59 The Sheriff of Nottingham is Robin Hood's traditional adversary. The *Gest* does not explain why the Sheriff of one county, Nottinghamshire, would be interested in the activities of an outlaw living and operating in another county; the same

A Gest of Robyn Hode

occurs in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. This is presumably the result of different ballads being meshed into one longer story. On the variation of place, see Dobson and Taylor, 1976, pp. 14–15 and, for the real activities of such sheriffs, see Bellamy, 1985, Chap. 4.

- 69–70 These place-names set Robin Hood's activities firmly in the area of the Yorkshire Barnsdale. The Roman Road to the north (in this text erroneously called Watling Street, actually named Ermine Street, and later the Great North Road and the A1) runs north from Barnsdale Bar, crossing the River West at Wentbridge. *The Saylis* has been identified by Dobson and Taylor as a plot of ground overlooking the highway on the northern edge of Barnsdale (1976, pp. 22–23); see also Holt, 1989, pp. 83–85.

To counteract the prevalence of highway robbery, Edward I sponsored special measures in the *Statute of Winchester* (A.D. 1285): "It is likewise commanded that the highways from market towns to other market towns be widened where there are woods or hedges or ditches, so that there may be no ditch, underwood or bushes where one could hide with evil intent within two hundred feet of the road on one side or the other, provided that this statute extends not to oaks or to large trees so long as it is clear underneath" (Harry Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents 1189–1327*, [New York: Oxford University Press, 1975], III, 461).

- 79 *loke*. Child emends to "loked" for consistency of tense, but all the early sources have this dramatic present, which is retained here.
- 83 The knight is identified with the knight rescued by the outlaws from Nottingham and named as Sir Richard at the Lee (lines 1239–41). He comes from *Veryndale* (line 504), which is probably the hamlet of Lee in Wyresdale in Lancashire (see Child III, 50; Holt, 1989, p. 100).
- 103 Child inserts *a* before *gode yoman*, but the text is idiomatic Middle English as it stands.
- 108 Blyth and Doncaster are located on the main road south of the Barnsdale region.
- 113 *lodge* refers to a temporary shelter in a forest, usually used for hunting.

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- 125 For the cultural significance of hand washing before a meal, see the note to line 164 of *Robin Hood and the Potter*. See also line 921 in the *Gest*, and line 527 in *Adam Bell*.
- 128 *noumblies*. Organ meats such as liver, heart, and kidney, but also, in early usage, particularly for venison, loin cuts. See OED.
- 145 The source has *wened*, meaning "thought." Child emends to *wende* for sense, and this is accepted.
- 148 Child reads, with the source, *knyght*, but this is probably a printer's error.
- 164 This unusual statement is repeated in line 984, and is not varied by any of the early texts. It presumably means "No peny (of that) I will have."
- 168 Child inserts *a* before *pounde*, but this does not seem required either for sense or meter.
- 170 Child inserts *full* before *lowe*: this is in some other early texts, but seems unnecessary, especially with *full styll* in the previous line.
- 177 Child inserts *one* before *wonde*, as is usual in this collocation; it is found in other early texts and seems necessary for both sense and meter.
- 179 *knyght of force* refers to the practice of "distraint of arms," that is "requiring military tenants who held £20 per annum to receive knighthoods or pay a compensation, begun under Henry III, as early as 1224, and continued by Edward I" (Child III, 51). In a Parliamentary writ, dated 1278, Edward I ordered all sheriffs in England "to distrain [compel] without delay all those of your bailliwick who have lands worth twenty pounds a year, or one whole knight's fee worth twenty pounds a year, and hold of us in chief and ought to be knights but are not, to receive from us before Christmas or on that feast the arms of a knight" (Harry Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents 1189-1327* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1975], III, 413).
- 180 *Or ellis of yemany* refers to the requirement for people owning less than a pound or 20 shillings to provide yeoman such as archers for royal forces (Powicke, 1962, p. 197).

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- 204 Child inserts medial *e* in *kyndnesse*, presumably for metrical reasons, but this is not necessary.
- 212-13 In both lines Child prints *borth* as in the earliest text and some later ones; the *b* text has *berh* in 213. It seems that *borth* makes no sense in 213, and has been introduced into 212 by the juxtaposition of the doublet *sette* and *solle*. This text emends to *berh* in each line.
- 217 In order to provide bail for his son, who has killed a knight in a joust, Sir Richard has pledged his lands as security for a loan of 400 pounds from the abbot of St Mary's Abbey in York. The loan is due, but the knight has only ten shillings, and as a result he stands to lose his pledged property.
- 255 When Robin asks for security (*borowe*) for the loan of four hundred pounds, the knight replies that he has none other than *Our dere Lady*, which, because of his devotion to the Virgin, Robin readily accepts. Sagacious as usual, Child (III, 51-52) cites two parallels: one from the *Legenda aurea* in which a knight robs travellers, and the other from a Latin miracle of the Virgin in which a Christian borrows money from a Jewish money-lender and pledges the Virgin as his security. While the first example is a little remote — it is the knight in the *Gest* who is waylaid by robbers — the miracle of the Virgin is much more promising. When we consider (apparently unknown to Child) that the miracle entitled *The Merchant's Surety* exists in two Middle English versions dating from c. 1390 and c. 1450, the probability of influence is greatly increased. Although there are significant differences between the version in the *Gest* and the Middle English miracle, the opening plot elements and language are strikingly close: both the knight and the merchant love the Virgin; both are impoverished (due to differing circumstances); both are asked to pledge security for a loan; both offer the Virgin as their *borowe/borwe*; in both it is proclaimed that the Virgin will never *faile*; both swear that they will repay the loans on a certain day; and, finally, Little John and the Jew make sure that the money is *wel tolde/wel itold*. For the text of *The Merchant's Surety*, see pp. 44-49 in Beverly Boyd, *The Middle English Miracles of the Virgin* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1964). Another edition is in Carl Horstmann, ed., *The Minor Poems of the Vernon MS*, Early English Text Society, o.s. 98 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1892), 157-61.
- 273 The source reads *Much*, but other texts call him *litell Much* here, as does the source at lines 291 and 305. Conceivably this name came from confusion with

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"litill John," but the adjective seems to improve the meter before "Much" in these instances and is accepted here.

- 279 Robin Hood on several occasions provides "livery" for those he protects. This is more than clothing: "livery and maintenance" were ways of building up a band of retainers, and it was frequently regarded as a crime if a man did not have the right to do that (Bellamy, 1973, especially pp. 8-9). Thus giving livery in an honest cause is another of Robin Hood's "good" crimes.
- 281 *scarlet and grene*. While the text is in no doubt about these colors, and both are used of the outlaws' clothing in early ballads, it seems likely that the line was originally *scarlet in graine*, that is a particularly good form of scarlet dye. But that is no reason to emend. It is, however, a sign that green was not the original color of the outlaws' clothing, but one of the accreted details of the myth.
- 289-90 Here appears a minor instance of the "bad tradesman" motif, especially clear in *Robin Hood and the Potter*.
- 332 The *a* text is deficient from this point until line 473 and *b* is followed.
- 334 The spelling of *Litell Joke* changes to *Lytel Johan* as the *b* text is taken up as the source.
- 335 Some thirty miles north of Barnsdale, York, a fine walled city with a 2000-year history, is the location of the powerful St. Mary's Abbey, where the knight must repay his 400 pounds or lose his land.
- 345 The text has a line missing, and Child sensibly repeats the line that ends the previous stanza — a repetition which may have caused the omission in the first place. Such repetitions for emphasis are not uncommon in early ballads.
- 351-52 The meaning of the lines seems obscure, but there are no signs of editing in the early texts to suggest miscomprehension. Presumably the Prior means "(If it were me) I would rather pay the hundred pounds right away."
- 353-54 The Prior seems to have knowledge of the knight's military activities *ferre beyonde the see* in England's cause. In line 388 the knight confirms that he has just returned from abroad with his *meyne* or company of soldiers.

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- 354 Child inserts *is his* into this line, which in the text reads simply *In Englonde ryght*. The b text reads *In Englonde he is right* and the later f and g, like Child, have *is his right*. This suggest different ways of editing an original line reading simply *In Englonde ryght*, acceptable Middle English for *In England's cause*, which makes better sense both grammatically and in terms of the support the Prior is here giving the knight. There seems no ground for changing the original.
- 362 *Saint Rychere*. The source reads *Richard* but the rhyme clearly requires *Rychere*. It is not fully clear which saint is referred to. In a note on *Gamelyn*, line 137 (which reads *Rychere*), Skeat states that, among a number of minor St. Richards, this one, popular in outlaw oaths, is the thirteenth century St. Richard of Chichester, who was "a pattern of brotherly love" (1884, pp. 38-39). Rhyme itself seems sufficient reason to emend to *Rychere*.
- 371 *justyce*. Child inserts *kye*; the expanded title is also found in some other early texts, but there seems little need for the emendation in terms either of sense or meter.
- 388 The knight speaks as if he and his company have (as the Prior suspected in line 353) been abroad, perhaps on a military campaign or crusade. This was not indicated earlier, and seems contradicted by his apparent plans to go on crusade (lines 223-28). He was traveling south when he met the outlaws, see lines 107-08. The uncertainty may arise from combining different ballads.
- 389 With a line missing in all the texts, Child inserts a repetition from line 387, which seems sensible.
- 416 *Syr justyce*. The justice, or professional lawyer, is the agent of a powerful lord — the abbot in this case. Justices were an important part of the county court system, performing a variety of functions: "pleaders, attorneys, seigniorial bailiffs, and seneschals, as well as occasionally filling royal positions such as undersheriff, sheriff, and county clerk" (Robert C. Palmer, *The County Courts of Medieval England 1150-1350*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 89). When the lawyer says he is *holde with the abbor . . . Both with cloth and fee*, he is revealing that he has been hired by the abbey to render legal services for a fee or annual annuity (Palmer, pp. 95-96).

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- 425 Referring to the justice's being *holde with the abbot*, Kaeuper notes that "in the first half of the fourteenth century the practice by which lords retained the king's justices was more prevalent than it had been earlier or would be again" (1988, p. 180).
- 426 The phrase *cloth and fee* echoes the Latin formula *cum robis et foedis*, used to designate payment of legal services with both money and gifts of clothing. The abbot had retained the chief justice in order to help him bankrupt the knight. According to Child (III, 52) the practice of giving and receiving robes for such purposes was considered a conspiracy in the legal code of King Edward I, 1305–06; in another statute of King Edward III, dated 1346, justices were required to swear that they would accept robes and fees only from the king.
- 450 *call*: the rhyme word is missing in Child's source (*b* here) but is in other early texts and needs inserting.
- 465 The abbot is seeking to gain the land by "purchas," that is, by cash sale, not by inheritance. At lines 471–76 the knight resists this; it was an increasingly common form of land transfer in the period, and is at the basis of the conflict in *Gomelyn* (see note to line 14).
- 473 The *a* text is available from this line until 831, with a gap at 532–44.
- 484 Child notes "the knight would have given something for the use of the four hundred pounds had the abbot been civil, though under no obligation to pay interest" (III, 52).
- 489 The abbot, having failed to gain the land, asks the justice to repay his retainer, intended to facilitate this process.
- 493 The *a* text has only *Sir . . . n of lawe* and then has a gap until line 507; the text is supplied from *b*.
- 504 *Verydale*. See note to line 83.
- 527 The nock is a small v-shaped cut in the end of an arrow to fit the string. This cut can split, and a horn or metal cap prevents this. Silver would be unusually lavish.

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530-31 The *a* text is damaged in the second half of these two lines and then has a gap until line 545. The text is supplied from *b*.

537 *at Wentbrydge*. Child reads, with the earliest text, *But as he went at a brydge*: this is obviously an attempt to edit by a compositor who did not know Wentbridge (this is its first mention in the poem). Child includes this necessary emendation as a possible reading in his textual note, III, 79.

Wrestling was not, by the fourteenth century, considered an aristocratic sport. In the portrait of the Miller in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer observes of this "churl" that "at wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram" (line 548). In Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas — a burlesque of the popular romances and ballads of the day — the effeminate hero engages in both wrestling and archery. In *Gawelyn* the hero only wrestles when he has been effectively disinherited.

548 The prize for an ordinary wrestling match was a ram: in this contest, however, the victor wins a bull, a saddled horse, a pair of gloves, a gold ring, and a cask of wine. This may suggest an "art" or literary context for the *Gest*.

551 *ferre and frembde bested*. This appears to mean "set far (from home) and as a stranger." Dobson and Taylor translate as "And because he was a stranger and in the predicament of being a foreigner" (1976, p. 89).

558 *in fere*. Child emends the phrase to *free* for the sake of the rhyme, but this is very vague in meaning compared with *in fere*, and rhymes in the *Gest* are frequently imprecise.

582 Shooting at sticks stuck in the ground was the hardest challenge for any archer in the ballads; Little John split the stick each time.

588 *sawe I me*. Child adds *me* to the line to improve the rhyme; this is found in *b*, but later texts edit differently *That ever I did see*. Child follows the same practice in line 675 where there is a little more support in the early texts for *I me* at the end of the line. The resultant expression seems unusual — a reflexive use of *see* — but it is found in lines 400 and 736, so the emendation is accepted.

624 While it might seem tempting to emend the source to *Gyve me my dynere sone*, so improving both the rhyme and the meter, long lines and imprecise rhymes

are common in the *Gest*, and the text is best left unemended.

- 628 *Mi dyner gif thou me*. Though Child accepts the source *Mi dyner gif me*; this very short line is filled out uniformly with *thou* in other early texts and it seems more probable that *thou* was lost in a compositor's error rather than different texts hit on the same amplification, simple though it is.
- 650 *The while that he wold*. This is how Child emends the source's *The while he wole* for both meter and rhyme. Other early texts insert *tha* after *while*, which is accepted here on metrical grounds, but none has the past tense in *wolde*. Yet *wole* and *wolde* would make a very poor rhyme, and the loss of *d* is very easy: Child's reading is accepted.
- 675 *sawe / me*. Child's addition of *me* for rhyme is accepted; see note to line 588 for discussion.
- 701 Child inserts *they*, with other early texts, and though this is not grammatically essential, it seems a sensible emendation.
- 704 *hoar*. Hoar or gray, due to the absence of foliage or because of the gray lichen that attaches itself to aged tree trunks.
- 714 Child emends *sende* to *sendeth* to keep the tense consistent with the previous line, but this is not necessary in Middle English.
- 731 Child prints the source's *shryef*, but though this is a conceivable condensation of *shire-reeve*, it is most likely a compositor's error and is emended to *shyref*.
- 738 As line 752 reveals, the green hart, with his herd of seven score deer, is an ironic reference (perhaps subliminally mythic) to Robin Hood, the *myster-herte* and his men.
- 775 *roke*. Child emends the source's *to* to *roke*, with other early texts. This is not absolutely necessary grammatically, but *to him* would be a somewhat strained reading, and Child's emendation is accepted.
- 803 *thy best*. Child emends the source to *the beste*, presumably on grounds of sense and meter, but this seems unnecessary.

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- 810 Child inserts *by* before *day*, as do some early texts, presumably on metrical grounds, but this is not necessary.
- 822-24 Robin is waiting to be repaid the four hundred pounds loaned to the knight, Sir Richard. This is the one year anniversary of their agreement in line 315. Commercial interests have invaded the greenwood: Robin is acting like the avaricious abbot of St. Mary's and the Jewish money-lender in *The Merchant's Surety* (see note to line 255). The knight is late because he stopped to help the yeoman at the wrestling match. See also the note to line 939.
- 832 The *a* text is not available until line 1255, and *b* is followed.
- 835 such unketh gest. The source's reading does make sense, if with some awkwardness — "Look for the kind of unknown guest (we seek)." Other early texts read more simply "some strange." In printing *some unketh* Child uncharacteristically produces a hybrid reading that no one can have had and which can hardly have been an error for *sach unketh*. In the absence of any obvious emendation, the earliest source is retained here, as it does make sense.
- 842 See line 51 of *Robin Hood and the Monk* for a fuller instance of Little John's anger: it is clear there that Robin's commands have annoyed him.
- 849 *they*. The source has *he*, presumably an error, as the plural pronoun of line 848 is used again in line 851. Child's emendation is accepted.
- 856 The source has *Thor*, which Child accepts and then inserts *these* afterwards to make sense, as do some early texts. But the more probable error is to have misread initial *The* as an abbreviated *Thor*, and this change is made here. *The monkes have brought our pay* introduces a recurrent ironic joke, that the robbery of the monks is a repayment, sanctioned by Mary, of the money lent to the knight. The joke recurs in *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*, lines 57-58.
- 858 *b* reads *frese*, which Child prints, but in his collation suggests *leese*, meaning "let loose" or *dresse* meaning "get ready." The latter seems much more likely, fitting well with 860.
- 861 Child inserts *men* at the end of the line, but the noun is not needed and is not in the earliest texts.

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- 870 The syntax is colloquial: John instructs the outlaws to stop the crowd of travellers, and picks the leading monk as his own target.
- 921 For the custom of hand washing, see the note to line 164 of *Robin Hood and the Potter*. Other references occur in line 125 of the *Gest* and line 527 in *Adam Bell*.
- 930 *here, there* might seem a more obvious word in terms of sense, but there is no support for it in the early texts.
- 939 Again Robin is preoccupied with being repaid his loan to the knight. The emphasis on *pay, money, borowe, cofers, marke, peny, sylver, male, pounde*, and *doubled your cast* permeates the scene that follows, and casts Robin in the role of a concerned money-lender.
- 960 The source has *one*, but this is clearly an error for *dame* and needs emending; Child records the error as *name*.
- 984 See also line 164 for this idiom.
- 988 The source only has *eight*, but *hundred*, easily lost as the Roman numeral c, is obviously needed, and Child emends accordingly.
- 991 An ironic moment: the monk's fidelity depends on the outlaw's pretending to assume that Mary has meant him to carry money to Robin.
- 1012 The abbot is attempting to use a legal means to overturn the knight's victory in lines 493–96.
- 1018 *tale* is ironic: they have listened to the monk's *tale* in the previous stanza.
- 1048 The source reads *they mery meyne*: Child emends a notional *thy* to *his*, but the error is more probably based on an original reading of *the*, which is adopted here.
- 1069 This very long line is even longer in most sources, which insert *said the knyght* after *grefe*: Child accepts this. There are a number of long lines that identify a speaker (see note to line 41 of *Robin Hood and the Potter*), but they begin speeches. The knight has already been identified as the speaker and so *said the knyght* can be omitted here.

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- 1083 *selerer*. Child inserts *kye* before the noun; this is found in later texts, but seems unnecessary; see the similar insertion before *justyce* in line 371.
- 1127 Here and in several later instances (lines 1163, 1199, 1251) Child adds *e* to *proude*, presumably on metrical grounds; although the spelling *proude* does appear in the text, this and the other instances of the emendation seem unnecessary.
- 1131 Child inserts *he* after *And*; this is not in the other early texts (though two late ones have *they*) and does not seem needed, that here having full pronominal, not simply relative force.
- 1135 *burres*. Mounds or other prominences (usually artificial) marking the limits of a shooting range.
- 1158 Child inserts *ve* into *hede*, so the older form of the word (from OE *heafod*) can rhyme with *desceyved*. Rhyme is at times so imprecise in the *Gest* that the emendation appears unnecessary and no early texts seem to find it difficult: perhaps they read *desceyved* as having three syllables and so rhyming with *hede* perfectly, but see also note to line 1218.
- 1165 *a hour*. Child spells *about* and treats it like an adverb, but, as in *Robin Hood and the Potter* (see note to line 205) the source separates the letters into article and noun, and this makes sense in the action.
- 1166 Child emends the source's *they* to *he*, and while *they* could be taken to make sense, rather vaguely, and was accepted by some early texts, the change seems justified and has support in the other early texts.
- 1167 Gylberte with the White Hand seems to be Robin's near equal in the tournament, and this may be a version of the "shoot-off" which will in Scott lead to splitting the arrow (*Ivanhoe*, ch. 13), where Locksley's opponent is Hubert. But, as in line 1604, Gylberte is again mentioned in the same formulaic way, and this time the competition is in the forest, among the archers. He does not appear elsewhere.
- 1171 In line 595 *Reynolde* is the alias of Little John; here he is depicted as a separate character. Child prints in his Introduction to the *Gest* a ballad telling how Reynold joined the outlaws (III, 54). There was a *Reynoldys* in the comic list of

outlaw names found in the Wiltshire parliamentary rolls as early as 1432; a late fifteenth-century poem speaks of "bow Reynall and Robin Hode runnen at the glev," and in 1502 Robert Fabian's *Chronicle* speaks of a criminal arrested about Midsummer "which had renued many of Robin Hodes pageantes, which named himself Granelef" (for these references see Knight, 1994, Appendix, pp. 264-68). With such evidence of a Reynold Greenleaf as one of the extended band, the question is why Little John took on his name? Was there perhaps a ballad of how Reynold served the Sheriff, which was absorbed by the compiler of the *Gest*?

- 1181 The populace are, it seems, raising the hue and cry against Robin Hood, and in that case the town constables had to make an arrest (Bellamy, 1973, p. 93). See note to line 1713.
- 1210 *lovest*. Child inserts *d*, apparently so *lovedest* can retain the consistency of a past tense; but by line 1216 John is speaking in the present and the emendation seems unnecessary.
- 1218 Child does not insert *f* into *hede* for the purpose of a better rhyme with *lefte*, though most later texts emend the line to create a good rhyme. The earliest texts seem to overlook the problem, so emendation seems unnecessary. See also line 1158, where the problem likewise occurs; there Child does amend to *hede*.
- 1245 Child inserts *f* after *moche*, as do the later texts, and this seems required.
- 1254 *a* is available again until line 1395.
- 1258 St. Quentin is, according to the *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, a martyr who "preached at Amiens where the probably fictitious prefect Rictiovarus arrested and interrogated him, finally killing him by a series of fearsome tortures." Perhaps it is fitting that Sir Richard swear by St. Quentin that he will protect Robin Hood and thus save him from the sort of arrest and torture that the saint suffered.
- 1297 The source reads *wyl not wil* as Child has it.
- 1317 The source reads *fayles* which would be a sharp change of tense; all but the two earliest sources vary it, and Child's emendation to *fayled* is accepted.

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- 1323 Hawking is an aristocratic pastime, and the knight would not be fully armed; there is a supposition of the sheriff's improper behavior in his capture.
- 1324 Child inserts *his* before *haeker*, apparently on metrical grounds; the earliest text lacks *his*, and the emendation seems unnecessary.
- 1352-53 These two lines are left blank by Child. Copland offers "The proude shiriffe," then sayd she, which completes well the stanza 1349-52, but he then offers two new and weak lines in place of 1354-56: "He is not yet passed thre myles, / You may them overtake." It seems best to produce a new line as 1353 based on repetition (see line 345).
- 1392 Child inserts *e* on the end of *bright*, presumably on metrical grounds, but this seems unnecessary.
- 1395 The *a* text is not available for the rest of the poem and *b* is followed.
- 1402 The source has *hoode* which does not make sense, unless the knight had a hood over his head — but at line 1328 the knight was merely said to be bound. None of the other early texts seem to see any problem, but Child's emendation to *bonde* is accepted.
- 1412 Three Edwards reigned in succession from 1272 to 1377: Edward I, 1272-1307; Edward II, 1307-27; Edward III, 1327-77. Joseph Hunter noted that Edward II had in 1324 a "valet de chambre" with the name of Robin Hood, though there was no indication that he had been in trouble with the law (pp. 35-38). Holt discusses the connection with some scepticism, but also feels that some of the events in the seventh and eighth fits had a basis in historical fact (1989, pp. 155-56). He notes that after Edward II's execution of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, in 1322, the earl's supporters committed wide-spread acts of vengeance, including the pillaging of the king's deer in the royal forests, and that as in the *Gest*, Edward II himself travelled to the area to investigate these disturbances. Knight has suggested that Edward IV, who may best fit the description *our comly kyng* (also in lines 1457, 1513, 1549, 1637, 1727), is referred to, as his period of rule (1461-83) is not inconsistent with the argument that the *Gest* is composed much later than has usually been thought (1994, pp. 46-48). We may, however, be on firmer ground in now identifying the king in fits seven and eight as Edward III, because Laurence Minot refers to him as *Edward, ouare cumly king* in line 1 of *Poem IV*, which was composed

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about 1339 to commemorate Edward III's invasion of France at the beginning of the Hundred Years War (Richard Osberg, ed., *The Poems of Laurence Minot, 1333–1352*, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996).

- 1425 The source reads *the passe of Lancashire* which makes no sense. Some of the later texts read *compasse*, which is very unlikely to be an editorial emendation because of its inherent complexity, and is probably the original reading.
- 1427 Ritson, relying on Camden's *Britannia*, suggested Plumpton Park was "upon the banks of the Penterill in Cumberland" (1795, p. xxv), and Child (III, 54–55) agreed, though noting that Hunter, "citing no authority" said it was part of the forest of Knaresborough in Yorkshire. Dobson and Taylor follow Hunter, though they include "possibly" in their note (1976, p. 105) and locate it in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Holt (1989, p. 101) argues for Plumpton Wood in Lancaster, near the king's demesne wood of Myerscough. However, it seems clear that the reference is to part of Inglewood Forest near Carlisle, providing an interesting connection with Andrew of Wyntoun's early location of Robin and Little John there. In her edition of *The Awntyrs of Arthur*, Helen Phillips notes that "Plumptoun Laund . . . was an area of grassland within the forest (walled in between 1332–35), within which was Plumpton Hay, a fenced park" (1988, p. 8). Plumpton is mentioned again in *Robin Hood's Fishing*, lines 65 and 71, possibly there a reference to the *Gest* as Dobson and Taylor suggest (1976, p. 181).
- 1429 Forest law. Royal laws regulating the use of forests can be traced back to the legal codes of Ine (A.D. 688–94), Alfred (871–99), and Cnut (1020–23). In the latter, "everyone is to avoid trespassing on my hunting, wherever I wish to have it preserved, on pain of full fine" (Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *English Historical Documents c. 500–1042* [London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955], I, 430). After the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror "gathered the woods and hunting preserves of the Saxon kings into a jurisdiction under the forest law he brought from Normandy and added new forests to that core" (Charles R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979, p. 150). It is estimated that one-fourth of the area of England was designated royal forest, including entire shires (Huntingdonshire). In his "Coronation Charter," dated 1100, William's youngest son, Henry I, reminded the kingdom that "I have retained the forests in my own hands as my father did before me" (David C. Douglas and George Greenaway, eds., *English Historical Documents 1042–1189* [London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968], II, 402). King

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Stephen made a similar claim in 1136 (Douglas and Greenaway, eds., *English Historical Documents 1042-1189*, vol. II, 403). In the *Assize of the Forest* (1184), Henry II set forth the first piece of legislation devoted exclusively to the royal forest. It begins by forbidding "that anyone shall transgress against him in regard to his hunting-rights or his forests in any respect." If anyone is convicted of offending his forests, "he wills that full justice be exacted from the offender." To oversee the protection of the forests, the king instructed the sheriff in each shire to appoint twelve knights to guard his venison (red deer, fallow deer, and roe deer) and vert (wood). Baronial discontent with forest law reached its peak in the years leading up to *Magna Carta* (1215). In the "Articles of the Barons," the barons demanded that King John amend the "wicked customs connected with forests and with foresters and warrens and sheriffs and river-banks . . ." (Harry Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents 1189-1327* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1975], III, 314). These calls for reform appeared in *Magna Carta* itself (p. 321), were later omitted (p. 331), and were reissued in expanded form in *The Charter of the Forest* in 1217 (p. 337). Item ten reads: "No one shall henceforth lose life or limb because of our venison" (p. 339). And item fifteen: "All who . . . have been outlawed for a forest offence only shall be released from their outlawry without legal proceedings . . ." (p. 340). But the harsh penalties continued. In the *Statute of Winchester* of 1275, Edward I ordered that if anyone is convicted of wrongdoing in the parks or preserves, the plaintiff "shall be awarded appropriate and heavy damages according to the nature of the offense and three years imprisonment." If the accused cannot pay the fine, "he shall abjure the realm," and, if he takes flight and ignores the lawful inquest, "let him be outlawed" (p. 403).

- 1442 *my honde*. Child inserts with before this phrase; this does appear in the later texts but is not needed: *my honde* is an idiomatic Middle English instrumental phrase.
- 1454 *ball in his hode*. The phrase refers to the head, and appears to have an ironic, even macabre, reference to games in which the ball was originally a human head.
- 1473 The sources all have *ledesman*, which, influenced by *lede* in line 1474, misses the play on a religious disguise continued in *bedesman*.

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- 1481 *hastly*. Child spells *hastely*, presumably for metrical reasons, but this is not necessary; the same occurs in lines 1565 and 1713.
- 1506 The second and fourth lines of this stanza are identical in the earlier texts. Child thought this was an error and supplied a new fourth line (*Other shyf have not we*). But such repetitions are not uncommon in this kind of text, and this statement before the king is a suitable occasion for such an emphatic celebration of the greenwood ethos.
- 1512 *saynt*. Child adds an *e*, presumably for metrical reasons, but this is not necessary.
- 1524 *I vouch it halfe on the*. The source's reading makes good sense: the "abbot" says he would split his money with the outlaws, and Robin acts accordingly. Child's emendation to *I wolde vouch it safe on the*, while intelligent, is unnecessary.
- 1534 The king, in disguise, presents his royal image in the form of a seal, which is both in itself revered and the instrument of recognition. The sense of the power of the king's presence and gaze is realized in the story.
- 1537 *targe*. According to the OED this is "a name applied in the reigns of the first three Edwards to the King's private or privy seal (perhaps bearing a shield as its device)."
- 1645 In a little-noted correction in a later volume (V, 297), Child inserts *to* before *ourkyng* and repunctuates to change speakers: now Robin asks mercy from the king. This is the reading of Copland and White, the later texts. It is also necessary to change *your* to *this* so the king does not seem to possess the *trystryng-tre*. It seems much more likely that the early source is correct and that the king-abbot is still theatrically playing his part — to which Robin responds by asking mercy in turn. Dobson and Taylor retain the original reading, as here.
- 1663 The idea of Robin holding an alternative lordship, with his own retinue, is clear.
- 1666 *come*. Child inserts *wylf* before the verb, but although this is the construction in line 1661 it is only in the later texts here, and is not needed.
- 1668 The gap between *fitts* is not as clear as that in earlier instances. Previous *fitts* have definite breaks, although *fitts* five, six, and seven are all rather short. This

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break appears to have been inserted editorially.

- 1681–82 The king adopts Robin's green livery in place of religious black. This acknowledges forest values, at least in play. Hall records Henry VIII and his courtiers dressing in green to pay a surprise visit to the queen and her ladies (Knight, 1994, pp. 105–10).
- 1683 *had so, iwyx.* Child emends to "also i-wys." This appears credible, but a sharper sense is produced if the error is assumed to be in the next line with *had* repeated from line 1683 instead of *had* ("hood"). The point of the passage is that the king's men are changing their black cowls for green hoods and Child's emendation obscures this. So line 1683 is retained as in the original and in line 1684 *had* is emended to *hode*.
- 1689 *Theyr bowes bente, and.* For no clear reason Child accepts the later texts' apparent editing of the source to *They bente theyr bower*: this loses the condensed force of the original as well as its sprightly internal rhyme.
- 1695 *plucke buffer.* According to Dobson and Taylor (1976, p. 110), "An archery competition with the forfeit of receiving a 'pluck' or knock for missing the target." Here this seems to have been extended to receiving a blow for losing a bout and so seems a euphemism of more violent encounters with the bow. See Introduction to *Robyn and Gandelyn*, p. 228. Child notes that *plucke-buffer* is played in the romance of *Richard Coer de Lion* and in *The Turke and Gowin* (III, 55).
- 1713 Compare the action of *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham* (p. 507), which also shows townspeople in fear of the outlaw. Adam Bell has a similar scene, where the townspeople capture the hero William of Cloudesley, lines 141–48. This, like the hue and cry in line 1181, seems a sharp form of opposition between forest and urban values, and suggests a stronger sociopolitical conflict than the usual notion of Robin Hood as a universal hero.
- 1731 *he had spent.* The source only has *spent* and Child inserts *he had*, which is found in the later texts. While in many cases they seem to amplify a condensed Middle English usage, here their addition appears required.
- 1742 *Fall ferre.* Child accepts the reading *Fall fayre* which is in a Douce fragment and the later texts, but it makes better sense to accept the earlier reading: Robin is

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impressed by the distance these young men can shoot.

- 1747 Child prints *compted* as an emendation of the source's *committid*; the logic of his emendation is correct, but the original must have been *comred*, which gives rise both to *committed* and, in the later texts, *commended*.
- 1767 To walk barefoot with wool next to the skin implies penance rather than poverty. Robin is suggesting to the king a pilgrimage to the chapel in Barnsdale, but also implies his rejection of the luxuries of court life.
- 1795 Child inserts *dere* from a Douce fragment, but it seems unnecessary: though "my master dear" is a common enough phrase in general, there is little sentiment of this kind in the *Gest*.
- 1803 *Kyrkely*. The place of Robin's death is known either as Kirklee (Church Lee) or Kirklees/Kyrklyes (see *The Death of Robin Hood*, where it is for the most part Kirkly and Churchlee and also Kirklys and Churchlees). There was a priory of this name near Wakefield in West Yorkshire; for a discussion of the location, see Dobson and Taylor, 1976, pp. 19–20. Child emends the source's *Kyrkely* to *Kyrkesly* at line 1803 and kept it as *Kyrkesly* at line 1815. The reverse is necessary: it appears that he was for once mistaken about a fact, as he refers to the site in his Introduction as "Kyrkesly or Kirklees" (III, 50).
- 1806 *Syr Roger* is presumably the same figure as Red Roger, Robin Hood's assailant in one version of *The Death of Robin Hood*, see line 97; he is referred to in the Sloane *Life*, which presumably draws on the *Gest* here as elsewhere.
- Donkesly*. Line 1817 refers to Doncaster. *Donkesly* could perhaps be an erroneous compound of Doncaster and Kirklees.



Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne

Introduction

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne only survives in the folio manuscript acquired by Thomas Percy (British Library Add MSS 27879), which is dated in the mid seventeenth century and clearly is a collection of pre-existing materials; this is the only one of the six Robin Hood ballads in the manuscript that Percy printed in his *Reliques* of 1765. He gave it the title used here, though in other more recent versions of the title Robin's opponent is called Sir Guy. This honorific is used frequently in the text, but Percy may have omitted it, as Child does, from the ballad's title because the text states that he and Robin are both yeoman (line 87), and so the knightly title seems anomalous, though Percy did add a note that "Sir" was used outside the knightly class (1765, p. 86). He edited the manuscript version considerably for meter and comprehension, though in his fourth edition he reinstated some of the original readings; Ritson also edited the text fairly heavily for his 1795 collection.

Child prints this text first after the *Gest*, presumably because of the evident antiquity of the story: *Sir Guy* is mentioned in Dunbar's poem *Of Sir Thomas Norry*, to be dated by the early sixteenth century, but before that a similar plot is told in a play found in a manuscript written about 1475 (see pp. 281-84 in this edition). Because Child assumed the plays were based on ballads, this might have led him to assume a date for the ballad even earlier than *Robin Hood and the Monk*, hence his ordering of the texts. This assumption would seem questionable: although the difference between play and ballad is not so great in this instance as in that of the *Potter* story, it still seems that they are generic variants of the same theme, and one cannot be placed before the other. But the ballad may well date from the fifteenth century in something very much like its present form, and as Fowler remarks it "may well be one of the earliest of all the Robin Hood ballads" (1980, p. 1782).

In making his judgment on date, Child might have been influenced by Percy's comment that this ballad bore "marks of much greater antiquity than any of the common popular songs on this subject" (1765, p. 124), though *Robin Hood and the Monk* was apparently unknown to Percy. Child's early location of the ballad may also be influenced by what seem to be quite ancient motifs in the ballad, notably Guy's horse-hide and head, which seems more like a ritual costume than a disguise, and also by what Dobson and Taylor call the ballad's "exceptionally violent tone" (1976,

p. 141). When Robin defaces this enemy's head and places it on his bow's end, both ritual and savagery seem to be invoked. The importance of the "mythic" Robin Hood is a matter for debate, but if that interpretation has any force, this ballad is one of its locations. The idea of a conflict between a true and a false forester (who has some resonances of the devil in Chaucer's *Friar's Tale*), the hero's unflinching ferocity against his enemies, his understanding of their rituals (including his appropriation of their own ritual costume), his capacity to be polymorphous — at the end, both false Guy and a quasi-priest — his insistence on facing this enemy himself even at the expense of his own fellowship, these are all elements which create a slightly different Robin (also found in the equally fierce *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham*), more emphatic, more inspired, more like the mythic international hero than the inherently human friend to many found in other early texts.

The ballad is set in the Yorkshire Barnsdale area (line 181) and Gisborne, wherever precisely it may be, is in the same region (see note to line 138). This makes it seem odd that the outlaw's major enemy is the Sheriff of Nottingham. Though sheriffs did have some duty to pursue felons outside their precincts, this is too far for credibility, and this ballad, early though its origins are, must represent to some extent a conflation — oral or literary — of the differently located Robin Hood myths, a process taken farther in the *Gest*. In the suggestion that the sheriff has employed Sir Guy (lines 99–100 and 187–90), we may well see a conscious articulation of two separate enemies, and at least one element of rationalization within this emotively intense text.

The power of this ballad also derives from its speed and its capacity to exploit the elisions and emphases of the ballad form. Though these qualities have been noted — Dobson and Taylor speak of its "concisely dramatic qualities" (1976, p. 141) — the extent of the significance of these features has not been fully appreciated by most commentators, more meshed in the tradition of realist humanism than aware of what Gray calls "the inherently expressionist form" of ballads (1984, p. 16). One example of this misinterpretation is the problem allegedly caused by the fact that Robin, having argued with John and set off on his own, cannot know that John has been seized by the sheriff — and yet goes straight to rescue him. Child thinks this shows "considerable derangement of the story" (III, 90), and Dobson and Taylor agree (1976, pp. 140–41). Yet this sort of instinctive certainty is just what empowers the hero of romance: he is led to his heroic encounter by fortune and self-confidence. Narrative elisions of this dramatic kind are common enough throughout the ballads — *Sir Patrick Spens* being a famous example.

A more striking example of this failure to "read" the genre of the poem lies in the assumption by commentators that there is a substantial sequence missing in the early stanzas. While it is evident that *Robin Hood and the Monk* has lost a leaf (and so

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne

about 48 lines) after line 120, and the Percy Folio has some pages torn in half, there is in fact no need to assume, as rationalists requiring the comfort of a blow-by-blow narrative have done, that there is anything missing between lines 6 and 7 of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. Rapid moving the text certainly is — but then John says in line 13 that *sweavens are swift*, and the ballads characteristically slip very quickly into their action, often giving the impression that the audiences knew quite well who these people were and what they did, so that fussier introductions would be superfluous; compare the opening of *Robin Hood and the Monk*, which has a very cursory introduction to the characters; *Adam Bell* is another case.

In terms of style this ballad is not unlike *Robin Hood and the Monk*: it has a relatively consistent metrical pattern and a recurrent abcb rhyme (with one six-line stanza, lines 21–27), occasional use of the abab pattern (lines 26–30, 35–38, 43–46, 59–62), and relatively few poor rhymes (lines 6/8, 36/8, 48/50, 88/90, 100/02, 112/14). Compared with *Robin Hood and the Potter* the language of the ballad is in general sure-footed, lacking the element of line-filler and cliché common to the popular ballad as it develops. This vigorous language emphasizes the effect of the pace and rapid variation of the narrative, the poetic drive which is the central instrument of this fierce and powerful ballad, creating powerfully its dramatic story and deepening the thematic impact of its "mysterious story" (Holt, 1989, p. 30).

In a number of ways it summarizes major themes that are to work strongly in the myth right through to the present. The argument between Little John and Robin that makes them separate leaves them both vulnerable: in this respect the poem is a partner piece to *Robin Hood and the Monk*. Robin's opponent is a personal enemy, with a vengeful, almost diabolic character, and his humiliation and destruction are an essential part of the story. The whole encounter has elements of natural myth about it, suggested rather than expressed. The final triumph is dependent not only on courage and fidelity among the outlaws but also on some supreme piece of trickery that stamps their spirit as well as their success on the story. This ballad also creates vividly the essential agon versus the villain. In nineteenth-century tradition the name of Sir Guy had just the right ring for a melodramatic villain, but the mixture of menace and mystery borne by Robin Hood's central opponent is originally and splendidly created in this strong ballad, which, by combining a dramatic fight with a bold rescue, remains at the core of the whole myth.



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Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne

When shawes beene sheene and shradds full fayre,¹
And levees both large and longe,
Itt is merry, walking in the fayre forrest,
To heare the small birds singe.

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| | The woodweele sang, and wold not cease,
Amongst the leaves a lyne.
"And it is by two wight yeoman,
By deare God, that I meane. | woodwall (golden oriole)
<i>in a row</i>
standy |
| 10 | "Me thought they did mee beate and binde,
And tooke my bow mee froe;
If I bee Robin a-live in this lande,
Ile be wrocken on both them towes." | <i>from me</i>
<i>revenged; two</i> |
| 15 | "Sweavens are swift, master," quoth John,
"As the wind that blowes ore a hill,
For if itt be never soe lowde this night,
To-morrow it may be still." | Dreams
<i>over</i>
<i>loud</i> |
| 20 | "Buske yee, bowne yee, my merry men all,
For John shall goe with mee,
For ile goe seeke yond wight yeomen
In greenwood where the bee." | <i>Prepare you, get ready</i>
<i>they</i> |
| | The cast on their gowne of greene,
A shooting gone are they,
Untill they came to the merry greenwood,
Where they had gladdest bee: | <i>They put on</i> |

When woods are bright, and branches full fair

Early Ballads and Tales

- 25 There were the ware of wight yeoman,
His body leaned to a tree.

A sword and a dagger he wore by his side,
Had beene many a mans bane,
And he was cladd in his capull-hyde,
Topp and tayle and mayne.
- they were aware
against a tree

murderer
horse-side
- 30
- "Stand you still, master," quoth Little John,
"Under this trusty tree,
And I will goe to yond wight yeoman,
To know his meaning trulyc."
- tryting tree
- 35 "A, John, by me thou seitts noe store,
And that's a farley thinge;
How off send I my men beffore,
And tarry myselfe behinde?
- amazing
- 40 "It is noe cunning a knave to ken,
And a man but heare him speake;
And iit were not for bursting of my bowe,
John, I wold thy head breakc."
- takes no skill to know a knave
if
damaging
- 45 But often words they breeden bale;
That parted Robin and John;
John is gone to Barnesdale,
The gates he knowes eche one.
- coase anger
ways
- 50 And when hee came to Barnesdale,
Great heaviness there hee hadd;
He found two of his owne fellowes
Were slaine both in a slade.
- forest glade
- 55 And Scarlett a foote flyinge was,
Over stockes and stone,
For the sherriff with seven score men
Fast after him is gone.
- on foot
stumps

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne

- 55 "Yett one shoote lie shoote," sayes Little John,
"With Crist his might and mayne;
lie make yond fellow that flyes soe fast
To be both glad and faine."
shot I'll shoot
happy
- 60 John bent up a good yeiwe bow,
And fetteled him to shoote;
The bow was made of a tender bouge,
And fell downe to his foote.
yew
prepared
- 65 "Woe worth thee, wicked wood," sayd Little John,
"That ere thou grew on a tree!
For this day thou art my bale,
My boote when thou shold bee!"
Misery come to you
trouble
help
- 70 This shoote it was but looselye shott,
The arrowe flew in vaine,
And it mett one of the sheriffes men:
Good William a Trent was slaine.
inaccurately
- It had beene better for William a Trent
To hange upon a gallowe
Then for to lye in the greenwoode,
There slaine with an arrowe.
- 75 And it is sayd, when men be mett,
Six can doe more then three:
And they have tane Little John,
And bound him fast to a tree.
taken
firmly
- 80 "Thou shalt be drawnen by dale and downe,"
quoth the sheriffe,
"And hanged bye on a hill."
"But thou may fayle," quoth Little John,
"If itt be Christys owne will."
dragged by a horse
- Let us leave talking of Little John,
For hee is bound fast to a tree,

Early Ballads and Tales

85 And talke of Guy and Robin Hood,
In the green wood where they bee.

How these two yeomen together they mett,
Under the leaves of lyne,
To see what marchandise they made
Even at that same time.

lyne (trees in general)
business

90 "Good Morrow, good fellow," quoth Sir Guy;
"Good Morrow, good fellow," quoth hee,
"Methinkes by this bow thou beares in thy hand,
A good archer thou seems to be."

95 "I am wilfull of my way," quoth Sir Guye,
"And of my morning tyde."
"Ile lead thee through the wood," quoth Robin,
"Good fellow, Ile be thy guide."

uncertain
time

100 "I seeke an outlaw," quoth Sir Guye,
"Men call him Robin Hood;
I had rather meet with him upon a day,
Then forty pound of golde."

105 "If you tow mett, ill wold be scene whether were better
Afore yee did part awaye;
Let us some other pastime find,
Good fellow, I thee pray.

If you two met; which

110 "Let us some other masteryes make,
And wee will walke in the woods even;
Wee may chance meet with Robin Hood
Att some unsett steven."

competitive feats of skill

unexpected occasion

They cutt them downe the summer shroggs
Which grew both under a bryar,
And sett them three score rood in twinn,
To shoote the prickes full neare.

bushes

330 yards apart

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne

115 "Leade on, good fellow," sayd Sir Guye,
"Lead on, I doe bidd thee."
"Nay, by my faith," quoth Robin Hood,
"The leader thou shalt bee."

120 The first good shoot that Robin ledd
Did not shooe an inch the pricke froe;
Guy was an archer good enoughe,
But he cold neere shooe soe.

center of the target

125 The second shooe Sir Guy shott,
He shott within the garlande;
But Robin Hoode shott it better than hee,
For he clove the good pricke-wande.

ring suspended on stick

stick that holds up ring

130 "Gods blessing on thy heart!" sayes Guye,
"Goode fellow, thy shooting is goode.
For an thy hart be as good as thy hands,
Thou were better then Robin Hood.

if; heart

135 "Tell me thy name, good fellow," quoth Guy.
"Under the leaves of lyne."
"Nay, by my faith," quoth good Robin,
"Till thou have told me thine."

140 "I dwell by dale and downe," quoth Guye,
"And I have done many a curst turne;
And he that calleth me by my right name
Calles me Guye of good Gysborne."

cursed deed

145 "My dwelling is in the wood," sayes Robin,
"By thee I set right nought;
My name is Robin Hood of Barnesdale,
A fellow thou has long sought."

150 He that had neither beene a kith nor kin
Might have seene a full fayre sight,
To see how together these yeomen went,
With blades both browne and bright.

friends or relatives

Bloodstained

Early Ballads and Tales

- To have seen how these yeomen together fought,
 Two howers of a summers day; hours
 Itt was neither Guy nor Robin Hood
 150 That fettled them to flye away. prepared
- Robin was reachles on a roote,
 And stumbled at that tyde, careless
 And Guy was quicke and nimble with-all,
 And hitt him ore the left side. on
- 155 "Ah, deere Lady!" sayd Robin Hoode,
 "Thou art both mother and may! Virgin Mary
 I thinke it was never mans destynye
 To dye before his day." maiden
- Robin thought on Our Lady deere,
 160 And soone leapt up againe,
 And thus he came with an awkwarde stroke; backhanded
 Good Sir Guy hee has slayne.
- He tooke Sir Guys head by the hayre,
 And sticked itt on his bowes end; hair
 165 "Thou hast beene traytor all thy liffe,
 Which thing must have an ende."
- Robin pulled forth an Irish kniffe,
 And nicked Sir Guy in the face,
 That hee was never on a woman borne
 170 Cold tell who Sir Guye was. Could
- Saies, "Lye there, lye there, good Sir Guye,
 And with me be not wrothe; angry
 If thou have had the worse stroakes at my hand,
 Thou shalt have the better cloathe."
- 175 Robin did his gowne of greene, took off
 On Sir Guye it throwe;
 And hee put on that capull-hyde, Threw it over Guy's body
 That cladd him topp to toe. horse-hide

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne

180 "The bowe, the arrowes, and little horne,
And with me now Ile beare;
For now I will goe to Barnsdale,
To see how my men doe fare."

185 Robin sett Guyes horne to his mouth,
A lowd blast in it he did blow;
That heheard the sheriffe of Nottingham,
As he leaned under a lowe.

steed; hill

190 "Hearken! hearken!" sayd the sheriffe,
"I heard noe tydings but good,
For yonder I heare Sir Guyes horne blowe,
For he hath slaine Robin Hood.

195 "For yonder I heare Sir Guyes horne blow,
Itt blowes soe well in tyde,
For yonder comes that wight yeoman,
Cladd in his capull-hyde.

time

200 "Come hither, thou good Sir Guy,
Aske of mee what thou wilt have."
"Ile none of thy gold," sayes Robin Hood,
"Nor Ile none of itt have."

205 "But now I have slaine the master," he sayd,
"Let me goe strike the knave;
This is all the reward I aske,
Nor noe other will I have."

servant (*i.e.*, Little John)

210 "Thou art a madman," said the shiriffe,
"Thou sholdest have had a knights fee;
Seeing thy asking bee soe badd,
Well granted it shall be."

fief (land-holding)

But Little John heard his master speake,
Well he knew that was his steven;
"Now shall I be loser," quoth Little John,
"With Christs might in heaven."

voice
set loose

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But Robin hee hyed him towards Little John,
Hee thought hee wold loose him belive;
The sherrife and all his companye
Fast after him did drive.

*hastened
at once*

- 215 "Stand abacke! stand abacke!" sayd Robin;
"Why draw you mee soe neere?
Itt was never the use in our countreye
One's shrift another shold heere."

confession

- 220 But Robin pulled forth an Irysh kniffe,
And losed John hand and foote.
And gave him Sir Guyes bow in his hand,
And bade it be his boote.

benefit

- 225 But John tooke Guyes bow in his hand
His arrowes were rawstye by the roote;
The sherrife saw Little John draw a bow
And fettle him to shoothe.

rusty with blood at their tips

prepare

- 230 Towards his house in Nottingam
He fled full fast away,
And soe did all his companye,
Not one behind did stay.

But he cold neither soe fast goe,
Nor away soe fast runn.
But Little John, with an arrow broade,
Did cleave his heart in twinn.

could

twain



Notes

- 1 MS: *shales*. Child emends to *shawes*, a word frequently used to set the early summer scene for a Robin Hood ballad. It is not an obvious error for a scribe to make, but no other likely emendation offers itself.
- 4 MS: *singe*. Child emends to *songe* for the sake of rhyme, but this seems unnecessary in the context of the fairly relaxed practices of ballad rhyming.
- 5 MS: *woodweete*. Child emends to *woodweele*, the woodwall or golden oriole; this may have become confused with bird names like godwit and peewit.
- 7 Editors have felt that although there is no break in the manuscript a substantial piece of narrative is missing. They feel that in the missing stanzas Robin has introduced and described a bad dream. Child locates the gap after line 8, and Dobson and Taylor agree. However, the reason they can reconstruct the notionally missing lines is that (unlike the case in *Robin Hood and the Monk* after line 120) there is no information missing from the poem. In view of the characteristic "leaping and lingering" style of ballads, and the way in which many Robin Hood adventures begin very rapidly after a short nature introduction, there seems in fact no reason other than the fixed ideas of realist-minded scholars to assume a gap here. The text works as it stands in the manuscript.
- 13 Little John tries to reassure Robin that since dreams are fleeting they do not need to be taken seriously. Dream lore is a popular theme in Middle English poetry; see Chaucer's Nun's Priest's Tale, lines 2907–3156; *The House of Fame*, 1–52; and *The Romaunt of the Rose*, lines 1–20. Like Perelote in the Nun's Priest's Tale, Little John is giving Robin bad advice.
- 21 This is a six-line stanza, which can also be identified in several other early texts, e.g., *Adam Bell*, lines 358–63, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, lines 208–13, 254–59, 280–85, *Robin Hood and the Monk*, lines 137–42, as well as several stanzas in the short *Robin and Gandeleyn*.
- 25 Child inserts *a* between *of* and *wight*, but these early ballads are often very clipped in their utterance (as in line 28), and there is no convincing case for the emendation.

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- 32 *trusty tree*. Presumably a corruption of the phrase "trysting tree." It also appears as "trystyll" (trestle or platform) tree — presumably suitable for speeches or even hangings. The three notions of *tryst*, *trust*, and *trestle* all embody central concepts of the outlaw band, with its meetings, fidelity, and occasional addresses by the leader.
- 45 *Bamsdale*. Child emends to *Bamesdale*, but this seems a freely varying spelling at this time.
- 49 Child omits *owne*.
- 59 *yeiwe*. Child reads the manuscript, damaged here, as *veiwe* and so, with less certainty, do Dobson and Taylor (1976, p. 142). Under ultra-violet light the word appears to be, as might be expected, *yeiwe*.
- 70 Dobson and Taylor comment "The confusion of sense in this stanza makes it probable that the text hereabouts is corrupt" (1976, p. 142); it is not clear what they mean by confusion. The action seems straightforward: because John's bow breaks, his inaccurate (and so "vaine," yet still fatal) shot misses the sheriff and hits one of his men.
- 76 Child reports this line as mostly illegible, but ultra violet light supports his hypothetical reading.
- 79 This is a long line; Percy remarks that *quoth the sheriff* has probably been added to clarify matters (*Reliques*, 1765, p. 80), yet these opening lines of speech with a speaker added recur in the ballads (see *Gest*, lines 309, 441, 629, 757, 1001, *Potter*, lines 21, 41, 81, 222, 226), and there seem no good grounds to emend; see line 103 below.
- 88 *lyne*. The lime tree is a linden, a tree that is particularly fragrant when in bloom. The term is used often for trees in general, however.
- 91 Guy speaks the first line and Robin the next three.
- 103 Guy pretends to be another forester, who also seeks Robin Hood; Little John uses the same maneuver in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, lines 162-82.
- 109 MS: *mee*. Ritson, Gutch, and Child emend to *meet*.

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- 129 MS: *ow: an*, meaning "if" seems a probable emendation.
- 138 *Gysborne*. Child says that "Gisburne is in the West Riding of Yorkshire, on the borders of Lancashire, seven miles from Clitheroe" (III, 91), but Bellamy suggests that Guy is connected with the village of "Guisborough in the North Riding (known in the middle ages as Giseburne)" (1985, pp. 34-35).
- 151 MS: *reachles*. Child emends to *reacheler*, presumably on metrical grounds, but this is unnecessary.
- 161 Percy emends to "backward," but "award" meaning "back-handed," here spelled *awkande*, is common in Middle English.
- 167 *Irish kniffe*. Presumably a form of hunting knife.
- 175-76 MS: *Robin did on his gowne of green, / On Syr Guye hee did it throwe*. This does not make sense. Child emends *on* in line 175 to *off*, but this is still very awkward. It is better to assume that having inserted *on* erroneously in line 175 (because of the collocation with *did* in the context of clothing), the scribe then tried to patch line 176 by adding "hee did it." If these notional insertions are omitted, the text has the characteristically condensed tone of the early ballad.
- 181 MS: *Barnsdale*. As in line 45, Child inserts *e* unnecessarily.
- 193 *wighr*. The MS has "wighty," which Child accepts, but this is probably a confusion of the true reading *wighr* and "mighty."
- 205 Child inserts *hath* before MS *beene*. The manuscript reading is certainly unacceptable, but a better emendation would be *bee*, which a scribe could easily misread as a plural.
- 218 *shrift*. Robin continues the suggestion that he is to kill Little John and momentarily plays the priest, who hears the dying man's last words, as well as the executioner.
- 234 Percy euphemized the action by changing the line to "He shott him into the backe'-syde."

The Tale of Gamelyn

Introduction

The Tale of Gamelyn survives in twenty-five early manuscripts, yet this is not a sign that it was popular. The poem was added to one version of *The Canterbury Tales* (known as the cd group of manuscripts) where it follows the unfinished Cook's Tale, often with a spurious link to make it his second tale. The cd connection with *Gamelyn* began very early (Manly and Rickert, 1940, II, 170-72), and it may have been generated at a stage when Chaucer himself had included *Gamelyn* among his papers, with the intention of rewriting it for a suitable character. Nevertheless, there is, as Laura Hibberd stated (1924, p. 156), no sign that Chaucer's own hand was involved in the transmission of the text.

Skeat edited the poem separately in 1884 and included it in an appendix to his *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, relying on what he thought was the best manuscript, Harley 7334. A more recent edition by N. Daniel (in a University of Chicago Ph.D. dissertation, 1967) was based on the Cospelus MS. Editorial work on *The Canterbury Tales* has shown these two manuscripts to be unreliable. In the case of the Petworth manuscript of *Gamelyn*, collation shows it to offer the best readings in many instances and only rarely to be in need of emendation: in this version *Gamelyn* on a significant number of occasions seems a better poem: e.g., lines 2-4 which have shorter first half-lines and more attack, especially than Skeat's text; or lines 616-57 where, as *Gamelyn* and Adam meet the outlaws, the language is a little sharper and the prosody somewhat tighter than in the manuscripts previously used as a base for the published text.

If the source of the text itself is both intriguing and enigmatic, the origin of its content remains obscure. Skeat (1884, p. vii) favored an Anglo-French original as with *Havelock*, but no contender has emerged. Prideaux (1886) felt that the story of *Fulk Fitzwaris* was close to this text, but there is little or no identity of incident. Commentators have linked *Gamelyn* to other robust stories involving physical heroism: W. F. Schirmer felt there was a category of *germanischer romanzen* embracing this text, *King Horn*, *Havelock*, and *Athelstan* (Mehl, 1968, p. 269, n.17). But unlike these other heroes, *Gamelyn* has no royal status, and a more thematically oriented connection was made by Ramsey in identifying this poem, *Athelstan*, *Raoul of Cambrai*, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, and *The Song of Lewes* as "rebel romances" (1983,

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p. 93).

This concept has generic implications. Skeat called *Gamelyn* "the older and longer kind of ballad" (1884, p. vii), while others have, like Ramsey, preferred to think of it as a rough and ready romance. Kaeuper (1983, p. 51) refers approvingly to Schmidt and Jacobs' broad definition of the romance (1980, I, 1-7). Pearsall's influential essay on "The Development of Middle English Romance," while not referring to *Gamelyn*, did assert the existence of a category of "epic romance" (1965, p. 111). However, the lack of any kind of aristocratic connection or dealing with women does make *Gamelyn* a difficult member of even such a limited romantic category, and it is tempting to think of the poem, like the *Gest*, *Adam Bell*, and long battle ballads of the sixteenth century such as *Chevy Chase* or *The Battle of Otterburn*, as best described by the term used by Child of the *Gest*, "popular epic" (III, 49).

Some commentators have seen an originary force in historical reality, noting like Sands (1966, p. 155) or detailing like Kaeuper (1983) and Scattergood (1994) the many resemblances to medieval legal practices and conflicts. That might, however, better be seen as a strong contextual feature of a story which, as Dunn notes, is known in folklore as the maltreatment of the youngest child (1967, p. 32) and which appears in romance proper as the *fair unknown*, but in this version deals with inheritance problems of a distinctly fourteenth-century kind.

The date of the poem has not been reconsidered carefully in recent years. Though Lindner offered the thirteenth century (1879, pp. 112-13), Skeat placed it about 1340, feeling its events and legal structures were basically of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. That would be a very early date for a secular and satirical English poem of this kind, and later commentators have inched it forward — about the middle of the fourteenth century for the historians Keen (1961, p. 78) and Holt (1989, p. 71), and for Dunn 1350-70 (1967, p. 32). Since the text may have been transmitted no more than once to the source of the surviving manuscripts (judging from the coherence of the existing versions), this period would seem likely, with a preference for the later part of it.

The dialect has always been identified as North Midlands, but Dunn was more precise, nominating the North East Midlands, even perhaps Nottinghamshire (1967, p. 32), which need not imply that the forest in which *Gamelyn* becomes an outlaw is Sherwood. In fact, the small but noticeable number of words of Scandinavian origin (including *Lütheth*, the first word of the whole poem) suggests an origin in a more Danelaw-oriented part of the region, such as Lincolnshire or, perhaps better because less northerly in dialect, Leicestershire, the scene of the notorious outlaw activities of the Folville and others much cited in the context of the poem (see Kaeuper [1983, pp. 54-57] and Scattergood [1994, pp. 170-74]). The text itself has no place names, and *Gamelyn*'s family name of *Boundys* just signifies a boundary of some kind.

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Audience has, as with many poems of this kind, remained a problem. Dunn felt it was enough to speak of "the common people" (1967, p. 32) who liked this rough-hewn form, while Holt thought (1989, p. 72) that in this and other respects the text was "more sophisticated" than the *Gest* which he located among the lower gentry and their affiliates. Both views have some force and the error may be to seek one social level to which the text belongs. It appears to invoke a multiple social response in that it brings together the interests of dispossessed landholders in Gamelyn himself, the falsely accused, like the king of the outlaws, upper servitors like Adam who have to decide whom to serve, and the bondsmen who resist the pressures imposed by Gamelyn's vicious eldest brother. This range of interests and audience members spreads out from a composite focal audience described by Kaeuper as an amorphous social level of minor landowners, lesser knights and retainers — those who might at most hobnob with the prior of a nearby religious house or know the sheriff, but whose horizons are essentially local (1983, p. 53).

Barron comments (1987, p. 84) that the text, not unlike fabliau, has a double form, offering Gamelyn both as a "strong arm champion of bourgeois values" and also, pleasing a higher social stratum, as a parody of the middle class as "strong, crude and inherently stupid"; the concept refers to and sophisticates a position suggested in Menkin's article on "Comic Irony and the Sense of Two Audiences in *The Tale of Gamelyn*" (1969). Kaeuper has seen these two elements as being connected: "No doubt the tale was meant to amuse and entertain (admittedly with a very dark variety of humor), but perhaps we can hear echoes of the 'fierce' mocking laughter which Owst detected in the literature of satire and complaint" (1988, p. 336).

The poem's style has been seen as direct rather than subtle, though it is often treated sympathetically. Skeat said the poem worked well if read slowly (1884, p. xxvi), and Sands recommended it be "read aloud" for best effect (1966, p. 156). Skeat noted "the variableness of the metre" (1884, p. xxiii), which is not as simple as Sands suggests in calling it a "seven stress affair" (1966, p. 156). That implies a line of four stresses before and three after the caesura which, as the poem is in couplets, could be taken as a version of ballad meter. But both the actual state of the meter and the frequency of four line syntax units (longer than a ballad stanza) refute this possibility. Skeat noted that many first half lines have three stresses, and this is more visible in the sparser, less scribally inflated, style of the Petworth manuscript, where three stresses before and two after the caesura is the norm, with a number of unstressed or half stressed syllables frequently added, and the occasional "heavy" line. This makes the meter not unlike that found in alliterative poetry, and there is a recurrence, though no regularity, of alliterative phrasing in the poem. In view of its early date and apparently uncourtly audience, this compromise between alliteration and rhyme is not a surprising metrical pattern.

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The rhymes tend to be quite accurate, and there is less of the laisse-like continued rhyme than is to be seen in the *Gest*; when compared with other rhyming poems of the period it is notable how few of the rhymes fall on polysyllabic and French-derived words: only nine according to Lindner's statistics, with another five on the name Gamelyn (1879, pp. 101–06). Equally the "rhyme-breaking" characteristic of Chaucer, where syntax crosses rhyme units, is almost unknown in *Gamelyn*, which tends to march steadily on with two and four line statements, all squarely mapped onto rhyme.

A similarly plain effect is created by the unadorned diction of the poem, and the frequent use of fillers and semi-proverbial statements of the *also mot I thryve* and *soth for to tell* kind. Some thirty of these occur. They, like the quite common "awkward verbal repetitions" (Scattergood, 1994, p. 160), are elements of a style that most commentators have felt to be at least in part oral: clarity and communication are the central elements of the style.

Yet these features can have an effect capable of some subtlety in a context of dynamic meaning. In the opening sequence, as Sir Johan of Boundys lies on his death bed, the text keeps repeating how he lay increasingly *stille* and *zyke*. At the same time the poem keeps returning, as he does, to the question of his lands. In performance the passage has considerable power: as the man grows weaker, his lands become mobile, more and more a matter of obsession for him and, as it transpires, others. The identity of landowner and land, the difficult dissolution of that bond and the crucial nature of its re-formation, these issues central to the period and the land-holding classes lie behind the emphatic language of this highly effective opening passage.

If repetition of language can have such a marked effect, the use of imagery — a rare feature — can also strike deep. In general this effect is highly stylized and proverbial, of the *as a wilde lyoun or stille as stoon* kind. But in the central fight scene (lines 489–540), where Gamelyn and Adam wreak their revenge on the clerical visitors, a heavy irony frames their violent acts with a quasi-religious signification: Gamelyn sprays them with a *spire*, that is both a club and an asperge; he makes *onders* of them in new ways. As Bennett and Gray remark, the poem can have "a touch of the grimmer humour" (1986, p. 163) found in heroic poetry.

A third range of stylistic vigor is found in the text when a point is emphasized with a strongly colloquial image which also has the force of collective wisdom and so provides generalized support for the hero and his values. When *four and twenty young men* form a posse to arrest Gamelyn and Adam after their onslaught on the clergy (line 549), the heroes treat the threat lightly and Adam says they will so welcome the sheriff's men:

That some of hem shal make her beddes in the fenne. (line 584)

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The yonge men are defeated and some flee. Adam invites them back for right good wyne drynk, but one refuses for fear of a specially physical kind of hangover:

It wold make a manys brayn to lyen on his hode. (line 594)

Hearing the sheriff is on his way, Gamelyn and Adam leave for the forest, and so the sheriff finds in the house nyst but now oye (line 606). The vigorous sequence of colloquial, folkloric images roots the resistance made by Gamelyn and Adam deep in popular discourse, linguistically sustaining the sense that the ordinary people and enduring values are very much on their side.

In terms of structure the poem has quite complex resources within an apparently plain and effective exterior: a "well-told story" (Dunn, 1967, p. 32) is a characteristic description. This, oddly, is not really the case, or not at least in terms of classic realism. The narrative is in fact shot through with incoherences and improbabilities. Why did Gamelyn take so many years to grasp his sorry position — it appears to be sixteen (see line 356)? Why did his brother suddenly lock him out when he went to the wrestling; and how did his brother find safety in the solar (line 349 — not the ceilere as in other texts, including Harley 7334 and Corpus)? Why, on earth, did Adam not set Gamelyn free as soon as they became allies, rather than wait for a public brawl? What precisely makes Gamelyn at the end suddenly return to court to rescue Ote rather than remain free? And what, most of all, leads Gamelyn to give up his quest for his own lands and accept from Ote the position of heir which had been unacceptable when offered by his brother?

It is possible to imagine answers, or at least discussions, relating to these points, but the text does not consider them as important. Rather than a coherent novel-like sequence of action and reaction, the text in fact arranges a series of dramatic encounters, much like the melodramatic surges of action and rhetoric in romance. Adam does not free Gamelyn early simply to generate a splendid brawl with the clerics. Gamelyn returns to court so he can break the judge's arm and then hang the whole jury — to dry in the wind, in another of the poem's brusquely colloquial images, grim irony again.

If the structure in this way prepares high moments of ethical melodrama, the theme is accordingly directed towards such highly flavored moments of violent frustration of the forces of evil. Most commentators have found the poem strong meat, along a scale ranging from Keen's identification of "simple rumbustious energy" (1961, p. 8) to Scattergood's sense of "barbarism" (1994, p. 160). But, as Bennett and Gray point out, there is a purpose to the violence. This is a poem of "rough justice" (1986, p. 163), and Crane remarks that "corruption runs deep in the world of *Gamelyw*, that, to resolve his claim, Gamelyn must move beyond his unsuccessful verbal pleas and

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the unsupportable local institutions to a direct physical attack on the suborned royal jury" (1986, p. 73).

But whereas most commentators have related Gamelyn's rugged sense of equity to the real processes of medieval law (Kaeuper provides the fullest account, 1983), there is a strong fictional and ideological structure of ethics at the heart of the poem. The disinherited younger son is a common figure in the Middle Ages, generated according to Georges Duby by changes of inheritance practice in the eleventh century (1977). In romance this figure will win both a lady and a land with his prowess and his courtesy. Gamelyn's social standing is less aristocratic, his trajectory less fantastic, and women play no part at all. And whereas the fair unknown will reveal his birth, like Sir Gareth or Lybeaus Desconus, and all will fall into his lap, Gamelyn's late birth, inscribed in his name ("old man's son") is the problem from the beginning. In this moderately realistic context, the author derives a resolution for this "male Cinderella" story (on this see Wittig, 1978, especially Chapter 5, "Speculations and Conclusions," pp. 179-90) not from the fantastic resources of romance but from another uncomfortable reality of medieval life, the outlaws who challenged settled law through the period. Nevertheless they too are romanticized, being as Keen notes (1961, pp. 92-93) somewhat genteel in their forest mode, and also having their leader conveniently removed for Gamelyn's benefit.

Though stripped of his true familial base, with this new *meyne*, Gamelyn is able to exercise lordship and rescue the true elder brother Sir Ote from the corrupt legal hands of the false elder brother Sir Johan. Family is reconstituted with outlaw help, just as the knight's world is rectified in the *Gest*. Then, however, follows a remarkable shift in the story, largely unnoticed by commentators. In this new familial context, both Gamelyn and the story go quietly. With good lordship in place, the younger son's problems are managed without the partition of inheritance that the wise men at the beginning tried to avoid. Old Sir Johan's wishes never come true. For all his heroism and violence, Gamelyn fits back into the family when it is purged of its "shrewed," that is diabolic, bad leader: primogeniture is recuperated and all in the family is again well.

Not only does the text arrive at this consoling conclusion by a series of melodramatic and violent events; these actions also reveal the sub-textual operations of a structure of social and ethical forces that in fact define the ideology of the text. Gamelyn is attended by four categories of value, and it is only at the end that all are benevolent to him and fully at his service: they are strength, family, honor, and law. Through the action he negotiates with these forces as one or the other is either taken from him or made hostile to him. At first a child without strength, having lost his familial role with the death of his father, Gamelyn has no honor and, through his elder brother, law is turned against him. Steadily he regains control over each

component of value — though some, like law, are highly elusive. It is only at the very end, when he and Ote reform their family, when he is honored by the king and made an agent of a true law, that his tremendous strength and strong support are no longer agents of social and narrative disruption but belong to and reinforce traditional society.

It is, as Keen noted with some disappointment (1961, p. 93), finally a quite conservative story. As Barron remarks of the author, "his remedy is a change of personnel, not system" (1987, p. 84). Only the church is resisted systematically — or rather its religious orders. Here, as in Langland and Chaucer there is no hostility to parish priests. Hatred of regular clergy and deep knowledge of the ways of the law are the underpinning instrumentalities of *Gamelyn* as a poem, and resistance to wrongful authority is as fully realized here as anywhere in the turbulent literature of the period.

But there remains a distance between this text and those where the outlaw life is central to the theme rather than, as here, merely instrumental to the resolution. Of the gentry rather than a yeoman, seeking land rather than occupying the potent spaces of the forest, without trickster characteristics or being close to natural imagery, *Gamelyn* is very different from Robin Hood, and his text survives from a period when it seems that the Robin Hood ballads were still entirely oral in medium. There is something gentrified about *Gamelyn*, thuggish though he might be, whereas the more socially elusive medieval Robin is never clearly tied to a class faction and its ideology.

The power of the myth of the greenwood outlaw worked dialectically with the *Gamelyn* tradition. At two points, *Gamelyn* walks in the forest, as Robin does at the start of many a ballad (lines 767 and 783–84). The possibilities of connection were not missed. It seems that *Gamelyn*'s character was attracted towards the Robin Hood saga; *Robyn and Gaudelyne* may well be an early example of that process; *Robin Hood and Will Scardey* certainly is, but at a much later date when such literary rationalization is commonplace. The two traditions interwove thoroughly in the undergrowth of the nineteenth century novel, when the Gamwells of Gamwell Hall provided ample subplot to fill out the three volumes required of a novel, and for which the spare suggestive encounters of the Robin Hood ballads were distinctly unaccommodating (Pierce Egan's *Robin Hood and Little John, or The Merry Men of Sherwood Forest* of 1840 is the classic example). And popular culture did not forget the link: in the Warner Brothers *Adventures of Robin Hood* starring Errol Flynn (Curtiz, 1938), Robin's close friend, resplendent in scarlet, is named Will a Gamwell. A more elusive interface between the two traditions was in the hands of a more culturally elevated artist. The Robin Hood mini-craze of the 1590s theatre eventually produced in 1600 the ludicrous disguise comedy *Looke Aboule Yow*, notable mostly for the stage

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direction "Enter Robin Hood in Lady Faukenbridge's nightgown, a turban on his head." The Admiral's Men did good business with this nonsense, building on their triumph with Munday's two Robin Hood plays of 1598-99. The Chamberlain's Men's house writer, William Shakespeare, appears to have responded immediately with that Italianate outlaw play, *As You Like It*, relying on the elaborations Thomas Lodge had imposed on *Gamelyn* in his deeply gentrified and highly euphuized version entitled *Rosalynde* (1590).

Gamelyn has both original force and elusive interrelations with other outlaw texts, even acting as a ghostly link between the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare. Its survival depends on its presence, at some stage, among Chaucer's papers, and it is intriguing to think that he saw something worth his embellishing touch — as he had in a raw fabliau for the Miller or in Boccaccio's cold amatorial enigma for the Franklin. Some have thought it would have been the Yeoman's tale for its forest connections (Skeat, 1884, p. xv, was firm on the point; see also de Lange, 1935, p. 36) and Dunn improbably suggested the Franklin because he was a rural magistrate (1967, p. 32), but Chaucer deals by displaced projections, and it may well be that the reference to Gamelyn refusing to cook for his brother and wielding the pestle as a weapon (lines 92 and 128) was the link through which he intended to develop the propertied dreams of Roger, his tough London scullion.

Speculations aside, it was only that Chaucerian connection which preserved *Gamelyn*. It is, as Keen says "the first outlaw legend which has survived in the English language" (1961, p. 88), an important link in the chain that just survives between the early distressed gentleman sagas of Eustace and Fulk and the plainer English heroes of forest resistance like Robin Hood and Adam Bell. This is a poem whose robust and direct qualities have always been visible, and whose subtleties have largely been overlooked on behalf of its simpler status as historical and legal corroboration. But as the author says *Lithes and listeneth and harkeneth aright*, and in the allusions and elisions of the text there will be heard something more literary, more imaginative, more resonant through time and the outlaw tradition.

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The Tale of Gamelyn

Fitt 1

- Lithes and listneth and harkeneth aright,
And ye shul here of a doughty knyght;
Sire John of Boundes was his name,
He coude of norture and of mochel game. *List and listen and harken closely
hear; brave
He knew about breeding and sport*
- 5 Thre sones the knyght had and with his body he wan.
The eldest was a moche schrewe and sone bygan. *begot
wicked rascal; /to show off*
- His brether loved wel her fader and of hym were agast,
The eldest deserved his faders curs and had it atte last.
The good knyght his fadere lyved so yore. *brothers; their
long*
- 10 That deth was comen hym to and handled hym ful sore. *tormented him bitterly*
- The good knyght cared sore sik ther he lay,
How his children shuld lyven after his day.
He had bene wide where but non husbonde he was. *where
far and wide; farmer*
- 15 Al the londe that he had it was purchas.
Fayn he wold it were dressed amonge hem alle,
That eche of hem had his parte as it myght falie.
Thoo sente he in to contrey after wise knyghtes *Eagerly; divided; them
Then; the shire*
- To helpen delen his londes and dressen hem to-rightes.
He sent hem word by letters thei shul hie blyve,
If thei wolde speke with hym whilst he was alyve. *divide; evenly divide
quickly hasten
alive*
- 20
- Whan the knyghtes harden sik that he lay,
Had thei no rest neither nyght ne day,
Til thei come to hym ther he lay stille
On his dethes bedde to abide goddys wille.
Than seide the good knyght seke ther he lay.
"Lordes, I you warne for sooth, without nay,
I may no lenger lyven here in this stounde;
For thorgh goddis wille deth droueth me to grunde."
Ther nas noon of hem alle that herd hym aright.
That thei ne had south of that ilk knyght. *When; heard
truly, without denial
time
draws
pity; same*

The Tale of Gamelyn

And seide, "Sir, for goddes love dismay you nought;
God may don boote of bale that is now ywrought." remedy of evil

Than speke the good knyght sik ther he lay.

"Boote of bale God may sende I wote it is no nay; *I know there is no denying it*

35 But I beseche you knyghtes for the love of me,

Goth and dressest my bondes amouge my sones thre. divide

And for the love of God deleth not amyss,

And forgeteth not Gamelyne my yonge sone that is.

Taketh hede to that oon as wel as to that other;

40 Seelde ye seen eny hier helpen his brother."

Seldom you see any heir

Thoo lete thei the knyght lyen that was not in hele,

health

And wenten into counselle his bondes for to dele;

divide

For to delen hem alle to on that was her thought.

their intent

And for Gamelyn was yongest he shuld have nought.

nothing

45 All the londe that ther was thei dalten it in two,

And lete Gamelyne the yonge without londe goo,

And ecche of hem seide to other ful loude,

His bretheren myght yeve him londe whan he good cowde. give

divided; their

50 They commen to the knyght ther he lay stille,

And tolde him anoon how thei had wrought;

done

And the knight ther he lay liked it right nought.

Than seide the knyght, "Be Seint Martyne,

For al that ye han done yit is the londe myne;

delay all action

55 For Goddis love, neighbours stondeth alle stille,

And I wil delen my londe after myn owne wille.

John, myne eldest sone shal have plowes fyve.

(see note)

That was my faders heritage whan he was alyve;

And my myddelest sone fyve plowes of londe,

60 That I halpe forto gete with my right bondes;

And al myn other purchace of bondes and ledes

tenants

That I bisuethe Gamelyne and alle my good stedes.

horses

And I biseche you, good men that lawe conne of londe,

understand

For Gamelynes love that my quest stonde."

bequest

65 Thus dalt the knyght his londe by his day,

Right om his deth bed sik ther he lay;

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And sone afterward he lay stoon stille,
And deide whan tyme come as it was Cristes wille.

closed

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | Anoon as he was dede and under gras grave,
Sone the elder brother giled the yonge knave:
He toke into his honde his honde and his lede,
And Gamelyne him selven to clothe and to fede.
He clothed him and fedde him evell and eke wroth,
And lete his londes forflare and his houses bothe,
His parkes and his wodes and did no thing welle;
And sithen he it abought on his owne felle.
So longe was Gamelyne in his brothers halle,
For the strengest, of good will they douted hym alle; <i>of their own accord; feared</i>
Ther was noon therinne neither yonge ne olde,
That wolde wroth Gamelyne were he never so bolde. | <i>As soon as
beguiled; boy
tenants
badly and also ill
go to ruin
after; paid for; skin
anger</i> |
| 70 | Gamelyne stood on a day in his brotheres yerde,
And byganne with his hond to handel his berde;
He thought on his landes that lay unsowe,
And his fare okes that dounre were ydrawe; | <i>unseen
pulled down</i> |
| 75 | His parkes were broken and his deer reved;
Of alle his good stedes noon was hym byleved;
His houes were unshilled and ful evell dight;
Tho thought Gamelyne it went not aright. | <i>broken into; stolen
left
unroofed; repaired
Then</i> |
| 80 | Afterward come his brother walking thare,
And seide to Gamelyne, "Is our mete yare?" | <i>food ready
agreed</i> |
| 85 | Tho wrathed him Gamelyne and swore by Goddys boke,
"Thow schalt go bake thi self I wil not be thi coke!" | |
| 90 | "What? brother Gamelyne howe answerst thou nowe?
Thou spekest nevere such a worde as thou dost nowe." | |
| 95 | "By feithe," seide Gamelyne "now me thenketh nede; <i>it seems to me necessary</i>
Of al the harmes that I have I toke never yit hede." <i>I never took notice</i> | |
| 100 | My parkes bene broken and my dere reved,
Of myn armes ne my stedes sought is byleved;
Alle that my fader me byquathe al goth to shame,
And therfor have thou Goddes curs brother be thi name!" | <i>stolen
weapons and horses; left</i> |

The Tale of Gamelyn

	Than spake his brother that rape was and rees, "Stond stille, gadlynge and holde thi pees; Thou shalt be fayn to have thi mete and thi wede; What spekest thou, gadelinge of londe or of lede?"	who was quick to anger churl (lowborn, bastard) clothing fool; tenant
105	Than seide Gamelyne, the child so yinge, "Cristes curs mote he have that me clepeth gadelinge! I am no wors gadeling ne no wors wight, But born of a lady and geote of a knyght."	young may; calls fellow begotten
	Ne dorst he not to Gamelyn never a foot goo, But cleped to hym his men and seide to hem tho, "Goth and beteth this boye and reveth hym his wite, And lat him lerne another tyme to answere me bette."	beat; rob better
	Than seide the childe yonge Gamelyne, "Cristes curs mote thou have brother art thou myne!"	
115	And if I shal algates be beten anoon, Cristes curs mote thou have but thou be that oon!" And anon his brother in that grete herte Made his men to feste staves Gamelyn to bete.	must in any case (see note) anger fetch everyone; taken
120	Whan every of hem had a staf ynomen, Gamelyn was werre whan he segh hem comen; Whan Gamelyne segh hem comen he loked overall, And was ware of a pestel stode under the wall;	aware; saw
	Gamelyn was light and thider gan he lepe, And droof alle his brotheres men right sone on an hepe	club-shaped grinder he leaps
125	And loked as a wilde lyon and leide on good wone; And whan his brother segh that he byganne to gon; He fley up into a loft and shette the door fast; Thus Gamelyn with his pestel made hem al agast.	drove; heap a good number saw flew up; that
	Some for Gamelyns love and some for eye, Alle they droughen hem to halves whan he gan to pleye.	terrified them all for awe (of him) sides; fight
	"What now!" seyde Gamelyne, "evel mot ye the! Wil ye bygynne constrete and so sone flee?"	may ye prosper ill! combat
	Gamelyn sought his brother whider he was flowe, And seghe where he loked out a wyndowe.	fled
135	"Brother," sayde Gamelyn "com a litel nere, And I wil teche thee a play at the bokelere."	buckler (small round shield)
	His brother him answerde and seide by Saint Richere,	

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- "The while that pestel is in thine honde I wil come no mere;
 Brother, I will make thi pees I swer by Cristes oore; peace; grace
 140 Cast away the pestel and wrethe the no more." anger yourself
 "I most nede," seide Gamelyn, "wreth me at onys,
 For thou wold make thi men to breke my bonys,
 Ne had I hadde mayn and myght in myn armes, once
 To han hem fro me thei wold have done me harmes."
 145 "Gamelyn," seide his brother, "be thou not wroth,
 For to sene the han harsme me were right loth; angry
 I ne did it not, brother, but for a fondinge, loath
 For to loken wher thou art stronge and art so yenge."
 "Come adoune than to me and graunt me my bone
 150 Of oon thing I wil the axe and we shal saught sone." except for a test
see whether
request
be reconciled
- Doune than come his brother that fikel was and felle, was deceitful and cruel
 And was swith sore afeerd of the pestelle. very much
 He seide, "Brother Gamelyn ase me thi bone,
 And loke thou me blame but I it graunte sone."
 155 Than seide Gamelyn, "Brother, iwys,
 And we shul be at one thou most graunte me this:
 Alle that my fader me byquath whilst he was alive,
 Thow most do me it have if we shul not strive."
 "That shalt thou have, Gamelyn I swere be Cristes oore! indeed
 160 Al that thi fadere the byquathe, though thou wolde have more;
 Thy londe that lith ley wel it shal be sawe, if; reconciled
 And thine houses reised up that bene leide ful lawe."
 Thus seide the knyght to Gamelyn with mouthe,
 And thought on falsnes as he wel couthe. begenerated
 165 The knyght thought on tresoun and Gamelyn on noon,
 And wente and kissed his brother and whan thei were at oon knew how to
 Alas, yonge Gamelyne no thinge he ne wist
 With such false tresoun his brother him kist!

Fift 2

- 170 Lytheneth, and listenneth, and holdeth your tonge,
 And ye shul here talking of Gamelyn the yonge.
 Ther was there bisidem eride a wrastelinge, announced a wrestling match

The Tale of Gamelyn

- And therfore ther was sette a ramme and a ringe; *[the usual prizes]*
 And Gamelyn was in wille to wende therto,
 Forso preven his myght what he coude doo.
 175 "Brothere," seide Gamelyn, "by Seint Richere,
 Thow most lene me tonyght a litel coursere
 That is fresshe for the spore on forto ride;
 I moste on an erande a litel here beside."
 "By god!" seide his brother, "of stedes in my stable
 180 Goo and chese the the best spare noon of hem alle
 Of stedes and of coursers that stoden hem byside;
 And telle me, good brother, whider thou wilt ride."
 "Here beside, brother, is cried a wrasteling,
 And therfore shal be sette a ram and a ringe;
 185 Moche worship it were brother to us alle,
 Might I the ram and the ringe bringe home to this halle."
 A stede ther was sadeled smertly and skete;
 Gamelyn did a peire spores fast on his fete.
 He sette his foote in the stirop the stede he bistrode,
 190 And towardes the wrasteling the yonge childe rode.
- Whan Gamelyn the yonge was riden out atte gate,
 The fals knyght his brother loked yit after that.
 And bysought Jesu Crist that is hevene kinge,
 He myghte breke his necke in the wresteling.
 195 As sone as Gamelyn come ther the place was,
 He lighte doun of his stede and stood on the gras,
 And ther he herde a frankeleyn "willoway" singe.
 And bygonne bitterly his hondes forto wringe.
 "Good man," seide Gamelyn, "whi mast thou this fare?
 200 Is ther no man that may you helpen out of care?"
 "Allas!" seide this frankeleyn, "that ever was I bore!
 For twey stalworth sones I wene that I have loren;
 A champion is in the place that hath wrought me sorowe,
 For he hath sclayn my two sones but if God hem borowe.
 205 I will yeve ten pound by Jesu Christ! and more,
 With the nones I fonde a man wolde handel hym sore."
 "Good man," seide Gamelyn, "wilt thou wele doom,
 Holde my hors the whiles my man drowe of my shoon,
 And helpe my man to kepe my clothes and my stede,

Early Ballads and Tales

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 210 | And I wil to place gon to loke if I may spedē." "By God!" seide the frankleyn, "it shal be doon; I wil myself be thi man to drowe of thi shoon. And wende thou into place. Jesu Crist the spedē. And dredē not of thi clothes ne of thi good stede." | wil
pull off; shoes
you |
| 215 | Barefoot and ungirt Gamelyn inne came,
Alle that were in the place hede of him nam, Howe he durst aventure him to doon his myght
That was so doghthy a champion in wrasteling and in fight.
Up stert the champioun rapely anon, | took heed of him
quickly and at once |
| 220 | And toward yonge Gamelyn byganne to gon,
And seide, "Who is thi fadere and who is thi sire?
For sothe thou art a grete fool that thou come hie!"
Gamelyn answerde the champioun tho,
"Thowe knewe wel my fadere while he myght goo. | |
| 225 | The whiles he was alyve, by seynt Martyn!
Sir John of Boundes was his name, and I am Gamelyne." | |
| 230 | "Felawe," sayde the champion, "so mot I thrive,
I knewe wel thi fadere the whiles he was alyve;
And thi silf, Gamelyn, I wil that thou it here.
While thou were a yonge boy a moche shrewē thou were." Than seide Gamelyn and swore by Cristes ore,
"Now I am older wexe thou shalt finde me a more!" "By God!" seide the champion, "welcomē mote thou be!
Come thow onys in myn honde thou shalt neverē the." | may
mischievous fellow
grace
green; greater (regal)
may
once; thrive |
| 235 | It was wel within the myght and the mose shone,
Whan Gamelyn and the champioun togider gon gone.
The champion cast turnes to Gamelyne that was prest,
And Gamelyn stode and bad hym doon his best.
Than seide Gamelyn to the champioun, | holds; ready |
| 240 | "Thowe art fast aboute to bringe me adoun;
Now I have proved mosy tornes of thine,
Thow most," he seide, "oon or two of myne."
Gamelyn to the champioun yede smertely anoon,
Of all the turnes that he couthe he shewed him but oon, | very eager
withstood
west
knew |
| 245 | And cast him on the lift side that thre ribbes to-brake,
threw; crushed | |

The Tale of Gamehn

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------|
| | And therto his owne arme that yaf a grete crake. | gave; crack |
| | Than seide Gamelyn smertly anon, | |
| | "Shal it bi hold for a cast or ellis for non?" | considered; throw |
| 250 | "By God!" seide the champion, "whedere it be,
He that cometh ones in thi honde shal he never the!" | prosper |
| | Than seide the frankleyn that had the sones there, | |
| | "Blessed be thou, Gamelyn, that ever thou bore were!" | born |
| | The frankleyn seide to the champion on hym stode hym noon eye, | |
| 255 | "This is yonge Gamelyne that taught the this pleye." | you |
| | Agein answerd the champion that liketh no thing wel, | who was displeased |
| | "He is alther maister and his pley is right felle; | of all; cruel |
| | Sithen I wrasteled first it is goon yore, | a long time |
| | But I was nevere in my lif handeled so sore." | |
| 260 | Gamelyn stode in the place anon without serk, | shirt |
| | And seide, "Yif ther be moo lat hem come to werk; | |
| | The champion that pymed him to worch sore, | |
| | It semeth by his countenance that he wil no more." | demeanor; wished |
| 265 | Gamelyn in the place stode still as stone,
For to abide wrasteling but ther come none; | |
| | Ther was noon with Gamelyn that wold wrastel more. | |
| | For he handeled the champion so woaderly sore. | hard |
| 270 | Two gentile men that yemed the place,
Come to Gamelyn God yeve him goode grace! | had charge of
give |
| | And seide to him, "Do on thi hosen and thi shoon, | Put on |
| | For soth at this tyme this fare is doon." | this fair is over |
| | And than seide Gamelyn, "So mot I wel fare,
I have not yete halvendele sold my ware." | by half |
| | Thoo seide the champion, "So broke I my swere, | idiom: as I use my neck |
| 275 | He is a fool that therof bieth thou sellenth it so dere." | |
| | Tho seide the frankleyn that was in moche care,
"Felawe," he saide, "whi lackest thou this ware? | blame |
| | By seynt Jame of Gales that mony man hath sought, | |
| | Yit is it to good chepe that thou hast bought." | merchandise |
| | Thoo that wardeynes were of that wrastelinge | Those; umpires |
| 280 | Come and brought Gamelyn the ramme and the ryng. | |

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And Gamelyn bithought him it was a faire thinge,
And wense with moche ioye home in the mornynge.

- His brother see wher he came with the grete route, company
And bad shitt the gate and holde hym withoute. ordered to be shut
The porter of his lord was soor agaast, afraid
And stert anoon to the gate and lokked it fast. closed it quickly

FIGURE 3

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | Now listenes and listmeth both yonge and olde,
And ye schul here gamen of Gamelyn the bolde.
Gamelyn come to the gate forto have come inne,
And it was shette faste with a stronge pynne; | harkes
sport
shut
gate |
| 290 | Than seide Gamelyn, "Porter, undo the yate,
For good menys sones stonden ther ate."
Than answerd the porter and swore by Goddis berd,
"Thow ne shalt, Gamelyne, come into this yerde." | by God's beard
yard |
| 295 | "Thow list," seide Gamelyne, "so broke I my chyne!" <i>lie; as I may use my chin</i>
He smote the wicket with his foote and breke awaie the pyne.
The porter seic thoo it myght no better be,
He sette foote on erth and bygam to flee. | larch
saw then |
| 300 | "By my feye," seide Gamelyn, "that travaile is ylore,
For I am of fose as light as thou if thou haddest it swore." ¹¹
Gamelyn overtoke the porter and his tene wrake,
And girt him in the nek that the boon to-brake, | that effort is lost
anger avenged
struck |
| | And toke hym by that oon arme and threwe hym in a welle,
Seven fadme it was depe as I have herde telle. | fathoms (<i>i.e.</i> , 42 feet deep) |
| 305 | Whan Gamelyn the yonge thus had plaied his playe,
Alle that in the yerde were drowen hem awaye;
Thei dredden him ful sore for werk that he wrought,
And for the faire company that he thider brought.
Gamelyn yede to the gate and lete it up wide; | fear'd
went |
| 310 | He lete inne alle that gone wolde or ride. | |

¹ For I am as light of foot as you, even if you swore it to the contrary.

The Tale of Gamehyn

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | And seide, "Ye be welcome without eyngreve,
For we wil be maisters here and axe no man leve. | trouble
permission |
| | Yesterday I lefte," seide yonge Gamelyne, | |
| 315 | "In my brothers seler fyve tonne of wyne;
I wil not this company partyn atwynne. | cellar; barrels of wine
part from each other |
| | And ye wil done after me while sope is therinne; | If: any mouthful of liquid |
| | And if my brother gruche or make soule chere, | complain |
| | Either for spence of mete and drink that we spende here, | cost |
| | I am oure catour and bere oure alther purs, | caterer; dearest purse |
| 320 | He shal have for his gruccinge Saint Maries curs. | grumbling |
| | My brother is a nigon, I swere be Cristes oore, | niggard (miser); honor |
| | And we wil spende largely that he hath spared yore; | |
| | And who that make gruccinge that we here dwelle, | |
| | He shal to the portter into the drowe-welle." | drawing well |
| 325 | Seven daies and seven nyghtes Gamelyn helde his feest, <td>fear</td> | fear |
| | With moche solace was ther noon cheest; | merriment; quarreling |
| | In a litel torret his brother lay steke, | turret; hidden |
| | And see hem waast his good and dorst no worde speke. | sow; waste |
| | Erly on a mornymge on the eight day, | |
| 330 | The gestes come to Gamelyn and wolde gone her way. | and would depart |
| | "Lordes," seide Gamelyn, "will ye so hie? | hurry off |
| | Al the wyne is not yit dronke so brouke I myn ye." | if I thus can use my eye |
| | Gamelyn in his herie was ful woo, | |
| | Whan his gestes toke her leve fro hym for to go; | |
| 335 | He wolde thei had dwelled lenger and thei seide may, | |
| | But bytaught Gamelyn, "God and good day." | |
| | Thus made Gamelyn his feest and brought wel to ende, | |
| | And after his gestes toke leve to wende. | afterward; asked permission to leave |

FIG. 4

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 340 | Lithen and listen and holde your tunge,
And ye shal here game of Gamelyn the yonge;
Harkeneth, lordinges and listeneth aright,
Whan alle gestis were goon how Gamelyn was dight.
Alle the while that Gamelyn heeld his mangerye,
His brotheres thought on hym be wroke with his trecherrye. | sport
treated
feast
to be avenged |
|-----|--|--|

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- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 345 | Whan Gamyllys gestes were ridein and goon,
Gamelyn stood anon allone frend had he noon;
Tho aftere felle sone within a litel stounde,
Gamelyn was taken and ful hard ybounde.
Forth come the fals knyght out of the solere, | happened; time |
| 350 | To Gamelyn his brother he yede ful nere,
And saide to Gamelyn, "Who made the so bold
For to stroien the stoor of myn household?"
"Brother," seide Gamelyn, "wreth the right nouȝt,
For it is many day gon sith it was bought; | solar (upper room)
went very close
waste the supplies
anger you
since it was paid for |
| 355 | For, brother, thou hast had by Seint Richere,
Of fiftene plowes of londe this sixtene yere,
And of alle the beestes thou hast forth bredde,
That my fader me byquath on his dethes bedde;
Of al this sixtene yere I yeve the the prowfe, | Richard
profit |
| 360 | For the mete and the drink that we han spended nowe."
Than seide the fals knyght (evel mote be thee!)
"Harken, brother Gamelyn what I wil yeve the:
For of my body, brother, here gesen have I none,
I wil make the myn here I swere by Seint John." | may be have ill luck! |
| 365 | "Par fay!" seide Gamelyn "and if it so be,
And thou think as thou seist God yeilde it the!" | children
heir
"By my faith!"
reward |
| 370 | Nothinge wiste Gamelyn of his brother gile;
Therfore he hym bygiled in a litel while.
"Gamelyn," seyd he, "oon thing I the telle;
Thoo thou threwe my poster in the drowe-welle,
I swore in that wrethe and in that grete moote, | knew; galle |
| 375 | That thou shuldest be bounde bothe honde and fote;
This most be falfilled my men to dote,
For to holden myn avowe as I the bihote." | When
anger; hostile assembly
trick
now as I promised you |
| 380 | "Brother," seide Gamelyn, "as mote I thee!
Thou shalt not be forswoore for the love of me."
Tho maden thei Gamelyn to sitte and not stonde,
To thei had hym bounde both fote and honde.
The fals knyght his brother of Gamelyn was agast, | as I may prosper |
| 385 | And sente efter fetters to fetter hym fast.
His brother made lesingges on him ther he stode. | frightened
fetters; shackles
told lies about |

The Tale of Gamelyn

	And tolde hem that commen inne that Gamelyn was wode.	innesse
	Gamelyn stode to a post bounden in the halle,	
	Thoo that commen inne loked on hym alle.	
385	Ever stode Gamelyn even upright!	Those who straight
	But mete and drink had he noon neither day ne nyght.	
	Than seide Gamelyn, "Brother, be myn hals,	neck
	Now have I aspied thou art a party fals;	discovered; partly known; invented
390	Had I wist the tresoun that thou hast yfounde,	
	I wold have yeve strokes or I had be bounde!"	given blows; before
	Gamelyn stode bounde stille as eny stone;	
	Two daies and two nyghtes mete had he none.	food
	Than seide Gamelyn that stood ybounde stronge,	
395	"Adam Spencere me thenketh I faste to longe;	
	Adam Spencere now I bische the,	
	For the moche love my fadere loved the,	great
	If thou may come to the keys lese me out of bonde,	release; bonds
	And I wil part with the of my free londe."	divide
400	Than seide Adam that was the spencere,	officer in charge of provisions
	"I have served thi brother this sixtene yere,	
	Yif I lete the gone out of his boure,	chamber
	He wold saye afterwardes I were a traitour."	
	"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "so brouke I myn hals!	as I use my neck!
	Thow schalt finde my brother at the last fals;	false
405	Therfore brother Adam lose me out of bondes,	free
	And I wil parte with the of my free londes."	
	"Up such forward," seide Adam, "ywis,	Upon that agreement; certainly
	I wil do therto al that in me is."	
	"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "as mote I the,	as I hope to thrive
410	I wil holde the covenant and thou wil me."	if thou will do also with me
	Anoon as Adams lord to bed was goon,	As soon as
	Adam toke the kayes and lete Gamelyn out anoon;	
	He unlocked Gamelyn both bondes and fete,	
	In hope of avauncement that he hym byhete.	advancement; promised
415	Than seide Gamelyn, "Thonked be Goddis sonde!	God's Providence
	Nowe I am lose both fote and honde;	
	Had I nowe eten and dronken aright,	
	Ther is noon in this hous shuld bynde me this nyght."	

Early Ballads and Tales

- 420 Adam toke Gamelyn as stille as eny stone,
And ladde him into the spence raply anon,
And sette him to sopere right in a privey styde,
He bad him do gladly and so he dide.
*pantry; quickly
secret place*
- 425 Anoon as Gamelyn had eten wel and fyne,
And thereto y-dronken wel of the rede wyne,
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "what is nowe thi rede?
Or I go to my brother and gerd of his heed?"
"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "it shal not be so.
I can teche the a rede that is worth the twoo.
I wote wel for sooth that this is no nay.
430 We shul have a mangerye right on Sonday;
Abbotes and priours mony here shul be,
And other men of holy churc as I telle the;
Thou shal stonde up by the post as thou were bounde fast,
And I shal leve hem unloke that away thou may hem cast.
435 Whan that thei han eten and wasshen her handes,
Thow shalt biseche hem alle to bringe the oute of bondes;
And if thei willen borowe the that were good game,
Than were thou out of prisoun and out of blame;
And if ecche of hem saye to us may,
440 I shal do another I swere by this day!
Thow shalt have a good staf and I wil have another,
And Cristes curs haf that on that failleth that other!"
I shall try another course
- "Ye for God," seide Gamelyn, "I say it for me,
If I faille on my side evel mot I thee!
445 If we shul algate assoile hem of her synne,
Warne me, brother Adam, whan we shal bygynne."
"Gamelyn," seid Adam, "by Seinte Charité,
I wil warne the bifore whan it shal be;
Whan I winke on the loke for to gone,
450 And caste away thi fettters and come to me anone."
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "blessed be thi bonys!
That is a good counseill yeven for the nonys;
Yif thei warne the me to bringe out of bendes,
I wil sette good strokes right on her lendes."
*absolve
wink at you
given for the occasion
forbid you; bonds
lends*

The Tale of Gamelyn

- 455 Whan the Sonday was comen and folk to the feest,
Faire thei were welcomed both leest and mest;
And ever as thei at the haldore come inne,
They casten her yem on yonge Gamelyn.
The fals knyght his brother ful of trecherye,
460 Al the gestes that ther were at the mangerye,
Of Gamelyn his brother he tolde hem with mouthe
Al the harme and the shame that he telle couthe.
Whan they were yserved of messes two or thre,
Than seide Gamelyn. "How serve ye me?
465 It is not wel served by God that alle made!
That I ssite fastinge and other men make glade."
*both high and low
half door
their eyes
at the banquet
could
courses
fasting (i.e., starving)*
- The fals knyght his brother ther as he stode,
Told to all the gestes that Gamelyn was wode;
470 And Gamelyn stode stille and answerde nought,
But Adames wordes he helde in his thought.
Thoo Gamelyn gan speke doolfully withalle
To the grete lordes that setos in the halle:
"Lordes," he seide, "for Cristes passioun,
475 Help to bringe Gamelyn out of prisoun."
Than seide an abbot, sorowe on his cheke,
"He shal have Cristes curs and Seinte Maries eke,
That the out of prison beggett or borow,
And ever worth him wel that doth the moche sorowe."
480 After that abbot than speke another,
"I wold thine hede were of though thou were my brother!
Alle that the borowe foule mot hem falle!"
Thus thei seiden alle that were in the halle.
*insane
dolefully indeed
also
(see note)
head were cut off
(see note)*
- Than seide a priour, evel mote be threve!
"It is grete sorwe and care boy that thou art alyve."
485 "Ow!" seide Gamelyn, "so brouke I my bone!
Now have I spied that frendes have I none
Cursed mote he worth both fleshe and blood,
That ever doth priour or abbot eny good!"
*alive
so profits my petition?
discovered
Cursed may be he
may do*
- Adam the spencere took up the clothe,
490 And loked on Gamelyn and segh that he was wrothe;
saw; angry

Early Ballads and Tales

- Adam on the pantry litel he thought,
 And two good staves to the halle door he brought,
 Adam loked on Gamelyn and he was warre anoon,
 And cast away the fettters and bygan to goon;
 Whan he come to Adam he took that on staf,
 And bygan to worsh and good strokes yaf.
 Gamelyn come into the halle and the spencer bothe,
 And loked hem aboute as thei hadden be wrothe;
 Gamelyn spreyyeth holy watere with an oken spire,
 That some that stode upright felle in the fire.
 Ther was no lewe man that in the halle stode,
 That wolde do Gamelyn eything but goode,
 But stoden bisides and lete hem both wirche,
 For thei had no rewthe of men of holy chirche;
 Abbot or priour, monk or chanoun,
 That Gamelyn overtoke anoon they yeden doun
 Ther was noon of alle that with his staf mette,
 That he ne made hem overthrowe to quye hem his detie.
- "Gamelyn," seide Adam, "for Seinte Charité,
 Pay good lyvert for the love of me,
 And I wil kepe the door so ever here I masse!
 Er they bene assoilid ther shal non passe."
 "Doute the not," seide Gamelyn, "whil we ben ifere,
 Kepe thou wel the door and I wil wirche here;
 Bystere the, good Adam, and lete nose fle,
 And we shul telle largely how mosy that ther be."
 "Gamelyn," seide Adam, "do hem but goode;
 Thei bene men of holy chirche drowe of hem no blode
 Save wel the crownes and do hem no harmes,
 But breke both her legges and sithen her armes."
- Thus Gamelyn and Adam wroughte ryght faste,
 And pleide with the monkes and made hem agaste.
 Thidere thei come ridinge joly with swaymes,
 And home ayein thei were ladde in cartes and waynes.
 Tho thei hadden al ydo than seide a grey frere,
 "Alias! sire abbot what did we nowe here?
 Whan that we comen hidere it was a colde rede,
- did not think at all
 gadgets
 aware at once
 move
 one
 work; gave
 as if: angry
 (see note)
 ignorant (i.e., layman)
 aside; work
 pity
 canon
 fell
 paid them
- pay a liberal allowance (of blows)
 guard; as sure as I hear Mass
 Before they have been absolved
 Fear you not; together
 work
 Stir thyself
 count fully
 do them only good
 Respect their resources
 then their
 worked
 servants
 farm wagons
 friar
 bad advice

The Tale of Gamelyn

	Us had be bet at home with water and breed."	better off
	While Gamelyn made orders of monke and frere,	
530	Evere stood his brother and made foale chere;	acted distraught
	Gamelyn up with his staf that he wel knewe,	
	And girt him in the nek that he overthrew;	struck; fell down
	A litel above the girdel the rigge-boon he barst;	wrist; backbone he broke
	And sette him in the fetters theras he sat arst.	shackles; where he sat before
535	"Sitte ther, brother," seide Gamelyn,	
	"For to colen thi body as I did myn."	cool
	As swith as thei had woken hem on her foos,	soon; avenged themselves; foes
	Thei asked water and wasshen anon,	asked for; washed
	What some for her love and some for her awe,	because of fear
540	Alle the servantes served hem on the besite lawe.	manner
	The sherreve was thennes but fyve myle,	thence; only
	And alle was tolde him in a lytel while,	
	Howe Gamelyn and Adam had ydo a sorye rees,	made a grievous attack
	Boundon and wounded men ayeinst the kingges pees;	against the king's peace
545	Tho bygan sone strif for to wake,	Then; at once
	And the shereff about Gamelyn forto take.	went about

FIT 5

	Now lithen and listen so God geve you good fyne!	ending
	And ye shul here good game of yonge Gamelyne.	
	Four and twenty yonge men that helde hem ful bolde,	considered themselves
550	Come to the shiref and seide that thei wolde	
	Gamelyn and Adam fette by her fay;	fetch; their faith
	The sheref gave hem leve soth for to say;	permission
	Thei hidens fast wold thei not lynne,	hurried; tarry
	To thei come to the gate there Gamelyn was inne.	Until; where
555	They knocked on the gate the porter was nyghe,	close at hand
	And loked out atte an hool as man that was scleghe.	cautious
	The porter hadde bishold hem a litel while,	
	He loved wel Gamelyn and was dradde of gyle.	fearful of guile
	And lete the wicket stonde ful stille,	small door or window; fastened up
560	And asked hem without what was her wille.	
	For all the grete company speke but oon,	
	"Undo the gate, porter and lat us in goon."	

Early Ballads and Tales

Than seide the porter, "So brouke I my chym,
Ye shul saie youre erand er ye come inne."

- 565 "Sey to Gamelyn and Adam if theire wil be,
We wil speke with hem two wordes or thre." *if it be their will*
"Felawe," seide the porter, "stonde ther stille,
And I wil wende to Gamelyn to wete his wille." *go; know*
Inne went the porter to Gamelyn anoon,
570 And saide, "Sir, I warne you here ben comen youre foen; *foes*
The shireves men bene at the gate,
Fortho take you both ye shul not scape." *escape*
"Porter," seide Gamelyn, "so mote I the!
I wil alowe thi wordes whan I my tyme se." *as I may thrive*
575 Go ageyn to the gate and dwelle with hem a while,
And thou shalt se right sone porter, a gile." *praise; see a chance*
dally
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "hast the to goon;
We han foo men mony and frendes never oon; *get ready to go*
It bene the shireves men that hider bene comes,
580 Thei ben swore togidere that we shal be nomen." *many foes; not one*
"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "hye the right blyve,
And if I faile the this day evel mot I thrive!
And we shul so welcome the shireves men,
That some of hem shal make her beddes in the fenne." *taken*
585 At a postern gate Gamelyn out went, *rear gate*
And a good cartstaf in his bondes heft; *tongue or shaft of a cart; seized*
Adam heft sone another grete staff
For to helpen Gamelyne and good strokes yaf. *gave*
Adam felled tweyn and Gamelyn thre,
590 The other seide fete on erthe and bygan to fire.
"What," seide Adam, "so evere here I masse!
I have right good wyne, drynk er ye passe!"
"Nay, by God!" seide thei, "thi drink is not goode,
It wolde make a manys brayn to lyen on his hode." *(see note)*
- 595 Gamelyn stode stille and loked hym aboute,
And seide "The shyref cometh with a grete route." *company*
"Adam," seyd Gamelyn "what bene now thi redes?
Here cometh the shref and wil have our hedes." *suggestions*

The Tale of Gamelyn

- Adam seide to Gamelyn. "My rede is now this,
 600 Abide we no lenger lest we fare amys:
 I rede we to wode gon er we be founde,
 Better is ther louse than in the toune bounde."
 Adam toke by the honde yonge Gamelyn;
 And every of hem dronk a draught of wyn,
 605 And after token her cours and wenten her way;
 Tho foade the scherreve nyst but non aye.
 The shirrive light doun and went into halle,
 And fonde the lord fetred faste withalle.
 The shirreve unfetred hym right sone anoon,
 610 And sente aftere a leche to hele his rigge boon.
- Lat we now the fals knyght lye in hys care,
 And talke we of Gamelyn and of his fare.
 Gamelyn into the wode stalked stille,
 And Adam Spensere liked right ill;
 Adam swore to Gamelyn, "By Seint Richere,
 615 Now I see it is mery to be a spencere.
 Yit lever me were kayes to bere,
 Than walken in this wilde wode my clothes to tere."
 "Adam," seide Gamelyn, "dismay the right sought;
 Mony good manrys child in care is brought."
 620 As thei stode talkinge bothen in fere,
 Adam herd talking of men and right nyghe hem thei were.
 Tho Gamelyn under wode lokid aright,
 Sevene score of yonge men he seye wel ydight;
 Alle satte at the mete compas aboute.
 625 "Adam," seide Gamelyn, "now have I no doute,
 Aftere bale cometh bote thorgh Goddis myght;
 Me think of mete and drynk I have a sight."
 Adam lokid tho under wode bough,
 And whan he segh mete was glad ynogh;
 630 For he hoped to God to have his dele,
 And he was sore elonged after a mele.
- As he seide that worde the mayster outlawe
 Saugh Adam and Gamelyn under the wode shawe.
 "Yonge men," seide the maistere, "by the good Rode,
- badly
before
free
each
Then; nest; egg
dismounted from his horse
doctor; backbone
grief
fortune
walked cautiously
was not pleased
I would rather; keys
don't be alarmed
sorrow
together
near them
well armed
food; in a circle
fear
after evil comes good
saw
share
sorely longing for
thicker in the woods
Cross

Early Ballads and Tales

- 635 I am ware of gestes God send us goode; aware of guests
 Yond ben twoo yonge men wel ydight.
 And parenture ther ben mo whoso loked right.
 Ariseth up, yonge men and fette hem to me;
 It is good that we weten what men thei be." Tonder; well armed
 perhaps
 fetch them
 know
- 640 Up ther sterten sevene from the dynere,
 And metten with Gamelyn and Adam Spencere.
 Whan thei were nyghe hem than seide that oon,
 "Yeeldeth up, yonge men your bowes and your floon." arrows
 Than seide Gamelyn that yong was of elde. age
- 645 "Moche sorwe mote thei have that to you hem yelde!
 I curs noon other but right mysilve;
 Thoo ye fette to you fyve than be ye twelve!" (see note)
 Whan they harde by his word that myght was in his arme,
 Ther was noon of hem that wolde do hym harme.
- 650 But seide to Gamelyn myldely and stille,
 "Cometh afore our maister and seith to hym your wille."
 "Yong men," seide Gamelyn, "be your leute.
 What man is youre maister that ye with be?" loyalty
- Alle thei answerd without lesing. bing
- 655 "Our maister is crowned of outlawe king."
 "Adam," seide Gamelyn, "go we in Cristes name;
 He may neither mete ne drink warne us for shame.
 If that he be hende and come of gentil blood,
 He wil yewe us mete and drink and do us som gode." refuse
 courteous
- 660 "By Seint Jame!" seide Adam, "what harme that I gete,
 I wil aventure me that I had mete." whatever
 food
- Gamelyn and Adam went forth in fere,
 And thei grette the maister that thei fond there. together
 Than seide the maister king of outlawes, greeted
- 665 "What seche ye, yonge men, under the wode shawes?"
 Gamelyn answerde the king with his croune,
 "He most nedes walk in feeld that may not in toun.
 Sire, we walk not here no harme to doo.
 But yif we mete a deer to shete therio, shoot
- 670 As men that bene hungry and mow no mete fynde,
 And bene harde bystad under wode lynde."
 Of Gamelyns wordes the maister had reushe. may no food find
 beset; in the forest pity

The Tale of Gamelyn

- And seide, "Ye shul have ynow have God my trouth!" enough
 675 He bad hem sittoun for to take rest;
 And bad hem ete and drink and that of the best.
 As they eten and dronken wel and fyne,
 Than seide on to another, "This is Gamelyne."
 Tho was the maistere outlaw into counseile nome, Then; taken
 680 And tolde howe it was Gamelyn that thider was come.
 Anon as he herd how it was byfalle, happened
 He made him maister under hym over hem alle.
 Withinne the thridde weke hym come tydinge, third week; tidings came to him
 To the maistere outlawe that was her kinge, who was their king
 685 That he shuld come home his peers was made;
 And of that good tydinge he was ful glade.
 Thoo seide he to his yonge men soth forto telle,
 "Me bene comen tydinges I may no lenger dwelle," tarry
 Tho was Gamelyn anon withoute taryinge, delay
 690 Made maister outlawe and crowned her kinge. their

- Whan Gamelyn was crowned king of outlawes,
 And walked had a while under the wode shawes,
 The fai knyght his brother was sherif and sire,
 And lete his brother endite for hate and for ire. had; indicted
 695 Thoo were his boond men sory and no thing glade, sherifs
 Whan Gamelyn her lord wolleshede was made; (see note)
 And sente out of his men wher thei might hym fynde, wherever
 For to go seke Gamelyne under the wode lynde,
 To telle hym tydinge the wynde was wente, changed
 700 And al his good reved and al his men shente. robbed; badly treated
 Whan thei had hym founden on knees thei hem settoun, drew down their hoods
 And adoune with here hodes and her lord gretten; Cross
 "Sire, wreth you not for the good Rode,
 For we han brought you tyddygges but thei be not gode."
 705 Now is thi brother sherreve and hath the bayly, power (of the sheriff)
 And hath endited the and wolleshed doth the crye."
 "Allas!" seide Gamelyn, "that ever I was so sclak
 That I ne had broke his nek whan I his rigge brak!
 Goth, greteth wel myn husbandes and wif, the people of my estates
 710 I wil be at the nexte shyre have God my lif!" (see note)
 Gamelyn come redy to the nexte shire.

Early Ballads and Tales

- And ther was his brother both lord and sire.
 Gamelyn boldely come into the mote halle,
 And puise adoun his hode amouge tho lordes alle;
 "God save you, lordinggs that here be!
 But broke bak sherreve evel mote thou thee!
 Whi hast thou don me that shame and vilenye,
 For to lat endite me and wolfeshede do me crye?"
 Thoo thoght the fals knyght forto bene awake,
 And lete Gamelyn most he no thinge speke;
 Might ther be no grace but Gamelyn atte last
 Was cast in prison and fetred faste.
- Gamelyn hath a brothere that highte Sir Ote,
 Als good an knyght and bende as might gon on foote.
 Anoon yede a massager to that good knyght
 And tolde him altogidere how Gamelyn was dight.
 Anoon whan Sire Ote herd howe Gamelyn was dight,
 He was right sory and no thing light,
 And lete sadel a stede and the way name,
 And to his tweyne bretheren right sone he came.
 "Sire," seide Sire Ote to the sherreve thoo,
 "We bene but three bretheren shul we never be mo;
 And thou hast prisoned the best of us alle;
 Such another brother evel mote hym byfalle!"
- "Sire Ote," seide the fals knyght, "lat be thi cors;
 By God, for thi wordes he shal fare the wors;
 To the kingges prisoun he is ynome,
 And ther he shal abide to the justice come."
 "Par de!" seide Sir Ote, "better it shal be;
 I bid hym to maynprise that thou graunte me
 To the next sitting of delyveraunce,
 And lat than Gamelyn stonde to his chaunce."
 "Brother, in such a forward I take him to the;
 And by thine fader soule that the bigate and me,
 But he be redy whan the justice sitte,
 Thou shalt bere the juggement for al thi grete witte."
 "I graunte wel," seide Sir Ote, "that it so be.
 Lat delyver him anoon and take hym to me."
- hall of justice
broke-back
Then; avenged
hindered; not allowed to speak
mercy
was called
As; courteous
went
treated
not at all happy
had saddled; took
two
more
carse
because of; worse
taken
until
"By God!"
I demand bail for him
legal hearing
agreement; commit
Unless
Have him freed; give

The Tale of Gamelyn

- Tho was Gamelyn delyvered to Sire Ote, his brother;
 750 And that nyght dwelled the oon with the other.
 On the morowe seide Gamelyn to Sire Ote the hende,
 "Brother," he seide, "I mote forsooth from you wende
 To loke howe my yonge men leden her lif,
 Whedere thei lyven in joie or ellis in striff."
 courteous
 go
 see; lead their
- "By God" seyde Sire Ote, "that is a colde rede,
 Nowe I se that alle the carke schal fal on my hede;
 For whan the justice sitte and thou be not yfounde,
 I shal anoon be take and in thi stede ibounde."
 bad plan
 responsibility
 taken; place
- 760 "Brother," seide Gamelyn, "dismay you nought,
 For by saint Jame in Gales that mony men hath sought,
 Yif that God almyghty holde my lif and witte,
 I wil be redy whan the justice sitte."
 Galicia, Spain
 maintain
- Than seide Sir Ote to Gamelyn, "God shilde the fro shame;
 Come whan thou seest tyme and bringe us out of blame."
 shield

Fitt 6

- 765 Litheneth and listeneth and holde you stille,
 And ye shul here how Gamelyn had al his wille.
 Gamelyn went under the wode-ris,
 And fonde ther pleying yenge men of pris.
 The was yonge Gamelyn right glad ymougue,
 770 Whan he fonde his men under wode bougue.
 Gamelyn and his men talkeden in fere,
 And thei hadde good game her maister to here;
 His men tolde him of aventures that they had founde,
 And Gamelyn tolde hem agen howe he was fast bounde.
 together
 their; hear
- 775 While Gamelyn was outlawe had he no cors;
 There was no man that for him ferde the wors,
 But abbots and priours, monk and chanoun;
 On hem left he nought whan he myghte hem nome.
 curse (public criticism)
 Except
 take
- While Gamelyn and his men made merthes ryve,
 780 The fals knyght his brother evel mot he thryve!
 For he was fast aboute both day and other,
 For to hiren the quest to hongen his brother.
 abundant joy
 evil may he thrive!
 very busy
 bribe; inquest

Early Ballads and Tales

- Gamelyn stode on a day and byheeld
 The wodes and the shawes and the wild feeld,
 785 He thoughte on his brothere how he hym byhest
 That he wolde be redy whan the justice sette;
 He thought wel he wold without delay.
 Come tofore the justice to kepen his day,
 And saide to his yonge men, "Dighteth you yare,
 790 For whan the justice sitte we most be thare,
 For I am under borowe til that I come,
 And my brother for me to prison shal be nome."
 "By Seint Jame!" seide his yonge men, "and thou rede thereto,
 Ordeyn how it shal be and is shal be do."
- 800 While Gamelyn was comyng ther the justice satte,
 The fals knyght his brother forgate he not that,
 To hire the men of the quest to hangen his brother;
 Thoughe thei had not that oon thei wolde have that other
 Tho come Gamelyn from under the wode-ris,
 805 And brought with hym yonge men of pris
 "I see wel," seide Gamelyn, "the justice is sette;
 Go aforn, Adam, and loke how it speite."
 Adam went into the halle and loked al aboue,
 He segh there stonde lordes grete and stout,
 810 And Sir Ote his brother fetred ful fast;
 Thoo went Adam out of halle as he were agast.
 Adam seide to Gamelyn and to his felawes alle,
 "Sir Ote stont fetered in the mote halle."
 "Yonge men," seide Gamelyn, "this ye heeren alle:
 815 Sir Ote stont fetered in the mote halle.
 If God geve us grace, well forto doo,
 He shal it abigge that it broughthe thereto."
 Than seide Adam that lockes had hore,
 "Cristes curs mote he have that hym bondt so sore!
 820 And thou wilt, Gamelyn, do after my rede,
 Ther is noon in the halle shal bere awey his hede."
 "Adam," seide Gamelyn, "we wil not do soo,
 We wil slee the giltif and lat the other go.
 I wil into the halle and with the justice speke;
 Of hem that bese giltif I wil ben awreke.

The Tale of Gamelyn

Lat no skape at the door take, yonge men, yeme;
For I wil be justice this day domes to deme.

God sped me this day at my newe werk!

Adam, com with me for thou shalt be my clerk."

825 His men answereden hym and bad don his best,
"And if thou to us have nede thou shalt finde us prest;
We wil stonde with the while that we may dure;
And but we wochten manly pay us none hure."
"Yonge men," said Gamelyn, "so mot I wel the!
830 A trusty maister ye shal fynde me."

escape; take . . . heed
to hand down verdicts

ready

endure

Unless; wages

drive

Right there the justice satte in the halle,
Inne went Gamelyn amonges hem alle.

Gamelyn lete unfetter his brother out of bende.
Than seide Sire Ote his brother that was hende.

835 "Thow haddest almost, Gamelyn, dwelled to longe,
For the quest is out on me that I shulde honge."
"Brother," seide Gamelyn, "so God yeve me good rest!"

This day shul thei be honged that ben on the quest;
And the justice both that is the juge man,

840 And the sherreve also thorgh hym it began.
Than seide Gamelyn to the justise,

"Now is thi power don, the most nedes rise;
Thow hast yeven domes that bene evel dight,
I will sitten in thi sete and dressen hem aright."

845 The justice satte stille and roos not anon;
And Gamelyn cleved his chekebon;

Gamelyn toke him in his armes and no more spake,
But threwe hym over the barre and his arme brake.

Dorst noon to Gamelyn seie but goode,
850 Forfeerd of the company that without stode.

had unfettered; bonds
courteous

wanted

vindictive

inquest

judge

finished, you must
verdicts; unjustly given

arrange them correctly

broke

railing

Terrified

Gamelyn sette him doun in the justise sete,
And Sire Ote his brother by him and Adam at his fete.

Whan Gamelyn was sette in the justise stede,
Herken of a bourde that Gamelyn dede.

855 He lete fetter the justise and his fals brother,
And did hem com to the barre that on with that other.

Whan Gamelyn had thus ydon had he no rest.

place

Listen; jest

had fettered
made; bar of justice

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- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | Til he had enquired who was on his quest
Fortho demen his brother Sir Ote for to honge;
Er he wist what thei were hym thought ful longe.
But as sone as Gamelyn wist where thei were,
He did hem everechon fetter in fere. | found out; jury
Until he knew who
had; fettered together
now |
| 860 | And bringgen hem to the barre and settien in rewe;
"By my feith!" seide the justise. "the sherrive is a shrewe!" | |
| 865 | Than seide Gamelyn to the justise,
"Thou hast yove domes of the worst assise: given judgments; worst court of law
And the twelve sesoures that weren on the quest, jurors
Thei shul be honged this day so have I good rest!" | |
| 870 | Than seide the sheref to yonge Gamelyn,
"Lord, I crie thee mercie brother art thou myn."
"Therfor," seide Gamelyn, "have thou Cristes curs,
For and thou were maister I shuld have wors." | |
| | For to make shorte tale and not to longe,
He ordeyned hym a quest of his men stronge:
The justice and the shirreve both honged hic. | |
| 875 | To weyven with the ropes and the windc drye;
And the twelve sisours (sorwe have that rekke!) Alle thei were honged fast by the nekke. | high
To swing on
misery to anyone who cares! |
| 880 | Thus endeth the fals knyght with his trecherye,
That ever had lad his lif in falsenesse and folye.
He was honged by the nek and not by the purs,
That was the mede that he had for his faders curs. | reward |
| | Sire Ote was eldest and Gamelyn was yenge.
Wenten to her frendes and passed to the kinge; | young |
| 885 | Thei maden pees with the king of the best sise.
The king loved wel Sir Ote and made hym justise.
And after, the king made Gamelyn in est and in west,
The cheef justice of his free forest; | assize |
| 890 | Alle his wight yonge men the king forsayf her gilt,
And sithen in good office the king hath hem pilt,
Thus wane Gamelyn his land and his lede,
And wreke him on his enemyes and quytte hem her mede; | bold
after; put
won (back); tenants
avenged; reward |
| | And Sire Ote his brother made him his heire,
And sithen wedded Gamelyn a wif good and faire; | |

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895 They lyved togidere the while that Crist wolde,
And sithen was Gamelyn graven under molde.
And so shull we alle may ther no man flee:
God bring us to that joye that ever shal be!

buried under earth



Notes

For discussion of textual issues in *Gamelyn* see Stephen Knight, "herkeneth aright": Reading *Gamelyn* for Text Not Context." In *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*. Ed. Rosalind Field. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999. Pp. 15–28.

- 1 Fitt titles and numbers are not marked in the Petworth manuscript, but spaces in the manuscript and the formulaic *Lithes and listeneth* opening (and its variants) make it clear where a new fitt begins; there are six.
- 3 The name appears to be spelt in the manuscript *Bonndes*, but in line 348 *ybounde* is written in just the same way, and this should be taken as a sign of the ambiguity possible in these minim-based letters (in much the same way *Arveragus* in Chaucer's Franklin's Tale appears to be spelt *Ameragus* throughout the excellent Hengwrt manuscript).
- The name should mean *of the boundaries or of the borders*, which is not very informative, especially since it is obscure where this story is set.
- 14 Sir John's land was held in *purchas* or *fee simple* as he had gathered it in his lifetime, not inherited it. Though line 58 refers to a portion he had inherited from his father, it was not all entailed to the eldest son, and the father could divide it among the three sons, though this was itself against the contemporary practice of primogeniture; hence the reaction of the advisers in line 43.
- 38 The name Gamelyn is held to mean *son of the old man*, from OE *gamol*, old man. According to line 356 Gamelyn has been oppressed by his brother for sixteen years before he comes to manhood. This would suggest he is very young as the poem starts, adding point to Sir John's description of him in this line as *my yonge sone*.
- 42 Before *Iondes* the letters *hon* are crossed out.
- 45 It seems that the advisers decide to split the land into two as a compromise between Sir John's proposal for a tripartite division and their own preference for keeping it all together.
- 53 St. Martin of Tours was a Roman cavalry officer in fourth-century France who became a highly influential Christian leader; he is an appropriate person for a

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knight to swear by, perhaps especially as Sir John divides his possessions, since he was famous for parting his cloak with a beggar.

- 56 Sir John speaks his own dying will, to divide the property into three. This takes effect, though the eldest brother subverts it.
- 57 A ploughland was the amount of land that could be worked throughout the year by eight oxen, so this is a handsome bequest.
- 82 Gamelyn handles his beard in a sign that he has come to maturity; this is also a sign of thoughtfulness.
- 90 The eldest brother is obviously treating Gamelyn as a kitchen servant, a frequent feature of this "male Cinderella" story; cf. the placement of Sir Gareth in King Arthur's kitchen in Malory's *Tale of Sir Gareth*.
- 92 Gamelyn uses the impolite second person singular to express his feelings, and so outrages his brother: they were evidently not on the level of intimacy which would have made the *thou* form natural.
- 102 *gadlynge* is a rude term for a youth, which may also imply illegitimacy. This is how Gamelyn takes it in line 108.
- 116 Sands notes (1966, p. 160) that Gamelyn means "Unless you be the one (that is, dare to be the one to beat me)."
- 122 A pestle could, in a large kitchen, be a sizeable club; Gamelyn, being treated like a servant, has no conventional weapons at hand.
- 127 The *loft* where the brother takes refuge would be a floor above the shared hall; there would probably be a ladder that could be drawn up. This is almost certainly the same place as the *solere* where he takes refuge later (line 349) and possibly also the *tower* (line 327).
- 130 MS *thei* is corrected by the scribe to *he*.
- 137 Skeat suggested (1884, pp. 38-39) that this refers to St. Richard of Chichester (also mentioned, it seems, in the *Gest*, line 362), and seen as a "pattern of brotherly love"; the saint is invoked again in line 614.

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- 146 The letter *w* is deleted before *me*.
- 165 MS: *anow*. This reading is unique to Petworth and is most unlikely to be original: to make sense of it would require dropping *And* at the start of the next line. It is better to assume the scribe has misread the quite precise *on noon*, found in the other MSS and parallel to *on mesoun* earlier in the line.
- 197 A franklin ranks below a knight, so Gamelyn shows his nobility by helping him. There is some resemblance hereabouts to the action in the *Gest* when the knight helps a yeoman at a rural sport festival, lines 536–67. Some feel the franklin's sons are dead (Scattergood, 1994, p. 160), but this is a version of the knightly rescue of those oppressed by an ogre. At line 204 the franklin fears he has lost his sons *but if God hem borowe*, and at 251, after Gamelyn has defeated the champion, the franklin has his sons again. There is some resemblance to the uncompleted story of the knight's son in the *Gest* (lines 105–12).
- 230 If Gamelyn was very young when his father died (see note to line 38), how did the champion know of him in this way? There seems an inconsistency in the chronology.
- 251 The MS has *thre* crossed out before *there*.
- 267 MS: *thar* is inserted above the line. The word is absent in most MSS, but a few amplify to *there were thar*. Only Petworth has the single relative pronoun as an afterthought, which suggests that it might have been an editor's insertion in its exemplar.
- 272 By saying "I have not sold half my goods," Gamelyn uses a mercantile metaphor to suggest "I have hardly started yet." The champion and the franklin continue in the same metaphor in lines 274 and 276.
- 273 The verb *broke* or *brouke* (line 332) means use or enjoy, and in company with a part of the body makes a bland oath like "As I live and breathe" (also see lines 295, 563).
- 277 The shrine of St. James the Apostle was at Santiago di Compostela in Galicia, North-Western Spain, a major focus of medieval pilgrimage. Skeat felt this line (repeated at line 760) derived from *A Poem on the Times of Edward II*, which

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had some other verbal similarities to *Gamelyn* (1884, pp. xii–iii), but the connections are all very general and, like this line, in common usage.

- 296 MS has *a* corrected by the scribe before *snot*.
- 319 *cator*. The word means *caterer*, but the scribe writes it with a capital C; this may be influenced by the classical figure Cato, but the abbreviation for our is also very clear, so this is probably an instance of the casual capitalization characteristic of medieval manuscripts.
- 327 *tomer*. See the note on *loft*, line 127.
- 333 MS: *a* is corrected by the scribe before *was*.
- 336 *God and good day* was a familiar farewell.
- 364 The eldest brother, having appropriated the property that their father willed to Gamelyn on his death-bed, now offers to make Gamelyn his heir, and Gamelyn apparently accepts.
- 369 MS: *Gamelyn seyde*. It is necessary to insert *he* after *seyde*: the Petworth scribe has not realized that a speech begins with *Gamelyn*, but most of the MSS have *seyde he*.
- 392 Two (the first of its occurrences in this line). MS: *Tho.*
- 404 *my*. MS: *thy*.
- 407 Adam transfers loyalty to Gamelyn not blindly, but with a due sense of return from such an action. Some have felt this is mean-minded of Adam, but it rather represents the processes of "bastard feudalism" at work, and there is no suggestion in the poem that Adam is anything other than a true supporter of Gamelyn.
- 426 *his*. MS: *his his*.
- 445 Gamelyn speaks ironically: "If we shall anyway absolve them of their sin," i.e., "take vengeance." The priestly metaphor is recurrent in this scene, see lines 499, 512, 519, 529.

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- 447 The reference is either generally to "holy love" or specifically to St. Charity, reputed to be the daughter of St. Sophia, whose other daughters were St. Faith and St. Hope.
- 453 The MS has *me the*, but, as *the* is the object of the first verb *wame* and *me* is the object of the second verb *bringe*, syntactic logic requires that they appear in the reverse order, and the text is so emended.
- MS: *bondes*. The rhyme requires *bendes*, which is in most other manuscripts.
- 460 *gestes*. MS: *getter*.
- 478 "But may they always prosper, who cause you much grief" — a positively phrased form of curse on Gamelyn.
- 481 "All who give you security, may evil befall them" — the reverse of the wish in line 478.
- 499 *spreyeth*. MS: *spreyneth*. Most MSS have some form of *spreyeth* or *sprengeth*, which Skeat translates as "sprinkle" (1884, p. 43). It seems most likely that the original read *spreyeth*, but the religious irony of the passage was not picked up by an early scribe who, assuming a nasal abbreviation, wrote *spreyneth* in the spirit of physical combat. In an attempt to restore the irony perceived because a spire can be a club, or an asperge for sprinkling holy water, scribal emendation to *spreyngeth* occurred.
- 520 *armes*. MS: *ames*.
- 528 *bet*. MS: *bet have be*. Most MSS have *better* and all of them lack *have be*. This seems the one instance where Petworth is more wordy than other MSS, and it seems necessary to emend on these grounds.
- 529 Religious irony continues: Gamelyn is giving the holy men "orders" in the form of attention to their tonsures, with his own forceful way of laying on of hands.
- 533 MS: *brast*. This is linguistically acceptable, but can be emended to *burst* to improve the rhyme.

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- 563 *So brouke I my chyn.* "As I may use my chin": a vague form of oath like "As I live and breathe."
- 594 An idiom to describe a bad hangover.
- 605 *her.* MS: *he.*
- 606 *Tho.* MS: *To.*
- 647 Gamelyn says, "If you brought five with you, you would be twelve," mocking the comfort they are (foolishly) taking in numbers.
- 655 Skeat feels this "evidently refers to an English outlaw, such as Robin Hood" (1884, p. 45).
- 661 "I will venture so I might have food" — ironic understatement by Adam.
- 696 The MS has *ca'd* before *made*. Most other MSS have *cried and made*, which makes for a long line. It may be the Petworth scribe was here reading an emended manuscript, and started to write an excised *ca'd and or called and*. There seems no reason to follow the other MSS, and *ca'd* is omitted.

A man was pronounced "wolfishhead" to indicate that as an outlaw his life was worth no more than a wolf's: anyone could hunt him. His land was also forfeited, in this case to his elder brother, who is also the sheriff, so confirming his appropriation of Gamelyn's property.
- 699 Harley 7334 and some MSS influenced by it read *To telle hym rydinges how the wynde was wente*, a characteristic scribal inflation against the condensed clarity of the Petworth line.
- 704 *ryddingges.* MS reads *tyddymge*, though a small final flourish may suggest a plural abbreviation.
- 709 Daniel notes that *wif* is an uninflected plural (1967, p. 140) and refers to the wives of the *husbonde*, that is, farmers, householders, stewards and so on. Several manuscripts emended to both *husbonde and wif* to clarify that Gamelyn is not being described as married at this point; he will marry in the last lines of the poem.

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- 710 *nexe shyre*. The next county where his brother has jurisdiction.
- 724 *foote*. MS: *foote*.
- 735 MS: *cows*, with the *s* subpuncted for correction.
- 775 *had he no cors* means that like Robin Hood he was universally popular.
- 777 Gamelyn was especially feared by clerics in orders. This feature is shared with the Robin Hood tradition, but also with Chaucer, Langland, and other contemporary satirists, who, like the author of *Gamelyn*, have no criticism of parish priests, but much of the "regular" clergy.
- 782 The eldest brother is now bribing the jurors to bring in a result favorable to him: this was a common corrupt practice in the period.
- 784 This line, like 799–800, and perhaps 767–68, seems a reference to the traditional greenwood opening of the Robin Hood ballads, particularly in the use of the word *shawes*.
- 800 *mew*. MS: *mor*.
- 807–10 These lines are the most striking example in the poem of the "awkward verbal repetition" (Scattergood, 1994, p. 160) which apparently relates to oral performance. Some manuscripts drop lines 807–08, but they clearly belong to the poem in its original form.
- 853 *stede*. MS has *sete* which has been erroneously carried on from line 851. The logical reading in this collocation, which also gives good rhyme, is *stede*.
- 864 *sherrive*. MS: *sherrive*.
- 875 *shirreve*. MS: *sireve*.
- 889 Gamelyn has won his *land and his lede* (line 891) through the king's generosity, not through the fulfilment of his father's will. That he becomes Sir Ote's heir in line 893 (as he became their brother's in line 364) seems another way of avoiding the implications of the planned breach of primogeniture. For a discussion see Introduction, p. 185.

Robyn and Gandelyn

Introduction

This poem is preserved only in the Sloane MS 2593, a neatly written repository of lyrics and carols, thought by Gray to be "probably a song book, although there is no music" (1984, p. 12), and dated around 1450. However, it does not automatically challenge *Robin Hood and the Monk* for the status of the earliest extant Robin Hood text. There must be serious doubt to what extent, as Child says, "the Robin in this ballad is Robin Hood" (III, 12), and he prints it among the parallel outlaw tales, between *Johnie Cock* and *Adam Bell*. Ritson did not print it with the Robin Hood poems but in *Ancient Songs* (1790) under the title *Robyn Lyth* (see note to line 1). Dobson and Taylor remark that "by no stretch of the imagination can the 'Robin' of this lyric be properly identified with the Robin Hood of the other ballads" (1976, p. 256).

Yet whereas *Johnie Cock* and *Adam Bell* provide analogues to the major outlaw myth, this poem has clear continuities with some features of the Robin Hood saga. This is not so much a matter of the title — Robin is a common enough name for a young man, whether a lover or a trickster, and the "Robin and Marion" French song cycle and the Robin Goodfellow tradition present figures who are clearly not the same as Robin Hood. But two other names in this poem connect with the tradition of the English outlaw.

Gandelyn is often assumed to be linked with Gamelyn. Skeat in his edition of that poem states the name "is a mere corruption of Gamelyn" (1884, p. ix). He is speaking of the poem which is itself a distant analogue of the Robin Hood tradition, but in a later ballad, *Robin Hood and Will Scudler*, a character with a name close to Gamelyn, Will Gamwell, joins Robin's band, and a number of the nineteenth-century expansions of the myth (notably Pierce Egan's novel of 1840) develop this aspect of the story. It may well be, of course, that making Will Gamwell Robin Hood's gentry cousin is only a way of rationalizing the existence of the early poem telling the outlaw-linked adventure of the knightly Gamelyn, but the early existence of *Robyn and Gandelyn* suggests that there had been at least some connection between the two names well before the narrative exploitation of their similarity in the later ballad.

The other name that seems to point towards Robin Hood is that of Wrennock. It has been suggested that when John Major and other sixteenth-century writers recast

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the outlaw tradition as that of a distressed nobleman in the period of bad King John, they had in mind the model of *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*. One of Fouke's worst enemies was a Welshman called Morris of Powys whose son went by the name of Wrennuc: the similarities have been outlined in some detail by Prideaux (1886).

There are many resonances throughout the Robin Hood tradition of the events in this poem: two outlaws are in the woods looking for game; they are attacked and Robin is bested; the other outlaw avenges him with courage and skill. That is not in the ballads a fatal encounter for Robin and rarely for his enemies, but *Robin Hood and the Monk*, one of the versions of *The Death of Robin Hood*, and, to some extent, *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* have resemblances with this kind of fatal duel, while the "Robin Hood meets with his match" ballads euphemize this forest encounter, as in another way does the exchange of blows that in the *Gest* and *The King's Disguise and Friendship with Robin Hood* has become reduced to *plock buffer*, where the blow is a result of winning at archery, and so is a distant version of the fatal duel seen here.

In form the poem is closer to a narrative lyric than an extended ballad, as is suggested by its presence in a lyrical anthology. This formal character is constructed not so much by the existence of a refrain (not an uncommon feature in the Robin Hood ballads) but by the brevity of the poem, the simplicity of its diction, as well as by the suggestive, incomplete nature of the action which is a good deal more gnomic than even the more "expressionist" ballads, like *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*.

The manuscript has no division into stanzas, but Child's lay-out seems convincing: it includes no less than three six-line stanzas, verified by the rhyme pattern, and the rhymes, as is usual in lyrics, are almost all good ("ale/knawe" in the last stanza seems the only half-rhyme) and consistently on an abcb pattern (lines 45 and 47 are repetition, not an additional rhyme). The diction, again as usual in the lyric, avoids redundancy and cliché, though there is a good deal of measured and rhetorical repetition as in lines 9 and 13, 27–28, 25 and 31, 39 and 41, 46 and 50, 48 and 52, 63–66, and 68–71.

Gray calls this poem "mysterious and eerie" (1984, p. 12), and there are other lyrics of that primarily suggestive kind, such as the *Corpus Christi Carol* and, with some verbal resonance, *Adam lay yboundyn*. In a similar context, Rosalind Field has suggested to the editor that the "unblemished" deer (line 17) may be supernatural, and killing them may be taboo, as with the kine of Helios in *The Odyssey*. Nevertheless, mystery is not the poem's only direction: the emergent themes of honest outlaws under threat, of unflinching loyalty, and of both plenitude and threat in the forest all look towards the concerns of the Robin Hood myth rather than to any other medieval corpus of material.

Robyn and Ganelyn

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Robyn and Gandelyn

- Robynn lyth in grene wode bowndyn. *bound (in a shroud)*
- I herde a carpyng of a clerk,
Al at yone wodes ende,
Of gode Robyn and Gandeleyne;
Was ther non other gyng. *singing: learned person
yonder
company*
- 5 Stronge thevys wer tho chylderin nos,
But bowmen gode and hende;
He wentyn to wode to getyn hem fleych,
If God wold it hem sende. *these youths
skillful; honorable
They: flesh (meat)*
- 10 Al day wentyn tho chylderin too,
And fleych fowndyn he non,
Til it were ageyn evyn;
The chylderin wolde gon hom. *two
meat they found none
toward evening*
- 15 Half an honderid of fat falyf der
He comyn ayom,
And alle he wern fayr and fat inow,
But markyd was ther non;
"Be dere God," seyde gode Robyn,
"Here of we shal have on." *follow deer
They came upon
enough
blemished
shall have one*
- 20 Robyn bent his joly bowe,
Ther in he set a flo; *arrow*
The fattest der of alle
The herte he clef a to. *cleaved in two*
- 25 He hadde not the der iflawe,
Ne half out of the hyde,
There cam a schrewde arwe out of the west,
That felde Robertes prude. *flayed
devilish arrow
struck down*

Robyn and Gandelyn

- Gandeleyn lokyd hym est and west,
Be every syde:
"Hoo hat myn mayster slayin?
Ho hat don this dede?
Shal I never out of grene wode go
Til I se sydis blede."
- 30 Who has
- Gandeleyn lokyd hym est and lokyd west,
And sowt under the sunne;
He saw a lytil boy
He clebyn Wrennok of Donne.
- 35 gazed
stared
- A good bowe in his hond,
A brod arwe ther ine,
40 And towre and twenty goode arwys,
Trusyd in a thrumme:
"Be war the, war the, Gandeleyn,
Her of thu shalt han summe.
- twenty four
Tied; bundle
- "Be war the, war the, Gandeleyn,
45 Hir of thu gyst plenté."
"Ever on for an other," seyde Gandeleyn:
"Mysaunter have he shal fle.
- will get plenty
- Misfortune may he have who flees
- "Wher-at shal oure marke be?"
Seyde Gandeleyn.
50 "Everyche at otheris herfe,"
Seyde Wrennok ageyn.
- Where
- Each at the other's hear
- "Ho shal yeve the ferste schote?"
Seyde Gandeleyn:
"And I shul geve the on be-foern."
55 Seyd Wrennok ageyn.
- Who
- the first one
- Wrennok schette a ful good schote,
And he schet not to bye;
Throw the samclothis of his bryk,
It towchyd neyther thyne.
- shot
- apron; breeches
- thigh

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- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 60 | "Now hast thou govyn me on beforne,"
Al thus to Wrennok seyde he,
"And throw the myght of our Lady
A bettere I shal yeve the." | <i>given me one first</i> |
| | | <i>A better / shot / I shall give thee</i> |
| 65 | Gandeleyn bent his goode bowe,
And set ther in a flo;
He schet throw his grene certyl,
His herte he clef on too. | <i>arrow</i>
<i>He shot through his green kirtle</i>
<i>cleft in two</i> |
| | "Now shalt thou never yelpe, Wrennok,
At ale ne at wyn, | <i>boast</i> |
| 70 | That thou hast slawe goode Robyn,
And his knave Gandeleyn. | <i>slain</i>
<i>servant</i> |
| | "Now shalt thou never yelpe, Wrennok,
At wyn ne at ale,
That thou hast slawe goode Robyn,
And Gandeleyn his knawe." | |
| 75 | Robyn lyeth in grene wode bowndyn. | <i>servant</i> |



Notes

- 1 This refrain line apparently refers to Robin's burial in a shroud as a result of the action of this poem; an analogue is the refrain of *Adam lay ybounden*. The line is usually printed as line 5, but actually begins the text in the MS.
- 2 *Robyne lyth* was read by Ritson (1790, p. 48) as the name of one of the characters, and made the title of the poem, but it is clearly a subject and verb.
- 4 *Gandelyn*. The name is close to Gamelyn (Skeat feels it is descended from it, 1884, p. ix). Gutch remarked that *Gandalin* is a name found in the Old Spanish romance *Amadis de Gaul* (1847, II, 36).
- 5 MS: *gange*. Child emends to *thynge*, presumably on grounds of sense, but as Dobson and Taylor suggest (1976, p. 256), *gange* meaning "gang" or "company" makes sharper sense.
- 13 MS: *wolde*. The final *e* is almost completely lost by the clipping of the page.
- 18 *Robyn* has probably been clipped from the edge of the MS: it seems necessary and is supplied.
- 20 MS: *went*. Child emends to *bent*, the verb regularly used in this collocation.
- 27 *Roberties*. I.e., Robin's. The balladeer uses the outlaw's more formal name when speaking of his pride.
- 33 *Til*. MS: *n.*
- Child inserts *his* before *sydis*, but this seems unnecessary and is not accepted by Dobson and Taylor (1976, p. 256).
- 45 MS: *Hir*. Child emends to *Her*, but this is unnecessary.

Early Ballads and Tales

- 54 MS *ȝewe* is corrected to *ȝeve* by the scribe, and so Child's emendation to this is not necessary.
- 55 MS: *seyd*. Child adds a final *e*, presumably for meter, but this is unnecessary and is omitted by Dobson and Taylor (1976, p. 257).
- 58 Child and Dobson and Taylor read the MS as *sanchorthis* but the first *h* is overwritten to make it more like an *l*. The reading *sanclothis* should be emended to *sanclothis*, a "semigarment" formed by the loose cloth hanging down from a pair of breeches between the legs; the *MED* refers to this instance of the word.
- 62 MS: *thu*. Child emends to *the*.
- 74 MS: *sw* is crossed out before *slawe*.
- 75 *Gandeleyn*. MS: *Gandelyn*.
- MS: *knowe*. Child emends to *knowe* which seems sensible, but does damage the rhyme. An unaffricated bilabial, as is possible in *knowe*, would give a better rhyme with *ale* in line 73.



Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

Introduction

This extended outlaw narrative was popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: five different printed versions are known, and there were many reprints of the later editions. But the existence of a saga about these three forester heroes of Cumberland appears to go back almost as far as that of Robin Hood himself. A 1432 Parliament Roll for Wiltshire adds to a list of local members, presumably in a spirit of satire, a sequence of outlaw names — Robin Hood, Little John, Much, Scathelock and Reynold are there, but, remarkably in so southern an area, the list is led by "Adam Belle, Clim O'Claw, Willyam Cloudesle." Presumably the first named is also the Allan Bell mentioned as a fine archer in Dunbar's poem *Of Sir Thomas Norrey*, datable to the early sixteenth century at the latest.

It was under the name of Adam Bell that the poem was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1557-58, indicating it was a mainstream text by then, and this is confirmed by reference to the poem by Shakespeare, *Much Ado* I.1 — to Adam; Jonson, *The Alchemist*, Act I — to Clim; and Davenant, *The Long Vacation in London* (see Dobson and Taylor, 1976, p. 259). This popularity led to a late and feeble second part of the ballad being produced, it seems, as early as 1586; in that year a "new" ballad with this title was claimed to exist, which could hardly be credible if it was the same as the one already printed at least four times, including the imprint by the well-known William Copland. This was added to Part I in the Percy Folio. The similarity to Robin Hood was no doubt part of the reason for the original ballad's success, and this also led to another piece of opportunism, a ballad which combined their stories, *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour and Marriage*.

Copland's text of the mid-sixteenth century is the earliest full version (C) and provides the basis for modern editions. As Child showed, there are some earlier fragments which offer good readings when they are available: A, from John Byddell's press from about 1536, provides only lines 452-506 and 642-80. Another fragment, B, may have been printed by Wynkyn de Worde, and at least a little earlier than Byddell's; it offers some valuable readings from lines 211-446. These three are referred to in the notes as "earlier texts." Two "later texts" sometimes referred to are both printed by James Roberts in the very early seventeenth century; there is also a version in the Percy Folio which appears to have been copied from a text of the Roberts type, and has no value for textual purposes.

In its own terms *Adam Bell* has many virtues. Gray described it as an "excellent long ballad" (1984, p. 11), and Dobson and Taylor found it "the most dramatically exciting of all English outlaw ballads" (1976, p. 258). Some of these qualities resemble patterns found in the Robin Hood myth. *Adam Bell* is lucidly constructed in three discrete fits (not unlike *Robin Hood and the Potter* and, if it were all available, *Robin Hood and the Monk*). As in those ballads, the first fit sees one of the outlaws enter the town and encounter danger; in the second fit there follows an exciting rescue not unlike that in the *Gest* or *Robin Hood and the Monk*; in the last fit the outlaw heroes are forgiven by the king, despite the damage they have caused, as happens in the *Gest* and is implicit in *Robin Hood and the Monk*.

Other motifs that are shared with *Robin Hood and the Monk* (and more generally with other texts) are the brisk but vivid nature opening (there seem to be verbal echoes with *Robin Hood and the Monk*: the latter seems likely to be the source, as it is sharper-focussed in both language and imagery); a fellow outlaw's advice to avoid the town, which is ignored; the harsh treatment of the jailer; the use of a messenger; the hostile role of sheriff and justice; the use of a royal seal for entry into the town (forged in *Adam Bell*, stolen in *Robin Hood and the Monk*); the king's eventual and somewhat reluctant approval.

But *Adam Bell* also has a range of original features of some importance. Whereas the Robin Hood texts explore pressures felt by outlawed men with no visible family, and *Gamelyn* deals with a disinherited younger son, *Adam Bell* concentrates on another type of distressed male, the husband and father separated from his family. While the social bandit, in Hobsbawm's definition, will be without dependants unless, like Jesse James, he was a historical figure actually in that situation, William of Cloudeslye, very much the hero of the ballad, is impelled to return to Carlisle to see his wife and children, and though after his rescue they play little part in the action, they are still included in the royal resolution at the end, when fatherhood is again central in the apple-splitting scene. The connection continues, as William's son is the focus of the sequel.

This stress on familial structures may also be related to the emphasis put on the role of women as well as the wife. William is betrayed by an "old wyfe" who has lived long in his house, and he and his outlaw colleagues are redeemed, from a position of great risk, by the generous queen who calls up a favor given her by the king at their wedding. Theorists of gender relations might well see in the three women who attend William a triad of wife, crone, and queen, projections of the male imagination (or anxiety) when dealing with the female. That feature is almost invisible in the rest of the outlaw ballads unless the Virgin Mary, the Prioress of Kirkleys, Queen Katherine, and the shadowy future figure of Maid Marian were variously invoked to represent this triune form of the feminine.

Another notable feature of this ballad is the fully resolved nature of its ending. Most Robin Hood ballads end with the outlaw band returning to the stasis that was disturbed by the original incursion into the greenwood of a stranger, or concluding with a renewed delicate balance where the hostile forces are still implicitly alive. Some have a tragic ending: the *Gest, The Death of Robin Hood, A True Tale of Robin Hood*; and a few later and gentrified ones have a blissfully resolved sense of future security. It is this last unproblematically happy ending that *Adam Bell* provides, which seems strange in an early, violent, and quite realistic ballad. The end has none of what Gray calls the "open" quality of the last part of *Robin Hood and the Monk* (1984, p. 17), where the king's ironic appreciation of the outlaws' loyalty (John's tough fidelity in particular) both threatens and validates their state of independence. At the end of *Adam Bell* William is a court gentleman, his colleagues are yeomen, William's wife a queen's gentlewoman, and promises of advancement are even made to William's son. Medieval literature usually brings such court happiness to rapid misery, but here all that follows is an equally neat verbal resolution, tying up the theme of archery with that of salvation, wishing for all good archers that *of heven they may never mysse* (line 683).

Redolent of heroic simplicity rather than the more uneasy world of the usual outlaw ballads, this ending does of course follow on from this ballad's single element most unlike Robin Hood adventures, the climactic moment where William proves his skill and his nerve — and perhaps his inherently unparental character — by shooting an apple from his son's head. At long distance, with a difficult and deadly weapon (the heavier broad arrow, not the light "bearing arrow" with which he has previously shown his skill) William performs a feat that, as Child shows at some length (III, 16–22), is a recurrent motif in international heroic story, not merely the *pièce de resistance* of William Tell. One scholar localizes this event; the closest version of the story, known as early as Wright's commentary as "a Northern story" (1846, II, 208), might, Holt suggests, belong to the Carlisle region through its close contact with Norse culture (1989, p. 71). That may well be so: it is also one of the elements by which this long ballad is stagey in a way avoided by most of the Robin Hood ballads, whose dramatic interchanges are those of immediate street theater, direct fights, simple disguises, rather than this lengthy, masque-like sequence of activity, more elaborate than the recurrent but usually brief archery contest.

A similar level of elaboration is embodied in the narrative methodology of the ballad, though as it is a feature that realism has handed down as "natural," commentators fail to observe it as a specific technique. *Adam Bell* is very notable for a narrative which moves briskly and neatly stanza by stanza: each quatrain brings a new event, a new explanation of the way it derives from the previous events. The narrative of *Adam Bell* tends to explain everything: the sequence where Adam and Clim trick

their way into Carlisle has an almost positivist note in the way it gives all relevant details and actions (e.g., the porter cannot read and so is tricked by the forged seals, line 220). The mimesis is insistently realistic and rationalized, even when, or perhaps especially when, the narrative is improbable (as in the carefully outlined apple-shooting episode). The overall tone is lucid, steady, metronomic narrative, most unlike the mildly mysterious stop-start movement of the popular and lyric ballad, and much more like the measured tread of the sixteenth-century historicist poems *Chevy Chase* or *The Battle of Otterburn*, and indeed not in this respect unlike the *Gest* itself, in this as in its compilation status a somewhat bookish text. However, to recognize the unusually realistic mode of the poem does not necessarily lead to a narrow historicism like Joseph Hunter's notion (1845, p. 245) that Adam Bell really existed. Child is more generously dismissive in this case than in dealing with Hunter's equally positivist approach to the *Gest* (III, 21–22), while Dobson and Taylor simply call Hunter's arguments "extraordinarily unconvincing" (1976, p. 260, n.2).

In terms of stylistic character *Adam Bell* is of limited interest. Its vocabulary is unremarkable either for imaginative variety or meaningless repetition. There are not many poor rhymes (lines 74/6, 78/80, 122/4, 154/6, 210/2, 226/8 stress, 246/8, 278/80, 445/7, 453/5, 593/5, 609/11, 673/5) and in terms of stanza form, as in many other ballads, the author appears to have been happy with abab when it came to hand easily (lines 109–12, 129–32, 161–64, 452–55, 464–67, 468–71, 492–95, 536–39, 564–67, 632–35, 636–39, 640–63). There seems to be a trace of grouping here, especially in the stanzas relating the apple-splitting episode. In the exciting sequence when William is rescued from Carlisle, the author appears to have adopted the abab stanza as his basic mode (see lines 205–387, and especially 314–87) and he appears to have got so much into the swing of full rhyming that he produced a five-line stanza in the process (lines 293–97).

In these ways, in terms of style, action, and temperament, the ballad of *Adam Bell* is a little less pointed and vivid than the earlier Robin Hood ballads; and yet in comparison with the feebly literary late-seventeenth-century broadsides, it seems to have in full measure the robust and daring directness of the true outlaw ballad. Adam, Clim, and William are indeed examples of the "good yeomen" archetype, realizing both the sturdy values and anxious projections of the other early outlaw texts. It is both a measure of the inherent quality of the story and of the massive pull of the major outlaw myth, that their story has become so closely linked to the tradition of Robin Hood himself.

Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

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Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

FIT 1

Mery it was in grene forest,
Amonge the leves grene,
Where that men walke both east and west,
Wyth bowes and arrowes kene.

- 5 To ryse the dere out of theyr denne; *to rouse; deer; den*
Suche sighties as hath ofte bene sene,
As by the yemen of the north countrey,
By them it is as I meane.
- 10 The one of them hight Adam Bel, *was called*
The other Clym of the Clough.
The thyrd was William of Cloudesly,
An archer good ynoch. *completely good*
- 15 They were outlawed for venyson, *venison (i.e., poaching deer)*
These thre yemen everechone: *everyone*
They swore them brethen upon a day, *brothers*
To Englysshe wood for to gone. *Inglewood Forest*
- 20 Now lith and lysten, gentylmen, *attend and listen*
And that of myrthes loveth to here: *entertainments; hear*
Two of them were single men.
The third had a wedded fere. *wife*
- Wylliam was the wedded man,
Muche more then was hys care:
He sayde to hys brethen upon a day,
To Carele he would fare, *Carlisle*

Early Ballads and Tales

- 25 For to speke with fayre Alyce my wif,
And with hys chyldren thre:
"By my trouth," sayde Adam Bel,
"Not by the counsell of me.

30 "For if ye go to Caerlel, brother,
And from thys wylde wode wende,
If the justice mai you take,
Your lyfe were at an ende."

35 "If that I come not to morowe, brother,
By pryme to you agayne,
Trusse not els but that I am take,
Or else that I am slayne."

40 He toke hys leave of hys brethen two,
And to Caerlel he is gone;
There he knocked at hys owne wyndowe,
Shortlye and alone.

45 "Wher be you, fayre Alyce my wif,
And my chyldren three?
Lyghtly let in thyne husbande,
Wylliam of Cloudeslé."

50 "Alas!" then sayde fayre Alyce,
And syghed wonderous sore,
"Thys place hath ben besettic for you
Thys halfe yere and more."

55 "Now am I here," sayde Cloudeslé,
"I woulde that I in were;
Now feche us meate and drynke ynough,
And let us make good chere."

She feched him meat and drynke plenty,
Lyke a true wedded wif,
And pleased hym with that she had,
Whome she loved as her lyfe.

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

- There lay an old wyfe in that place,
A lytle besyde the fyre.
Whych Wylyam had found, of cherytye,
More then seven yere.
- Up she rose, and walked full stylle,
Evel more she spedetherefoore!
For she had not set no fote on ground
In seven yere before.
- She went unto the justice hall,
As fast as she could bye:
"Thys nyght is come unto thys town
Wylliam of Cloudesle."
- Thereof the justice was full fayne,
And so was the shirife also:
"Thou shalt not travale hether, dame, for nought;
Thy meed thou shalt have or thou go."
- They gave to her a ryght good gounne,
Of scarlat it was, as I heard saye;
She toke the gyft, and home she wente,
And couched her doune agayne.
- They rysed the towne of mery Carlle,
In all the hast that they can,
And came thronging to Wylyames house,
As fast they might gone.
- Theyr they besette that good yeman,
Round about on every syde;
Wylliam hearde great noyse of folkes,
That heytherward hyed.
- Alyce opened a shot wyndow,
And lokid all about;
She was ware of the justice and the shirife bothe,
Wyth a full great route.

woman

provided for: charity

quietly

may she fare

go

pleased

come hither

reward: before

down

aroused

haste

Who hurried there

window with shutters

crowd

Early Ballads and Tales

- 90 "Alas! treason," cryed Alyce,
"Ever wo may thou be!
Go into my chambre, my husband," she sayd,
"Swete Wylyam of Cloudeslé."
- 95 He toke hys sweard and hys buckler,
Hys bow and hys chyldren thre,
And wente into hys strongest chamber,
Where he thought surest to be.
- 100 Fayre Alice folowed him as a lover true,
With a pollaxe in her hande:
"He shalbe deade that here commeth in
Thys dore, whyle I may stand."
- 105 Cloudeslé bent a wel good bowe,
That was of trusty tre,
He smot the justise on the brest,
That hys arrowe brest in thre.
- 110 "God's curse on his hart," saide William,
"Thys day thy cote dyd on;
If it had ben no better than myne,
It had gone nere thy bone."
- 115 "Yelde the, Cloudeslé," sayd the justise,
"And thy bowe and thy arrowes the fro."
"Gods curse on hys hart," sayde fair Alice,
"That my husband councelleth so."
- 120 "Set fyre on the house," saide the sherife,
"Syth it wyll no better be,
And breanne we therin William," he saide,
"Hys wyfe and chyldren thre."
- They fyred the house in many a place.
The fyre flew upon bye;
"Alas!" than cryed fayr Alice,
"I se we shall here dy."

buckler (small shield)

safest

ax with long handle

brest

coat put on

thee

set fire to

die

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

William openyd hys backe wyndow,
That was in hys chambre on hye,
And wþt shetes let hys wýfe downne,
And hys chyldren thre.

sheets

- 125 "Have here my treasure," sayde William,
"My wýfe and my chyldren thre;
For Christes love do them no harme,
But wreke you all on me."

Wyllyam shot so wonderous well,
Tyll hys arrowes were all go,
And the fyre so fast upon hym fell,
That hys bow stryng brent in two.

burned

- 130 The spercles brent and fell hym on,
Good Wyllyam of Cloudesle;
135 But than was he a wofull man and sayde,
"Thys is a cowardes death to me."

embers

"Lever I had," sayde Wyllyam,
"With my sworde in the route to renne,
Then here among myne ennemyes wode
140 Thus cruelly to bren."

I'd rather

run

furious

burn

He toke hys swerd and hys buckler,
And among them all he ran;
Where the people were most in prece,
He smot downne many a man.

in a crowd

- 145 There myght no man stand hys stroke,
So fersly on them he ran;
Then they threw wyndowes and dores on him,
And so toke that good yeman.

withstand

fiercely

There they hym bounde both hand and fote,
150 And in depe donegeon hym cast;
"Now, Cloudesle," sayde the bye justice,
"Thou shalt be hanged in hast."

Early Ballads and Tales

"One vow shal I make," sayde the sherife,
"A payre of new galowes shall I for the make,
155 And al the gates of Caerlel shalbe shutte,
There shall no man come in therat.

"Then shall not helpe Clim of the Clouge,
Nor yet Adam Bell,
Though they came with a thousand mo,
160 Nor all the devils in hell."

Early in the mornyng the justice uprose,
To the gates fast gan he gon,
And commaunded to be shut full cloce
Lightlie everychone.

*began he to go
closed tightly
Quickly every one*

165 Then went he to the market-place,
As fast as he coulde hye;
A payre of new gallows there dyd he up set,
Besyde the pyllory.

*gallows
pyllory*

A lytle boy stod them amone.
170 And asked what meaneid that gallow-tre;
They sayde, "To hange a good yeaman,
Called Wylliham of Cloudesle."

That lytle boye was the towne swyne-heard,
And kept there Alyce swyne;
175 Full oft he had sene Cloudesle in the wodde,
And even hym there to dyne.

*swineherd
Alice's pigs*

He went out of a creves in the wall,
And lightly to the woode dyd gone;
There met he with these wyght yonge men,
180 Shortly and anone.

crevice

"Alast!" them sayde that lytle boye,
"Ye tary here all to longe;
Cloudesle is taken and dampaed to death,
All readye for to honge."

condemned

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

- 185 "Alas!" then sayde good Adam Bell,
"That ever we see thys daye!
He myght her with us have dwelled,
So ofte as we dyd him praye." *pleaded*
- 190 "He myght have taryed in grene foreste,
Under the shadowes sheene,
And have kepte both hym and us in restie,
Out of trouble and teene." *tarried
lovely
harm*
- 195 Adam bent a ryght good bow,
A great hart sone had he slayne; *at once*
"Take that, chylde," he sayde, "to thy dynner,
And bryng me myne arrowe agayne."
- 200 "Now go we hence," sayed these wight yong men, *wrong*
"Tary we no lenger here;
We shall hym borowe, by Gods grace, *ransom*
Though we bye it full dere." *pay for it dearly*
- To Caerlel went these good yemen,
In a mery mornynge of Maye:
Her is a fyt of Cloudesli,
And another is for to saye.

Fitt 2

- 205 And when they came to mery Caerlel,
In a fayre mornynge tyde, *morning time*
They founde the gates shut them untyll,
Round about on every syde. *against them*
- 210 "Alas!" than sayd good Adam Bell,
"That ever we were made men!
These gates be shyt so wonderly well,
That we may not come herein."

Early Ballads and Tales

- Than spake Clymme of the Clouche:
"With a wyle we wyll us in bryngē;
Let us say we be messengers,
Streyght comen from oure kynge."
deceitful stratagem
- 215
Adam sayd, "I have a leſtre wryten wele,
Now let us wyſely werke;
We wyll say we have the kynges ſeale,
I holde the porter no clerke."
*written
cunningly
think; unable to read*
- 220
Than Adam Bell bete on the gate,
With ſtockes greate and ſtronge;
The porter herde ſuch a noyſe therate,
And to the gate he thronge.
*bate
hastened*
- 225
"Who is there nowe," ſayde the porter,
"That maketh all this knockynge?"
"We be messengers," ſayd Clymme of the Clough,
"Be come ryght frome our kyng."
230
"We have a letter," ſayd Adam Bell,
"To the justyce we muſt it bryngē
Let us in oure message to do,
That we were agayne to our kyng."
So we can return
- 235
"Here cometh none in," ſayd the porter,
"By Hym that dyed on a tre,
Tyll a false thefe be hanged,
Called Wyllyam of Cloudesle."
By Christ who was crucified
- 240
Than ſpake that good yeman, Clym of the Clouche,
And ſwore by Mary fre.
"If that we ſtande long wythout,
Lyke a thefe hanged ſhalt thou be.
245
"Lo! here we have the kynges ſeale;
What, lordane, arte thou wode?"
The porter had wende it had been ſo,
And lyghtly dyd of hys hode.
*the gracious Virgin Mary
fool; mad
thought
quickly took off his hood*

Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

- 245 "Welcome be my lordes seale," sayd he,
"For that shall ye come in."
He opened the gate ryght shortly,
An evyl openyng for hym!
- 250 "Now are we in," sayde Adam Bell,
"Wherof we are full fayne;
But Cryst knoweth that herowed hell,
How we shall come oute agayne." glad
who borrowed Hell
- 255 "Had we the keys," sayd Clym of the Clowgh,
"Ryght well than sholde we spede; prosper
Than myght we come out well ynough.
Whan we sc tyme and nede."
- They called the porter to a councell,
And wronge bys necke in two. wrang
And kest hym in a depe dongeon,
And toke the keys hym fro. cost
- 260 "Now am I porter," sayd Adam Bell;
"Se, broder, the keys have we here;
The worste porter to mery Carlell,
That ye had this hondreth yere.
- 265 "Now wyll we oure bowes bende,
Into the towne wyll we go.
For to delyver our dere broder,
Where he lyeth in care and wo."
- 270 Then they bent thei good yew bowes,
And loked thei strings were round; properly aligned
The market-place of mery Carlyll,
They beset in that stounde. moment
- 275 And as they loked them besyde,
A payre of newe galowes there they se,
And the justyce, with a quest of swerters, inquest of jurors
That had juded Clowdyslē there hanged to be. judged

Early Ballads and Tales

And Clowdyslē hymselfe lay redy in a carte,
Fast bounde bothe fote and hande,
And a strong rope aboue his necke,
280 All redy for to be hangde.

The justyce called to hym a ladde;
Clowdysles clothes sholde he have,
To take the mesure of that good yoman,
And therafter to make his grave.

lad

285 "I have sene as greate a merveyll," sayd Clowdyslē.
"As bytwene this and pryme,
He that maketh thys grave for me,
Hymselfe may lye therin."

290 "Thou spekest proudly," sayd the justyce.
"I shall hange the with my hande."
Full well that herde his bretheren two,
There stylly as they dyd stande.

295 Than Clowdyslē cast hys eyen asyde,
And sawe hys bretheren stande,
At a corner of the market place,
With theyr good bowes bent in theyr hand,
Redy the justyce for to chase.

300 "I se good conforte," sayd Clowdyslē.
"Yet hope I well to fare;
If I myght have my handes at wyll,
Ryght lytell wolde I care."

free

305 Than bespake good Adam Bell,
To Clymme of the Clowgh so fre;
"Broder, see ye marke the justyce well;
Lo yonder ye may him se.

"And at the sheryf shote I wyll,
Strongly with an arowe kene."

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

A better shotte in mery Carlyll,
Thys seven yere was not sene.

- 310 They loused theyr arowes bothe at ones, *released*
Of no man had they drede;
The one hyt the justyce, the other the sheryf,
That bothe theyr sydes gan bledē.
- 315 All men voyded that them stode nye, *moved away*
Whan the justyce fell to the grounde.
And the sheryf fell nyghe hym by;
Eyther had his dethes wounde.
- 320 All the citezens fast gan flee, *did*
They durste no lenger abyde; *dared*
There lyghtly they loused Clowdyslē, *quickly; freed*
Where he with ropes lay tyde. *tied*
- 325 Wylyam sterre to an offycer of the towne, *rushed*
Hys ase out his hande he wronge; *wrenched*
On eche syde he smote them downe, *struck*
Hym thought he had taryed to longe.
- Wylliam sayd to his bretheren two,
"Thys daye let us togyder lyve and deye;
If ever you have nede as I have nowe,
The same shall ye fynde by me."
- 330 They shyt so well in that tyde, *shot; time*
For theyr srynges were of sylke full sure, *silk*
That they kepte the stretes on every syde; *held*
That batayll dyd longe endure.
- 335 They fought togyder as bretheren true,
Lyke hardy men and bolde;
Many a man to the grounde they thrawē,
And made many an herte colde.

Early Ballads and Tales

- But whan theyr arowes were all gone,
Men presyd on them full fast;
340 They drewe theyr swerdes than anone,
And theyr bowes from them caste.
- They wente lyghtly on theyr waye,
With swerdes and buckelers rounde,
By that it was the myddes of the daye.
345 They had made many a wounde.
- There was many an oute-horne in Carlyll blowen,
And the belles backwarde dyd they ryng:
Many a woman sayd "Alas,"
And many theyr handes dyd wryng.

 350 The mayre of Carlyll forth come was,
And with hym a full grete route;
These thre yomen dredde hym full sore,
For theyr lyves stode in doubt.

 355 The mayre came armed a full greate pace,
With a pollaxe in hys hande;
Many a stronge man with hym was,
There in that stoure to stande.

 360 The mayre smote at Clowdyslē with his byll,
His buckeler he brast in two;
Full many a yoman with grete yll,
"Alas, treason!" they cryed for wo.
"Kepe we the gates fast," they bad,
"That these traytors theroute not go."

 365 But all for nought was that they wrought,
For so fast they downe were layde
Tyll they all thre, that so manfully fought,
Were gotten without at a brayde.

 "Have here your keys," sayd Adam Bell,
"Myne offyce I here forsake;

Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

370 Yf ye do by my councell,
A newe porter ye make."

He threwe the keys there at theyr bedes,
And bad them evyll to thryve,
And all that leiseth ony good yoman
375 To come and confortie his wyve.

hinder

Thus be these good yomen gone to the wode,
As lyght as lefe on lynde;
They laughe and be mery in theyr mode,
Theyr enemyes were farre behynde.

linden, tree

380 Whan they came to Inglyswode,
Under theyr tryste-tre,
There they founde bowes full gode,
And arowes greate plenté.

meeting tree

"So helpe me God," sayd Adam Bell,
385 And Clymme of the Clowgh so fre,
"I wolde we were nowe in mery Carlell,
Before that fayre meyné."

company

They set them downe and made good chere,
And eate and dranke full well:
390 Here is a fyte of these wyght yonge men,
And another I shall you tell.

Fitt 3

As they sat in Inglyswode,
Under theyr tryste-tre,
Them thought they herde a woman wepe,
395 But her they myght not se.

Sore syghed there fayre Alyce, and sayd,
"Alas that ever I se this daye!"

Early Ballads and Tales

For now is my dere husbone slayne,
Alas and welawaye!

- 400 "Myght I have spoken wthy hys dere bretheren,
With eyther of them twayne,
To shew to them what him befell
My herte were out of Payne."

- 405 Clowdysle walked a lytell besyde,
And loked under the grene wodde lynde;
He was ware of his wyfe and his chyldren,
Full wo in herte and mynde.

*tree
children*

- 410 "Welcome, wyfe," than sayd Wylyam,
"Unto this trysty-ire;
I had wende yesterdaye, by swete Saint John,
Thou sholde me never have se."

thought

- 415 "Now wele is me," she sayd, "that ye be here,
My herte is out of wo."
"Dame," he sayd, "be mery and glad,
And thanke my bretheren two."

it is good for me

- "Here of to speke," sayd Adam Bell,
"I wys it is no bote;
The meat that we must supp withall,
It runneth yet fast on fote."

Truly it is no use

- 420 Then went they down into a launde,
These noble archares all thre,
Eche of them slewe a harte of grece,
The best they coude there se.

clearing

fat hart

- 425 "Have here the best, Alyce my wyfe,"
Sayde Wylyam of Clowdysle,
"By cause ye so boldely stode me by,
Whan I was slayne full eyne."

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

- Than they wente to theyr souper,
Wyth suche mete as they had.
430 And thanked God of theyr fortune;
They were bothe mery and glad.
- And whan they had souped well,
Certayne withouten leace,
Clowdysse sayde, "We wyll to oure kyng,
435 To get us a chartre of peace."
*sapp'd
lying
letter of pardon*
- "Alyce shal be at sojournyng,
In a nunsse here besyde;
My tow sonnes shall with her go,
And ther they shall abyde.
*temporarilu may
two*
- 440 "Myne eldest sone shall go with me,
For hym have I no care,
And he shall bring you worde agayne
How that we do fare."
anxiety
- Thus be these wight men to London gone,
445 As fast as they maye hye,
Tyll they came to the kymges palays,
There they woulde nedes be.
- And whan they came to the kymges courte,
Unto the pallace gate,
450 Of no man wold they aske leve,
But boldly went in therat.
- They preced prestly into the hall,
Of no man had they dreade;
The porter came after and dyd them call,
455 And with them began to chyde.
rashed quickly
- The usher sayd, "Yemen, what wolde ye have?
I praye you tell me;
Ye myght thus make offycers shent;
Good syrs, of whens be ye?"
disgraced

Early Ballads and Tales

- 460 "Syr, we be outlawes of the forest,
Certayne withouten leace,
And hyther we be come to our kyng,
To get us a charter of peace."
without falsehood
- 465 And whan they came before our kyng,
As it was the lawe of the lande,
They kneled downe without lettymge,
And eche heilde up his hande.
delay
- 470 They sayd, "Lorde, we beseche you here,
That ye wyll graunie us grace,
For we have slayne your fatte falowe dere,
In many a sondry place."
- "What is your names?" than sayd our kyng,
"Anone that you tell me."
They sayd, "Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough,
475 And Wylliam of Clowdesle." *At once*
- "Be ye those theves," than sayd our kyng,
"That men have tolde of to me?
Here to God I make a vowe,
Ye shall be hanged all thre.
- 480 "Ye shall be deed without mercy,
As I am kyng of this lande."
He commanded his officers everichone
Fast on them to lay hand.
- 485 There they toke these good yemen,
And arrested them all thre:
"So may I thryve," sayd Adam Bell,
"Thys game lyketh not me.
- 490 "But, good lord, we beseche you nowe,
That ye wyll graunie us grace,
In so moche as we be to you commen;
Or elles that we may fro you passe,

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

"With such weapons as we have here,
Tyll we be out of your place;
And yf we lyve this hondred yere,
495 We wyll aske you no grace."

"Ye speke proudly," sayd the kyng.
"Ye shall be hanged all thre."
"That were great pity," sayd the quene,
"If any grace myght be.

500 "My lorde, whan I came fyrst in to this lande,
To be your wedded wyfe,
The first bone that I wolde aske,
Ye wolde graunte me belyfe.

*boon
immediately*

505 "And I asked you never none tyll nowe,
Therfore, good lorde, graunte it me."
"Nowe aske it, madame," sayd the kyng.
"And graunted shall it be."

510 "Than, good lorde, I you beseche,
The yemen graunte you me."
"Madame, ye myght have asked a bone
That sholde have ben worthe them thre.

515 "Ye myght have asked towres and townes,
Parkes and foreastes plentie."
"None so pleasaunt to mi pay," she said,
"Nor none so lefe to me."

*liking
dear*

"Madame, sith it is your desyre,
Your askyng graunted shalbe;
But I had never have geven you
Good market-townes thre."

rather

520 The quene was a glad woman,
And sayd, "Lord, gramarcy;
I dare undertake for them
That true men shall they be.

thank you

525 " But, good lord, speke som mery word,
 That they comfort may se."
 " I graunt you grace," then said our kyng.
 " Washe, felos, and to meate go ye."

530 They had not setten but a whyle,
 Certayne without lesyng.
 There came messengers out of the north,
 With letters to our kyng.

535 And whan they came before the kyng,
 The kneled downe upon theyr kne,
 And sayd, " Lord, your offykers grete you wel,
 Of Caerlel in the north contré."

540 " How fare my justice," sayd the kyng,
 " And my sheriſe also?"
 " Syr, they be slayne, without leasyng,
 And many an officer mo."

545 " Who hath them slayne?" sayd the kyng.
 " Anone thou tell me."
 " Adam Bel, and Clime of the Clough,
 And Wylyam of Cloudeslé."

550 " Alas for rewth!" then sayd our kyng,
 " My hart is wonderous sore;
 I had never than a thousand pounde
 I had knowne of thys before.

555 " For I have y-graunted them grace,
 And that forthynketh me;
 But had I knowne all thys before,
 They had ben hanged all thre."

560 The kyng opened the letter anone,
 Hymselfe he red it tho,
 And founde how these thre outlawes had slaine,
 Thre hundred men and mo.

without lyng

country

lying

grieves me

then

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

Fyrst the justice and the sheryfe,
And the mayre of Caerl le towne;
Of all the constables and catchipolles
Alyve were left not one.

*officers of the sheriff
Alice*

560 The baylyes and the bedyls both,
And the sergeautes of the law,
And forty fosters of the fe
These outlawes had y-slaw,

*bailliffs and beadles
foresters of the estate
slain*

565 And broken his parks, and slaine his dere;
Over all they chose the best;
So perelous outlawes as they were
Walked not by easte nor west.

570 When the kynge this letter had red,
In hys harte he syghed sore;
"Take up the table," anone he bad,
"For I may eate no more."

575 The kyng called hys best archars,
To the buttis with hym to go;
"I wyll se these felowes shote," he sayd,
"That in the north have wrought this wo."

The kynges bowmen busked them blyve,
And the quenes archers also,
So dyd these thre wyght yemen,
Wyth them they thought to go.

prepared themselves at once

580 There twyse or thryse they shote about,
For to assay theyr hande;
There was no shote these thre yemen shot
That any prycke might them stand.

target

585 Then spake Wylyam of Cloudesle:
"By God that for me dyed,
I hold hym never no good archar
That shuteth at buttis so wyde."

Early Ballads and Tales

"Wher at?" then sayd our kyng.
"I pray thee tell me."
590 "At suche a but, syr," he sayd,
"As men use in my countree."

Willyam wente into a fyeld,
And his to brothren with him;
There they set up to hasell roddes,
595 Twenty score paces betwene.

two hazel sticks

"I hold him an archar," said Cloudeslé,
"That yonder wande cleveth in two."
"Here is none suche," sayd the kyng.
"Nor none that can do so."

600 "I shall assaye, syr," sayd Cloudeslé,
"Or that I farther go."
Cloudeslé, with a bearyng arow,
Clave the wand in to.

try

Before

flight arrow (see note)

Cleft

605 "Thou art the best archer," then said the king.
"Forsothe that ever I se."
"And yet for your love," sayd Wylliam,
"I wyll do more maystry."

show more skill

610 "I have a sonne is seven yere olde,
He is to me full deare;
I wyll hym tye to a stake,
All shall se that be here,

615 "And lay an apple upon hys head,
And go syxe score paces hym fro,
And I my selfe, with a brode arow,
Shall cleve the apple in two."

"Now hast the," then sayd the kyng;
"By Him that dyed on a tre,
But yf thou do not as thou hast sayde,
Hanged shalt thou be.

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

620 "And thou touche his head or gowne,
In syght that men may se,
By all the sayntes that be in heaven,
I shall hange you all thre."

"That I have promised," said William,
625 "I wyl it never forsake."
And there even before the kynge,
In the earth he drove a stake,

630 And bound thereto his eldest sonne,
And bad hym stande styl therat,
And turned the childes face fro him,
Because he shuld not sterke.

flinch

635 An apple upon his head he set,
And then his bowe he bent;
Syxe score paces they were outmet,
And thether Cloudeslé went.

120 paces were measured out

There he drew out a fayr brode arrowe,
Hys bowe was great and lange;
He set that arrowe in his bowe,
That was both styffe and stronge.

640 He prayed the people that was there
That they would styl stande;
"For he that shooteth for such a wager,
Behoveth a stedfast hand."

Requires

645 Muche people prayed for Cloudeslé.
That hys lyfe saved myght be,
And whan he made hym redy to shose,
There was many a wepynge eye.

Thus Clowdeslé clefie the apple in two,
That many a man it se;
"Over Goddes forbode," sayd the kynge,
650 "That thou sholdest shote at me!"

May God forbid

Early Ballads and Tales

- “I gyve the eighteen pens a daye,
And my bowe shalte thou bere,
And over all the north countree
I make the chefe sydere.” *ranger*
- 655 “And I gyve the twelve pens a day,” sayd the quene,
“By God and by my faye;
Come fetche thy payment whan thou wylt,
No man shall say the naye.
- 660 “Wylliam, I make the gentylman
Of clothynge and of fee,
And thy two brethren yemen of my chambre,
For they are so semely to se. *thee*
- 665 “Your sone, for he is tendre of age,
Of my wyne seller shall he be,
And whan he commeth to mannes stafe,
Better avaunced shall he be. *In my wine cellar*
- 670 “And, Wylliam, bryng me your wylf,” sayd the quene:
Me longeth sore here to se;
She shall be my chefe gentylwoman,
And governe my nursery.”
- The yemen thanked them full courteysly,
And sayd, “To Rome streyght wyl we wende,
Of all the synnes that we have done
To be assoyled of his hand.” *absolved: [the pope's]*
- 675 So forthe be gone these good yemen,
As fast as they myght hye,
And after came and dwelled with the kymge,
And dyed good men all thre.
- 680 Thus endeth the lyves of these good yemen,
God sende them eternall blysse,
And all that with hande-bowe shoteth,
That of heven they may never mysse!

Notes

Abbreviations: A = John Byddell (c. 1536); B = Wynkyn de Worde (c. 1510); C = Copland (c. 1550).

- 7 *the*. Child emends to *thre* as the outlaws are consistently mentioned as a threesome, but while this makes sense it does not seem necessary.
- 16 *Englysshe wood*. Child prints the name without a gap, presumably on the model of *Inglewood*, the usual name for this forest. It is mentioned in the first quasi-historical reference to Robin Hood and Little John, that is, in the chronicle by Andrew of Wyntoun written in the 1420s; it is also a forest of adventure in *The Awntyrs of Arthur*, a fifteenth-century alliterative poem. However, little is made of the forest as a location in this ballad.
- 50 The source reads "In woulde," and while a construction could begin this way, it is more likely that "In" is an error for "I," as Child emends.
- 74 *saye*. Child emends to *sayne* for the sake of the rhyme, which seems unnecessary.
- 80 Child inserts *as* (not in any of the sources) after *fast*, but this is an acceptable Middle English condensed idiom and the emendation is not necessary.
- 84 Child inserts *they* (not in any of the sources) before *hyed*, presumably on metrical grounds, but this is not necessary.
- 95 *hyz*. A: *hy*.
- 99 *commeth*. Not *cometh*, as Child has it.
- 132 *bow*. A: *bo*.
- 133 *spercles* is an unusual version of "sparks," here apparently meaning "embers."

Early Ballads and Tales

- 174 *there*. Child emends to *fayre* and Dobson and Taylor (1976, p. 264) add *fayre* to *there*. There seems no ground for either of these versions.
- 191 *reste*. A: *reaste*. Child spells it as *reaste* as if the *s* has dropped out, rather than being mis-set by A, which is more likely.
- 204 Child leaves a gap here, but does not insert a *fitt* marker. He does the same at each later *fitt* break.
- 211 At this point Child begins to use the source he calls *B*, a fragmentary print which does appear to have some good readings, but is not here always accepted, as *C* seems in several instances better.
- 227 Child's source *B* provides *two* before *messengers*, but *C* seems to have the sharper line and is accepted here.
- 228 *come ryght*. This is the *C* reading, where the *B* fragment has *comen streight* which, like *two* in the previous line, seems the sort of expansion and banalization that comes with a later text.
- 241 Child prints *gor* from *B* after *have*; this (as in line 228) seems a weaker reading and is here not accepted.
- 249 Child follows *B* in reading *Now we are in* (though *Now* is from *C*, as *B* here is cropped). However, the *C* reading *Now are we in* is better Middle English, inverting subject and verb after an initial conjunction or adverbial. Therefore *C* is accepted.
- 250 Child prints *Therof*, but in fact *C*, from which he draws the initial letter (*B* is still cropped), has *Wherof*.
- 268 *Iyeth* is Child's reading, which is accepted; it is presumably an emendation of *C* which reads *Iyverh* (*B* lacks lines 268–70), an inappropriate term for being in captivity compared with the familiar collocation with *lie*: see line 277, where William *lay* in a cart.
- 270 This action is a preparation for shooting seriously; if the bow strings are twisted, not running straight between the two ends of the bow, the arrow may veer off course.

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley

- 275 *swevers*. *B*'s reading is clearly much better than *C* and the rest with the meaningless *squieres*: the *swevers*, or jurors, formed the jury.
- 285 *Cloudyale*, not as Child has it *Cloudeslye*.
- 293 This is a five-line stanza, presumably because the author added a rhyming line, thinking *marker place* ended the second, not third line. This casts some light on the irregularities found elsewhere, when it does not always seem that a line is missing when a stanza is deficient.
- 301-30 Child is again using *B* and providing the opening words from *C* as the *B* leaf is cropped in these lines.
- 346 *an ouate-home*. Skeat suggested this should be emended to *a nouate-home*, that is, a horn which was sounded at need (*nouate*). Child accepted this, but it is clear (as Dobson and Taylor note, 1976, p. 267) that an "out horn" was sounded to bring every body *out* in the streets, and the text can stand.
- 347 A peal of bells is rung "backward," that is, out of their usual order, for an alarm.
- 353 *For theyr lyves stode in doubt*. The more elaborate *C* version *For of theyr lyves they stode in great doubt* appears derived from *B*, and the *C* editor or compositor has personalized the idiom "to stand in doubt." Therefore, Child's *B* reading is accepted here.
- 360 *yif*, from *B*, seems a better reading than *C*'s *evyf*: *yif* implies an injury, but *evyf* is less well focussed.
- 394 The *B* fragment here lacks the word *wepe* at the end of the line, but although this is an elaboration, the line seems so much weaker without it that it is accepted.
- 402 Child feels there is a line missing, and employs one found in a later print. This is accepted here, though it is curious that, as in a number of other cases where the regular four-line-stanza pattern seems disrupted, the rhyme scheme is related to a line in the previous stanza. Could this in fact be an irregular seven-line stanza? While this is conceivable, it seems simpler to print, following Child, the extra line.

- 406 The *B* fragment only has *chylde* but although this, a version of *childer*, is an acceptable plural for *child*, the text is cropped hereabouts: the final *n*, found in *C*, has probably been lost, and is printed here. However, *B* is unlikely to have had room for *thre* before clipping, and this is omitted as a *C* filler.
- 452 At this point Child adopts the *A* fragment as a basis of his text, and this is followed here; it is distinctly earlier than Copland's *C* text and has some good readings.
- 455 Child finds *chylde* invisible and adds it from a later text, but it is in fact just readable.
- 480 *deed*. Child emends the spelling to *dead*, but *deed* is perfectly acceptable as a spelling.
- 512 *A* reads *towres* and *towne* and while this might seem a sensible reading, the king does shortly refer to *townes* being on offer (line 519), so Child's plural emendation seems sensible.
- 525 *C* reads *they comfort not comfort they* as Child has it.
- 527 For the cultural significance of hand washing before a meal, see the note to line 164 of *Robin Hood and the Potter*. See also lines 125 and 921 in the *Gest*.
- 536 *fore*. Child emends to *fareth*, but in fact the subject is plural, being both *justice* and, in the next line, *sherife*.
- 546 *than*. MS: *an*. Emended by Child to *than*, as is found in later texts and seems essential.
- 576 With the *C* text Child reads *biske* but this would make a very dramatic historic present, not supported by anything else in context, and it seems the later texts are right to use a past tense *basked*.
- 594 This describes the hardest test of shooting; elsewhere (see *Gest*, lines 1165–66, 1600–01) archers aimed simply at peeled wands set in the ground. Sometimes the wands carried circular targets, like wreaths, but even then to split the wands was the greatest skill.

- 602 a *bearynge arrow*, as Dobson and Taylor note (1976, p. 271), is the opposite of a "broad arrow," and is designed for distance rather than causing damage; it is also called a "flight arrow." When William uses a "broad" or heavy arrow to split the apple (line 614) the range of 120 paces makes the feat all the more remarkable.
- 637 *longe*. Child emends to *longe* for rhyme, but this is unnecessary in the context of the relaxed practices of ballad rhyming.
- 642 The *A* fragment is used by Child as the basis of his text until the end of the text, see note to line 452.
- 673 The *A* text alone says *To Rome streyght wyll we wende*, and Dobson and Taylor suggest that the fact that it is torn after this point is a result of this Catholic statement (1976, p. 273). However, if sectarian feeling had interfered with the text, it would be probable that the Catholic statement would be destroyed, and casual damage is a more likely reason for the missing lines. Sectarianism is, however, evident in the fact that all the post-reformation texts read *To some bishop we will wende*.



Robyn Hod and the Shryff off Notyngham

Introduction

Notwithstanding his important role in ballads and prose fiction, Robin Hood would have been best known in communities throughout fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Britain as the subject of a wide range of theatrical and quasi-theatrical entertainments. Most took the form of ceremonial games, dances, pageants, processions, and other mimetic events of popular culture of which we only get a fleeting glimpse in surviving civic and ecclesiastical records. Revels featuring the legendary outlaw appear to have surged in growth towards the close of the fifteenth century and remained popular from the royal court to the rural village green throughout the following century (Lancashire, p. xxvi). Indeed, it is not exaggerating to say that Robin Hood plays and games were the most popular form of secular dramatic entertainment in provincial England for most of the sixteenth century (for records of performance, see Lancashire, index under "Robin Hood"). This is generally unrecognized by both literary and theatrical historians, many of whom assume that the Tudor Reformation quickly put an end to such popular pastimes — it did not (White, p. 163). But there are other reasons for overlooking Robin Hood spectacles: few Robin Hood play scripts survive (folk plays were rarely written down and published) and only in the past few years have archivists and provincial historians (many working on the Records of Early English Drama project) begun to document in a systematic way records of theatrical entertainment in early modern England.

Although the first record of a Robin Hood play is from Exeter in 1426-27 (Lancashire, p. 134), the earliest extant play text, a twenty-one line dramatic fragment from East Anglia known as *Robyn Hod and the Shryff off Notyngham*, is dated half-a-century later. The text is written on one side of a single sheet of paper, now housed in Trinity College Library, Cambridge; the other side of the page, in a hand thought to be from the same period, contains accounts of money received by one John Sterndalle in 1475-76 (Dobson and Taylor, p. 203). Scholars connect the manuscript to Sir John Paston, who, in a letter of April 1473, complains that his horse-keeper W. Wood has "goon into Bernysdale" (i.e., left his service). Paston further remarks that "I have kepyd hym thys iij. yer to pleye Seynt Jorge and Robyn Hod and the Shryff off Notyngham" (Gairdner, p. 185). It would appear, therefore, that this script is of a Robin Hood play sponsored by the household of this well-to-do Norwich

gentleman and performed by his servants in the early 1470s.

As the transcription of the manuscript version, which lacks speaker rubrics, scene divisions, and stage directions, makes clear, the text is more of "a scenario or mnemonic providing a framework for improvisation" than a finished script (Wiles, p. 37). While there are certainly ambiguities in the text, the settings, speakers, and actions, especially in the first scene, are relatively easy to follow, which suggests that the script may be complete as it stands. The mentions of the *lynde* in line 3 and the *pryson* in line 20 indicate that there are two fictional settings: the greenwood and a prison. We say "fictional" because the staging conventions of the time required little more than a spacious outdoor playing area — perhaps a field near the Paston household, where archery, wrestling, and stone-throwing competitions could take place freely. The dialogue, much of it in direct address, often mentions the addressee's name: *Syr Sheryffe* (line 1), *Robyn Hode* (line 5), *Syr Knignt* (line 15), indicating a cast of three actors for the scene, possibly others if Robin's men appear when summoned (line 17). Likewise, the simple active verbs identify most of the actions and act as stage directions: *caste the stome* (line 11), *blowe myn home* (line 17), and *off I smyte* (line 22). The second scene, however, is much less clear in speaker identity and action, although it is reasonable to conclude that it requires seven or more actors to play two unnamed outlaws, Friar Tuck, the Sheriff, his deputies, and Robin Hood.

The minimal dialogue and the active verbs underscore the real appeal of the play — improvisational action. What is important here is robust activity: an archery match, stone throwing, tossing the pole ("caber" in Scotland), wrestling, and vigorous sword fighting. "The dialogue," as David Wiles observes, "serves simply to punctuate the action" (pp. 31, 37). The various sporting competitions are akin to those performed in May games, of which, in many communities, Robin Hood plays formed an important part (see Introduction to *Robyn Hood and the Friar* and *Robyn Hood and the Potter*, pp. 281–84), and the climactic hero-combat of the first scene and the melee at the end of the second recall two other types of folk drama popular in the fifteenth century, the St. George play and the Hock Tuesday play. Not surprisingly, Paston's servant/player, Wood, excelled in the St. George play as well (see Mills, pp. 136–37).

As mentioned above, the plot of the first scene is relatively straightforward. An unidentified knight offers to capture Robin Hood, and the sheriff agrees, offering to pay him *golde and fee*. The sheriff apparently withdraws, while the knight confronts Robin under a tree and challenges him to an archery contest. The shooting match proceeds, and Robin wins when he splits the target. Next the pair compete at stone casting, pole throwing, and wrestling. Robin wins one fall, while the knight wins the other. After being thrown, Robin curses the knight and blows his horn to summon

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help from his companions. Robin then challenges the knight to a sword fight to the death, and Robin kills the knight and cuts off his head, placing the severed head in his hood. Robin then dons the knight's attire, and the first scene ends. As David Mills remarks, a good part of the play's impact derives "from the comic social inversion of the knight's defeat, and a further part from the recognition and dramatic frustration of the 'death-resurrection-triumph' pattern of hero-combat plays. The knight's death here is final, followed by his functional beheading (to prevent identification?)" (Mills, p. 136).

The second scene begins when two unidentified outlaws greet each other, one telling the other that Robin and some of his men have been captured by the sheriff. (This revelation does not follow logically from what has happened at the end of the first scene, when Robin kills the bounty-hunting knight and dons his clothing. In order for the second scene to make sense, Robin has to have been identified and captured by the sheriff; so something is missing here.) The two outlaws then agree to *sette on foore* (line 29) in order to find and kill the sheriff. On route to town, they see Friar Tuck drawing his bow; he is single-handedly fighting the sheriff and his men. The three of them are suddenly surrounded and ordered to yield. One of the outlaws (Little John?), addressing Friar Tuck, exclaims that they have been captured and bound. As the three outlaws are taken to the gates of the prison, the sheriff orders the *fals outlawe* (line 37), presumably Robin Hood who is inside, to come out to face his execution. As the gates are opened for the *thevys* to go in — and this is conjectural — Robin and the men inside jump the sheriff and his men, rescue the three outlaws outside, and escape. This reading resolves the problem, as created by Wiles and others, of having Robin, still in disguise as the knight, show up to rescue his men and throw the sheriff in prison. While Wiles's reading gives the play ironic closure — the "jailer jailed" — it ignores the fact that Robin has been taken prisoner in lines 27–28.

Much of the critical commentary has attempted to link the play to the ballad *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. While there are similarities — the sheriff hires a bounty-hunter to kill Robin, Robin and the antagonist engage in a shooting match and a sword fight, Robin decapitates his enemy and blows a horn, and Robin frees Little John from the sheriff — the major differences suggest instead that the play and the ballad share a common but distant source.

Two other points are worth noting. First, the references to Frere Tuke in lines 31 and 36 of the play are significant because they mark the first appearance of the outlaw ecclesiastic in literature. The early ballads — *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, and the *Gest* — feature Robin, Little John, Much, and Will, but not Friar Tuck. In *Robin Hood and the Monk*, Robin is forced to go to Nottingham to attend mass because he has no chaplain in Sherwood. Like Maid Marian, Friar

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Tuck enters the legend relatively late and from a source different from the early ballads. One theory identifies Friar Tuck as the criminal alias of a historical outlaw, Robert Stafford, chaplain of Lindfield, Sussex, who was charged in 1417 with a variety of serious offenses, including poaching, robbery, and murder (Holt, 1989, 58–59). Another theory connects Friar Tuck to the morris dances, in which a friar is paired with a "girlfriend," popularly identified as Maid Marian. The morris dance, however, is a late medieval, if not a Tudor, development, and, hence, too late to have influenced the 1475 play (Knight, 1994, p. 104). A third theory, not mentioned by previous commentators, is that Friar Tuck is somehow related to another historical outlaw, Eustache the Monk (c. 1170–1217), who is the subject of a thirteenth-century French romance, *Li Romans de Witasse le Moine*. After his father was murdered, Eustache left the abbey of Saint Samer and demanded justice from the count of Boulogne. When Eustache's champion loses the judicial duel, his lands and titles are confiscated by the count. Eustache escapes and disguises himself as a monk, calling himself Witasse le Moine. Using a variety of other disguises and tricks, Eustache exacts his revenge on the count by harrying his men and stealing his property. Eustache was not unknown in England, where for a time he supported the cause of King John against the French. Switching sides, he was killed by the English in a naval battle at Sandwich in 1217. In *The Lost Literature of Medieval England* (London: Methuen, 1970), R. M. Wilson observes that the stories of Eustache were well-known in England (p. 117). Among other accounts, now lost, two fourteenth-century chroniclers, John of Canterbury and William of Guisborough, recounted his adventures.

Of further significance is that the play, like contemporary ballads and commentary through to the mid-sixteenth century, emphasizes Robin Hood as a "figure of anarchy rather than of justice" (Mills, p. 133) who is openly defiant of constituted authority. Not surprisingly, some government officials perceived the plays as politically subversive. Around 1540, Richard Morrison, an advisor to Henry VIII, condemned "the lewdenes and ribawdry that there is opened to the people, disobedience also to your [i.e., the King's] officers, is taught, whilst these good bloodes go about to take from the shiref of Notyngham one that for offendyng the lawes should have suffered execution" (text in Anglo; see p. 179). Critics in the past have explained the inversion of authority in the plays as a civic-and-church sponsored "safety-valve" to release pent-up frustrations of the common people, and indeed at least one contemporary reported that the mock fighting was a useful form of military exercise for the citizenry preparing for invasion and war (Child, III, 45). Nevertheless some recent scholarship has connected seasonal festivity involving Robin Hood to popular resistance and even peasant rebellions (Billington, p. 1). Certainly there are instances of social disorder, even riots, occasioned by Robin Hood games, but surviving records

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are either ambiguous about the cause of disorder or indicate that the riots, or threatened riots, arose from prohibitions against the popular revels (Lancashire, p. 91). Moreover, studies undertaken by Peter Greenfield and James Stokes demonstrate that in the majority of cases in provincial towns of England, "Robin Hood games and king-ales function as charitable fund-raisers, authorized by and organized by local officials — usually the churchwardens — and usually culminating in a communal feast," and that they are "anything but spontaneous expressions of popular resistance to authority" (Greenfield, p. 2; Stokes).

The text of the dramatic fragment is presented in two versions: an exact transcription of the manuscript, retaining the spellings and punctuation, and a conjectural reconstruction of the fragment in two scenes.

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Robyn Hod and the Shryff off Notyngham

I. Manuscript Version

Transcribed from Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.2.64 (fragment), c. 1475

Syr sheryffe for thy sake Robyn hode wull y take.
I wyll the gyffe golde and fee This be heste þ^e holde me.
Robyn hode flayre and fre vndre this lynde shote we.
with the shote y wyll Alle thy lustes to full fyll.
5 Have at the pryke. And y cleue the styke.
late vs caste the stome I grūme well be seynt Iohn.
late vs caste the exalire have a foote be fore the.
syr knyght ye haue a falle. And I the Robyn qwyte shall
Owie on the I blowe myn horne. hit ware better be vn borne.
10 lat vs fylght at ottraunce he that fletch god gyfe hym myschaunce.
Now I haue the maystry here off I smye this sory swyre
This knyghtys clothis wolle I were And in my hode his hede woll bere.
welle mete felowe myn What herst þ^e of gode Robyn
Robin hode and his menye w^t the sheryffe takyn be.
15 sette on foote w^t gode wyll And the sheryffe wull we kyll
Be holde wele ffere tuke howe he dothe his bowe pluke
3eld yow syrs to the sheryffe. Or elles shall yo' bowes clyffe.
Now we be bownden alle in same ffere [T]uke þis is no game.
Co[m]je þ^e foeth þ^e faiß outlawe. þ^e shall [be] hangyd and y drawe.
20 Now alas what shall we doo we [m]oste to the prysone goo
Opy[n] the yatis [faste] anom An[d] la]te theiſ thevys ymme goo

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II. Reconstruction of the dramatic fragment in two scenes with designated speakers.

Scene One

[*The scene is set in the forest.*]

<i>Knight</i>	Syr Sheryff, for thy sake Robyn Hode wull Y take.	
<i>Sheriff</i>	I wyll the gyffe golde and see This beheste thou holde me.	give you promise
[<i>The Sheriff exits, and Robin Hood enters.</i>]		
5 <i>Knight</i>	Robyn Hode, fflyre and fre, Undre this lynde shote we.	tree
	With the shote Y wyll Alle thy lustes to full-fyll.	desires
	Have at the pryke.	target or bull's eye
10 <i>Robin Hood</i>	And Y cleft the styke.	stick
[<i>They shoot at the target, and Robin wins.</i>]		
	Late us caste the stone.	throw
	I graunste well, be Seynt John.	
[<i>They throw stones.</i>]		
	Late us caste the exalire.	axle-tree, cart axle
[<i>They toss the wooden axe.</i>]		
	Have a foone before the.	Half a foot
[<i>They wrestle, and Robin throws the knight.</i>]		
15 <i>Robin Hood</i>	Syr Knyght, ye have a fallie.	
	And I the, Robyn, qwyte shall.	pay back
[<i>They wrestle again, and the Knight throws Robin.</i>]		
	Owse on the, I blowe myn horne.	A curse on thee
[<i>Robin blows his horn to summon help.</i>]		
	Hit ware better be un-borne.	
	Let us fyght at onraunce.	
20 <i>Robin Hood</i>	He that fleteth, God gyfe hym myschaunce.	to the death
[<i>They sword fight, and Robin wins.</i>]		

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- Robin Hood* Now I have the maystry here,
Off I smyte this sory swyre. neck
[*Robin decapitates the knight.*]
- Robin Hood* This knyghtys clothis wolle I were
And in my hode his hode woll bere.
[*Robin dresses in the knight's clothing, and places his head in his hood.*]

Scene Two

[*Robin Hood is in prison with several of his men.*]

- 25 *Outlaw #1* Welle mete, felowe myn.
 What herest thou of gode Robyn?
- Outlaw #2* Robyn Hode and his menye company
 With the Sheryffe takyn be.
- 30 *Outlaw #1* Sette on foote with gode wyll,
 And the Sheryffe wull we kyll.
- Outlaw #2* Beholde wele Frere Tuke
 Howe he dothe his bowe pluke. draw back the string
 [*Friar Tuck is presumably attacking the Sheriff single-handedly.*]
- Sheriff* Yield yow, syrs, to the Sheryffe. Yield
 Or elles shall your bowes clyffe. crack
 [*The three outlaws are captured, and taken to the prison gates.*]
- 35 *Outlaw #1?* Now we be bawnden alle in same. bound
 Frere Tuke, this is no game.
- [*The Sheriff opens the gates and orders Robin Hood to come out.*]
- Sheriff* Come thou forth, thou faiis outlawe.
 Thou shall be hangyde and y-drawe.
- Outlaw #1?* Nowc alias, what shall we doo?
 We mosie to the peysonc goo.
- 40 *Sheriff* Opyn the gatis faste anon,
 And late theis thevys ynne gon.
- [*As the gates are opened, Robin and the other outlaws presumably attack the Sheriff and escape.*]

Notes

I. Manuscript version

- 1 The final *e* in *hode* consists of a point.
- 2 MS: þ "thorn" with a superior letter *u* = *thow*.
- 3 *ffayre*. Orthographic double f = capital F.
lynde. The final *e* is a point.
- 6 *grān̄te* = *grāunte*. As indicated by the horizontal line, the medial *a* has been omitted.
- 14 MS: *w* with superior *r* = *with*.
- 17 MS: *geld* = *Yeld*.
- 18 Two vertical tears in the sheet disturb some of the letters in the last four lines.
The *T* of *Tack* is missing, but easily reconstructed.
- 19 The *m* of *come* and the auxiliary verb *be* are missing. A later hand has added the missing letters.
- 20 The end of the word *Now* is missing, but it can be easily reconstructed from the same word in line 18. The second tear disturbs the initial letter of *moste*, and Greg's reconstruction is accepted (p. 121).
- 21 This line is damaged by two tears and a smudge. The last letter of the first word is easily determined by context. The fourth word is badly smudged, but the initial letters *fa* can just be discerned. The MED (vol. E-F, p. 413) lists *faste* *anon* as meaning "quickly, instantly, or immediately," so this is the likely

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reading. The second tear obscures the ending of one word and the beginning of another; we accept Greg's emendation: *An d laſte*.

II. Reconstruction of the dramatic fragment

- 1 In line 15 Robin addresses the bounty-hunter as *Syr Knyght*. By contrast, in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, the putative source, the antagonist is a wight yeoman (line 19).
- 3 *golde and fee*. In feudal law, a fee is "an estate in land, held on condition of homage and service to a superior lord" (OED). In *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* (line 204), the sheriff offers Robin, disguised in Gisborne's horse-hides, a knight's fee.
- 6 *lynde*. The linden tree (*tilia europaea*), but in ME poetry any kind of tree (OED). The presence of a tree indicates a forest setting.
- 5-10 The sequence of speakers and their actions in these lines is unclear. In lines 5-6 the knight challenges Robin to a shooting match, and in 7-8 Robin agrees to satisfy the knight's desire. If line 9 is assigned to the knight, then Robin would be the winner when he splits the bull's eye in line 10. However, if line 9 is a continuation of Robin's response, then line 10 should be assigned to the knight, who then would be the winner of the match. There is precedent for Robin losing a shooting match: in lines 47-50 of *Robin Hood and the Monk*, Robin loses the game of *shete a peny* to Little John. Robin also loses the shooting game of *placke buffer* to King Richard in the *Gest* (lines 1609-12).
- 10 *styke*. A stick or wand stuck in the ground in front of the *pryke* or bull's-eye, see *Adam Bell*, lines 580-603.
- 13 *eualtre* = axle-tree. A beam of wood used as the axle of a cart (OED).
- 14 On wrestling, see note to line 548 of the *Gest*.
- 22 In *Robie Hood and Gay of Gisborne* (lines 167-70), Robin not only decapitates Guy but literally "defaces" him.

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- 23 In *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, Guy is dressed in capull-kyde or horse hides, and Robin exchanges clothing with him after he kills him (lines 175–78).
- 24 *in my hode his hede*. This grotesque act may be related to the expression *best ball in his hode* in line 1454 of the *Gest*.
- 25 Based on parallels with *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, Little John and Will Scarlock are identified as the speakers.



Robin Hood and the Friar and *Robin Hood and the Potter*

Introduction

The survival of *Robin Hood and the Friar* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*, our next earliest play script following the fragment of c. 1475, is due to printer William Copland's decision to append it to his edition of *A Mery Geste of Robyn Hoode and of Hys Lyfe*, dated somewhere between 1549 and 1569, but most likely printed in 1560 when he entered a Robin Hood play in the Stationers' Register. There are no extant manuscript versions. The appended text preserves two dramatic pieces: lines 1-122 in this edition contain the well-known account of Robin's initial confrontation with Friar Tuck, in which physical and verbal sparring of the two is followed by the cleric carrying Robin on his back through a stream before dropping him into the water. After further fighting Robin seeks help from his men and then offers Friar Tuck gold and "a lady" (a precursor to Maid Marian as bawd?) in exchange for service. Lines 123-203 recount a second example of "Robin meets his match," this time with a potter who refuses to pay road-toll, for which Robin breaks his pots and engages in a fencing duel.

Unlike *Robyn Hod and the Shryff off Notyngham*, which is linked with a particular gentleman's household in late fifteenth-century East Anglia, no specific auspices can be found for this drama, although Copland's introductory remark that it is "verye proper to be played in Maye Games" suggests that the two dramatic pieces were typical of the numerous Robin Hood plays sponsored by parishes and civic organizations all across Britain throughout the Tudor era. The lengthy festive season for May games often extended from May 1 through Whitsuntide (a holy day celebrated seven weeks after Easter) when towns and villages chose a May King and Queen (or Lord and Lady) to preside over various festivities, including dances around the Maypole, nights sleeping in the greenwood, sporting contests (e.g., wrestling and archery) and processions around town and to neighboring villages, often for the purpose of raising money for poor relief and church maintenance.

By the end of the fifteenth century, many villages and towns renamed their May king (also known as Summer Lord, Lord of Misrule, Abbot of Bon Accord) Robin Hood, and followed suit by calling the May Queen Maid Marian and their attendants, Friar Tuck, Little John, and the rest of the merry band of outlaws bearing pipes, tabors, and drums. In some towns the change of title is very deliberate and can be

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precisely dated, as in Aberdeen, Scotland, where an order of 17 November 1508 formally announces that the traditional procession through town will be led by "Robert huyd and litile Iohn" formally known as "Abbot and priour of Bonacord" (Mills, p. 135). E. K. Chambers and others speculate that Robin and Marian entered the May game via the old French *pasteurella* popularized in England by French minstrels (*Medieval Stage*, I, 160-81). This lyric poem is about a shepherdess called Marion who rejects the advances of a knight out of fidelity to another lover named Robe. However, this alone is not an adequate explanation. The already legendary home-grown hero's associations with nature and the forest, with physical prowess, generosity, camaraderie, as well as the subversive spirit of summer games themselves, made him the perfect choice as the fictional persons of the Summer Lord. Moreover, Robin Hood, Maid Marian, and their colorful entourage of outlaws gave an added theatrical dimension to the May revels. As David Mills asserts, "identification by costume was essential," indicated in the churchwarden's accounts of Kingston-on-Thames, 1507-29, which show "regular expenditure on the costumes and appurtenances ('banner,' 'cote,' 'gloves and shoes') of 'Robyn Hode,'" and other dress items displaying Maid Marian as the May Queen and the Friar as one of the morris dancers (Mills, p. 135). This is not to suggest that communities dispensed with the traditional generic role of the Summer Lord. At Wells in May 1607, for example, the "Lord of the May" led a procession which included Robin Hood and his men as one of ten such groups of characters (Lancashire, p. 280). By the latter part of the sixteenth century, the May-game Marian developed her own separate persona as a figure of sexual license, frequently presented as a conspicuously cross-dressed male, as illustrated in an anti-Marprelate play of the 1580s where Martin appears on stage as the "Maide marian," possibly to satirize puritan opposition to boys playing female roles (see Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 231).

Contemporary records indicate that civic and parish sponsored Robin Hood plays, like most of the other May games, took place outdoors, and indeed the first sequence involving Friar Tuck may have been performed next to a river or stream, for the dialogue has the Friar, with Robin on his back, wading into water before Robin is dropped in (Blackstone, pp. 6-7). A body of water, however, is not necessary for the action to be effective, and since local actors often took their productions to neighboring towns, little if any scenery and only a few properties (e.g., clubs and staves, a horn, and perhaps some musical instruments) would be expected. If the two dramatic pieces are performed together, a minimum of seven actors are required. Since one of the characters is "a lady," six men and one woman may have participated, but considering Tudor conventions of acting and of the depiction of Maide Marian at the time (noted above), the female character was likely impersonated by a cross-dressed male. An intriguing feature of *Robin Hood and the Friar* is the evident

Robin Hood and the Friar and *Robin Hood and the Potter*

requirement of three dogs who accompany Friar Tuck when he enters ("these dogs all three"). Animals, in fact, were not infrequent participants in productions of the time (see White, p. 120 and p. 221 n. 67). However, whereas in the ballad version of the play the Friar's dogs fight Robin's men, in the play (where this might have been too dangerous to stage) they are replaced by the Friar's own men (albeit with canine names like Cut and Bause) who fight with staves and clubs (see Blackstone, p. 4).

The relationships of the two dramatic texts to their narrative and visual sources are problematic. The first play antedates its corresponding ballad, *Robin Hood and the Curial Friar*, by at least one hundred years. A late medieval ballad probably existed because a fighting friar appears in the Paston fragment of c. 1475. The play's anti-fraternal satire recall's Chaucer's depiction of Frere Huberd, who was himself strong "as a champioun," and yet it is also representative of Protestant ballads and plays of the mid-sixteenth century in which the boasting, lecherous, and merrymaking mendicant is widely featured and often conflated with the comic Vice (see, for example, John Bale's anti-Catholic plays). It's worth noting that Francis Child omitted the eight-line bawdy speech of the Friar near the end in his truncated version of the play, and by so doing destroyed the continuing anti-clerical satire and carnivalesque atmosphere of the May games in which social conventions were mocked or inverted. The Friar's remark *Here is an huckle dackle/an inch above the buckle* (lines 115-16) suggests he may have sported an artificial phallus to signify sexual virility like that of comic figures in the folk drama (for example, Robin Goodfellow appeared with horns, goat-feet and a phallus [see White, pp. 31-32 and fig. 4]). Child's omission also deprives the play of the dramatic resolution inherent in the dance in which Friar Tuck joins with "the lady." A stained glass window in Betley Hall, Staffordshire, pictures Friar Tuck participating in a morris dance with a lady who appears to be Maide Marian, but whether the play's female figure is Marian is questionable, even if she does suggest the licentious Marian of the May games (see Blackstone, p. 13 and fig. 3). In the case of the second play text, the ballad, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, antedates the play by about sixty years. We may be witnessing, as Dobson and Taylor claim, the "transformation from recited tale to dramatic version" (p. 215). Two pairs of lines are virtually identical:

ballad:	Ne was never so corteyc a man On peney of pawage to paye	(lines 19-20)
play:	Yet was he never so cutteyse a potter As one peny passage to paye	(lines 132-33)
ballad:	Yend potter well stiffeley stonde	(line 66)
play:	And I wyl styfly by you stonde	(line 199)

Plays: Robin Hood in Performance

However, if the play were a dramatized version of the first fit of the ballad, one would expect to find many more borrowings, such as the amount of the bet — forty shillings versus twenty pound in the play. Also, Jack the potter's boy is not found in the ballad. If the play script was adapted from the longer and more complex ballad, one would also expect a minor character to be omitted rather than added. There is no question that the play is based upon the story of the potter, but it is probably not the exact one that survives.

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Robin Hood and the Friar and Robin Hood and the Potter

Source: William Copland's *A Mery Geste of Robyn Hoode and of Hys Lyfe*
(British Library copy, press mark C.21.C.63)

*Here beginneth the Playe
of Robyn Hoode, verye
proper to be played
in Maye Games*

[Enter Robin Hood and his men.]

Robyn Hode Now stand ye forth my mery men all,
And hark what I shall say;
Of an adventure I shal you tell,
The which befell this other day.

lines

5 As I went by the hygh way,
With a stout frere I met,
And a quarter stafie in his hande.
Lyghtely to me he lept,
And stylly he bade me stande.
10 There were strypes two or three,
But I cannot tell who had the worse;
But well I wote the horesson lepte within me
And fro me he toke my purse.
Is there any of my mery men all
15 That to that frere wyl go,
And bryng him to me forth withall,
Whether he wyl or no?

a thick pole
Quickly

blows

son of a whore

20 *Lytell John* Yes, mayster, I make God avowee,
To that frere wyl I go,
And bryng him to you,
Whether he wyl or no.

[Exit Robin Hood and his men. Enter Friar Tuck with three dogs.]

Fryer Tucke Deus hic! Deus hic! God be here!
Is not this a holy worde for a frere?

God be here!

Robin Hood and the Friar and Robin Hood and the Potter

God save all this company!
But am not I a jolly fryer?
For I can shose both farre and nere,
And handle the swerde and buckler,
And this quarter staffe also.

If I mete with a gentylman or yeman,
I am not afrayde to loke hym upon,
Nor boldly with him to carpe;

If he speake any wordes to me,
He shall have strypes two or thre,
That shal make his body smarte.

But, mairier, to shew you the matter
Wherfore and why I am come hither,
In fayth I wyl not spare,

I am come to seke a good yeman,
In Barnisdale men sai is his habitacion.
His name is Robyn Hode,

And if that he be better man than I,
His seruaunt wyl I be, and serve him truely;
But if that I be better man than he,

By my truch my knave shall be be,
And lead these dogges all three.

small round shield

tell

blows with the staff

[Enter Robie Hood seizing the friar by the throat.]

Robyn Hode Yelde the, fryer, in thy long cote.

Fryer Tucke I beshow thy hart, knave, thou hurtest my throt.

Robyn Hode I trowe, fryer, thou beginnest to dote:
Who made the so malapert and so bolde
To come into this forest here
Amonge my falowe dere?

Yield

curse

believe; act foolishly
impudent

yellow-brown deer

[Friar Tuck shakes off Robin Hood.]

Fryer Tucke Go louise the, ragged knave.
If thou make mani wordes,
I wil geve the on the eare,
Though I be but a poore fryer.
To seke Robyn Hode I am com here,
And to him my hart to brecke.

Robyn Hode Thou lousy frer, what wouldest thou with hym?
He never loved fryer nor none of freiers kyn.

hit

reveal my intentions

Robin Hood Plays

- 60 *Fryer Tucke* Avaunt, ye ragged knave!
Or ye shall have on the skynne. *Go away; base rogue
be hit*
- 65 *Robyn Hode* Of all the men in the morning thou art the worst,
To mete with the I have no lust;
For he that meteth a frere or a fox in the morning,
To spedc ell that day he standeth in jeopardy.
Therefore I had never mete with the devil of hell,
Fryer, I tell the as I think,
Then mete with a fryer or a fox
In a mornynge, or I drynke. *To prosper badly
rather
before I drink*
- 70 *Fryer Tucke* Avaunt, thou ragged knave, this is but a mock!
If you make mani words, you shal have a knock. *Go away*
- 75 *Robyn Hode* Harke, frere, what I say here;
Over this water thou shalt me bere;
The brydge is borne away.
- 80 *Fryer Tucke* To say nayc I wyll not;
To let the of thine oth it were great pitie and sin;
But upon a fryers backe and have even in.
- 85 *Robyn Hode* Nay, have over.

[*Robin Hood climbs on the Friar's back.*] *[Friar Tuck throws Robin Hood.]*
- Now am I, frere, within, and, thou, Robin, without,
To lay the here I have no great doubt.
- Now art thou, Robyn, without, and I, frere, within,
Lye ther, knave; chose whether thou wille sinkc or swym.
- Why, thou lowsy frere, what hast thou doon?
- Mary, set a knave over the shone. *put a fool in your shoes*
- Therefore thou abyce. *shall suffer the consequences*
- 85 *Fryer Tucke* Why, wyll thou fyght a plucke? *hour with clubs*
- And God send me good lucke.
- Than have a stroke for Fryer Tucke.
- [*They fight.*]
- Holde thy hande, frere, and here me speke.

Robin Hood and the Friar and *Robin Hood and the Potter*

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 90 | <i>Fryer Tucke</i> | Saye on, ragged knave,
Me semeth ye begyn to swete. | <i>It seems to me</i> |
| | <i>Robyn Hode</i> | In this forest I have a hounde,
I wyl not give him for an hundredth pound:
Geve me leue my horne to blowe,
That my hounde may knowe. | |
| 95 | <i>Fryer Tucke</i> | Blowe on, ragged knave, without any double,
Untyll bothe thyne eyes starte out. | <i>bulge</i> |
| | | [<i>Robin Hood blows his horn; his men enter.</i>] | |
| | | Here be a sorre of ragged knaves come in,
Clothed all in Kendale grene,
And to the they take their way nowe. | |
| 100 | <i>Robyn Hode</i> | Peradventure they do so. | <i>Perhaps</i> |
| | <i>Fryer Tucke</i> | I gave the leue to blowe at thy wyll;
Now give me leue to whisell my fyll. | <i>permission</i> |
| | <i>Robyn Hode</i> | Whysell, frere, evyl mote thou fare!
Untyll bothe thyne eyes starte. | <i>may</i> |
| | | [<i>The Friar whistles.</i>] | |
| 105 | <i>Fryer Tucke</i> | Now Cut and Bause!
Breng forth the clubbes and staves,
And downe with those ragged knaves. | |
| | | [<i>They all fight.</i>] | |
| | <i>Robyn Hode</i> | How sayest thou, frere, wyll thou be my man,
To do me the best servyse thou can?
Thou shalt have both golde and fee.
And also here is a lady free: | |
| | | [<i>Enter the Lady.</i>] | |
| | | I wyll geve her unto the,
And her chappelain I the make
To serve her for my sake. | <i>chaplain</i> |
| 115 | <i>Fryer Tucke</i> | Here is an huckle duckle,
An inch above the buckle.
She is a trul of trust,
To serve a frier at his lust, | <i>trollop or prostitute</i> |
| | | A peycker, a prauencer, a terer of shetes, | |
| | | [<i>A rider; a tearer of sheets</i>] | |

Robin Hood Plays

- 120 A wagger of ballockes when other men sleepes.
 Go home, ye knaves, and lay crabbes in the fyre,
 For my lady and I wil daunce in the myre,
 For veri pate joye.
- [A dance.]
- * * * * *
- 125 *Robyn Hode* Lystes to me my mery men all
 And harke what I shall say
 Of an adventure I shall you tell
 That befell this othere daye.
 With a proade potter I met;
 And a rose garlande on his head,
 The floures of it shone marvaylous freshe.
 This seven yere and more he hath used this waye,
 Yet was he never so curseyse a potter
 As one peny passage to paye.
- 130 *Lytell John* Is there any of my mery men all
 That dare be so bolde
 To make the potter pale passage either silver or golde?
- 135 *Lytell John* Not I, master, for twenty pound redy tolde.
 For there is not among us al one
 That dare medle with that potter man for man.
 I felte his handes not long agone,
 But I had never have ben here by the.
- 140 *Lytell John* Therfore I knowe what he is;
 Mete hem when ye wil or mete him whan ye shal
 He is as propre a man as ever you medle withal.
- 145 *Robyn Hode* I wil lai with the, Litel John, twenty pound so read,
 If I wyth that potter mete
 I wil make him pay passage, maugré his head.
- 150 *Lytell John* I consente thereto, so eate I bread;
 If he pay passage, maugré his head,
 Twenti pound shall ye have of me for your mede.
- bet; red
against his will
reward
- [Robin's men leave. Enter Jack the potter's boy.]
- Jacke* Out alas that ever I sawe this day!
 For I am cleane out of my waye
 From Notygham towne.

Robin Hood and the Friar and Robin Hood and the Potter

- 155 If I hye me not the faster,
 Or I come there the market wel be done. *hurry
Before*
- Robyn Hode* Let me se, are the pottes hole and sounde?
[*Robin throws a pot to the ground.*] *harry*
- Jacke* Yea, maister, but they will not breake the ground.
- Robyn Hode* I wil them beeke for the cuckold thi maister's sake;
And if they will breake the grounde,
Thou shalt have thre pence for a pound.
[*Robin breaks more pots.*] *harry*
- Jacke* Out alas! What have ye done?
If my maister come, he will beeke your crowns.
[*The potter enters.*] *harry*
- The Potter* Why, thou boreson, art thou here yet?
Thou shouldest have bene at market. *harryard*
- 165 *Jacke* I met with Robyn Hode, a good yeman;
He hath broken my pottes,
And called you cuckold by your name.
- The Potter* Thou mayst be a gentylman, so God me save,
But thou semest a nougthy knave. *naughty*
- 170 Thou callest me cuckolde by my name,
And I swere by God and Saym John,
Wylc had I never none:
This cannot I denye.
But if thou be a good felowe,
- 175 I wil sel mi horse, mi harneis, pottes and paniers to,
Thou shalt have the one halfe, and I wil have the other.
If thou be not so content,
Thou shalt have stripes, if thou were my brother.
- Robyn Hode* Harke, potter, what I shall say;
This seven yere and more thou hast used this way,
Yet were thou never curteous to me
As one penny passage to paye.
- The Potter* Why should I paye passage to thee?
- Robyn Hode* For I am Robyn Hode, chiefe governoure
Under the grene wood tree. *harryard*

Robin Hood Plays

- The Potter This seven yere have I used this way up and downe,
Yet payed I passage to no man;
Nor now I wyl not beginne, to do the worst thou can.
- 190 Robyn Hode Passage shalst thou pai, here under the grene wode tre,
Or els thou shalt leve a wedded with me. *forfeir*
- The Potter If thou be a good felowe, as men do the call,
Laye awaye thy bowe,
And take thy sword and buckeler in thy hande,
And se what shall befall.
- 195 Robyn Hode Lyttle John, where art thou?
- Lyttell John Here, mayster, I make God avowe,
I told you, mayster, so God me save,
That you should fynde the potter a knave.
Holde your buckeler [fast in your hand],
And I wyl stify by you stande,
Ready for to fyghte;
Be the knave never so stout,
I shall rappe him on the snoute,
And put hym to flyghte.
- [A fight follows, and the text ends.]
- Thus endeth the play of Robyn Hode

Imprinted at London upon the Crane wharf by Wylyam Copland



Notes

- 21 *Deus hic!* The Friar's knowledge of Latin is questionable. The phrase is probably a corruption of *Haec dicit Dominus Deus* ("Thus saith the Lord God") from the *Roman Missal*. It's the same phrase that Chaucer's friar uses in the Summoner's Tale, line 1770, as the friar approaches the ailing Thomas (glossed in Benson's edition as "God be here!" as does our author). Mary A. Blackstone (p. 28) suggests that the actor's saying of *hic* could be accompanied by hiccups, an auditory pun and that the Friar makes the sign of the cross. In the early Elizabethan context, the Friar's speech and gesturing were familiar instances of anti-Catholic satire. The earliest citation for *hicker*, an early form of "hiccup," is dated 1544 in the OED.
- 22 This line has been partially cropped, but it is still legible.
- 34 MS: *maister*. Dobson and Taylor emend to *maisters*.
- 44 *these dogges all three*. See Introduction, above.
- 58 Robin's dislike of clergy is also evident in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, where he is betrayed by a *gret-hedid munke*, and in the *Gest*, where he orders Little John to *bete and bynde* bishops and archbishops.
- 63–64 Mary A. Blackstone (p. 31) detects the presence of a proverb in these lines, but the one she cites from *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases From English Writings Mainly Before 1500*, Bartlett J. Whiting, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), is not very close: *Two Friars and a fox make three shrews* (p. 214). The actual meaning of the proverb is: if you meet a friar or fox in the morning before you eat or drink, you will have bad luck the rest of the day. See Vincent S. Lean, *Lean's Collectanea*, Volume II, Part 1 (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1903), p. 193.
- 72 See the Introduction for a discussion of the presence or absence of water in the original staging.

Robin Hood Plays

- 82 MS: *donee*. Dobson and Taylor emend to *doon*.
- 92 MS: *an hundredth*. Dobson and Taylor emend to *a hundred*.
- 98 *Kendale grene*. Fabric manufactured in Kendal, Westmorland.
- 105 *Cat and Bause*. These sound suspiciously like dogs' names (possibly those referred to in line 44), and while dogs might bring forth the clubs and staves of line 106, it is unlikely that they would fight with them! *Cat and Bause*, therefore, are probably the Friar's "men."
- 111 Dobson and Taylor (1989, p. 214, n. 1) identify the "lady free" with the Maid Marian of the May morris dances, but Stephen Knight (1994, p. 102) notes that the lady is not named in the play and Marian in the morris is never called "Maid."
- 114 *To serve her for my sake*. As the lines below make clear, the friar's "service" has unmistakable erotic meaning.
- 115–16 Mary A. Blackstone (p. 37) observes that *huckle duckie* is "a phrase of unclear meaning probably invented to rhyme with *buckle* and convey bawdy innuendo." According to the OED, *huckle* means "hip" or "hip-bone," and "the complete phrase may describe the extent of his physical excitement." For the possible use of a phallus, see Introduction.
- 119 MS: *sheses*. White's edition (c. 1590) has *shetes*, which we accept.
- 122 *My lady and I wil daunce*. This likely calls for a morris dance involving all the players; see Introduction.
- 123 Because the rhyme *fyre / myre* in lines 121–22 indicates a complete couplet, we have added the phrase *for veri pure joye* as a separate short line.

Following this line, and without a break in the text, is the speaker designation, *Robyn Hode*, as if the play *Robin Hood and the Friar* were continuing at this point. Line 124 clearly indicates — *Lysten to me my mery men all* — that we have the beginning of a second play, which editors call *Robin Hood and the Friar*. While Child and Dobson and Taylor separate the two plays, we have respected the authority, flawed as it is, of Copland's text.

Robin Hood and the Friar and Robin Hood and the Potter

- 124 Dobson and Taylor add *me*, and this is accepted.
- 126 The line, which is cropped at the top of the page, is supplied by Dobson and Taylor from Edward White's edition of c. 1590 (Oxford, Bodleian Library Art. Seld. Z. 3).
- 144 MS: *medie*. Dobson and Taylor emend to *medied*.
- 145 MS: *xx*: *twenty*.
- 152 The line, which is at the top of the page, is partially cropped.
- 169 MS: *noughty*. Dobson and Taylor emend to *naughty*.
- 171 MS: *saynt*. Dobson and Taylor emend to *seynt*.
- 176 The line, which is at the top of the page, is partially cropped.
- 182 MS: *penny*. Dobson and Taylor have *peny*.
- 199 The line, which is at the top of the last page, is partially cropped. Dobson and Taylor supply the missing half line from the White edition, and this is accepted. Manly supplies "The rest is wanting" (p. 288).



Introduction to the Munday Plays

In these two plays Robin Hood appears in the prestigious panoply of Elizabethan historical tragedy. Anthony Munday should have most of the credit. Philip Henslowe's diary records that he paid Munday the substantial sum of £5 for a Robin Hood play in February 1598. Both the diary note and internal evidence indicate that this was to be a single work — line 2229 predicts "Robins Tragedie" at the end of the current play. However, plans were changed, probably because there was too much material for one play, and *The Death* is attributed by Henslowe to both Munday and Henry Chettle. As Chettle was also paid 10/- for "the mending of The First Part of Robart Hoode" on 25 November 1598, it is likely that Chettle revamped Munday's over-long play draft, providing an end for *The Downfall*, moving the death of the hero into the second play, and, probably in conjunction with Munday, completing it with an extensive sequence about Prince John's designs on Matilda and her own tragic and honorable death. This material was drawn largely from Michael Drayton's poem "Matilda the faire and chaste daughter of the Lord R. Fitzwater," which Munday had already used in *The Downfall*. The likelihood of joint authorship could account for the patchwork quality of various portions of both plays. Some of the overlaps and repetitions could be due to the compositor, who might have been working from multiple copies, including acting scripts.

Produced by the Admiral's Men in 1599 and kept in their repertoire for some time, the two plays were clearly successful. The company offered as a follow-up *Looke Abour You*, which makes the gentrified hero central to a disguise-obsessed farce in King Richard's days, and it is presumably no accident that the house author for the rival Chamberlain's Men, one W. Shakespeare, produced in 1602 his own outlaw play *As You Like It*, with a casual reference to Robin Hood in the first act.

In creating this high-theater Robin Hood, Munday fulfilled the trend towards gentrification that had been clear in the chroniclers Major and Grafton (see The Chroniclers' Robin Hood). Yet if it was simple for a chronicler to recast the hero as a gentleman, to provide enough material for a full play was another matter — and it may well be that Munday's inventive energies in this respect were excessive, so generating the need for Chettle's play-doctoring. Munday takes an approach different from several contemporaries who had included the outlaw in plays, though not creating a Robin Hood play as such. George Peele's *Edward I* (1593) contains one scene where the Welsh rebels play a Robin Hood disguising game; Richard Greene

Introduction to the Munday Plays

almost certainly wrote *George a Greene* (by 1592), in which Robin plays second fiddle to the heroic Pinder of Wakefield: these plays are discussed fully by M. A. Nelson (1973). The writers were adapting popular traditions for the stage as so many others did in the period, and this was presumably also the case in the lost plays *Robin Hood* and *Little John* (1594) and *Robin Hood's Penn'orths* (1600).

Munday, however, made a decision not to rely on the wide range of popular Robin Hood material that must have been available to him. It would have been easy to adapt the action of the *Gest* to the period of Richard I, as many novels and films have done in the modern period, and Copland's well-known edition of the *Gest* (c. 1560) had two robust plays at the end featuring Robin, his friends, and enemies. Munday, however, sought a higher tone in setting and content, and made very little use of the popular tradition. In scene vii he clearly uses the theme of the ballad *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*; the Prior of York and Sir Doncaster come at some remove from the *Gest* and there may well be reference to Robin's orders to the outlaws in the *Gest* when Little John administers the Sherwood Articles of behavior (*Downfall*, lines 1329-59); the hostility between Little John and the sheriff may also derive from the *Gest*; and there is a review of Robin Hood related characters and places in *Downfall* lines 1279-89, which includes ballad material but also presents apparently new ideas and unusually specific reference to villages in the Sherwood area.

These links with the earlier popular material are of little weight, and Munday's principal resource is to take Major's idea about a distressed gentleman in the period of King Richard and Prince John and flesh it out with new plot and contemporary aristocratic concerns. The enemies here are not the threatening local sheriff or voracious provincial clerics, as in the ballads and the *Gest*. The politics of the play, like so many other historical dramas of the period, operate across the complex quadrilateral of crown, clergy, barons and bureaucrats, a force field which is evidently late sixteenth century in its reference. Prince John himself is not the villain that in more personalized modern dramas he has become: hot-tempered though he is, having taken power he is easily dislodged and in fact takes to the forest himself, fights a "joining the band" duel with the friar, and plays the role of Marian's somewhat over-enthusiastic admirer.

Robert, Earl of Huntington, is in the tense opening scenes betrayed by his uncle the Prior of York and by his own steward, Warman, conceived initially as a Judas figure. For renaissance aristocrats like those who owned the play-companies, living on lands taken from the Catholic church and fearful of the unreliability of those they had to trust, Munday could hardly find a more gratifying pair of villains. In accordance with this socially conservative reconstruction of the myth, Munday's own career was that of a semi-official agent of the state. His activities hovered between

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fact-finding missions and outright espionage, and his literary work was consistently close to the interests of the powerful and wealthy: he was a writer of political essays, a well-known balladeer, a highly successful translator of romances, and a writer of city pageants, one of which was another Robin Hood drama, a masque called *Metropolis Coronata, The Triumphs of Ancient Drapery or Rich Cloathing in England* (1615), in which both author and outlaw praise to the point of servility the drapers for whom it was written. (Munday's father, it should be noted, had been a draper.)

But Munday was an artist as well as a political author, and he made the elegant decision to set the play itself at the court of Henry VIII. That monarch had himself been involved in Robin Hood activities, as Hall's chronicle reports (Knight, 1994, pp. 109–10) and he — father to Elizabeth I — is the ultimate validator of this play. In the opening scene and elsewhere through the play, John Skelton, who will play Tuck, debates with Sir John Eltham, a typical new-age diplomat who plays Little John, concerning the nature of the play. Eltham remarks (lines 2210–13) that he sees none of the traditional elements; Skelton who, for all his intellectual power (he was Henry's tutor), was remembered as a popular comedian, states firmly (as Friar) that the king himself has approved this new material and plot (lines 2219–20), and so Skelton presides over the rejection of popular material he himself by tradition represents, in favor of the appropriation into nobility of the material and the hero. (See also lines 2787 ff.)

In dramatic terms the play suffers from this decision, as did the eighteenth-century ballad operas that palely followed it: almost all the exciting action of the myth has gone because judged too vulgar; the only fight that occurs is between Prince John and the friar; the final recognition and re-establishment scene beloved of stage and screen is here simply that of Robin, not the returning King; the forest is never seen as a world of freedom and possible resistance, just as a site of aristocratic shame: Robin's "downfall" is his degradation from noble status and having to take to the woods. In terms of action, the fighting outlaw has become as passive as King Arthur at his most nobly inactive. At times the set pieces almost make up for this — Robin's fine speech about making the woods into a surrogate stately home (lines 1366–81) has reverberated through to Tennyson's *The Foresters*, and in *The Death* the hero's funeral scene, mournful as it must be, still has real dramatic power, especially in its musical context (lines 848–59).

There remain some signs of haste and incomplete editing, even after Chettle "mended" *The Downfall*. Matilda is called Marian too early (perhaps a sign that Munday discovered Michael Drayton's poem after he had begun his work); her father is at first Lacy and then Fitzwater; the Earl of Leicester is either two unrationaled characters or a villain who becomes suddenly loyal without explanation of the change (see note to *The Downfall*, line 782, for further discussion). These are no doubt slips

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in drafting or the result of inconsistently recording performance versions: less easily explicable is the origin of the hero's title. Munday is the first to name him Earl of Huntington, as he spells it, or as the town and former county are now spelled, Huntingdon. One suggestion that has been offered, without much confidence, is that a wordplay on "hunting" is the key. Bevington linked the name with the puritan Earl of the earlier sixteenth century, and also argued that the play had a strongly puritan anti-church and aristocracy theme (1968, pp. 295–96). Neither case seems convincing. It is conceivable that Munday derived the name from the existence of such an earl in the time of King Richard: the well-informed historian John Stow was a friend of Munday's, and it seems likely that he might have had a hand in the ideas for the play, including this name (Knight, 1994, p. 131).

Rarely performed, the two "big" Robin Hood plays have an importance in the tradition and an impact that surpasses their limited artistic standing. The semi-gentrified ballads and lives of Robin Hood created in the seventeenth and eighteenth century derived, directly or indirectly, from these plays. They created the authorizing narrative of gentrification and much as the 1938 Warner Brothers film makes filmmakers remember that Robin Hood is a theme that can always make money, so the Munday-Chester plays gave status to the myth that both stimulated more adaptations — like Ben Jonson's tantalizingly unfinished *The Sad Shepherd* — and also assisted the perseverance of the popular tradition both in association with and sometimes in resistance to the newly dignified dramatic hero.

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The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

by Anthony Munday

List of Characters

in the order of their appearance

Sir John Eltham	Characters of the Induction.	Lord Lacy, brother of Sir Hugh and father of Marian (after line 781, Lord Fitzwater).
Skelton		A Boy, servant to Sir Hugh Lacy.
Little Tracy		Lord Chester.
Sir Thomas Mantle		Friar Tuck.
Clown		Ralph, Warman's man.
The other Players, the characters of the dumbshow		Scarlet.
Gilbert de Hood, Prior of York and uncle to Robert, Earl of Huntingdon.		Scathlock.
Justice Warman, Steward to Robert, Earl of Huntingdon; later Sheriff of Nottingham.		First Collier.
Robert Hood, Robert Earle of Huntingdon.		Second Collier.
Little John, his Servant.		Widow Scarlet, mother of Scarlet and Scathlock.
Marian, his betrothed (after line 781, Matilda, daughter of Lord Fitzwater).		Sir Doncaster of Hothersfield.
Eleanor, the Queen Mother.		Jinny, daughter of the Widow Scarlet.
Lord Sentelee	Conspirators against the Earl of Huntingdon.	A Servant of the Prior.
Sir Hugh Lacy		Another servant, messenger from York.
Sir Gilbert Brogthon		A Herald.
Mistress Warman.		Earl of Leicester.
Prince John.		Richmond.
The Bishop of Ely.		Warman's Cousin.
Much, the Miller's Son, a clown.		Jailer of Nottingham.
A Messenger from Ely.		Mistress Thomson.
Simon, Earl of Leicester (after line 781, Lord Salisbury).		King Richard.
		Sheriff's men, Sir Doncaster's ruffians, Leicester's drum and ancient, soldiers, officers, attendants, Jailer's dog.

Robin Hood Plays

[Screen 4]

[Enter Sir John Eltam, and knocke at Skeitons doore.

- | | | |
|----|----------------|--|
| | <i>Eitham</i> | Howe, maister Skelton? What, at studie hard?
[Opens the doore.] |
| 5 | <i>Skelton</i> | Welcome and wisht for, honest Sir John Eitham.
I have sent twice, and either time
He mist that went to seeke you. |
| 10 | <i>Eitham</i> | So full well hee might.
These two howers it pleas'd his Majesty
To use my service in surveying mappes
Sent over from the good King Ferdinand,
That to the Indies, at Sebastians sute,
Hath lately sent a Spanish Colonie. |
| 15 | <i>Skelton</i> | Then twill trouble you, after your great affaers,
To take the paine that I intended to intreat you to
About rehearsall of your promis'd play. |
| 20 | <i>Eitham</i> | Nay master Skelton, for the King himselfe,
As wee were parting, bid mee take great heed
Wee failte not of our day; therefore I pray
Sende for the rest that now we may rehearse. |
| 25 | <i>Skelton</i> | O they are readie all, and drest to play.
What part play you? |
| 30 | <i>Eitham</i> | Why I play Little John
And came on purpose with this greene sute. |
| | <i>Skelton</i> | Holla my masters, Little John is come.
[At every doore all the Players runne out, some crying
"where? where?" Others welcome Sir John; among others
the boyes and Clowne.] |
| | <i>Skelton</i> | Faith little Tracy you are somewhat forward;
What, our Maid Marian leaping like a lad? |

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

If you remember, Robin is your love:
Sir Thomas Mantle yonder, not Sir John.

Clown But master, Sir John is my fellowe, for I am
Much, the Millers sonne. Am I not?

35 Skelton I know yee are, sir,
And gentilmen, since you are thus prepar'd,
Goe in and bring your dumbe scene on the stage,
And I, as Prologue, purpose to expresse
The ground whereon our historie is laied.

40 [Exit; manet Skelton.] remains

[Trumpets sounde; enter first king Richard, with drum
and Auncient, giving Ely a purse and scepter, his mother,
and brother John, Chester, Lester, Lacie, others at the
kings appointment doing reverence. The king goes in;
presently Ely ascends the chaire; Chester, John, and the
Queene part displeasantly. Enter Robert, Earle of Hun-
tington, leading Marian; followes him Warman, and, after
Warman, the Prior, Warman ever flattering and making
curtie, taking gifts of the Prior behinde, and his master
before. Prince John enters, and offereth to take Marian.
Queene Elinor enters, offering to pull Robin from her,
but they infolde each other and sit downe within the
carteines; Warman with the Prior, Sir Hugh Lacy, Lord
Senlue, & Sir Gilbert Broghton folde hands, and drawing
the carteins, all but the Prior enter and are kindly re-
ceived by Robin Hoode. The carteins are againe shut.

55 Skelton Sir John, once more, bid your dumbe shewes come in,
That as they passe I may explaine them all.

60 [Enter King Richard with drumme and scepter, and Ensigne,
giving Ely a purse; his mother and brother John,
Chester, Lester, Lacie, others at the Kings appointment,
doing reverence. The King goes in.

Richard calde Cor de Lyon takes his leave, Lion-hearted
Like the Lords Champion, against the Pagan foes
That spoyle Judea and rich Palestine.
The rule of England and his princely seate
He leaves with Ely, then Lord Chancellor,
To whom the mother Queene, her sonne, Prince John,
Chester, and all the Peeres are sworne.

70 [Exit Richard cum militibus.] with soldiers

Robin Hood Plays

[*Ely ascends the chaire; Chester, John and the Queene
part displeasantly.*]

hostilely

Now reverend Ely, like the deputie
Of Gods greate deputie, ascends the throne,
Which the Queene mother, and ambitious John
Repining at, rais'd many mutinies;
And how they ended you anone shall heare.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

All exit

[*Enter Robert, Earle of Huntington, leading Marian; fol-
lowes him Warman, and after Warman the Prior, War-
man ever flattering and making curtseie, taking gifts
of the Prior behinde, and his master before. Prince
John enters, offereth to take Marian. Queene Elinor
enters, offering to pull Robin from her; but they in-
foldie each other, and sit downe within the curtaines.*]

This youth that leads you virgin by the hand
(As doth the Sunne, the morning richly clad)
Is our Earle Robert, or your Robin Hoode,
That in those daies was Earle of Huntington.
The ill fac't miser, bribe'd in either hand,
Is Warman, once the Seward of his house,
Who Judas-like betraies his liberall Lord
Into the hands of that relentesse Prior,
Calde Gilbert Hoode, uncle to Huntington.

faced

Those two that seeke to part these lovely friends
Are Elenor the Queene and John the Prince;
She loves Earle Robert, he Maide Marian,
But vainely: for their deare affect is such,
As only death can sunder their true loves.

generous

Long had they lov'd, and now it is agreed
This day they must be troth-plight, after wed.
At Huntingtons faire house a feast is helde,
But envie turnes it to a house of teares.
For those false guestes, conspiring with the Prior,
To whome Earle Robert greatly is in debt,
Meane at the banquet to betray the Earle,
Unto a heavie wrat of outlawry.
The manner and escape you all shall see.

betrothed

Etham Which all, good Skelton?

110 *Skelton* Why, all these lookers on,

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Whom, if wee please, the King will sure be pleas'd.
Looke to your entrance, get you in Sir John. [Exit Sir John.]
- My shift is long, for I play Frier Tucke,
Wherein if Skelton have but amy lucke
Heele thanke his hearers oft, with many a ducke.
- For many talk of Robin Hood that never shot in his bowe,
But Skelton writes of Robin Hood what he doth truly knowe.
- Therefore, I pray yee,
Contentedly stay yee
And take no offending,
But sit to the ending.
Likewise I desire,
Yea would not admire,
My rime so I shift.
- For this is my drift,
So mought I well thrive,
To make yee all blithe:
But if ye once frowne,
Poore Skelton goes downe,
His labour and cost,
He thinketh all lost,
In tumbling of bookees
Of Mary goe lookes.
- The Sheriff with staves,
With caschpoles and knaves,
Are comming, I see,
High time tis for mee
To leave off my babble
And fond ribble rabbile.
- Therefore with this curtaine
A while I will leave yee.
- robe
Re'll; bow
wonder about
intention
must
glad
reading books
law officers (see note)
babble

[Scene ii]

[Enter, as it were in haste, the Prior of Yorke, the Sheriff, Justice Warman, steward to Robin Hoode.]

- Prior Here master Warman, there's a hundred crowns,
145 For your good will and furtherance in this.

Robin Hood Plays

- Warman I thanke you my Lord Prior, I must away
To shunne suspicion, but be resolute,
And wee will take him, have no doubt of it.
- Prior But is Lord Sentloe and the other come?
- 150 Warman Lord Sentloe, Sir Hugh Lacie, and Sir Gilbert Brughton
Are there and, as they promist you last night,
Will helpe to take him, when the Sheriff comes. [Exit Warman.]
- Prior A while farewell, and thanks to them and you.
Come master Sheriff, the outlawry is proclaim'd;
155 Sende therefore quickly for more compaines,
And at the backe gate wee will enter in.
- Sheriff Wee shall have much adoe I am afraide.
- Prior No, they are very merry at a feast,
A feast, where Marian, daughter to Lord Lacy,
160 Is troth-plighted to wastfull Huntington.
And at the feast are my especiall friends,
Whom hee suspectes not: come weele have him, man,
And for your paines, here is a hundred markes. [Exit.]
- Sheriff I thanke your Lordshippe, weele be diligent.

[Scene III]

- 165 [Enter Robin Hoode, Little John following him — the one
Earle of Huntington, the other his servant, Robin having
his napkin on his shoulder, as if hee were sodainly
raised from dinner.]
- 170 Robin As I am outlawed from my fame and state,
Be this day outlawed from the name of daies:
Day lacklesse, outlawe lawlesse, both accurst.
[Flings away his napkin, hat, and surthe downe.]
- Lit. John Doe not forget your honourable stane,
Nor the true noblesse of your worthy house.
- 175 Robin Doe not perswade mee; vaine as vanitie
Are all thy comforts — I am comfortlesse.
- Lit. John Heare mee my Lord.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Robin What shall I heare thee say?
Areadie hast thou saide too much to heare.
180 Areadie hast thou stabd mee with thy tongue,
And the wide wound with words will not be clos'd.
Am I not outlawed, by the Prior of Yorke,
Proclaim'd in court, in citie, and in towne,
A lawlesse person? This thy tongue reports:
185 And therefore seeke not to make smooth my griefe:
For the rough storme thy windie words hath rais'd
Will not be calm'd till I in grave be laid.
- Lit. John Have patience yet.
- Robin Yea, now indeede thou speakest.
190 Patience hath power to beare a greaser crosse
Then honours spoyle, or any earthly losse. Than
- Lit. John Doe so my Lord.
- Robin I, now I would beginne; Indeed
But see, another Scene of griefe comes in.
- 195 [Enter Marian.]
- Marian Why is my Lord so sad? Wherefore so soone,
So sodainely arose yee from the boorde?
Alas my Robin, what distempering griefe
Drinkest up the roseat colour of thy cheekes? early
table
200 Why art thou silent? Answer me my love.
- Robin Let him, let him, let him make thee as sad.
Hee hath a tongue can banish thee from joy,
And chase thy crimson colour from thy cheekes.
Why speakest thou not? I pray thee Little John,
205 Let the short story of my long distresse
Be uttered in a word. What mean'st thou to protract?
Wilt thou not speake? Then Marian list to mee.
This day thou werst a maide, and now a spowse,
Anone (poore soule) a widdowe thou must bee:
- 210 Thy Robin is an outlawe, Marian,
His goods and landes must be extened on,
Himselfe exilde from thee, thou kept from him, seized
- [She sinkes in his armes.]

Robin Hood Plays

- 215 By the long distance of unnumbred miles,
Faint'st thou at this? Speake to mee Marian,
My olde love newly met, partie not so soone;
Wee have a little time to tarry yet.
- Marian If but a little time, let mee not stay,
Part wee today, then will I dyc today.
- 220 Little John For shame my Lord, with covrage of a man,
Bridle this over-greeving passion,
Or else dissemble it, to comfort her.
- Robin I like thy counsell, Marian, cleare these clouds,
And with the sunny beames of thy bright eyes,
Drinke up these mistes of sorrowe that arise.
- 225 Marian How can I joy, when thou art banished?
- Robin I tell thee love, my griefe is counterfaite,
And I abruptly from the table rose,
The banquet being almost at an ende,
Only to drive confused and sad thoughts
230 Into the mindes of the invited guesstes.
For, gentle love, at greate or nuptiall feastes,
With Comicke sportes, or Tragick stately plaiers,
Wee use to recreate the feasted guesstes,
Which I am sure our kinsfolke doe expect.
- 235 Marian Of this what then? This seemes of no effect.
- Robin Why thus of this, as Little John can tell,
I had bespoken quaint Comedians:
But greate John, John the Prince, my lieges brother,
240 My rivaill, Marian, he that crost our love,
Hath crost mee in this jest, and at the court,
Employes the Players, should have made us sport;
This was the tydings brought by Little John,
That first disturb'd mee and begot this thought
245 Of sodaine rysing, which by this I know
Hath with amazement, troubled all our guesstes:
Goe in, good love; thou as the Chorus shalt
Expresse the meaning of my silent griefe,
Which is no more but this: I only meane
250 (The more to honour our right noble friends)
Myselife in person to present some Sceanes

entertainment

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Of tragick matter, or perchance of mirth,
Even such as first shall jumpe with my concept. *agree with my idea*
- 255 *Marian* May I be boilde thou hast the worst exprest?
- Lit. John* Faire misresse, all is true my Lord hath said.
- Robin* It is, it is.
- Marian* Speake not so hollow then;
So sigh and sadly speake true sorrowing men. *truly*
- 260 *Robin* Believe mee love, believe mee (I beseech)
My first Scene tragick is, therefore tragicke speech,
And accents, fitting wofull action, I strive to get.
I pray thee sweete goe in, and with thy sight,
Appease the many doubts that may arise.
- 265 That done, be thou their usher, bring them to this place,
And thou shalt see mee with a loftie verse,
Bewitch the hearers eares and tempt their eyes
To gaze upon the action that I use. *wonder*
- Marian* If it be but a play, Ile play my part:
But sure some earnest grieve affrights my heart.
- 270 *Lit. John* Let mee intreate yee, Madam, not to feare,
For by the honestie of Little John,
Its but a tragicke Scene we have in hand,
Only to fit the humour of the Queene,
Who is the chiefest at your troth-plight feast.
- 275 *Marian* Then will I fetch her Highnesse and the rest. *[Exit Marian.]*
- Robin* I, that same jealous Queene, whose doting age
Envies the choyce of my faire Marian,
She hath a hande in this. *Aye*
- 280 *Lit. John* Well, what of that?
Now must your honour leave these mourning tunes,
And thus by my areede you shall provide; *advice*
Your plate and jewels Ile straight packe up,
And toward Notingham convey them hence,
At Rowford, Sowtham, Wortley, Hothersfield.
- 285 Of all your castell, mony shall be made,
And I at Mansfield will attend your comming,
Where weeke determine, which waie's best to take. *property*
we'll

Robin Hood Plays

- Robin Well be it so, a Gods name let it be;
And if I can, Marian shall come with mee.
- 290 *Lit. John* Else care will kill her; therefore if you please,
At th'utmost corner of the garden wall,
Soone in the evening waite for Marian,
And as I goe Ile tell her of the place,
Your horses at the Bell shall readie bee,
I meane Belsavage, whence as citizens
That meant to ride for pleasure some small way,
You shall set foorth.
- 295 *Robin* Be it as thou dost say.
Farewell a while.
- 300 In spight of griefe, thy love compels mee smile,
But now our audience comes, wee must looke sad.
- 305 [Enter Queen Elinor, Marian, Senteine, Lacie, Brogh-
ton, Warman, Robins steward. As they meete, John
whispers with Marian.]
- [Exit John.]
- 310 *Queen* How now my Lord of Huntington?
The mistresse of your love, faire Marian,
Tels us your sodaine rising from the banquet
Was but a humor, which you meane to purge,
In some high Tragick lines, or Comick jests.
- 315 *Robin* Sit down faire Queen (the Prologues part is plaid,
Marian hath tolde yee, what I bad her tell);
Sit downe Lord Senteine, cosin Lacy sit,
Sir Gilbert Broghton, yea, and Warman sit;
Though you my steward be, yet for your gathering wit, self-assurance
- I give you place, sit downe, sit downe I say,
- [Sets them all downe.]
- Gods pittie sit; it must, it must be so:
For you will sit, when I shall stande I knowe.
320 And, Marian, you may sit among the rest,
I pray yee doe, or else rise, stand apart;
These helps shall be beholders of my smart.
You that with ruthlesse eyes my sorrowes see,
And came prepar'd to feast at my sad fall,
Whose envie, greedinesse, and jealousie hired helpers

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

	Afforde mee sorrowe endlesse, comfort small, Knowe what you knewe before, what you ordaind To crosse the spousall banquet of my love, That I am outlawed by the Prior of Yorke, My traiterous uncle, and your trothlesse friend.	
330	Smile you Queene Elinor? laugh'st thou Lord Sentloe? Lacy look'st thou so blithe at my lament? Broughton a smooth browe graceth your sterne face: And you are merry Warman at my mone.	<i>grief</i>
335	The Queene except, I doe you all defie. You are a sort of fawning sycophants, That while the sunshine of my greatnessse dur'd, Reveld out all my day for your delights,	<i>group</i>
	And now yee see the blacke night of my woe Oreshade the beautie of my smiling good, You to my griefe adde griefe, and are agreed With that false Prior, to reprise my joyes	Celebrated
340	From execution of all happinesse.	<i>delay</i>
	Warman Your honour thinks not ill of mee, I hope.	
345	Robin Judas speakes first, with "Master, is it I?" No, my false Steward, your accounts are true. You have dishonoured mee, I worshippt you.	<i>honored</i>
	You from a paltry pen and inkhorne clarke, Bearing a buckram satchell at your belt, Unto a Justice place I did preferre,	<i>elevate</i>
350	Where you unjustly have my tenants rackt, Wasted my treasure and increast your store.	<i>charged excessive rents</i>
	Your site contented with a cottage poore, Your mastershippe hath halles and mansions built, Yet are you innocent, as cleare from guilt,	
355	As is the ravenous mastife that hath spilt The bloode of a whole flocke, yet sily comes And coaches in his kennell with smeard chaps.	
	Out of my house, for yet my house it is, And followe him yee catchpole bribed groomes;	<i>mouth</i>
360	For neither are ye Lords, nor Gentlemen, That will be hired to wrong a Nobleman. For hir'd yee were last night, I knowe it I,	
	To be my guests, my faithlesse guestes this day,	
365	That your kinde houe you trothlesse might betray:	<i>falsely</i>

Robin Hood Plays

But hence, and helpe the Sheriff at the doore,
Your wors: attempt; fell traitors, as you bee,
Avoide, or I will execute yee all.
Ere any execution come at mee,

[Runne away.]

370 They ran away, so ends the tragedie.

Marian, by Little John, my minde you know,
If you will, doe: if not, why, be it so.

[Offers to goe in.]

Queene No words to me Earle Robert ere you goe?

375 *Robin* O to your Highnesse? Yes, adieu proud Queene;
Had not you bene, thus poore I had not beene.

[Exit.]

Queene Thou wrongst mee Robert, Earle of Huntington,
And were it not for pittie of this maide,
I would revenge the words that thou hast saied.

380 *Marian* Addc not, faire Queene, distresse unto distresse;
But if you can, for pittie make his lesse.

385 *Queene* I can and will forget deserving hate,
And give him comfort in this wofull state.
Marian, I knowe Earle Roberts whole desire
Is to have thee with him from hence away;
And though I loved him dearely to this day,
Yet since I see hee dearlier loveth thee,
Thou shalt have all the furtherance I may.
Tell mee, faire girl, and see thou truly tell,
Whether this night, tomorrowwe, or next day,
There be no pointment for to meete thy love.

390 *Marian* There is, this night there is, I will not lie,
And be it disappointed, I shall die.

unmet

395 *Queene* Alas poore soule, my sonne, Prince John my son,
With severall troupes hath circuited the court,
This house, the citie, that thou canst not scape.

400 *Marian* I will away with death, though he be grim,
If they deny mee to goe hence with him.

Queene Marian, thou shalt go with him clad in my attire,
And for a shift, Ile put thy garmens on,

disguise (stratagem)

It is not mee, my sonne John doth desire;
But Marian it is thee he doteth on.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

	When thou and I are come into the field, Or any other place where Robin stales, Mee in thy clothes, the ambush will beset, Thee in my robes they dare not once approach: So while with mee a reasoning they stay, At pleasure thou with him maist ride away.	
405	Marian I am beholding to your Majesty, And of this plot will sende my Robin worde.	
410	Quene Nay, never trouble him, least it breed suspect: But get thee in, and shift of thy attire, My robe is loose, and it will soone be off, Goe gentle Marian, I will followe thee, And from betrayers hands will set thee free.	suspicion take off
415	Marian I thanke your Highnesse, [Aside] but I will not trust ye, My Robert shall have knowledge of this shift: For I conceive alreadie your deepe drift. [Exit.]	deception intention
420	Quene Now shall I have my will of Huntington, Who taking mee this night for Marian, Will Harry mee away in steade of her:	drag
	For hee dares not stand trifling to conferre: Faith, prettie Marian, I shal meete with you, And with your lowly sweete heart Robert too:	be even with
425	For when wee come unto a baiting place, If with like love my love hee doe not grace, Of treason capitall I will accuse him, For traitorous forcing me out of the court, And guerdon his disdainc with guiltie death,	resting
	That of a Princes love so lightly weighes.	reward
	[Exit.]	

[Scene iv]

430	[Enter Little John, fighting with the Sheriff and his men, Warman persuading him.]
	Lit. John Warman, stand off, tis tattle, tel not me what ye can do: The goods I say are mine, and I say true.
	Warman I say the Sheriff must see them ere they goe.
435	Lit. John You say so Warman; Little John saies no.

Robin Hood Plays

	<i>Sheriff</i>	I say I must for I am the kings Shrieve.	<i>Sheriff</i>
	<i>Lit. John</i>	Your must is false, your office I believe.	
	<i>Watch</i>	Downe with him, downe with him.	
440	<i>Lit. John</i>	Ye barke at me like curres, but I will downe With twentie stand-and-who-goe-theres of you, If yee stand long tempting my patience. Why, master Shrieve, thinke you mee a foole? What justice is there you should search my trunkes, Or stay my goods, for that my master owes?	
445	<i>Sheriff</i>	Here's Justice Warman, steward to your Lord, Suspects some coyne, some jewels, or some plate That longs unto your Lord, are in your trunkes, And the extent is out for all his goods: Therefore wee ought to see none be convaide.	<i>writ of seizure</i>
450	<i>Warman</i>	True, Little John, I am the sorier.	
	<i>Lit. John</i>	A plague upon ye else, how sore ye weape? Why, say thou, upstart, that there were some helpe, Some little little helpe in this distresse, To aide our Lord and master comfortlesse; Is it thy part, thou screendac'nt snouty nose,	<i>two-faced</i>
455		To hinder him that gave thee all thou hast?	
		[Enter Justice Warman's wife, odly attyred.]	
	<i>Wife</i>	Who's that husband? You, you, means he you?	
	<i>Warman</i>	I, ber Lady is it, I thanke him.	<i>by our Lady</i>
460	<i>Wife</i>	A, ye kneve you, Gods pittie hisband, why dis not your worshippe sende the kneve to Newgate?	<i>knave; doesn't</i>
	<i>Lit. John</i>	Well master Sheriffe, shall I passe or no?	
	<i>Sheriff</i>	Not without search.	
	<i>Lit. John</i>	Then here the casket stands, Any that dares unto it set their hands, Let him beginne.	
465	<i>Wife</i>	Doe hisband, you are a Majestic, y'warrant ther's olde knacks, cheins, and other toyes.	<i>Magistrate things</i>
	<i>Lit. John</i>	But not for you, good Madam beetle browes.	<i>shaggy</i>

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- 470 **Wife** Out upon him. By my truly master Justice, and ye
 doe not clasp him up, I will sue a bill of remorse, and ne-
 ver come betweene a pere of sheetes with yee. Such a
 knewe as this, downe with him I pray. *if you*
- [*Set upon him. He knockes some downe.*]
- 475 **Wife** A good Lord, come not neere good husband, only
 charge him; charge him. A good God; helpe, helpe.
- [*Enter Prince John, the Bishopp of Ely, the Prior of
 Yorke, with others. All stay.*]
- 480 **Pr. John** What tumult have wee here? Who doth resist
 The kings wris with such obstinate contempt?
- Wife** This knave.
- Warman** This rebell.
- Pr. John** How now Little John,
 Have you no more discretion than you shewe?
- 485 **Ely** Lay holde, and clappe the traitor by the heeles.
- Lit. John** I am no traitor, my good Lord of Ely.
 First heare mee, then commit me if you please.
- Pr. John** Speake and be briefe.
- 490 **Lit. John** Heere is a little boxe,
 Containing all my gettings twentie yeare;
 Which is mine owne, and no mans but mine owne.
 This they would rifle, this I doe defend,
 And about this we only doe contend.
- 495 **Pr. John** You doe the fellow wrong: his goods are his;
 You only must extend upon the Earles.
- Prior** That was my Lord; but nowe is Robert Hood,
 A simple yeoman as his servants were.
- 500 **Wife** Backe with that legge, my Lord Prior: *cursing*
 There be some that were his servantes thinke foulc
 scorne to be cald yeomen.
- Prior** I cry your worshippe mercy, mistresse Warman.
 The squire your husband was his servant once.
- Lit. John** A scurvie squire, with reverence of these Lords.

Robin Hood Plays

- Wife Doo's he not speake treason, prey. *[I] pray*
- 505 Ely Sirra, yea are too saucie; get you hence.
- Warman But heare mee first, my Leeds, with patience.
This scoffing carelesse fellowe, Little John,
Hath loaden hence a horse, twist him and Much,
A silly rude knave, Much the millers sonne.
- 510 *[Enter Much, clowne.]*
- Much I am here to answerre for myselfe, and have ta-
ken you in two lies at once. First, Much is no knave,
neither was it a horse Little John and I loded, but a
little curtail, of some five handfols high, sib to the Apes *small horse*
515 onely beast at Parish garden.
- Lit. John But master Warman, you have loded carts
And turnd my Lords goods to your proper use. *personal*
Who ever hath the right, you doe the wrong.
And are ...
- 520 Wife What is hee kneve?
- Lit. John Unworthy to be named a man.
- Much And lie be swoyne for his wife,
- Wife I, so thou maist Nich. *Much*
- 525 Much That shee sets newe markes of all my olde ladies
linnen (God rest her soule) and my young Lord never
had them since.
- Wife Out, out, I tooke him them but to whiting, as *for bleaching*
God mend me.
- Ely Leave off this idle talk. Get yee both hence.
- 530 Lit. John I thanke your honours. Woe are not in love with
being here; woe must seeke service that are master-
lesse. *[Exeunt Much, John.]*
- Ely Lord Prior of Yorke, here's your commission.
You are best make spedde, least in his country houses,
By his appointment, all his heards be solde. *Livestock*
- 535 Prior I thankes your Honour, taking humble leave. *[Exit.]*

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- 540 *Ely* And master Warman, here's your Patent seal'd,
For the high Sheriffwick of Nottingham:
Except the King our master doe repeale
This gift of ours.
- Pr. John Let him the while possesse it.
- Ely* A Gods name, let him; he hath my good will. [Exit.]
- Pr. John Well Warman, this proude Priest I can not brooke. *i.e., Ely*
But to our other mattier, send thy wife away.
- 545 *Warman* Goe in good wife, the Prince with mee hath
private conference.
- Wife* By my troth yee will anger mee: now yee have
the Paterne, yee should call mee nothing but mistresse
Sheriffe: for I tell you I stand upon my replicationes. *Patent*
reputation
- 550 [Exit.]
- Pr. John Thinkest thou that Marian meaneas
To scape this evening hence with Robin Hoode?
- [Warman]* The horse boy tolde mee so, and here he comes, *(see note)*
Disguised like a citizen me thinkes.
- 555 *[Pr. John]* Warman, less in. Ile fit him presently;
Only for Marian am I now his enemie. *Let us go in*
[Enter.]

[Scene v]

[Enter Robin like a citizen.]

- 560 *Robin* Earle John and Warman, two good friends of mine:
I thinke they knewe mee not, or if they did
I care not what can followe. I am sure
The sharpest ende is death, and that will come.
But what of death or sorrowe doe I dreame?
My Marian, my faire life, my beautious love,
Is comming, to give comfort to my griefe,
And the sly Queene, intending to deceive,
Hath taught us how we should her sleights receive. [Enter John.]
But who is this? Gods pittie, here's Prince John.
We shall have some good rule with him alone.

Robin Hood Plays

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------|---|
| 570 | <i>Pr. John</i> | God even, sir; this cleare evening should portend
Some frost I thinke. How judge you honest friend? |
| | <i>Robin</i> | I am not weatherwise; but it may be,
Wee shall have hard frost. For true charitie,
Good dealing, faithfull friendshippe, honestie,
Are chil-colde, deade with colde. |
| 575 | <i>Pr. John</i> | O good sir, stay.
That frost hath lasted many a bitter day.
Knowe yee no frozen hearts that are belov'd? |
| | <i>Robin</i> | Love is a flame, a fire, that being mov'd,
Still brighter growes; but say, are you belov'd? |
| 580 | <i>Pr. John</i> | I would be, if I be not; but passe that.
Are ye a dweller in this citie, pray? never mind |
| | <i>Robin</i> | I am, and for a gentlewoman stay,
That rides some fourre or five mile in great hastie. |
| | | [Enter Queene, Marian.] |
| 585 | <i>Pr. John</i> | I see your labour, sir, is not in waste.
For here come two: are either of these yours? |
| | <i>Robin</i> | Both are, one must. must be |
| | <i>Pr. John</i> | Which doe you most respect? prefer |
| | <i>Robin</i> | The youngest and the fairest I reject. |
| 590 | <i>Pr. John</i> | [Aside] Robin, Ile try you whether yee say true. |
| | <i>Robin</i> | [Aside] As you with mee, so John Ile feast with you. |
| | <i>Queene</i> | Marian, let me goe first to Robin Hood,
And I will tell him what wee doe intend. |
| | <i>Marian</i> | Doe what your Highnesse please. Your will is mine. |
| 595 | <i>Pr. John</i> | My mother is with gentle Marian;
O it doth grieve her to be left behinde. |
| | <i>Queene</i> | Shall we away my Robin, leas the Queene
Betray our purpose? Sweese, let us away.
I have great will to goe, no heart to stay. |
| 600 | <i>Robin</i> | Away with thee? No! Get thee farre away
From mee foule Marian, faire though thou be nam'd. |

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

For thy bewitching eyes have raised stormes,
That have my name and noblesse ever sham'd.
Prince John, my deare friend once, is now, for thee,
605 Become an unrelenting enemie,

because of you

Pr. John But Ile relent, and lve thee, if thou leave her.

Robin And Elinor, my soveraignes mother Queene,
That yet retaines true passion in her breast,
Stands mourning yonder. Hence, I thee detest.
610 I will submit mee to her Majestie.
Greate Princesse, if you will but ride with mee,
A little of my way, I will expresse
My folly past, and humble pardon beg.

Marian I grant, Earle Robert, and I thanke thee too.

Queene She's not the Queene, sweete Robin, it is I.

Robin Hence sorceresse, thy beauty I defie.
If thou have any love at all to mee,
Bestowe it on Prince John: he loveth thee.

[Exeunt *Robin, Marian*.]

620 *Pr. John* And I will love thee Robin, for this deede,
And helpe thee too, in thy distresfull neede.

Queene Wilt thou not stay nor speake, proud Huntington?
Ay mee, some whirlwinde hurries them away.

625 *Pr. John* Follow him not, faire love, that from thee flies:
But flic to him that gladly followes thee.
Wilt thou not, girlie? Turnst thou away from mee?

Queene Nay, we shall have it then,
If my queint sonne, his mother gin to court.

strange: takes

630 *Pr. John* Wilt thou not speake, faire Marian, to Prince John,
That loves thee well?

Queene Good sir, I know you doe.

Pr. John That can maintaine thee?

Queene I, I know you can:
But hitherto I have maintained you.

Aye

635 *Pr. John* My princely mother?

Robin Hood Plays

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------|---|-------------------|
| | <i>Queene</i> | I, my princely sonne. | <i>Aye</i> |
| | <i>Pr. John</i> | Is Marian then gone hence with Huntington? | |
| | <i>Queene</i> | I, she is gone, ill may they either thrive. | <i>Aye</i> |
| 640 | <i>Pr. John</i> | Mother, they must goe whom the divell drives.
For your sharpe furie, and infernall rage,
Your scorne of mee, your spite to Marian,
Your over-doting love to Huntington,
Hath crost yourselfe, and mee it hath undone. | <i>devil</i> |
| | <i>Queene</i> | I, in mine owne deceipt, have mett deceipt.
In briefe, the manner thus I will repeate;
I knewe, with malice that the Prior of Yorke
Pursu'd Earle Robert; and I furdred it, | <i>furtherred</i> |
| | | Though God can tell, for love of Huntington.
For thus I thought, when he was in extremes,
Neede, and my love would winne some good regarde
From him to mee, if I reliev'd his want. | |
| 650 | | To this end came I to the mock-spouse feast;
To this end made I change for Marians weedes,
That me, for her, Earle Robert should receive.
But now I see they both of them agreed, | <i>clothes</i> |
| | | In my deceipt, I might myselfe deceive.
Come in with mee, come in and meditate
How to turne love, to never changing hate. | |
| 655 | <i>Pr. John</i> | In by thyselfe; I passe not for your spels.
Of youth and beautie still you are the foe.
The curse of Rosamond rests on your head,
Faire Rose confounded by your cankers hate. | <i>care not</i> |
| | | O that she were not as to mee she is,
A mother, whom by nature I must love,
Then would I tell her shew were too too base,
To dote thus on a banisht carclesse groome: | <i>cankeroas</i> |
| 665 | | Then should I tell her that shew were too fond,
To thrust faire Marian to an exiles hand. | |
| | | [Enter a messenger from Ely.] | |
| 670 | <i>Messenger</i> | My Lord, my Loed of Ely sends for you,
About important businesse of the state. | |
| | <i>Pr. John</i> | Tell the peoude prelate I am not dispos'd,
Nor in estate to come at his commaunde. | <i>of rank</i> |

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

|Smile him, bee bleeder.

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------|---|-------------|
| 675 | | Be gon with that, or tarry and take this.
Zwouns, are yee listning for an after-areant? [Exit Messenger. (see note)] | |
| | | Ile followe, with revengefull murdrous hate,
The banisht, beggered, bankrupt Huntington. | banksrpt |
| | | [Enter Simon, Earle of Leicester.] | |
| 680 | <i>Leicester</i> | How now, Prince John? Bodie of mee, I muse
What mad moodes issue yee, in this busie time,
To wound the messenger that Ely sent,
By our consent? Yfaith yee did not well. | wonder |
| 685 | <i>Pr. John</i> | Leyster, I meant it Ely, not his man:
His servants heade but bleedes; hee headlesse shall
From all the issues of his traitor necke,
Poure streames of blode, till he be bloodlesse left.
By earth it shall, by heaven it shall be so,
Leister, it shall though all the world say no. | |
| 690 | <i>Leicester</i> | It shall, it shall, but how shall it be done?
Not with a stormie tempest of sharpe words,
But slowe, still speaches, and effecting deedes.
Here comes olde Lacy and his brother Hugh.
One is our friend, the other is not true. | |
| 695 | | [Enter Lord Lacy, Sir Hugh, and his boy.] | |
| 700 | <i>Lacy</i> | Hence trechor as thou art! By Gods blest mother
Ile lop thy legges off, though thou be my brother,
If with thy flattring tongue thou seeke to hide
Thy traiterous purpose. Ah poore Huntington,
How in one houre have villaines thee undone? | traitor |
| 705 | <i>Hugh</i> | If you will not beleevve what I have sworne,
Conceipt your wrost. My Lord of Ely knowes
That what I say is true. | Imagine |
| 710 | <i>Lacy</i> | Still facest thou?
Drawe boy, and quickly see that thou defende thee. | dissensible |
| 715 | <i>Leicester</i> | Patience, Lord Lacy, get you gon, Sir Hugh,
Provoke him not, for he hath tolde you true.
You knowe it, that I knowe the Prior of Yorke,
Together with my good Lord Chauncellor, | |

Robin Hood Plays

710 Corrupted you, Lord Senteine, Brughton, Warman,
To feast with Robert on his day of fall.

Hugh They lie that say it; I defie yee all.

Pr. John Now by the Roode thou lyest. Warman himselfe,
That creeping Judas, joyed, and tolde it mee.

Cross

715 *Lacy* Let mee, my Lords, revenge me of this wretch,
By whosee my daughter and her love were lost.

Pr. John For her, let mee revenge with bitter cost.
Shall Sir Hugh Lacy and his fellowes buy
Faire Marians losse, lost by their treachery.
And thus I pay it.

[Stabs him. *He falleth; boy runneth in.*

Leicester Sure painement, John.

725 *Lacy* There let the villane lie.
For this, olde Lacie honours thee, Prince John;
One trecherous soule, is sent to answere wrong.

[Enter Ely, Chester, officers, Hugh Lacies boy.

Boy Here, here, my Loed,
Looke where my master lies.

730 *Ely* What murdrous hand hath kild this gentle knight,
Good Sir Hugh Lacy, steward of my lands?

Pr. John Ely, he died by this princely hand.

Ely Unprincely deed. Death asketh death you know.
Arrest him officers.

735 *Pr. John* O sir, lie obey; you will take baile, I hope.

Chester Tis more, sir, than hec may.

Leicester Chester, he may by lawe, and therefore shall.

Ely Who are his baile?

Leicester I.

Lacy And I.

740 *Ely* You are confederates.

conspirators

Pr. John Holy Loed, you lye.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

Chester Be reverent, Prince John; my Lord of Ely,
You knowe, is Regent for his Majestie.

Pr. John But here are letters from his Majesty,
745 Sent out of Joppa, in the holy land,
To you, to these, to mee, to all the State,
Containing a repeal of that large graunt,
And free authoritie to take the seale,
750 Into the hands of three Lords temporeall,
And the Lord Archbisshoppe of Roan, he sent,
And hee shall yielde it, or as Lacy lies,
Desertfully, for pride and treason stabd,
He shall ere long lye. Those that intend as I
Followe this steely ensigne, lift on high.

Haifa

755 [Lifts up his drawn sword:
Exit, cum Lester and Lacy.

with

Ely A thousand thousand ensignes of sharpe steele,
And feathered arrowes, from the bowe of death,
Against proud John, wrongd Ely will imploy.
760 My Lord of Chester, let mee have your aide,
To lay the pride of haute usurping John.

proud

Chester Some other course than warre let us bethinke.
If it may be, let not uncivill broiles,
Our civill hands defile.

765 Ely God knowes that I,
For quiet of the realme, would ought forbear.
But give mee leave, my noble Lord, to feare,
When one I dearely lov'd is murdered
Under the colour of a little wrong
770 Done to the wastfull Earle of Huntington,
Whom John, I knowe, doth hate unto the death,
Only for loue he beares to Lacies daughter.

Chester My Lord, its plaine this quarrel is but pickt
For an inducement to a greauer ill;
But wee will call the Counsell of Estate,
At which the mother Queene shall present be,
Whither by summons shall Prince John be cald,
775 Lester, and Lacy, who, it seemes,
Favour some factious purpose of the Prince.

Robin Hood Plays

[Scene vi]

[Enter Robin Hood, Matilda [i.e., Marian], at one doore; Little John, and Much the millers sonne at another doore.

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------|--|---|
| | <i>Much</i> | Luck I beseech thee, Marry and amen,
Blessing betide hem, it be them indeede,
Ah my good Lord, for and my little Ladie. | <i>Mary
them, if it be
and also</i> |
| 785 | <i>Robin</i> | What? Much and John, well met in this ill time. | |
| | <i>Lit. John</i> | In this good time my Lord; for being met,
The world shall not depart us till wee die. | |
| 790 | <i>Matilda</i> | Saist thou mee so, John? As I am true maide,
If I live long, well shall thy love be paide. | |
| | <i>Much</i> | Well, there be on us, simple though wee stand
here, have as much love in hem as Little John. | <i>them</i> |
| 795 | <i>Matilda</i> | Much, I confesse thou lovest mee very much,
And I will more reward it than with words. | |
| | <i>Much</i> | Nay I know that, but wee millers children
love the cogge a little, and the faire speaking. | (see note) |
| 800 | <i>Robin</i> | And is it possible that Warmans spite
Should stretch so farre, that he doth hunt the lives,
Of bonnie Scarlet, and his brother Scathlock. | |
| | <i>Much</i> | O, I, sir. Warman came but yesterday to take
charge of the Jaile at Nottingham, and this day he saies
he will hang the two outlawes. He meanes to set them
at libertie. | <i>indeed</i> |
| 805 | <i>Matilda</i> | Such libertie God send the pievish wretch
In his most neede. | <i>mischievous</i> |
| | <i>Robin</i> | Now by my honours hope,
Yet buried in the lowe dust of disgrace,
He is too blame. Say John, where must they die? | |
| 810 | <i>Lit. John</i> | Yonders their mothers house, and here the tree,
Whereon (poore men) they must foregoe their lives. | |

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- And yonder comes a lazie, lozell Frier
That is appointed for their confessor,
Who, when we brought your monie to their mothers,
Was wishing her to patience for their deaths.
- [Enter Frier Tucke, and Ralph, Warmans man.]
- Ralph I am timorous, sir, that the prigioners are passed
from the Jaile.
- Frier Soft, sirra, by my order I protest,
Ye are too forward; tis no game, no jest
We goe about.
- Robin Matilda, walke afore,
To widow Scarlets house. Looke where it stands.
Much, man your Ladie; Little John and I
Will come unto you thither presently.
- Much Come Madame, my Lord has pointed the pro-
perer man to goe before yee.
- Matilda Be carefull, Robin, in this time of feare.
- [Exit Much, Matilda.]
- Frier Now by the reliques of the holy Masse,
A prettie girl, a very bonny lass.
- Robin Frier, how like you her?
- Frier Mary, by my hoode,
I like her well, and wish her nought but good.
- Ralph Yee protract, master Frier. I obsecrate ye with
all curtesie, omitting complement, you would vouch,
or deigne to proceede.
- Frier Deigne, vouch, protract, complement, obsecrate?
Why, good man tricks, who taught you thus to prate?
Your name, your name, were you never christned?
- Ralph My nomination Radulf is or Ralph;
Vulgars corruptly use to call mee Rafe.
- Frier O foule corruption of base palliardize,
When idiots witesse travell to be wise.
Age barbarous, times impious, men vitious,

worthless

religious order

delay; beseach
formality

chatter

lewdness (see note)
labor

Robin Hood Plays

- Able to upraise,
Men deade many daies,
That wanted to praise,
The Rimes and the laies
Of Poets Laureate,
Whose verse did decorate,
And their lines illustrate
Both Prince and Potentate.
- See asses and knaves,
Base idiot slaves,
With boastings and braves,
Offer to upstie,
To the heavens hie,
- With vaine foolery,
And rude ribaldry.
Some of them write
Of beastly delight,
Suffering their lines,
- To flatter these times,
With Pandarisme base,
And lust doe uncase,
From the placket to the pappe:
- God send them ill happe.
- Some like quaint pedants,
Good wits true recreants,
Yee cannot beseech
From pure Priscian speech.
- Divers as nice,
Like this odde vice,
Are wordmakers daily.
- Others in curtail
When ever they moete yee,
With newe fashions greete yee,
- Chaunging each congee,
Sometime beneath knee,
With, good sir, pardon mee,
And much more foolerie,
- Faltry, and foppry,
Dissembling knavery,

illuminate

exhibitions

*fly up
high*

obsequious sycophancy

padendum; nippie

grammatically strict

bow

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

Hands sometime kissing,
But honestie missing.
God give no blessing
To such base counterfaiting.

- 890 *Lit. John* Stoppe, master Skelton; whither will you runne?
 Frier Gods pittie, Sir John Elam, Little John,
 I had forgotte myselfe; but to our play.
 Come, good man fashions, let us goe our way,
 Unto this hanging businesse. Would, for mee,
895 Some rescue, or repreeve might set them free.
 [Exeunt Frier, Ralph.]
 Robin Heards: thou not, Little John, the Friers speach,
 Wishing for rescue, or a quicke repreeve?
 Lit. John He seemes like a good fellowe, my good Lord.
900 *Robin* He's a good fellowe, John, upon my word.
 Lend mee thy horne, and get thee in to Much,
 And when I blowe this horne, come both and helpe mee.
 Lit. John Take heed my Lord: the villane Warman knows you,
 And ten to one, he hath a writ against you.
905 *Robin* Fear not; below the bridge a poore blind man doth dwell,
 With him I will change my habit, and disguise,
 Only be ready when I call for yee,
 For I will save their lives, if it may bee.
 Lit. John I will doe what you would immediatly. [Exeunt.]

[Scene vii]

- 910 [Enter Warman, Scarlet, and Scathlock bounde, Frier Tuck as their confessor, Officers with halberts.]
 Warman Master Frier, be briefe, delay no time.
 Scarlet and Scathlock, never hope for life.
 Here is the place of execution,
915 And you must answerre lawe for what is done.
 Scarlet Well, if there be no remedie, we must,
 Though it ill seemeth, Warman, thou shouldst bee
 So bloodie to pursue our lives thus cruellie.

Robin Hood Plays

- 920 *Scathlock* Our mother sav'd thee from the gallowes, Warman;
 His father did preferre thee to thy Lord.
 One mother had wee both, and both our fathers,
 To thee and to thy father, were kinde friends.
- 925 *Prier* Good fellowes, here you see his kindness ends.
 What he was once, hee doth not now consider.
 You must consider of your many sinnes;
 This day, in death, your happinesse beginnes.
- 930 *Scarlock* If you account it happinesse, good Frier,
 To beare us companie, I you desire.
 The more the merrier, wee are honest men.
- 935 *Warman* Ye were first outlaws, them ye prooved theoves,
 And now all carelessly yee scoffe at death.
 Both of your fathers were good honest men;
 Your mother lives, their widowe, in good fame.
 But you are scapethrifts, unthrifts, villaines, knaves, *spendthrifts, wastrels*
 And, as yee liv'd by shifts, shall die with shame.
- 940 *Scathlock* Warman, good words, for all your bitter deeds.
 Ill speach, to wretched men, is more than needs.
 [Enter Raph, running.]
- 945 *Ralph* Sir, retire yee, for it hath thus succeeded, the car-
 nifex, or executor, riding on an ill curtall, hath tituba-
 ted or stumbled, and is now cripplified, with broken or
 fracted tibards, and sending you tidings of successse, saith,
 yourselfe must be his deputie.
- 950 *Warman* Ill luck! But, sirra, you shall serve the turne.
 The cords that binde them, you shall hang them in.
- 955 *Ralph* How are you, sir, of mee opinias? Not to possess
 your seneschalship, or sherrifarie, not to be Earle of
 Nottingham, will Ralph be nominated by the base scan-
 dalous vociferation of a hangman.
- 960 [Enter Robin Hood, like an old man.]
- 965 *Robin* Where is the shrieve, kinde friends? I you beseech,
 With his good worshippe, let mee have some speech.
- 970 *Prier* Here is the Sheriffe, father, this is hee.
- 975 *Robin* Frier, good alms, and many blessings thank thee.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- 955 Sir, you are welcome to this troublous sheere.
Of this dailies execution did I heare.
Scarlet and Scathlocke murdered my young sonne,
Mee have they robd, and helplessly undoone.
Revenge I would, but I am olde and dry:
Wherefore, sweete master, for saint charitie,
Since they are bound, deliver them to mee,
That for my sons blood I reveng'd may bee.
- 960 Scarlet This old man lies, we ne're did him such wrong. never
Robin I doe not lie, you wose it too too well; know
965 The deede was such, as you may shame to tell.
But I with all intreas might not preuale
With your sterne stubborne mindes, bent all to blood.
Shall I have such revenge then, master Sheriffe,
That with my sonnes losse, may suffice myself?
- 970 [Robin whispers with them.]
- Warman Doe, father, what thou wilt, for they must die.
Friar I never heard them toucht with bloode till now.
Warman Notorious villanes, and they made their brags,
The Earle of Huntington would save their lives;
975 But hee is downe the wind, as all such shall,
That revell, wast and spende, and take no care.
- Robin My horne once winded, Ile unbindc my belt,
Wherat the swords and bucklers are fast tied.
- Scathlocke Thanks to your Honour, Father, we confesse,
980 And, were our armes unbounde, we would upheave
Our sinfull hands with sorrowing hearts to heaven.
- Robin I will unbindc you, with the Sheriffes leave.
- Warman Doe, Help him Ralphe; go to them, master Friar.
- 985 Robin And as yee blew your horns, at my sons death,
So will I sound your knell, with my best breath.
[Sound his horn.]
And here's a blade, that hangeth at my belt,
Shall make ye feele in death, what my sonne felt.
- 990 [Enter Little John, Much, Scarlet, and Scathlock. Fight; the Friar, making as if he helps the Sheriffe, knockes downe

Robin Hood Plays

his men, crying, "Keep the kings peace."

- 995 *Ralph* O they must be hangd, father.
 Robin Thy master and thyselfe supply their roomes.
 Warman Warman, approach mee not, tempt not my wrath.
 For if thou doe, thou diest remedlesse.
- 1000 *Warman* It is the outlawed Earle of Huntington;
 Dowsse with him Frier. Oh, thou dost mistake.
 Fly Ralph, wee die else; let us raise the shire.
 [*Sheriffe runnes away, and his men.*]
 Frier Farewell Earle Robert, as I am true frier,
 I had rather be thy clarke, then serve the Prior. [Exit *Frier.*]
 Robin A jolly fellowe, Scarlet, knowest thou him?
 Scarlet Hee is of Yorke, and of Saint Maries Cloister.
 There where your greedie uncle is Lord Prior.
1005 *Much* O murren on ye, have you two scap't hanging? plague
 Harke yee, my Lord, these two fellowes kept at Barns-
 dale seaven yeare, to my knowledge, and no man.
 Robin Here is no biding masters. Get yee in; waiting
 Take a short blessing at your mothers hands.
1010 *Much* Much, beare them companie, make Matilda merry.
 John and myselfe will followe presently. [*Exeunt Much, Scarlet, Scath.*]
 John, on a sodaine thus I am resolv'd,
 To keepe in Sherewodde, till the Kings returne,
 And being outlawed, leade an outlawes life. wait
1015 *Scarlet* Seaven yeares these brethen, being yeomens sons,
 Lived and scap't the malice of their foes.
 How thinkest thou, Little John, of my intent?
 Lit. John I like your Honours purpose exceeding well.
1020 *Robin* Nay, no more honour, I pray thee Little John.
 Henceforth I will be called Robin Hoode,
 Matilda shall be my Maid Marian.
 Come, John, friends all, for now beginnes the game,
 And after our deserts, so growe our fame. [Exit. according to

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

[Scans will]

[Enter Prince John and his Lords, with soldiers.]

- | | | | |
|------|------------------|--|------------------|
| 1025 | <i>Pr. John</i> | Now is this comet shot into the sea,
Or lies like slime, upon the sullen earth.
Come, he is deade, else should we heare of him. | <i>i.e., Ely</i> |
| | <i>Salsbury</i> | I knowe not what to thinke herein, my Lord. | |
| | <i>Fitzwater</i> | Ely is not the man I tooke him for,
I am afraide wee shall have worse than hee. | |
| 1030 | <i>Pr. John</i> | Why, good Fitzwater, whence doth spring your fear? | |
| | <i>Fitzwater</i> | Him, for his pride, we justly have suspect;
But prouder climers are about to rise. | |
| | <i>Salsbury</i> | Name them, Fitzwater; know you any such? | |
| 1035 | <i>Pr. John</i> | Fitzwater meaneſt not any thing, I know;
For if he did, his tongue would tell his heart. | |
| | <i>Fitzwater</i> | An argument of my free heart, my Lord,
That lets the worlde be witnesse of my thought.
When I was taught, true dealing kept the schoole;
Deeds were swoyne partners with protesting words.
We said and did, these say and never meane. | |
| 1040 | | This upstart protestation of no proofe,
This, I beseech you, sir, accept my love;
Commaund mee, use mee, O you are too blame
That doe neglect my everlasting zeale, | |
| | | My deare, my kinde affect, when God can tell,
A sodaine puffle of winde, a lightning flash,
A bubble on the stremme doth longer dure,
Than doth the purpose of their promise bide. | |
| 1045 | | A shame upon this peevish apish age. | ape-like |
| | | These crouching hypocrite dissembling times.
Well, well, God rid the patrones of these crimes,
Out of this land. I have an inward feare,
This ill, well-seeming sinne will be bought deare. | |
| 1050 | <i>Salsbury</i> | My Lord Fitzwater is inspir'd I thinke. | |
| | <i>Pr. John</i> | I, with some divell; let the olde foole done. | |

[Enter Queene Mother, Chester, Sheriff, Kent
soldiers.]

Robin Hood Plays

- 1060 *Queene* From the pursuing of the hatefull Priest,
 And bootlesse search of Ely are wee come.
- Pr. John* And welcome is your sacred Majestie.
 And, Chester, welcome too, against your will.
- 1065 *Chester* Unwilling men come not without constraint,
 But uncompeid comes Chester to this place,
 Telling thee, John, that thou art much too blame
 To chase hence Ely, Chauncelor to the King,
 To set thy footesieppes on the cloath of stase,
 And seate thy body in thy brothers throne.
- Salsbury* Who should succeede the brother, but the brother?
- 1070 *Chester* If one were deade, one should succeede the other.
- Queene* My sonne is king, my son then ought to raigne.
- Fitzwater* One sonne is king, the State allows not twaine.
- Salsbury* The subjects many yeares the king have mist.
- Chester* But subjects must not chuse what king they list.
- 1075 *Queene* Richard hath conquered kingdomes in the East.
- Fitzwater* A signe hee will not loose this in the West.
- Salsbury* By Salsburies honour, I will follow John.
- Chester* So Chester will, to shunne commotion.
- Queene* Why? John shall be but Richards deputie.
- 1080 *Fitzwater* To that, Fitzwater gladly doth agree.
 And looke io't Lady, minde King Richards love:
 As you will answer't, doe the King no wrong.
- Queene* Well said old conscience; you keep still one song.
- 1085 *Pr. John* In your contentious humours, noble Lords,
 Peeres, and upholders of the English State,
 John silent stode, as one that did awaite
 What sentence yee determinid for my life.
 But since you are agreed that I shall beare
 The weightlie burthen of this kingdomes state,
 Till the retурne of Richard, our dread king,
 I doe accept the charge, and thanke you all,
 That think me worthie of so great a place.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- All Wee all confirme you Richards deputie.
- Salsbury Now shall I plague proud Chester.
- 1095 Queene Sit you sure, Fitzwater.
- Chester For peace, I yield to wrong.
- Pr. John Now old man, for your daughter.
- Fitzwater To see wrong rule, my eyes run streams of water.
- [A noyse within.]
- 1100 [Enter a Collier, crying a monster.]
- Collier A monster, a monster! Bring her out Robin, a monster, a monster!
- Salsbury Peace gaping fellowe. Knowest thou where thou art? bawling
- Collier Why? I am in Kent, within a mile of Dover.
- 1105 Sbloud, where I am, peace, and a gaping fellow? For all your dagger, were not for your ging.
I would knocke my whipstocke on your addle head.
Come out with the monster, Robin.
- God's blood crew (gang)
- Within I come, I come, help mee she scrats. scratches
- 1110 Collier He gee her the lash; come out yee bearded witch. give
[Bring forth Ely, with a yarde in his hand, and his men cloath, drest like a woman.]
- Ely Good fellowes let mee goe, there's gold to drinke.
I am a man, though in a womans weedes.
- 1115 Yonders Prince John, I pray yee let mee goe.
- Queene What rude companions have we yonder Salsbury?
- 1 Col. Shall we take his money?
- 2 Col. No, no; this is the thiefe that robd master
Mighels, and came in like a woman in labour, I war-
rant yee.
- 1120 Salsbury Who have yee here, honest colliers?
- 2 Col. A monster, a monster! A woman with a bearde,
a man in a petticoate! A monster, a monster!
- Salsbury What my good Lord of Ely, is it you?
Ely is taken; here's the Chauncelor.

Robin Hood Plays

- I Coll.* Pray God wee be not hangd for this tricke?
- Quene* Whas my good Lord?
- Ely* I, I, ambitious Ladie. Aye
- Pr. John* Who, my Lord Chauncelour?
- 1130 *Ely* I, you proud usurper.
- Salisbury* What, is your surplesse turned to a smock?
- Ely* Peacc, Salibury, thou changing weathercocke.
- Chester* Alas, my Lord, I grieve to see this sight.
- Ely* Chester, it will be day for this darke night.
- 1135 *Fitzwater* Ely, thou wert the foe to Huntington:
Robin, thou knewest, was my adopted sonne:
O Ely, thou to him wert too too cruell,
With him fled hence Matilda, my faire jewell.
For their wrong, Ely, and thy haantic pride,
I helpt Earle John; but now I see thee lowe,
At thy distresse, my heart is full of woe.
- Quene* Needes must I see Fitzwaters overthrowe.
John, I affect him not; he loves not thee.
Remoove him John, least thou remooved bee.
- 1145 *Pr. John* Mother, let mee alone. By one and one,
I will not leave one, that envies our good.
My Lord of Salbury, give these honest colliers,
For taking Ely, each a hundred markes. leave it to me
- Salisbury* Come fellowes, goe with mee.
- 1150 *I Coll.* Thanke yee faith; farewell, monser.

[Exeunt Salbury, Colliers.]
- Pr. John* Sheriff of Kent, take Ely to your charge,
From Shreeve to Shreeve, send him to Nottingham
Where Warman, by our Patent, is high Shreeve.
There as a traitor, let him be close kept,
And to his triall wee will follow straight.
- 1155 *Ely* A traitor, John?
- Pr. John* Doe not expostulate.
You at your trial shal have time to prate. [Exeunt cum Ely.]

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- 1160 *Fitzwater* God for thy pittie, what a time is here?
- Pr. John* Right gracious mother, wold yourself and Chester
Would but withdrawe you for a little space,
While I conferre with my good Lord Fitzwater.
- Queene* My Lord of Chester, will you walke aside?
- 1165 *Chester* Whether your Highnesse please, thither I wil. Whither
[Exeunt Chester, Queene.]
- Pr. John* Souldiers, attend the person of our mother. *[Exeunt.]*
Noble Fitzwater, now wee are alone,
What oft I have desir'd, I will intrease,
1170 Touching Matilda, fled with Huntington.
- Fitzwater* Of her what wold you touch? Touching her flight,
She is fledde hence with Robert, her true knight.
- Pr. John* Robert is outlawed, and Matilda free.
Why through his fault should she exiled be?
1175 She is your comfort, all your ages blisse.
Why should your age, so great a comfort misse?
She is all Englands beautie, all her pride.
In forren lands, why should that beautie bide?
Call her againe Fitzwater, call againe
1180 Guiltlesse Matilda, beauties souveraigne.
- Fitzwater* I graunt, Prince John, Matilda was my joy,
And the faire sunne, that kept old winters frost
From griping deade the marrowe of my bones.
And she is gone, yet where she is, God wote,
1185 Aged Fitzwater truly guesseth not.
But where she is, there is kinde Huntington;
With my faire daughter, is my noble sonne.
If he may never be recal'd againe,
To call Matilda backe it is in vaine.
- 1190 *Pr. John* Living with him, she lives in vitious state,
For Huntington is excommunicate. sinful
And till his debts be paid, by Romes decree,
It is agreed, absolv'd he can not be.
And that can never be. So never wife,
1195 But in a loath'd adult'rous beggers life,

Robin Hood Plays

Must faire Matilda live? This you may amend
And winne Prince John, your ever during friend.

Fitzwater As how, as how?

1200 *Pr. John* Cal her from him; bring her to Englands court,
Where, like faire Phoebe, she may sit as Queene,
Over the sacred honourable maids
That doe attend the royll Queene, my mother.
There shall shooe live a Princes Cynthia,
And John will be her true Endimion.

1205 *Fitzwater* By this construction, she should be the Moone,
And you would be the man within the Moone.

Pr. John A pleasant exposition, good Fitzwater:
But if it fell so out that I fell in,
You of my full joyes should be chiefe partaker.

1210 *Fitzwater* John, I defie thee. By my honours hope,
I will not beare this base indignitie.
Take to thy tools. Thinkst thou a noble man
Will be a Pandar to his proper childe?

Draw your sword

1215 For what intendst thou else? Seeing I knowe,
Earle Clepslowes daughter is thy married wife.
Come, if thou be a right Plantaginet,
Drawe and defende thee. Oh our Ladie helpe
True English Lords, from such a tyrant Lord.
What, doest thou think I jest? Nay by the Roode,
Ile loose my life, or purge thy lustfull blode.

1220 *Pr. John* What my olde Ruffian, ly at your warde?
Have at your froward bosome, olde Fitzwater.

en garde

[Fight: John falleth. Enter Queene, Chester, Salbury
hastily.

1225 *Fitzwater* O that thou were not Royal Richards brother,
Thou shouldst here die in presence of thy mother.

[John rises. All compasse Fitzwater; Fitzwater chafes.

What, is he up? Nay Lords, then give us leave.

Chester What meaneas this rage Fitzwater?

1230 *Queene* Lay hands upon the Bedlam, traitrous wretch.

crazy man

Pr. John Nay, hale him hence, and heare you old Fitzwater;

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

See that you stay not five daies in the Realme,
For if you doe, you die remedlesse.

Fitzwater Speak Lords. Do you confirme what he hath said?

1235 *All* He is our Prince, and he must be obaid.

Fitzwater Harken, Earle John, but one word will I say.

Pr. John I will not heare thee, neither will I stay.
Thou knowest thy time.

[Exit.]

Fitzwater Will not your Highnesse heare?

1240 *Quenes* No, thy Matilda robd mee of my deare. [Exit.]

Fitzwater I aided thee in battell, Salsbury.

Salsbury Prince John is moov'd; I dare not stay with thee. [Exit Salsbury.]

Fitzwater Gains't thee and Ely, Chester, was I foe?
And dost thou stay to aggravate my woe?

1245 *Chester* No, good Fitzwater, Chester doth lament
Thy wrong, thy sodaine banishment.
Whence grue the quarrell twixt the Prince and thee?

Fitzwater Chester, the devill tempted old Fitzwater,
To be a Pandar to his only daughter,
1250 And my great heart, impatient, forst my hand,
In my true honours right, to chalenge him.
Alas the while, wrong will not be reproov'd.

Chester Farewell, Fitzwater. Wheresoere thou bee,
By letters, I beseech thee, send to mee.

[Exit.]

1255 *Fitzwater* Chester, I will, I will.
Heavens turne to good this woe, this wrong, this ill.

[Exit.]

[Scene ix]

[Enter Scathlocke and Scarlet, winding their hornes at severall doores. To them enter Robin Hoode, Matilda all in greene, Scathlockes mother, Much, Little John, all the men with bowes and arrowes.

Robin Widowe, I wish thee homeward now to wend,

Robin Hood Plays

		Least Warmans malice worke thee any wrong.	<i>Len</i>
1265	<i>Widow</i>	Maser I will, and mickle good attend On thee, thy love, and all these yeomen strong.	<i>Much</i>
	<i>Matilda</i>	Forget not, widow, what you promise mee.	
	<i>Much</i>	O I, mistresse, for Gods sake lets have Jinny.	<i>Oh yes</i>
	<i>Widow</i>	You shall have Jinny sent you with all speede. Sonnes farewell, and by your mothers reede,	<i>counsel</i>
1270		Love well your master; blessing ever fall On him, your mistresse, and these yeomen tall.	[Exit.]
	<i>Much</i>	God be with you, mother; have much minde I pray on Much, your sonne, and your daughter Jinny.	<i>Brave</i>
1275	<i>Robin</i>	Wind once more, jolly huntmen, all your horns, Whose shrill sound, with the echoing wods assist, Shall ring a sad knell for the fearefull doere, Before our feathered shafts, deaths winged darts, Bring sodaine summons for their fatal ends.	
1280	<i>Scarlet</i>	Its ful seaven years since we were outlawed first, And wealthy Sherwood was our heritage. For all those yeares we raigned uncontroilde, From Barnsdale shrogs to Notinghams red clifffes; <i>thicket</i> (<i>undergrowth</i>) At Blithe and Tickhill were we welcome guests.	
1285		Good George a Greene at Bradford was our friend, And wanton Wakefields Pinner lov'd us well. At Barnsley dwelt a Potter tough and strong, That never brookt we brethren should have wrong. The Nunneres of Farnsfield, pretty nunneres they bee,	
		Gave napkins, shirts, and bands to him and mee.	
1290		Bateman of Kendall, gave us Kendall groene, And Sharpe of Leedes, sharpe arrowes for us made: At Rotheram dwelt our bowyer, God him blisse.	<i>bow maker; biss</i>
		Jackson he hight; his bowes did never misse.	<i>was called</i>
1295		This for our good, our scathe let Scathlocke tell, In merry Mansfield, how it once befell.	<i>peril</i>
	<i>Scathlocke</i>	In merry Mansfield, on a wrestling day, Prizes there were, and yeomen came to play. My brother Scarlet and myselfe were twaine, Many resisted, but it was in vain,	

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- 1300 For of them all we wonne the mastery,
And the gilt wreathes were given to him and mee.
There by Sir Doncaster of Hethersfield,
Wee were bewraid, beset, and forst to yield,
betrayed
1305 And so borne bound, from thence to Nottingham,
Where we lay doom'd to death, till Warman came.
- Robin* Of that enough. What cheere, my dearest love?
- Much* O good cheare anone, sir, she shall have venson
her bellyfull.
venison
- Matilda* Matilda is as joyfull of thy good,
1310 As joy can make her. How fares Robin Hood?
- Robin* Well, my Matilda, and if thou agree,
Nothing but mirth shall waite on thee and mee.
- Marioun* O God, how full of perfect mirth were I,
To see thy grieve turnd to true jollisie!
- 1315 *Robin* Give me thy hand; now Gods curse on me light,
If I foesake not grieve, in grieves despight.
Much, make a cry, and yeomen stand yee round.
I charge yee never more let woefull sound
Be heard among yee; but what ever fall,
1320 Laugh grieve to scorne; and so make sorrowes small.
Much, make a cry, and loudly, Little John.
- Much* O God, O God, helpe, helpe, helpe! I am un-
doone, I am undoone.
- Lit. John* Why how now, Much? Peace, peace, you roaring
1325 slave.
- Much* My master bid mee cry, and I will cry till hee
bid me leave. Helpe, helpe, helpe: I, mary, will I.
- Robin* Peace, Much; reade on the Articles good John.
- Lit. John* First, no man must presume to call our master,
1330 By name of Earle, Lord, Baron, Knight, or Squire,
But simply by the name of Robin Hoode.
- Robin* Say, yeomen, to this oder will ye yielde?
- All* We yield to serve our master Robin Hoode.

Robin Hood Plays

- 1335 *Lit. John* Next tis agreed (if thereto shee agree)
 That faire Matilda henceforth change her name,
 And while it is the chance of Robin Hoode,
 To live in Sherewodde a poore outlawes life,
 She, by Maid Marians name, be only cald.
- 1340 *Matilda* I am contented; reade on, Little John,
 Henceforth let me be nam'd Maid Marian.
- 1345 *Lit. John* Thirdly, no yeoman, following Robin Hoode
 In Sherewod, shall use widowe, wife, or maid,
 But by true labour, lustfull thoughts expell.
- 1350 *Robin* How like yee this?
 All Master, we like it well.
 Much But I cry no to it. What shal I do with Jinny then?
 Scarlet Peace, Much; goe forwarde with the orders, fel-
 lowe John.
- 1355 *Lit. John* Fourthly, no passenger with whom ye meete
 Shall yee let passe till hee with Robin feast —
 Except a Poast, a Carrier, or such folke, post (*i.e.*, message carrier)
 As use with foode to serve the market townes.
- 1360 *All* An order which we gladly will observe.
 Lit. John Fifthly, you never shall the poore man wrong,
 Nor spare a priest, a usurer, or a clarke.
 Much Nor a faire wench, meete we her in the darke.
 Lit. John Lastly, you shall defend with all your power,
 Maids, widowes, orphans, and distressed men. orphans
- 1365 *All* All these wee vowe to keepe, as we are men.
 Robin Then wend ye to the Greenewod merrily,
 And let the light roes bootesie from yee runne. deer
 Marian and I, as soveraigns of your toyles,
 Will wait, within our bower, your bent bowes spoiles. toils
- 1370 *Much* Be among them master.
 [Exeunt winding their horns.]
- 1375 *Robin* Marian, thou seest though courtly pleasures want,
 Yet country sport in Sherewodde is not scant.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

	For the soule-ravishing delicious sound Of instrumentall musique, we have found The winged quiristers, with divers notes, Sent from their quaint recording prettie throats, On every branch that compasseth our bower, Without commaund, contenting us each hower.	choristers
1370	For Arras hangings, and rich Tapestrie, We have sweete natures best imbrothery. For thy steele glasse, wherein thou wouldest to looke, Thy christall eyes, gaze in a christall brooke. At court, a flower or two did decke thy head: Now with whole garlands is it circled.	embroidery
1375	For what is wealth we want, we have in flowers, And what wee loose in halles, we finde in bowers.	
1380	<i>Marian</i> Marian hath all, sweete Robert, having thee, And guesses thee as rich, in having mee.	
1385	<i>Robin</i> I am indeede, For having thee, what comfort can I neede?	
	<i>Marian</i> Goe in, goe in. To part such true love, Robin, is were sinne.	[Exeunt.]

[Scene x]

[Enter Prior, Sir Doncaster, Frier Tucke.]

	To take his bodie, by the blessed Roode, Twold doe me more than any other good.	Cross <i>It would</i>
1390	<i>Doncaster</i> O tis an unthrift, still the Churchmens foe, An ill end will beside him, that I knowe. Twas hee that urg'd the king to sesse the clergie	
	When to the holy land he tooke his journey; And he it is that rescued those two theives, Scarlet and Scathlocke, that so manie grieves	assess
1395	To churchmen did. And now they say Hee keepes in Sherewod, and himselfe doth play The lawlesse rener; heare you, my Lord Prior;	
1400	He must be taken, or it will be wrong.	fugitive
	<i>Prior</i> I, and he shall bee to.	Aye

Robin Hood Plays

- Tuck I, I; soone sed. But ere he be, many wil lie deade — spoken
Except it be by sleight.
- Doncaster I there, there, Frier.
- 1405 Tuck Give mee, my Lord, your execution. writ
The widowe Scarleis daughter, lovely Jinny,
Loves and is belov'd of Much the millers sonne.
If I can get the girlc to goe with mee,
Disguis'd in habit, like a pediers mort,
Ile serve this execution, on my life,
And singe out a time alone to take
Robin, that often carelesse walkes alone.
Why? Answere not. Remember what I saide.
Yonder I see comes Jinny, that faire maide;
If wee agree, then back me soone with aside.
- 1410 [Enter Jinny with a fardle.] bundle
- Prior Tuck, if thou doe it . . .
- Doncaster Pray you doe not talke;
As we were strangers, let us carelesse walke.
- 1420 Jinny Now to the greene wodde wend I, God me speede.
- Tuck Amen, faire maid, and send thee, in thy neede,
Much, that is borne to doe thee much good deeds.
- Jinny Are you there, Frier? Nay, then ylath we have it.
- Tuck What, wenche? My love?
- 1425 Jinny I, gee't mee when I crave it. Aye, give it to
Tuck Unaskt I offer, pre thee, sweete girlc, take it. pray you
- Jinny Gifts stinke with proffer; foh, Frier, I forsake it.
- Tuck I will be kinde.
- Jinny Will not your kindesse kill her?
- 1430 Tuck With love?
- Jinny You cogge. flatterer (deceiver) mill wheel
- Tuck Tut, girlc, I am no miller; heare in your eare.
- Doncaster [Aside] The Frier couris her.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- | | | | |
|------|------------------|---|---------------|
| 1435 | <i>Prior</i> | Tush, let him alone,
He is our Ladies Chaplaine, but serves Jone. | a star |
| | <i>Doncaster</i> | Then, from the Friers fault, perchance, it may be
The proverbe grew, Jone's taken for my Ladie. | |
| | <i>Prior</i> | Peace, good Sir Doncaster, list to the end. | |
| | <i>Jinny</i> | But meane yee faith and troth, shall I go weye? | with you |
| 1440 | <i>Tuck</i> | Upon my faith, I doe intend good faith. | |
| | <i>Jinny</i> | And shall I have the pinnes and laces too,
If I beare a pedlers packe with you? | |
| | <i>Tuck</i> | As I am holy Frier, Jinny, thou shalt. | |
| | <i>Jinny</i> | Well, there's my hand, see, Frier, you do not halt. | |
| 1445 | <i>Tuck</i> | Goe but before into the miry mead,
And keepe the path that doth to Farnsfield lead.
Ile into Suthwell, and buy all the knacks,
That shall fit both of us for pedlers packes. | |
| | <i>Jinny</i> | Who be they two that yonder walke, I prey? | |
| 1450 | <i>Tuck</i> | Jinny, I knowe not; be they what they may,
I care not for them, pre thee doe not stay,
But make some speede that we were gone away. | prey you |
| | <i>Jinny</i> | Wel Frier, I trust you that we go to Sherewod. | |
| | <i>Tuck</i> | I, by my beads, and unto Robin Hood. | Aye |
| 1455 | <i>Jinny</i> | Make speede, good Frier. | [Exit Jinny.] |
| | <i>Tuck</i> | Jinny, doe not feare,
Lord Prior, now you heare
As much as I; get mee two pedlers packes,
Points, laces, looking glasses, pinnes and knackes: | |
| 1460 | | And let Sir Doncaster with some wight lads,
Followe us close; and ere these fortie howers,
Upon my life, Earle Robert shall be ours. | stabwarr |
| | <i>Prior</i> | Thou shalt have any thing, my dearest Frier,
And in amends, Ile make thee my subprior. | |
| 1465 | | Come, good Sir Doncaster, and if wee thrive,
Weele frolicke with the Nunnies of Leeds belive. | shortly |
- [Exunt.]

Robin Hood Plays

[Scene xi]

[Enter Fitzwater, like an olde man.]

- 1470 *Fitzwater* Well did he write, and mickle did he knowe,
 That said this worlds felicitie was woe,
 Which greatest states can hardly undergoe.
 Whilom Fitzwater in faire Englands court,
 Possest felicitie and happie state;
 And in his hall blithe fortune kept her sport,
 Which glee, one howre of woe did ruinate.
 Fitzwater once had castles, townes, and towers,
 Faire gardens, orchards, and delighfull bowers;
 But now nor garden, orchard, towne, nor tower
 Hath poore Fitzwater left within his power.
1480 Only wide walkes are left mee in the world,
 Which these stiffe limmes wil hardly let me tread;
 And when I sleep, heavens glorious canopy
 Mee and my mossie couch doth over-spreade.
 Of this, injurious John can not bereave mee;
 The aire and earth he (while I live) must leave mee.
 But from the English aire and earth, poore man,
 His tyranny hath ruthlesse thee exil'd.
 Yet ere I leave it, Ile do what I can,
 To see Matilda, my faire lucklesse childe.
- 1485 [Curtaines open; Robin Hoode sleepes on a greene
 banke, and Marian strewing flowers on him.]
- 1495 And in good time, see where my comfort stands,
 And by her lyes dejected Huntington.
 Looke how my flower holds flowers in her hands,
 And flings those sweetes upon my sleeping sonne.
 Ile close mine eyes as if I wansed sight,
 That I may see the end of their delight.
- 1500 *Marian* What aged man art thou? Or by what chance,
 Cam'st thou thus farre into the wallesse wodde?
Fitzwater Widowe or wife, or maiden if thou be,
 Lend mee thy hand: thou seest I cannot see.
 Blessing beside thee, little feellst thou want.

feeling his way

pathless

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- With mee, good childe, foode is both hard and scaast.
These smooth even vaines, assure mee he is kinde,
What ere he be, my girle, that thee doth finde.
I poore and olde am reft of all eartha good
And desperately am crept into this wodde
To seeke the poore mans patron, Robin Hoode.
- 1510 *Marian* And thou art welcome, welcome aged man,
I, ten times welcome to Maid Marian. *Indeed*
Sit downe olde father, sit and call me daughter,
O God, how like he lookes to olde Fitzwater! [Runs in.]
- 1515 *Fitzwater* Is my Matilda cald Maid Marian?
I wonder why her name is changed thus.
[Brings wine, meat.]
- Marian* Here's wine to cheere thy hart. Drink aged man.
There's venson and a knife, here's manchet fine. *high quality bread*
Drinke good old man, I fee you drinke more wine.
My Robin stirres, I must sing him a sleepe. *pray*
- Robin* Nay, you have wak't me Marian with your talke.
What man is that, is come within our walke?
- Marian* An aged man, a silly sightlesse man,
Neere pin'd with hunger: see how fast he eates. *innocent destroyed*
- 1525 *Robin* Much good may't doe him. Never is good meat
Ill spent on such a stomacke. Father, proface;
To Robin Hood thou art a welcome man. *welcome*
- Fitzwater* I thanke you master. Are you Robin Hood?
- Robin* Father, I am.
- 1530 *Fitzwater* God give your soule much good,
For this good meat Maid Marian hath given mee.
But heare you, master, can you tell mee newes,
Where faire Matilda is, Fitzwaters daugher?
- Robin* Why? Here she is, this Marian is shee.
- 1535 *Fitzwater* Why did she chaunge her name?
- Robin* What's that to thee?
- Fitzwater* Yes, I could weepe for grieve that it is so,
But that my teares are all dried up with woe.

Robin Hood Plays

- 1540 *Robin* Why? Shee is cald Maid Marian, honest friend,
 Because she lives a spotlesse maiden life,
 And shall, till Robins outlawe life have eade,
 That he may lawfully take her to wife;
 Which, if King Richard come, will not be long;
 For, in his hand is power to rright our wrong.
- 1545 *Fitzwater* If it be thus, I joy in her names change.
 So pure love in these times is very strange.
- Marian* Robin, I thinke it is my aged father.
- Robin* Tell mee old man, tell me in curtesie.
 Are you no other than you seeme to be?
- 1550 *Fitzwater* I am a wretched aged man, you see.
 If you will doe mee ought for charitie,
 Farther than this, sweete, doe not question mee.
- Robin* You shall have your desire, but what be these?
 [*Enter Frier Tucke, and Jinny, like Pedlers,*
 singing.]
- 1555 *Tuck* What lacke ye? What lacke yee? What ist ye wil buy?
 Any points, pins, or laces, any laces, points or pins?
 Fine gloves, fine glasses, any buskes, or maskes?
 Or any other prettie things?
 Come chuse for love, or buy for money.
- 1560 *Tuck* Any cony cony skins,
 For laces, points, or pins? Faire maids, come chuse or buy.
 I have prettie poting sticks,
 And many other tricks, come chuse for love, or buy
 for money.
- 1565 *Robin* Pedler, I pre thee set thy packe downe here.
 Marian shall buy, if thou be not too deare.
- Tuck* Jinny, unto thy mistresse shewe thy packe;
 Master, for you I have a pretty knacke.
 From farre I brought it, please you see the same.
- 1570 *[Enter Sir Doncaster,*
 and others weaponed.
- Frier* Sir Doncaster, are not we pedlerlike?
- Doncaster* Yes, passing fit, and yonder is the bower.
- 1575 *[Enter Sir Doncaster,*
 and others weaponed.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Prier You and your companie were best stand close.
- Doncaster What shal the watchword be so bring us forth?
- Prier Take it, I pray, though it be much more worth.
When I speake that aloude, be sure I serve
1580 The execution presently on him.
- Doncaster Frier, looke too't.
- Prier Now Jinny to your song. [Singr.]
[Enter Marian, Robin.]
- Marian Pedler, what prettie toyes have you to sell?
- 1585 Prier Jinny, unto our mistresse shewe your ware.
- Marian Come in, good woman. [Exit.]
- Prier Master, looke here, and God give care,
So mone I thee, to her and mee, if ever wee, Robin to So might I drive
thee, that art so free, meane treachery.
- 1590 Robin On, Pedler, to thy packe;
If thou love mee, my love thou shalt not lacke.
- Prier Master, in briefe, there is a theefe, that seekes
your grieve, God send reliefe, to you in neede; for a foule
deede, if not with spedde, you take good heede, there is
1595 decreede.
In yonder brake, there lies a snake, that meanes to
take, out of this wodde, the yeoman good, calde Ro-
bin Hood.
- Robin Pedler, I pre thee be more plaine: what brake? What snake? What trappe? What traine? pray
- 1600 Prier Robin, I am a holy Frier, sent by the Prior, who
did mee hire, for to conspire thy endlesse woe, and over-
throwe; but thou shalt knowe, I am the man whome
Little John from Nottingham desir'd to be a clarke to
thee; for hee to mee saide thou wert free, and I did see,
thy honestie; from gallows tree, when thou didst free
1605 Scathlocke and Scarlet certainly.
- Robin Why then it seemes that thou art Frier Tucke.
- Prier Master, I am.

Robin Hood Plays

- | | | |
|------|------------------|--|
| 1610 | <i>Rabin</i> | I pray thee, frier, say
What treachery is meant to mee this day? |
| | <i>Frier</i> | First winde your horne; then drawe your sworde.
<i>[Hee windes his horne.</i> |
| 1615 | | For I have given a frices worde
To take your bodie prisoner
And yield you to Sir Doncaster,
The envious Priest of Hotherasfield,
Whose power your bushie wodde doth shielde;
But I will die, ere you shall yield. |
| 1620 | | <i>[Enter Little John, &c:</i>
And sith your yeomen doe appeare,
Ile give the watchword without feare.
Take it I pray thee, though it be more worth.
<i>[Rashe is Doncaster with his crue.</i> |
| 1625 | <i>Doncaster</i> | Smite down, lay hold on outlawed Huntington. |
| | <i>Lit. John</i> | Soft, hot spurd priest, tis not so quickly done. |
| | <i>Doncaster</i> | Now out alas, the frier and the maide
Have, to false theevenes, Sir Doncaster betraide. |
| | | <i>[Exeunt omnes.</i> |

[Scene iii]

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

In such a person as Lord Ely is.

- Prior Yes honorable Chester, more it fits
To make apparent sinnes of mighty men,
And on their persons sharply to correct
A little fault, a very small defect,
Than on the poore to practise chastisement.
For if a poore man die, or suffer shame,
Only the poore and vile respect the same;
But if the mighty fall, feare then besets
The proud harts of the mighty ones, his mates.
They thinke the world is garnished with nets,
And trappes ordained to intrappe their states.
Which feare, in them, begets a feare of ill,
And makes them good, contrary to their will.
- Pr. John Your Lordship hath said right. Lord Salsbury,
Is not your minde as ours, concerning Ely?
- Salsbury I judge him worthy of reproofe and shame.
- Pr. John Warman, bring forth your prisoner, Ely, the Chancellor,
And with him, bring the seale that he detains.
Warman, why goest thou not?
- Warman Be good to mee, my Lord.
- Pr. John What hast thou done?
- Warman Speake for mee, my Lord Prior.
All my good Lords, intreat his Grace for mee.
Ely, my Lord . . .
- Pr. John Why? Where is Ely, Warman?
- Warman Fled today, this mistie morning he is fled away.
- Pr. John O Judas, whom nor friend nor foe may trust,
Thinkst thou with teares and plaints to answer this?
Doe I not knowe thy heart? Doe I not knowe
That bribes have purchast Ely this escape?
Never make anticke faces, never bende
With fained humblenesse, thy still crouching knoe;
But with fixt eyes unto thy doome attend.
Villane, ile plague thee for abusing mee.
Goe hence, and henceforth never set thy foote
In house or field, thou didst this day possesse.

Robin Hood Plays

- 1680 Marke what I say; advise thee to looke too't,
Or else be sure thou diest remedlesse.
Nor from those houses see that thou receive
So much as shall sustaine thee for an hower;
But as thou art, goe where thou canst get friends,
And hee that feedes thee, be mine enemie.
- 1685 **Warman** O, my good Lord.
- Pr. John** Thou thy good Lord betrayedst,
 And all the world for money thou wilt sell.
- Warman** What saies the Queene?
- Queene** Why thus I say:
1690 Betray thy master, thou wilt all betray.
- Warman** My Lords, of Chester and of Salsbury?
- Both** Speake not to us, all traitothes we defie.
- Warman** Good my Lord Prior.
- Prior** Alas, what can I doe?
- 1695 **Warman** Then I defie the worlde; yet I desire
 Your Grace would read this supplication.
 [John reads.]
- Pr. John** I thought as much; but Warman dost thou thinke
 There is one moving line to mercie here?
 I tell thee no; therefore away, away.
1700 A shamefull death followes thy longer stay.
- Warman** O poore poore man!
 Of miserable, miserablist wretch I am. [Exit.]
- 1705 **Pr. John** Confusion be thy guide; a baser slave
 Earth cannot beare. Plagues followe him, I crave.
 Can any tell mee if my Lord of Yorke
 Be able to sit up.
- Queene** The Archbishoppes Grace
 Was reasonable well even now, good sonne.
- 1710 **Salsbury** And he desir'd mee that I should desire
 Your Majestie to send unto his Grace,
 If any matter did import his presence.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Pr. John Wee will ourselves steppe in and visit him.
Mother, and my good Lords, will you attend us?
- 1715 Prior I gladly will attend your Majestie.
- Pr. John Now good Lord helpe us.
When I saide good Lords,
I meant not you Lord Prior. Lord I know you are;
But good, God knowes, you never meane to bee.
- 1720 [Exeunt John, Queene, Chester, Salisbury.]
- Prior John is incensit, and very much I doubt
That villane Warman hath accused mee.
About the scape of Ely. Well, suppose he have.
Whats that to mee? I am a cleargie man,
And all his power, if hee all extend,
Cannot preevale against my holy order;
But the Archbischoppes Grace is now his friend
And may perchance attempt to doe me ill.
- [Enter a serving man.]
- 1730 What newes with you, sir?
- Servant Even heavie newes, my Lord; for the light fire
Falling, in manner of a fier drake,
Upon a barne of yours, hath burnt six barnes,
And not a strike of corne reserv'd from dust.
- 1735 No hand could save it, yet ten thousand hands,
Laboured their best, though none for love of you.
For every tongue with bitter cursing band,
Your Lordshippe as the viper of the land.
- Prior What meant the villanes?
- 1740 Servant Thus and thus they cride:
Upon this churie, this hoorder up of corne,
This spoyler of the Earle of Huntington,
This lust-defiled, merciless false Prior,
Heaven raigneth vengeance downe in shape of fier.
- 1745 Old wives that scarce could with their crouches creep,
And little babes, that newly leardne to speake,
Men masterlesse that thorough want did weepe,
All in one voice, with a confused cry,
In execrations band you bitterly,
- fear
- dragon
bushel
- cursing cursed
- creches
- unemployed
- cursed

Robin Hood Player

- | | | |
|------|------------------|---|
| 1750 | | Plague followe plague, they cry, he hath undone
The good Lord Robert, Earle of Huntington,
And then . . . |
| | <i>Prior</i> | What then, thou villane? Get thee from my sight.
They that wish plagues, plagues wil upon them light. |
| 1755 | | [Enter another servant.] |
| | | What are your tidings? |
| | <i>Servant 2</i> | The Covent of Saint Maries are agreed
And have elected, in your Lordshippes place,
Olde Father Jerome, who is staled Lord Prior,
By the newe Archbischoppe. |
| 1760 | | installed |
| | <i>Prior</i> | Of Yorke thou meanaſt.
A vengeance on him, he is my hopes foe. |
| | | [Enter a Herald.] |
| 1765 | <i>Herald</i> | Gilbert de Hood, late Prior of Saint Maries,
Our Soveraigne John commandeth thee by mee,
That presently thou leave this blessed land,
Defiled with the burden of thy sinne.
All thy goods temporall and spirituall,
With free consent of Hubert Lorde Yorke,
Primate of England and thy Ordinary, |
| 1770 | | (see note): Diocesan Superior
He hath suspended, and vow'd by heaven,
To hang thee up, if thou depart not hence,
Without delayng or more question.
And that he hath good reason for the same, |
| 1775 | | He sends this writing firm'd with Warmans hand,
And comes himselfe, whose presence if thou stay,
I feare this sunne will see thy dying day. |
| | <i>Prior</i> | O, Warman hath betraide mee. Woe is mee. |
| | | [Enter John, Queene, Chester, Salisbury.] |
| 1780 | <i>Fr. John</i> | Hence with that Prior, sirra do not speake,
My eyes are full of wrath, my heart of wreake,
Let Lesser come; his hault hart, I am sure,
Will checke the kingly course we undertake. |
| | | vengeance
arrogant heart |
| | | [Exeunt cum Prior.] |
| 1785 | | [Enter Lester, drumme and Ancient.] |
| | | standard-bearer |

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Pr. John Welcome from warre, thrice noble Earle of Lester;
Unto our court, welcome, most valiant Earle.
- Leicester Your court in England, and King Richard gone,
A king in England, and the king from home:
This sight and salutations are so strange,
That what I should, I know not how to speake.
- 1790 Pr. John What would you say? Speake boldly, we intreat.
- Leicester It is not feare, but wonder barres my speach;
I muse to see a mother and a Queene,
Two peeres, so great as Salsbury and Chester,
Sit and support proud usurpation,
And see King Richards crowne, worne by Earle John.
- Queene He sits as viceroy and a substitute.
- Chester He must and shal resigne when Richard comes.
- 1800 Salsbury Chester, he will without your must and shall.
- Leicester Whether he will or no, he shall resigne.
- Pr. John You knowe your own will Lester, but not mine.
- Leicester Tell me among ye, where is reverent Ely,
Left by our dreade King, as his deputie?
- 1805 Pr. John Banishi he is, as proud usurpers should.
- Leicester Pride then, belike, was enemy to pride:
Ambition in yourselfe, his state envied.
Where is Fitzwater, that old honoured Lord?
- Pr. John Dishonourd and exil'd, as Ely is.
- 1810 Leicester Exil'd he may be, but dishonourd never.
He was a fearelesse souldier, and a vertuous scholler,
But where is Huntington, that noble youth?
- Chester Undoone by ryot.
- Leicester Ah, the greater ruth.
- 1815 Pr. John Lester, you question more than doth become you.
On to the purpose, why you come to us.
- Leicester I came to Ely, and to all the State,
Sent by the King, who three times sent before,
To have his ransome brought to Austria;

miracle

Robin Hood Plays

- 1820 And if you be elected deputie,
Doe as you ought, and send the ransome money.
- Pr. John* Lester, you see I am no deputie;
And Richards ransome if you doe require,
Thus wee make answer: Richard is a king,
In Cyprus, Acon, Acres, and rich Palestine.
1825 To get those kingdomes England lent him men,
And many a million of her substance spent,
The very entrails of her wombe was rent.
No plough but paid a share, no needy hand,
1830 But from his poore estate of penurie,
Unto his voyage offered more than mites,
And more, poore soules, than they had might to spare.
Yet were they joyfull. For still flying newes,
And lying I perceive them now to be,
1835 Came of King Richards glorious victories,
His conquest of the Souldans, and such tales
As blewe them up with hope, when he returnd
He would have scattered gold about the streetes.
- Leicester* Doe Princes fight for gold? O leaden thought!
1840 Your father knewe that honour was the aime
Kings levell at. By sweete Saint John I sweare,
You urge mee so that I cannot forbear.
What doe you tell of money lent the King,
When first he went into this holy warre?
1845 As if he had extorted from the poore,
When you, the Queene, and all that heare me speake,
Know with what zeale the people gave their goods:
Olde wives tooke silver buckles from their belts,
Young maids the gilt pins that tuckt up their traines,
1850 Children their prettie whistles from their neckes,
And every man what he did most esteeme,
Crying to souldiours, "Weare these gifts of ours."
This prooves that Richard had no neede so wrong
Or force the people that with willing hearts
1855 Gave more than was desir'd. And where you say,
You guesse Richards victories but lies,
I sweare he wan rich Cyprus with his sworde.
And thence, more glorious than the guide of Greece
That brought so huge a fleese to Tenedos,

*ruler
(see note)*

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- 1860 He saide along the Mediterran sea,
Where on a sunbright morning he did meete
The warlike souldours well prepared fleete.
O still mee thinkes I see King Richard stand,
In his guitt armour staind with Pagans blood,
Upon a galles prowe, like warres fierce god,
And on his crest, a crucifix of golde.
O that daies honour can be never tolde:
Six times six severall brigandines he boarded,
And in the greedie waves flung wounded Turkes,
1865 And three times thrice the winged gallics bankes,
(Wherin the Souldans sonne was Admirall)
In his owne person royall Richard smooth'd,
And left no heathen hand to be upheav'd
Against the Christian souldiers.
- 1870 *Pr. John* Lester, so,
Did he all this?
- 1875 *Leicester* I, by God hee did,
And more than this; nay jeast not at it, John:
I sweare hee did, by Lesters faith hee did,
1880 And made the greene sea red with Pagan blood,
Leading to Joppa glorious victory,
And following feare that fled unto the foe.
- 1885 *Pr. John* All this hee did, perchance all this was so.
- 1890 *Leicester* Holy God helpe mee, souldiers come away:
This carpet knight sits carping at our scarres,
And jeasts at those most glorious well fought warres.
- 1895 *Pr. John* Lester, you are too hot. Stay, goe not yet.
Me thinkes, if Richard wonne these victories,
The wealthie kingdomes he hath conquered
May bester than poore England pay his ransome.
He left this realme as a young orphan maid
To Ely, the stepfather of this state,
That stript the virgin to her very skinne.
And, Lester, had not John more carefull bin
1895 *Pr. John* than Richard, at this hower, England had not England bin.
Therefore, good warlike Lord, take this in briefe:
- war ships
rubbed out (eradicated)
hour

Robin Hood Plays

- We wish King Richard well,
But can send no relieve.
- Leicester* O, let not my heart breake with inward griefe.
- 1900 *Pr. John* Yes let it, Lester, it is not amisse
That twenty such hearts breake, as your heart is.
- Leicester* Are you a mother? Were you Englands Queene?
Were Henry, Richard, Gefferey (your sonnes)
All sonnes, but Richard, sunne of all those sonnes?
- 1905 And can you let this little meteor, *i.e., supreme son*
This ignis fatuus, this same wandring fire,
This goblin of the night, this brand, this sparke,
Seeme through a lanthorne, greater than he is?
By heaven you doe not well, by earth you doe not.
will-o-the-wisp
- 1910 Chester, nor you, nor you, Earle Salsbury,
Ye doe not, no yee doe not what yee should.
- Queene* Were this Beare loose, how he wold tear our mawes! *throats (bellies)*
- Chester* Pale death and vengeance dwel within his jawes.
- 1915 *Salsbury* But we can muzzle him and binde his pawes;
If King John say we shall, wee will indeede.
- Pr. John* Doe if you can.
- Leicester* Its well thou hast some feare.
No cures, ye have no teethe to haite this Beare.
I will not bid mine ensigne bearer wave
- 1920 My tottered colours in this worthlesse aire *tattered*
Which your vile breathes vilye contaminate.
Beare, thou hast bene my auncient bearer long,
And borne up Lesters Beare in forren lands.
Yet now resigne these colours to my hands.
ensigne
- 1925 For I am full of griefe and full of rage.
John, looke upon mee: thus did Richard take
The coward Austria's colours in his hand,
And thus he cast them under Acon walles,
And thus he trod them underneath his feete.
- 1930 Rich colours, how I wrong ye by this wrong!
But I will right yee. Beare, take them againe,
And keepe them ever, ever them maintaine.
We shall have use for them I hope, ere long.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Pr. John Darest thou attempt thus proudly in our sight?
- 1935 Leicester What ist a subject dares, that I dare not?
- Salsbury Darc subjects dare, their soveraigne being by?
- Leicester O God, that my true soveraigne were ny.
- Queene Lester, he is.
- Leicester Madam, by God you ly.
- 1940 Chester Unmannerd man.
- Leicester A plague of reverence,
Where no regard is had of excellence. [Sound drum.
But you will quit mee nowe; I heare your drummes,
Your principalitie hath stird up men.
And now ye think to muzzle up this Beare.
Still they come nearer, but are not the neare.
- Pr. John What drums are these?
- Salsbury I think some friends of yours
Prepare a power to resist this wrong.
- 1950 Leicester Let them prepare; for Lester is preparede,
And thus he wooes his willing men to fight;
Souldiers, yee see King Richards open wrong,
Richard that led yee to the glorious East,
And made yee treade upon the blessed land,
Where He, that brought all Christians blessednesse,
Was borne, lived, wrought His miracles, and died,
From death arose, and then to heaven ascended;
Whose true religious faith ye have defended.
Yee fought, and Richard taught yee how to fight
Against prophane men following Mahomet.
But if ye note, they did their kings their right,
These more than heathen, sacrilegious men,
Professing Christ, banish Christs champion hence,
Their lawfull Lord, their homeborne soveraigne,
With pettie quarrels, and with slight pretence.
- 1955 [Enter Richmond, souldiers.
O let me be as shott as time is short,
For the arm'd foe is now within our sight.
Remember how aginst ten, one man did fight,
- 1960
- 1965

Robin Hood Plays

1970		So hundreds against thousands, have borne head. You are the men that ever conquered, If multitudes oppresse ye that ye die, Less sell our lives and leave them valiantly. Courage; upon them, till wee cannot stand.	given battle
1975	<i>Pr. John</i>	Richmond is yonder.	
	<i>Queene</i>	I, and sonne, I thinke, The King is not farre off.	
	<i>Chester</i>	Now heaven forfend.	
	<i>Leicester</i>	Why smite ye not, but stand thus cowardly?	
1980	<i>Richmond</i>	If Richmond hurt good Lester, let him die.	
	<i>Leicester</i>	Richmond, O pardon mine offending eye, That tooke thee for a foe; welcome deare friend; Where is my Soveraigne Richard? Thou and he Were both in Austria. Richmond, comfort mee, And tell mee where he is, and how he fares.	
1985		O, for his ransome, many thousand cares Have mee afflicted.	
	<i>Richmond</i>	Lester, he is come to London, And will himselfe to faithlesse Austria,	
1990		Like a true king, his promis'd ransome beare.	
	<i>Leicester</i>	At London saist thou, Richmond, is he there? Farewell, I will not stay to tell my wrongs, To these pale coloured, hartlesse, guiltie Lords. Richmond, you shall goe with mee, doe not stay, And I will tell you wonders by the way.	
1995	<i>Richmond</i>	The King did doubt you had some injury, And therefore sent this power to rescue yee.	suspect
	<i>Leicester</i>	I thanke his Grace. Madam adieu, adieu. Ile to your sonne, and leave your shade with you.	shadow
2000		[Exeunt.]	
	<i>Pr. John</i>	Harke how he mocks mee, calling me your shade. Chester and Salsbury, shall wee gather power, And keepe what we have got?	
2005	<i>Chester</i>	And in an hower, Be taken, judg'd, and headed with disgrace?	

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

Salsbury, what say you?

Salsbury My Lord, I bid your excellency adieu —
I to King Richard will submit my knee,
I have good hope his Grace will pardon mee.

2010 *Chester* And Salsbury, hee goe along with thee.
Farewell, Queene mother; fare you well, Lord John. [Exit.]

Pr. John Mother, stay you.

Queene Not I sonne, by Saint Anne.

Pr. John Will you not stay?

2015 *Queene* Goe with me. I will doe the best I may,
To beg my sonnes forgivenesse of my sonne. [Exit.]

Pr. John Goe by yourselfe. By heaven twas long of you, on account of
I rose to fall so soone. Lester and Richmonds cruce,
They come to take me. Now too late I rue
My proud attempt. Like falling Phaeson,
I perish from my guiding of the sunne. [Enter Lester and Richmond.]

2020 *Leicester* I will goe backe yfaith once more and see,
Whether this mock-king and the mother Queene,
And, who! Heres neither Queene nor Lord.
What, king of crickets, is there none but you?
Come off, off. This crowne, this scepter are King Richards right.
Bear thou them, Richmond, thou art his true knight.
You would not send his ransome, gentle John.
He's come to fetch it now. Come, wily Fox,
Now you are strip out of the Lyons case,
What, dare you looke the Lyon in the face?
The English Lyon, that in Austria,
With his strong hand, puld out a lyons heart.
Good Richmond tell it mee; for Gods sake doe:
Oh, it does mee good to heare his glories tolde.

2035 *Richmond* Lester, I saw King Richard with his fist,
Strike deade the sonne of Austrian Leopold,
And then I sawe him, by the Dukes commaund,
Compast and taken by a troope of men,
Who led King Richard to a lyons denne,
Opening the doore and in a paved court,
The cowards left King Richard weaponlesse.

Robin Hood Plays

Anone comes forthe the fier-eyde dreadfull beast,
And with a heart-amazing voice he roarde,
Opening (like hell) his iron-toothed jawes,
And stretching out his fierce death-threatning pawes,
I tell thee Lester, and I smile thereat,
(Though then, God knowes, I had no power to smile)
I stooode by treacherous Austria all the while.
Who in a gallery with iron grates,
Staid to behoide King Richard made a prey.

Leicester What wast, thou smildest at in Austria?

Richmond Lester, he shooke, so helpe me God, he shooke,
With very terroure, at the Lyons looke.

2055 *Leicester* Ah coward; but goe on what Richard did.

Richmond Richard about his right hand wound a scarfe
(God quit her for it) given him by a maide,
With endlesse good may that good deede be paid,
And thrust that arme downe the devowring throat
Of the fierce Lyon, and withdrawing it,
Drew out the strong heart of the monstrous beast,
And left the senselesse boide on the ground.

reward

Leicester O roiall Richard! Richmond, looke on John.
Does he not quake in hearing this discourse?
Come, we will leave him; Richmond, let us goe.
John, make sute for grace, that is your means you knowe.

[Exeunt.]

Pr. John A mischiefe on that Lester. Is he gone?
I were best goe too, lest in some mad fit
He turne againe and leade me prisoner.
Southward I dare not flie; faime, faime I would
To Scotland bend my course; but all the woddes
Are full of outlawes that in Kendall greene
Followe the outlawed Earle of Huntington.
Well, I will cloath myselfe in such a sute,
And by that meanes as well scape all pursuite,
As passe the daunger-threatning Huntington.
For having many outlawes theyl thinke mee,
By my attire, one of their mates to be.

[Exit.]

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

[Scene iii]

2080 [Enter Scarlet, John, and Frier Tucke.]

- Frier Scarlet and John, so God me save,
No minde unto my beades I have.
I thinkc it be a lucklesse day,
For I can neither sing, nor say,
Nor have I any power to looke,
On Portasae, or on Mattins booke.
- 2085
- Breviary
- Scarlet What is the reason, tell us Frier?
- Frier And would yee have mee be no lyer.
- Lit. John No: God defend that you should lie,
A Churchman be a lyer? Fie.
- 2090
- Frier Then by this hallowed Crucifise,
The holy water, and the pixe,
It greatly at my stomacke stickes,
That all this day we had no guesse,
And have of meate so many a messe.
- 2095
- container for consecrated Host
guest
food: serving
- Much [Much brings out Ely, like a country man with
a basket.]
- Well, and ye be but a market, ye are but a market
man.
- if you
- Ely I am sure, sir; I doe you no hurt, doe I?
- Scarlet Wee shall have company, no doubt.
My fellowe Much hath founde one out.
- Frier A fox, a fox! As I am Frier,
Much is well worthie of good hire.
- deceiver
- Lit. John Say, Frier, soothly knowest thou him?
- Frier It is a wolfe in a sheepes skinne.
Goe call our master, Little John,
A glad man will he be anone.
It's Ely man, the Chancelor.
- 2105
- 2110 Lit. John Gods pittie looke unto him, Frier. [Exit John.]
- Much What, ha ye egges to sell, old fellowe?

Robin Hood Plays

- | | | |
|------|----------------|---|
| | <i>Ely</i> | I, sir, some fewe, and those my neede constraines
mee beare to Mansfield,
That I may sell them there, to buy me bread. |
| 2115 | <i>Scarlet</i> | Alas good man: I see the, where dost dwell? |
| | <i>Ely</i> | I dwell at Oxen sir. |
| | <i>Scarlet</i> | I knowe the towne. |
| | <i>Much</i> | Alas poore fellow, if thou dwell with Oxen,
It's strange they doe not goe thee with their hornes. |
| 2120 | <i>Ely</i> | Masters, I tell yee truly where I dwell,
And whether I am going; let mee goe:
Your master would be much displeas'd I knowe,
If he should heare, you hinder poore men thus. |
| | <i>Frier</i> | Father, one word with you before we part. |
| 2125 | <i>Much</i> | Scarlet, the Frier will make us have anger all.
Farewell, and beare me witnesse, though I staid him,
I staid him not.
An olde fellowe, and a market man? [Exit.] |
| | <i>Frier</i> | Whoop! In your riddles, Much? Then we shall ha'nt. |
| 2130 | <i>Scarlet</i> | What dost thou Frier? Pre thee, let him goe. Pray |
| | <i>Frier</i> | I pre the, Scarlet, let us two alone. |
| | <i>Ely</i> | Frier, I see thou knowest me; let me goe,
And many a good turne I to thee will owe. |
| 2135 | <i>Frier</i> | My masters service bids me answer no;
Yet love of holy churchmen wils it so.
Well, good my Lord, I will doe what I may
To let your holiness escape away.
[Enter Robin and Little John.] |
| | | Here comes my master, if he question you,
Answer him like a plaine man, and you may passe. |
| 2140 | <i>Ely</i> | Thankes, Frier. |
| | <i>Frier</i> | [Aside] O, my Lord thinkes me an Asse. |
| | <i>Robin</i> | Frier, what honest man is there with thee? |
| | <i>Frier</i> | A silly man, good master. I will speake for you.
[Aside] Stand you aloofe, for feare they note your face. |
| 2145 | | |

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Master in plaine, it were but in vaine, long to detaine,
with toyes and with bables, with fond fained fables: but
him that you see, in so mean degree, is the Lord Ely, that
helped to exile you, that oft did revile you. Though in his
fall, his traine be but small, and no man at all, will give him the wall, nor Lord doth him call. Yet he did ride, on Jennets pide, and knightes by his side, did foote it pied Spanish horses each tide: O see the fall of pride.
- yield
right-of-way
pied Spanish horses
festival
- 2150 *Robin* Frier, enough.
- 2155 *Frier* I pray, sir, let him goe.
He is a very simple man in shewe;
He dwelles at Oxen and to us doth say
To Mansfield market he doth take his way.
- 2160 *Lit. John* Frier, this is not Mansfields market day.
- 2160 *Robin* What would hee sell?
- 2160 *Frier* Egges sir, as he saies.
- 2160 *Robin* Scarlet, goe thy waies, take in this olde man,
Fill his skinne with venson:
And after give him money for his egges.
- 2165 *Ely* No, sir, I thanke you. I have promised them
To master Baillies wife of Mansfield, all.
- 2165 *Robin* Nay, sir, you doe me wrong.
No Baily, nor his wife, shall have an egge.
Scarlet, I say, take his egges and give him money.
- 2170 *Ely* Pray, sir.
- 2170 *Frier* Tush, let him have your egges.
- 2170 *Ely* Faith, I have none.
- 2170 *Frier* Gods pittie, then he will finde you soone.
- 2175 *Scarlet* Here are no egges, nor any thing but hay.
Yes, by the masse, here's somewhat like a scale.
- 2175 *Robin* O God, my Princes scale, faire Englands roiall scale!
Tell mee, thou man of death, thou wicked man,
How cam'st thou by this seale? Wilt thou not speake?
Being burning irons, I will make him speake.
- 2180 For I doe knowe the poore distressed Lord,

Robin Hood Plays

		The Kings Vicegerent, learned reverend Ely, Flying the furie of ambitious John, Is murdred by this peasant. Speake vile man, Where thou hast done thrice honorable Ely?	stain
2185	<i>Ely</i>	Why dost thou grace Ely with stiles of Grace, Who thee with all his power sought to disgrace?	rhetoric
	<i>Robin</i>	Belike his wisdome sawe some fault in mee.	
	<i>Ely</i>	No I assure thee honorable Earle: It was his envie, no defect of thine,	
2190		And the persuasions of the Prior of Yorke, Which Ely now repents; see, Huntington, Ely himselfe, and pittie him, good sonne.	
	<i>Robin</i>	Alas for woe, alack that so greate state The malice of this world should ruinate.	
2195		Come in, great Lord, sit downe and take thy ease, Receive the seale and pardon my offence. With me you shall be safe and if you please, Till Richard come, from all mens violence.	
		Aged Fitzwater, banished by John,	
2200		And his faire daughter shall con verse with you; I and my men that me attend upon Shall give you all that is to honour due. Will you accept my service, noble Lord?	keep company
	<i>Ely</i>	Thy kindnesse drives me to such inward shame, That for my life I no reply can frame. Goe, I will followe, blessed maist thou bee, That thus releev'st thy foes in miserie.	[Exeunt.]
	<i>Lit. John</i>	Skelton, a word or two beside the play.	
	<i>Frier</i>	Now, Sir John Eltam, what ist you would say?	
2210	<i>Lit. John</i>	Me thinks I see no jeasts of Robin Hoode, No merry morices of Frier Tuck, No pleasant skippings up and downe the wodde, No hunting songs, no coursing of the bucke.	morris dances
		Pray God this Play of ours may have good lucke,	
2215		And the Kings Majestie mislike it not.	chasing
	<i>Frier</i>	And if he doe, what can we doe to that? I promist him a Play of Robin Hoode,	If

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- His honorable life, in merry Sherewod;
His Majestic himselfe survaide the plat,
And bad me boldly write it, it was good,
For merry jests, they have bene showne before,
As how the Frier fell into the Well,
For love of Jinny that faire bonny bell:
How Greeneleafe robd the Shrieve of Nottingham,
And other mirthfull matter, full of game,
Our play expresses noble Roberts wrong,
His milde forgetting trecherous injurie;
The Abbots malice, rak't in cinders long,
Breakes out at last with Robins Tragedie.
If these that heare the historic rehearst,
Condemne my Play when it begins to spring,
Ile let it wither while it is a budde,
And never shewe the flower to the King.
- Lit. John* One thing beside; you fall into your vaine,
Of ribble rabble rimes, Skeltonicall,
So oft, and stand so long, that you offend.
- Frier* It is a fault I hardly can amend.
O how I champe my tongue to talke these scarmes,
I doe forget oft times my Friens part;
But pull mee by the sleeve when I excede,
And you shall see mee mend that fault indeede.
Wherefore still sit you, doth Skelton intreat you,
While he faceth wil breefely repeate you, the history al,
And tale tragical, by whose treachery, and base injury,
Robin the good, calde Robin Hood, died in Sherewodde:
Which till, you see, be rul'd by me, sit patiently, and give
a plaudite, if any thing please yee. [Exeunt.]
- play
scarcely
applause

[Scene xiv]

[Enter Worman.

- Worman* Banishi from all, of all I am bereft,
No more than what I weare unto me left,
O wretched, wretched griefe, desertfull fall.
Striving to get all, I am reft of all;

Robin Hood Plays

2255 Yet if I could a while myselfe relieve,
Till Ely be in some place settled,
A double restitution should I get,
And these sharpe sorrowes that have joy supprest
Should turne to joy with double interest.

[Enter a gentleman, Warmans cosin.

2260 And in good time, here comes my cosin Warman,
Whome I have often pleasur'd in my time.
His house at Bingham I bestow'd on him;
And therefore doubt not, he will give me house-roome.
Good even, good cosin.

Cousin O couisen Warman, what good newes with you?
2265 Warman Whether so farre a foot walk you in Sherewod?

Cousin I came from Rotheram, and by hither Farnsfield
My horse did tire, and I walkt home a foone.

2270 Warman I doe beseech you couisen at some friends,
Or at your owne house for a weeke or two,
Give me some succour.

Cousin Ha? Succour say you?
No, sir: I heard at Mansfield how the matter stands,
How you have justly lost your goods and lands,
And that the Princes indignation
2275 Will fall on any that relieves your state.

Away from mee; your trecheries I hate.
You when your noble master was undoone
(That honourable minded Huntington)

Who forwarder than you, all to distraine?
2280 And as a wolfe that chaseth on the plaine,
The harmelesse hind, so wolfe-like you pursued
Him and his servants: vile ingratitude,
Damnd Judaisme, false wrong, abhorred treachery,
Impious wickednesse, wicked impietie.

2285 Out, out upon thee, soh, I spit at thee.

dor

Warman Good cosen.

Cousin Away, ile spurne thee if thou followe me. [Exit.

Warman O just heaven, how thou plagu'st iniquitie!

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

All that he has, my hand on him bestowed.
2290 My master gave mee all I ever owed;
My master I abus'd in his distresse;
In mine, my kinsman leaves me comfortlesse.

[Enter Jayler of Notingham, leading a dog.]

Here comes another, one that yesterday
2295 Was at my service, came when I did call,
And him I made Jayler of Notingham.
Perchance some pittie dwelles within the man.
Jaylor, well met, dost thou not knowe me, man?

Jailer Yes, thou art Warman; every knave knowes thee.

2300 *Warman* Thou knowest I was thy master yesterday.

Jailer I, but tis not as it was, farewell, goe by.

Indeed

Warman Good George, relieve my bitter misery.

Jailer By this fleshe and bloode I will not.

alive

No if I do, the divell take me quicke.

2305 *Warman* I have no money; begger balk the way.

pass by

Warman I doe not aske thee money.

Jailer Wouldst ha meate?

have food

Warman Would God I had a little breafe to eate.

2310 *Jailer* Soft, let me feele my bagge. O heare is meate,
That I put up at Redford for my dogge,
I care not greatly if I give him this.

Warman I pre thee doe?

Jailer Yet let me search my conscience for it first.
My doggo's my servant, faithfull, trustie, true;
2315 But Warman was a traitor to his Lord,
A reprobate, a rascall, and a Jewe,
Worser than dogges, of men to be abhorrd.
Starve therefore, Warman; dogge receive thy due;

Followe me not, least I belabour you,

2320 You halfe-fac't groat, you thin-cheekt chittiface,
You Judas, villane, you that have undoone
The honourable, Robert, Earle of Huntington.

pinch-faced

[Exit.]

Robin Hood Plays

- 2325 **Warman** Worse than a dogge, the villane me respects,
 His dogge he feedes, mee in my neede rejects.
 What shall I doe? Yonder I see a shed,
 A little cottage, where a woman dwelles,
 Whose husband I from death delivered.
 If she denie mee, then I faint and die.
 Ho, goodwife Tomson?
- 2330 **Woman** What a noyse is there?
 A foule shame on yee; is it you that knockt?
- 2335 **Warman** What, doe you knowe mee then?
 Whoop, who knowes not you?
 The beggerd banisht Shrieve of Nottingham,
 You that betrayd your master, ist not you?
 Yes, a shame on you; and forsooth ye come,
 To have some succour here, because you sav'd,
 My unthrifit husband from the gallows tree.
 A pos upon yee both. Would both for me
2340 Were hangd together; but soft, let mee see.
 The man lookes faint. Feelist thou indeede distresse?
- 2345 **Warman** O doe not mocke me in my heaviness.
 Indeede I doe not; well I have within,
 A caudle made, I will goe fetch it him.
- 2350 **Woman** Here, Warman, put this hempen caudle ore thy head.
 See downward, yonder is thy masters walke,
 And like a Judas, on some rotten tree,
 Hang up this rotten trunke of miserie
 That goers by thy wretched end may see.
 Stirr'st thou not villane? Get thee from my doore.
 A plague upon thee, haste and hang thy selfe,
 Runne rogue away. Tis thou that hast undone
2355 Thy noble master, Earle of Huntington. [Exit.]
- 2360 **Warman** Good counsell, and good comfort by my faith.
 Three doctors are of one opinion,
 That Warman must make spedde to hang himselfe.
 The last hath given a caudle comfortable,

regards

(see note)

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- 2360 That to recure my grieves is strong and able.
Ile take her medicine, and Ile chuse this way,
Wherein she saith my master hath his walke.
There will I offer life for trechery.
And hang, a wonder to all goers by.
- 2365 But soft what sound hermonious is this?
What birds are these, that sing so chearefully,
As if they did salute the flowring spring?
Fitter it were, with tunes more dolefully
They shriekt out sorrowe than thus chearely sing.
- 2370 I will goe seeke sad desperations cell.
This is not it, for here are greene-leav'd trees.
Ah for one winter-bitten bared bough,
Whereon, a wretched life, a wretch would leese.
O, here is one. Thrice blessed be this tree,
- 2375 If a man cursed, may a blessing give.
- [Enter old Fitzwater.]
- But out alas, yonder comes one to me
To hinder death, when I detest to live.
- Fitzwater What woefull voice heare I within this wod?
2380 What wretch is there complaines of wretchednesse?
- Warman A man, old man, bereav'd of all earths good,
And desperately seekes death in this distresse.
- Fitzwater Seeke not for that which will be here too soone,
At least if thou be guylie of ill deedes.
- 2385 Where art thou, sonne? Come and neerer sit;
Heare wholsome counsell aginst unhallowed thoughts.
- Warman The man is blinde. Muffle the eye of day
Ye gloomy clouds (and darker than my deedes,
That darker be than pitchie sable night),
Muste together on these high sopt trees,
That not a sparke of light thorough their sprayes,
- 2390 May hinder what I meane to execute.
- Fitzwater What dost thou mutter? Heare mee wofull man.
- [Enter Marian, with mease.]
- Marian God morrowe father.

heat

release

food

Robin Hood Plays

- Fitzwater Welcome, lovely maid,
And in good time, I trust you hither come.
Looke if you see not a distressefull man,
That to himselfe intendeth violence.
- 2400 Fitzwater One such even now was here and is not farre;
Seeke, I beseech you, save him if you may.
- Marian Alas, here is, here is a man enrag'd,
Fastning a halter on a withered bough,
And stares upon mee, with such frightened lookes,
As I am fearefull of his sharpe aspect.
- 2405 Fitzwater What meanst thou, wretch? Say, what ist thou wilt doe?
- Warman As Judas did, so I intend to doe.
For I have done alreadie as he did:
His master he betrayd: so I have mine.
- 2410 Warman Faire mistresse looke not on me with your blessed eyne.
From them as from some excellencye divine,
Sparkles sharpe judgement, and commaunds with speede.
Faire, fare you well. Foule fortune is my fate.
As all betrayers, I die desperate.
- eyes
- 2415 Fitzwater Soft sir, goe Marian call in Robin Hoode.
Tis Warman, woman, that was once his steward.
- Marian Alas, although it be, yet save his life.
I will sende helpe unto you presentlye.
- [Exit.]
- Fitzwater Nay, Warman, stay; thou shalt not have thy will.
- 2420 Warman Art thou a blinde man, and canst see my shame?
To hinder treachers, God restoreth sight,
And giveth infants tongues to cry alowde,
A wofull woe against the trecherous.
- traitors
- [Enter Much running.]
- 2425 Much Hold, hold, hold. I heare say, my fellowe Warman
is about to hang himselfe, and make I some speede
to save him a labour. O good master, Justice Shrive,
have you execution in hand, and is there such a murren
among theives and hangmen, that you play two parts
in one? For old inquaintance, I wil play one part. The knot
under the eare, the knitting to the tree: Good master
Warman, leave that worke for mee.
- plague

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Warman Dispatch me, Much, and I will pray for thee.
- Much Nay, keepe your pealers; no bodie sees us.
- 2435 [He takes the rope, and offers to clime.]
- Fitzwater Downe sirra, downe; whether a knaves name
clime you?
- Much A plague on ye for a blinde sinksanker. Would I
were your match. You are much blinde yfaith, can hit
so right. soothsayer
- 2440 [Enter Little John.]
- Lit. John What, master Warman, are yee come to yield
A true account for your false stewardshippe?
- [Enter Scarlet and Scathlocke.]
- 2445 Scathlocke Much, if thou meanest to get a hundred pound,
Present us to the Shrieve of Nottingham.
- Much Masse, I thinke there was such a purclamation.
Come, my small fellowe John,
You shall have halfe, and therefore being in one. proclamation
- 2450 Lit. John No, my big fellow, honest master Much,
Take all unto yourselfe; Ile be no halfe.
- Much Then stand, you shall be the two theeves, and
I will be the presenter.
- O master Shrieve of Nottingham,
When eares unto my tidings came
(He speake in prose, I misse this verse vilye) that mismerter
- 2455 Scathlock and Scarlet were arrested by Robin Hood, my
master, and Little John, my fellowe, and I, Much his ser-
vant, and taken from you, master Shrieve, being well
forward in the hanging way, wherein yee now are (and
God keepe yee in the same) and also that you, master Shrieve,
would give any man in towne, citie, or contrey, a hun-
dred pound of lawfull arrant money of Englannde, that current
- 2460 would bring the same two theeves, being these two. Now
I, the said Much, chalenge of you, the saide Shrieve,
bringing them, the same money.
- Scarlet Faith, he can not pay thee, Much.

Robin Hood Plays

- Mach I, but while this end is in my hand, and that about
his necke, he is bound to it.
- [Enter Robin, Ely, Marian.]
- Warman Mock on, mock on; make me your jesting game,
I doe deserve much more than this small shame.
- Robin Disconsolate and poore dejected man,
Cast from thy necke that shamefull signe of death,
And live for mee, if thou amende thy life,
As much in favour as thou ever didst.
- Warman O worse than any death,
When a man, wrongd, his wronger pitteth.
- Ely Warman, be comforted, rise and amend.
On my word, Robin Hoode will be thy friend.
- Robin I will indeede. Go in, heart-broken man,
Father Fitzwaser, pray you leade him in.
Kinde Marian, with sweete comforts comfort him,
And my tall yeomen, as you mee affect,
Upbraide him not with his forepassed life.
Warman, goe in, goe in and comfort thee.
- Warman O God requite your honours curtesie.
- Marian Scathlocke or Scarlet, helpe us some of yee.
- [Exeunt Warman, Marian, Fitzwaser, Scathlock, Scarlet, Mach]
Enter Frier Tucke in his trusse, without his weede.] jacket; robe
- Frier Jesu benedicte, pittie on pittie, mercie on mercy,
misery on misery. O such a sight, as by this light, doth
mee affright.
- Robin Tell us the matter, pre thee, holy Frier.
- Frier Sir Doncaster the Priest, and the proud Prior
Are stript and wounded in the way to Bawtsey,
And if there goe not spedie remedie,
Theyl die, theyl die in this extreamitie.
- Robin Alas, direct us to that weesched place.
I love mine uncle, though he hateth mee.
- Frier My weede I cast to keepe them from the colde,
And Janny, gentle girl, tote all her smocke,

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

The blodie issue of their wounds to stoppe.

Robin Will you goe with us, my good Lord of Ely?

2505 *Ely* I will, and ever praise thy perfect charitie. [Exeunt.]

[Scene xv]

[Enter Prince John, solus, in greene, bowe and arrowes.]

alone

Pr. John Why this is somewhat like, now may I sing,
As did the Wakefield Pinder in his nose;
At Michaelmas commeth my covenant out,
My master gives me my fee.

2510 Then, Robin, he weare thy Kendall greene,
And wend to the greenewodde with thee.
But for a name now, John, it must not bee,
Alreadie Little John on him attends.

2515 Greeneleaf? Nay surely there's such a one alreadie.
Well, he be Wodnet, hap what happen may.

[Enter Scathlocke.]

Here comes a greene cole (good lucke be my guide).
Some sodaine shift might helpe me to provide.

scheme

2520 *Scathlocke* What, fellow William, did you meeete our master?

Pr. John I did not meeete him yet my honest friend.

Scathlocke My honest friend? Why, what a terme is here?
My name is Scathlocke, man, and if thou be
No other than thy garments shewe to mee,
Thou art my fellowe, though I knowe thee not.
2525 What is thy name? When wert thou entertainid?

Pr. John My name is Woodnet, and this very day,
My noble master, Earle of Huntington,
Did give mee both my fee and liverye.

2530 *Scathlocke* Your noble master, Earle of Humington?
He lay a crowne you are a counterfeit,
And that you knowe, lacks money of a noble.
Did you receive your livery and fee,
And never heared our orders read unto you?
2535 What was the oath was given you by the Friar?

Robin Hood Plays

- Pr. John* Who? Frier Tuck? [Enter Frier Tuck.]
- Scathlock* I doe not play the lyer;
For he comes here himselfe to shrive. *hear confession*
- Pr. John* Scathlock, farewell, I will away.
- 2540 *Scathlock* See you this arrowe? It saies nay.
Through both your sides shall fly this feather,
If presently you come not hither.
- Frier* Now heavens true liberalitie
Fall ever for his charitic
Upon the heade of Robin Hood,
That to his very foes doth good.
Lord God, how he laments the Prior
And bathes his wounds against the fier!
Faire Marian, God requite it her,
Doth even as much for Doncaster,
Whome newly she hath laine in bed,
To rest his weary wounded head.
- 2550 *Scathlock* Ho, Frier Tuck, knowe you this mate?
- Frier* Whans hee?
- 2555 *Scathlock* He saith my master late
Gave him his fee and livery.
- Frier* It is a leasing, credit mee. *falsehood*
How chance, sir, then you were not sworne?
- 2560 *Pr. John* What meane this groome and lozell Frier,
So strictly matters to inquire?
Had I a sword and buckler here,
You should aby these questions deare. *peasant, scoundrel*
- 2565 *Frier* Saist thou me so lad? Lend him thine.
For in this bush here lyeth mine.
Now will I try this newcome guest. *pay penalty for*
- Scathlock* I am his first man, Frier Tuck,
And if I faile and have no lucke,
Then thou with him shalt have a plucke.
- 2570 *Frier* Be it so Scathlock. Holde thee lad,
No better weapons can be had.

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

The dewe doth them a little rust.
But heare yee, they are tooles of trust.

Pr. John Gramercy Frier for this gift,
And if thou come unto my shrift,
Ile make thee call those fellowes fooles
That on their foes besiowe such tooles.

Scathlock Come let us too't.

[Fight, and the Frier looks on.

Frier The youth is deliver and light,
He presaeth Scathlocke with his might:
Now by my beades to doe him right,
I thinke he be some tryed knight.

agile

proven

Scathlock Stay, let us breath.

Pr. John I will not stay.
If you leave, Frier, come away.

Scathlock I pre the, Frier, holde him play.

Frier Frier Tuck will doe the best he may.
[Fight. Enter Marian.

Marian Why, what a noyse of swordes is here?
Fellowes, and fight our bower so neere?

Scathlock Mistresse, he is no man of yours,
That fightes so fast with Frier Tucke;
But on my woerde he is a man,
As good for strength as any can.

2595 Marian Indeede hee's more than common men can be,
In his high heart there dwels the bloode of kings.
Goe call my Robin, Scathlock: tis Prince John.

Scathlock Mistresse I will; I pray part the fray. [Exit.

Marian I pre thee goe; I will doe what I may.
Frier, I charge thee holde thy hand.

Frier Nay, yonker, to your tackling stand.
What all amost, wil you not fight?

youngster, hold your ground
spiritless

Pr. John I yield, unconquered by thy might,
But by Matildas glorious sight.

Robin Hood Plays

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| | <i>Frier</i> | Mistresse, he knowes you. What is hee? | |
| | <i>Pr. John</i> | Like to amasing wonder she appereas,
And from her eye, flies love unto my heart,
Attended by suspicioous thoughts and feareas,
That numme the vigor of each outward part.
Only my sight hath all sacietie,
And fulnesse of delight, viewing her deitie. | satisfaction |
| 2610 | <i>Marian</i> | But I have no delight in you, Prince John. | |
| | <i>Frier</i> | Is this Prince John?
Give me thy hand, thou art a proper man,
And for this mornings worke, by Saints above,
Be ever sure of Frier Tucks true love. | |
| 2615 | <i>Pr. John</i> | Be not offended that I touch thy shrine;
Make this hand happie, let it folde in thine. | |
| | <i>[Enter Robin Hoode, Fitzwater, Ely, Warmer.]</i> | | |
| 2620 | <i>Robin</i> | What sawcie wodman Marian stands so neere? | |
| | <i>Pr. John</i> | A wodman, Robin, that would strike your deere,
With all his heart. Nay never looke so strange,
You see this fickle world is full of change.
John is a ranger, man, compeld to range. | forester/wanderer |
| 2625 | <i>Fitzwater</i> | You are young, wilde Lord, and wel may travel bear. | |
| | <i>Pr. John</i> | What, my olde friende Fitzwater, are you there?
And you, Lord Ely? And old best betrust?
Then I perceve that to this geere we must.
A messe of my good friends, which of you foure
Will purchase thanks by yielding to the King
The bodie of the rash rebellious John?
Will you, Fitzwater? | most reliable
business
group |
| 2630 | <i>Fitzwater</i> | No, John, I defie
To stain my old hands in thy youthfull bloode. | |
| 2635 | <i>Pr. John</i> | You will, Lord Ely. I am sure you will. | |
| | <i>Ely</i> | Be sure, young man, my age means thee no ill. | |
| | <i>Pr. John</i> | O you will have the praise, brave Robin Hood,
The lustie outlawe, Lord of this large wodde. | |

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

Hee'l lead a kings sonne, prisoner to a king,
2640 And bid the brother smite the brother deade.

Robin My purpose you have much misconstrued.
Prince John, I would not for the wide worlds wealth
Incense his Majestie, but doe my best,
To mitigate his wrath, if he be mov'd.

2645 *Pr. John* Will none of you? Then here's one I dare say,
That from his childehoode knowes how to betray.
Warman, will not you helpe to hinder all you may.

Warman With what I have beeene, twit me not, my Lord.
My olde sins at my soule I doe detest.

2650 *Pr. John* Then that he came this way, Prince John was blest.
Forgive me, Ely; pardon mee, Fitzwater.
And Robin, to thy hands myselfe I yield.

Robin And as my heart, from hurt I will thee shield.

[Enter Mach, running.]

2655 *Mach* Master, fly, hide ye mistresse, we al shall be taken.

Robin Why, whats the matter?

Mach The King, the King, and twelve and twenty score of horses.

Robin Peace, foole. We have no cause from him to fly.

[Enter Scarlet, Little John.]

2660 *Lit. John* Scarlet and I were hunting on the plaine.
To us came royall Richard from his traine
(For a great traine of his is hard at hand)
And questiond us, if we serv'd Robin Hoode.
I saide wee did, and then his Majestie,
2665 Putting this massie chaine about my necke,
Said what I shame to say, but joyde to heare.
Let Scarlet tell it, it befits not mee.

Scarlet Quoth our good King, "Thy name is Little John,
And thou hast long time serv'd Earle Huntington:
Because thou leftst him not in miserie,
A hundred markes I give thee yearelic fee,
And from henceforth, thou shalt a squier bee."

taunt

Robin Hood Plays

- Much O Lord, what luck had I to runne away?
I should have bene made a knight, or a lady sure.
- 2675 Scarlet Goe, said the King, and to your master say,
Richard is come to call him to the court.
And with his kingly presence chase the clouds
Of grieve and sorrow, that in mistie shades,
Have valid the honour of Earle Huntington.
- 2680 Robin Now God preserve him, hye you backe againe, hoster
lest
And guide him, least in by-paths he mistake.
Much, fetch a richer garment for my father.
Good Frier Tuck, I pre thee rouse thy wits.
Warman, visit myne uncle and Sir Doncaster,
See if they can come forth to grace our shewe. [Exit Much.]
Gods pittie, Marian, let your Jinny waite.
Thankes, my Lord Chancellor. You are well prepar'd,
And good Prince John, since you are all in greene,
Disdaine not to attend on Robin Hoode.
Frollick I pray, I trust to doe yee good. Be happy
Welcome, good uncle, welcome Sir Doncaster. [Enter Prior and Doncast.
Say, will yee sit, I feare yee cannot stand. attend
- Prior Yes, very well.
- Robin Why, cheerely, cheerely then.
The trumpet sounds, the King is now at hand.
Lords, yeomen, maids, in decent order stand.
- 2695 [The trumpets sound, the while Robin places them.
Enter first, bare-heade, Little John and Scarlet; likewise
Chester, and Lester, bearing the sword and scepter; the
King follows crowned, clad in green; after him Queene
Mother, after her Salsbury and Richmond, Scarle and
Scathlocke turne to Robin Hoode; who with all his
company kneele downe and cry:
- All God save King Richard, Lord preserve your Grace.
- 2705 King Thanks all, but chiefly, Huntington, to thee.
Arise poore Earle, stand up, my late lost sonne,
And on thy shoulders let me rest my armes,
That have bene toyled long with heathen warres: wearied
True pillar of my state, right Lord indeede,
Whose honour shineth in the denne of neede,

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

I am even full of joy, and full of woe;
To see thee, glad; but sad to see thee so.

2715 *Robin* O that I could powre out my soule in prayers,
And praises for this kingly curtesie.

Doe not, dread Lord, grieve at my lowe estate.
Never so rich, never so fortunate,
Was Huntington as now himselfe he findes.
And to approve it, may it please your Grace,
But to accept such presents at the hand
Of your poore servant, as he hath prepar'd.
You shall perceive, the Emperour of the East,
Whom you contended with at Babilon,
Had not such presents to present you with.

King Art thou so rich? Sweet, let me see thy gifts.

2725 *Robin* First take againe this jewell you had lost,
Aged Fitzwater, banished by John.

King A jemme indeede; no Prince hath such a one.
Good, good old man, as welcome unto mee,
As coole fresh ayre, in heats extreamitie.

2730 *Fitzwater* And I am glad to kisse my soveraignes hand,
As the wrackt swimmer, when he feelest the land. shipwrecked

Queene Welcome, Fitzwater, I am glad to see you.

2735 *Fitzwater* I thanke your Grace; but let me hug these twain,
Lester and Richmond, Christies sworne champions,
That follow'd Richard in his holy warre.

Richmond Noble Fitzwater, thanks, and welcome both.

Leicester O God, how glad I am to see this Lord!
I cannot speake; but welcome at a worde.

2740 *Robin* Next take good Ely in your royll hands,
Who fled from death, and most uncivill bands. constraints

King Robin, thy gifts exceede: Moerten my Chancellour!
In this man giv'st thou holinesse and honour.

2745 *Ely* Indeede he gives me, and he gave me life,
Preserving me from fierce pursuing foes,
When I too blame had wrought him many woes:

Robin Hood Plays

- With me he likewise did preserve this scale,
Which I surrender to your majestic.
- King Keep it, good Ely, keep it still for me.
- 2750 Robin The next faire jewell that I will present
Is richer than both these, yet in the foyle,
My gracious Lord, it hath a foule default,
Which if you pardon, boldly I protest,
It will in value farre exceede the rest.
- Pr. John [Aside] Thats me he meanes, yfaith my turne is next.
He callis me foile, ifaith, I feare a foile.
Well, tis a mad lord, this same Huntington.
- 2760 Robin Here is Prince John, your brother, whose revolt
And folly in your absence, let me crave,
With his submission may be buried.
For he is now no more the man he was,
But duetifull in all respects to you.
- King Pray God it proove so. Wel, good Huntington,
For thy sake pardon'd is our brother John,
And welcome to us in all heartie love.
- 2765 Robin This last I give, as tenants do their lands,
With a surrender, to receive againe,
The same into their owne possession:
No Marian, but Fitzwaters chast Matilda,
The precious jewell that poore Huntington
- 2770 Doth in this world hold as his best esteeme.
Although with one hand I surrender her,
I holde the other, as one looking still,
Richard returnes her: so I hope he will.
- 2775 King Eis God forbid. Receive thy Marian backe,
And never may your love be separate,
But florish fairely to the utmost date.
- Robin Now please my King to enter Robins bower,
And take such homely welcome as he findes,
It shall be reckened as my happinesse.
- 2780 King With all my heart. Then as combined friends,
Goe we together; here all quarrelles ends.
- [Exeunt.]
- [From Sir John Eliot and Skelton.]

The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Eltham Then Skelton here I see you will conclude.
- Skelton And reason good: have we not held too long?
- 2785 Eltham No in good sadness, I dare gage my life,
His Highnesse will accept it very kindly.
But I assure you, he expects withall,
To see the other matters tragical
That followe in the peocesse of the storie,
2790 Wherin are many a sad accident,
Able to make the strictest minde relent:
I neede not name the points, you knowe them all.
From Marians eye shall not one teare be shed?
Skelton, yfaith tis not the fashion.
- 2795 The King must grieve, the Queene must take it ill;
Ely must mourne, aged Fitzwater weepc,
Prince John, the Lords his yeomen must lament,
And wring their wofull hands, for Robins woe.
Then must the sickle man fainting by degrees,
2800 Speake hollowe words, and yield his Marian,
Chast Maid Matilda, to her fathers hands
And give her, with King Richards full consent,
His lands, his goods, late seazd on by the Prior,
Now by the Priors treason made the Kings.
- 2805 Skelton, there are a many other things,
That aske long time to tell them lineally.
But ten times longer will the action be.
- Skelton Sir John, yfaith I knowe not what to doe;
And I confesse that all you say is true.
2810 Will you doe one thing for me, crave the King
To see two parts. Say tis a prettie thing.
I know you can doe much, if you excuse mee,
While Skelton lives, Sir John, be bolde to use mee.
- 2815 Eltham I will perswade the King; but how can you
Perswade all these beholders to consent?
- Skelton Stay, Sir John Eltham; what to them I say,
Deliver to the King, from mee, I pray.
Well judging hearers, for a while suspence
Your censures of this Plaies unfinisht end.
2820 And Skelton promises for this offence,

suspend

Robin Hood Plays

- The second part shall presently be pend.
There shall you see, as late my friend did note,
King Richards revels at Earle Roberts bower,
The purpos'd mirth, and the performed mone,
The death of Robin, and his murderers.
For interest of your stay, this will I adde,
King Richards voyage backe to Austria,
The swift returned tydings of his death,
The manner of his royll funeral.
- 2825
Then John shall be a lawfull crowned king,
But to Matilda beare unlawfull love.
Aged Fitzwakers finall banishment,
His pitious end, of power teares to move
From marble pillars. The Catastrophe
2835
Shall shewe you faire Matildas Tragedie,
Who, shunning Johns pursue, became a nunne,
At Dunmowe Abbey, where she constantly
Chose death to save her spotlesse chastitie.
Take but my word, and if I fail in this,
2840
Then let my paines be baffled with a hisse.
- written*
lament
disgraced

FINIS.



Notes

This edition is based on John C. Meagher's edited facsimile collation of William Leake's black letter printing of 1601 (Malone Society, 1965). The full title in Leake's edition is *The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington, Afterward Called Robin Hood of merrie Sherwodde: with his love to chaste Matilda, the Lord Fitzwaters daughter, afterwardeis his faire Maide Marian*. Ten copies of Leake's printing survive. Meagher based his reprint on xerographs of the Harvard copy which he collated with the other nine copies. Line count in the present edition corresponds to the idiosyncracies of Meagher's edition. Leake printed the text in black letter with roman for speech-prefixes, stage directions, and names occurring within the text; and with italic for names occurring within stage directions. I have ignored such distinctions in this edition, using instead boldface for speech prefixes and italic for stage directions, with a smaller italic font on the right margin for glosses of hard words. In Leake speakers are identified in various ways. For the most part I have chosen uniform designations for characters — Lit. John, for Little John, Pr. John for Prince John — though I have maintained Leake's distinctions between Marian and Matilda which, though they are the same person, usually (though not always) refer to her in different contexts (Marian in the Greenwood, and Matilda at court). I occasionally have followed Leake's practices in capitalization but usually have followed modern usage. Except for the formation of genitives (where I have followed Leake's practices), I have converted all punctuation to modern usage. In some instances I have elided two word phrases to compound words according to modern practices (e.g., *to day* > *today*, *to morrowe* > *tomorrow*, *my selfe* > *myself*, *your selfe* > *yourself*). I have noted significant emendations in the notes, and usually compared them with other modern editions.

Abbreviations: L = Leake's 1601 black-letter 4° edition. C = Collier's 1828 edition. H = Hazlitt's 1874 edition. F = Farmer's 1913 facsimile edition. M = Meagher, with date identifying appropriate edition.

[Scene i]. L does not specify scene divisions. But modern editions (C, H, F, and M) use them, so I have adopted them as well. They are not included in line count, however, as they are in *The Dearth*, where they are necessary if line count is to correspond to M's two editions, thus facilitating cross-reference.

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- 1-39 The Induction, whereby the play leads the audience from familiar social banter between two men of letters into a theatrical representation of "history," or, at least, entertainment from a former time. By naming Skelton and Eltham as the protagonists, Munday implies that they are rehearsing a performance for Henry VII or Henry VIII ("his Majesty" — line 9; see also note to line 2741). M (1980, p. 465) suggests that the Induction perhaps imitates Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, which was published twice with an induction (1594 and 1596), where revellers gather in a tavern before putting on their play. See also Greene's *James IV*, entered in the Stationer's Register in 1594, which likewise begins with an induction. Munday goes a step farther by maintaining the illusion of actors rehearsing by placing an interlude between Skelton and Eltham in *The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington* after Robert's death before moving on into the Tragedy of Matilda, and by having the Friar, played by Skelton, often interrupt the play to respond as "Skelton"; he then is usually reprimanded for his indulgence by Sir John Eltham, who is playing the part of Little John.
- 5 Skelton. John Skelton (c. 1460-1529) wrote court verse for three kings: Edward VI, Henry VII, and Henry VIII. He was designated poet laureate for the last two and served as tutor for Henry VIII in his youth, instructing the king-to-be in the performing arts. Noted for his satiric flair and witty short, rhymed verses (Skeltonics), he also wrote comedies, interludes, and morality plays, including the play *Magnificence*. He is thus a most suitable figure for Munday's theatrical device as he bastes about ordering up the play for his king. By setting the performance in the time of Henry VII or Henry VIII Munday evokes a time of exuberance when the Tudor dynasty was in its youth, a time when May festivals and Robin Hood theater flourished.
- 11-13 Ferdinand is king of Spain; Sebastian, king of Portugal. But, as M (1980) observes: "Since the former died in 1516 and the latter was born in 1557, the business of the negotiations is plainly the fanciful invention of the dramatist, designed merely to provide the equally fictitious Sir John Eltam with 'great affairs'" (p. 465).
- 28 *the boyes and Clowne*. These boys are the actors who will play the women's parts, once the play gets underway; the clown will become Much the Miller's son, from the Robin Hood ballads. As clown, he will speak in prose, despite

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the fact that L's compositor occasionally breaks the prose up into irregular lines, as if it were verse. The list of characters and line 29 suggest that Marian is played by "little Tracy."

32 *Sir Thomas Mantle*. Mantle's identity is unknown, except that he seems to be the actor who will play Robin. L reads *mantle*; C capitalizes the word, which makes sense.

37 *dumbe scene*. A silent pantomime often used as prelude to a dramatic action in Elizabethan drama. Usually it anticipates the principal roles and plot of what follows. See, for example, the proleptic dumbshow at the outset of Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1562); or Lyly's *Endymion* (1588, 1591), where it foreshadows events about to unfold; or the dumbshow prior to the performance of *The Mousetrap* in *Hawler* (1599–1601); or Bottom's confused exercise in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594–98). In Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (1612–14) the dumbshow presents both events to come and events just passed. Here, in Munday, the dumbshow (lines 41–56) is repeated along with Skelton's commentary (lines 59–108) in a way similar to Peele's mingling of dumbshow and commentary in *The Battle of Alcazar* (1594). See also the dumbshows in *The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington*, which establish the political environs of Matilda's tragedy.

73 Now. M (1980) silently emends to No. But Now makes good sense.

94 *Gilbert Hoode*. The name given to Robert's father in another Robin Hood play entitled *Look About You* (1600).

101 *troth-plight*. To engage a woman in a contract of marriage, i.e., engagement (OED). In line 208 Robin calls Marian his *spouse*, but as M (1980, p. 469) observes, the betrothal, which preceded the actual marriage by an indefinite period, made them man and wife.

116 *shot in his bowe*. A well-known proverb: "Many speak (talk) of Robin Hood that never shot his bow." See Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), R 148, who cites Haywood, Campion, Lyly, Puttenham, Harrington, etc.

118 Skeltonic verse is marked by short lines, irregular meter and rhymes, and

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- alliteration. M (1980), citing Puttenham, notes that Skelton was not often thought of as a serious writer but more as a jokester (pp. 469-70), though in the lines which follow the matter is serious indeed.
- 135 *catchpoles*. A catchpole is a barbed device on a pole that is attached to the neck of offenders being brought to justice. It was used originally by tax collectors but became a synecdoche of scorn for any apprehending officer or sheriff's man. See also *catchpole bribed groomes* in line 360.
- 139 *ribble rabble*. See also line 2235: an alliterative doublet of the sort common in popular verse (see *tir tattle* in line 432); perhaps a variant on *bibble babbie*. See also *huckle duckle* in the play *Robin Hood and the Friar*, line 115.
- 141 /Exit. Not in L; C's emendation, followed by H and M (1980).
- 152 /Exit Warman. Not in L; C's emendation, followed by H and M (1980).
- 160 Robin's prodigality is offered as the reason for his being outlawed. The source, according to M (1980, p. 43), is probably Grafton's *Chronicle*: "But in an olde and auncient Pamphlet I finde this written of the Sayd Robert Hood. This man (sayeth he) discended of a noble parentage: or rather beyng of a base stocke and linage, was for his manhoode and chivalry aduanced to the noble dignitie of an Erle, excellyng principally in Archery, or shooting, his manly courage agreeyng therewnto: But afterwards he so prodicall exceeded in charges and expences, that he fell into great debt, by reason whereof, so many actions and sutes were commenced against him, wherewnto he answered not, that by order of lawe he was outlawed."
- 167 *napkin on his shoulder*. M (1980, p. 471) notes that the shoulder is the usual place for napkins, citing *An Humorous Day's Mirth* (1599), where Verose enters with his napkin on his shoulder.
- 169 For discussion of outlawry, see the note to line 5 of the Gest.
- 173 In L the pre-speech signifier is *John*. I have identified him as *Lit. John*, for the sake of clarity; later, Prince John, also called John sometimes in L, is here identified as *Pr. John*.
- 194 *Scene*. L frequently capitalizes terms for the theater, a practice I've adhered

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to. E.g., lines 233, 238, etc.

275 */Exit Marian.* Not in L; C's emendation, followed by H and M (1980).

284 The four locations identify Robert's country houses: *Rowford* = Rufford, Nottinghamshire; *Sowtham* = Southam, Warwickshire; *Worley* is north of Sheffield; and *Hothersfield* = Huddersfield, Yorkshire.

290 *care will kill her.* Proverbial: see Tilley C84, for variations from "Sorrow hath killed many" to "care will kill a cat."

295 *Belsavage.* An inn that stood on Ludgate Hill, used to house Elizabethan plays. See M (1980, p. 475).

318 *murst.* L: *mnst:* a compositor's error. Inverted letters are not uncommon in L. See also *humble* (line 536), *mnne* (line 890), *Renenge* (line 959), *hane* (line 968), *aud* (lines 976, 1301, 1677, 1821, 2236), *turue* (line 1256), *thon* (lines 1605, 1680), *Yowr* (line 1656), *Bmr* (line 1675), *Scotlaud* (line 2072), *yow* (i.e., you, lines 1265, 1354, 2165, 2236).

347 *worshipt.* "honored your position with proper address." I.e., "I 'your-worshiped' you."

349 *buckram satchell.* A sachel of coarse linen rather than leather; hence, without class, as paltry as his pen-and-inkhorn status.

356–58 The trope of the sheep-killing mastiff epitomizes hypocrisy that is not easily recognized when found within one's own domain but which, once exposed, must be dealt with expeditiously.

360 See note to line 135.

370 *ran.* H emends to *ran.*

417 */Exir.* Not in L. C's emendation, followed by H and M (1980).

429 M (1980, p. 477) notes that *Prisce* was used of male and female alike.

433 *and I say true.* In truth, he says false. M (1980) observes that good people lie

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"with surprising freedom" in these plays (see also lines 227-56 and *Death*, lines 1770-81), but cites Guazzo, in Pettie's translation of *The Cuile Conuersation* (1586): "I denie not, but that it is commendable to coine a lie at sometime, and in some place, so that it tend to some honest end."

- 457 oddly attyred. Hazlitt conjectures that Warman's wife, given her odd dialect in lines 460 ff., is French. But M (1980) doubts that that's the case. Perhaps her attire simply means she's eccentric and that her dialect is provincial, or that she is not well bred.
- 523 *Nich.* C emends to *Mach.* M (1967) defends *Nich* as a characteristic distortion by Mistress Warman.
- 548 The sheriff's wife pretends to lofty speech now that she is a lofty woman, but seldom does she get things right. By *Paterne* she seems to mean *Patent* (i.e., the appointment of Warman to Sheriff). Compare the even more pretentious language of Ralph below (see note to line 939).
- 551-56 C suggests that lines 553-54 are spoken by Warman, with lines 555-56 again by Prince John. M (1980) acknowledges the possibility with bracketed speech prefixes.
- 558 *Earle John.* John bears both titles of earl and prince.
- 566 receive. L: deceive. H's emendation. M (1980) maintains *deceive*.
- 566 /*Enter John.* Not in L; C's emendation, followed by H and M (1980).
- 572-74 Proverbial paraphrase of Matthew 24.12.
- 594 *Marian.* L: *War.* Another instance of an inverted letter.
- 661 Rosamond was mistress to Henry II. She was supposedly killed by order of the jealous Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, Richard and John's mother. Munday is having fun with "history."
- 662 cankers. H emends to *cank'rous*, or perhaps *cankred*.
- 676 *Zwounz.* God's wounds.

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- 676 *after-arrant*. *Arrant* perhaps means "message"; an *after-arrant* could thus mean "subsequent message" such as the blow just given.
- 679 */Exit Messenger*. Not in L; supplied by C and all others.
- 679 Simon. M (1980, p. 482) notes that historically the reference should be to Robert de Beaumont, not Simon.
- 732 *Ely*. C suggests *Chester* could be the speaker.
- 782 As the stage direction here makes clear, Marian's name has been changed to Matilda. See note to line 1328. She is hereafter referred to as Matilda, except for a brief appearance in the greenwood (lines 1382 ff.), where she becomes Marian once again; Lord Lacy becomes Fitzwater; and the character hereafter called Salsbury was before called Leicester. A new Leicester appears later. M (1980) suggests that lines 1-781 were from early composition of the play which was later revised in the acted version (pp. 67-70); or, perhaps, the adjustments came after decisions were being made to write a two-part play which would center upon Matilda in the second part. See note to lines 871 ff. of *The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington*, below.
- 786 *for and*. A common expression in the drama of the period, meaning "and also," "and moreover." Collier (cited by M [1980], p. 483) is wrong to suggest "*for*" to be useless. See, for example, Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, II.i.163-64: "Your Squire doth come and with him comes the Lady, / For and the Squire of Dames as I take it" (Cyrus Hoy, *Beaumont and Fletcher* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980], Vol. I, 33); and the Gravedigger's song in *Hamlet*, V.i.82-83: "A pick-axe and a spade, a spade, / For and a shrouding sheet."
- 797 *cogge*. M suggests a "pan on cog (flattery, or an ingratiating speech of any kind) and cog (the cross-board on a mill wheel); cf. 1431-32" (1980, p. 485).
- 800 *his brother*. L: *brother*. C's emendation, which improves the meter, followed by all others.
- 843 *palliardize*. *Palliard* is a cant term for beggar.

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- 890 Skelton. Skelton is playing the role of the Friar. He becomes so agitated with the vanity of the world that he falls from the Friar's character into his own "moral" voice and has to be reminded by John Eltham, who's playing Little John, to get back into his role. This gest on theatrical decorum proceeds from the Induction, where they assume their roles.
- 909 */Exeunt.* Not in L; C's addition, followed by all others.
- 919 Will Scarlet, variously known in the ballads as "Scarlock," "Scathelocke," and "Scadlock," has been turned into two separate characters by Munday: Scarlet, in line 916, and Scathlock here.
- 921 "This is obviously a rationalization of traditions: the author has inserted Scarlet and Scathlock into the position otherwise held by three anonymous brethren, and must reconcile the diversity of names with their common sonship to the widow. The solution he chose gave him an extra father to employ, and it is with characteristic thoroughness that he insists on both fathers' kindness to Warman, throwing in Warman's father for symmetry and good measure" (M, 1980, p. 488).
- 939 By putting "inkhorn" terms (words borrowed from Latin, Greek, and French) into the mouth of Ralph, Warman's servant, Munday satirizes Ralph's pretension and positions himself with the numerous writers who ridiculed the use of obscure language when adequate English equivalents existed.
- 1001 */Exit Friar.* Not in L; C's addition, followed by all.
- 1003 Friar Tuck is identified with St. Mary's Abbey, York, where, in the *Gest* (see lines 217, 337, and 930), Earl Robert's uncle is Prior.
- 1005-23 This passage is conceivably from an early version which Munday intended to cancel since it overlaps matter repeated in lines 1258-1387. But it cannot be deleted without adjustment of one passage or the other. Perhaps it was this kind of reworking that Chettle was paid to undertake on 25 November 1598, as the play was moved from the Rose Theatre to the Court. See *Henslowe's Diary (Part I: Text)* (London, 1904), fol. 52. M provides a thoughtful discussion of these problematic lines in his critical edition (1980, pp. 70-74).
- 1011 */Exeunt Much, Scarlet, Scath.* C's addition, not followed by M.

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- 1028 Salsbury is the name given now and henceforth to line 1785 for Leicester.
- 1203-04 The story of Cynthia and Endimion was well-known to theater-goers through Lyly's *Endimion* (1591).
- 1215 Clepstowes. C: Chepstow's.
- 1242 /Exit Salsbury. Not in L; C's addition, followed by all.
- 1282 Barnsdale shrogs to Nottinghams red cliffer. In *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* Robin is said to be from Barnsdale where mention is made of shrogs. See also the *Gest*, line 9 and note. M (1980, p. 498) suggests that Munday may be specifically alluding to the ballad here; and, given the fact that Nottingham does have red cliffs, no literary reference to which can M find, he speculates that Munday may have had first-hand knowledge of that region.
- 1283 Blithe is located on the Northumberland coast, north of Newcastle. Tickhill is in the West Riding of Yorkshire.
- 1284-85 George a Greene at Bradford . . . Wakefields Pinner. See M's long note on these lines (1980, pp. 499-500): Collier had thought Munday guilty of an error when he conflates George a Greene the pinner of Wakefield with the shoemaker of Bradford. But the text does not say that he is a shoemaker. M suggests that the source of the association of George a Greene with Bradford may be Robert Greene's 1592 play *George a Greene the Pinner of Wakefield*, which has a scene with both the Shoemaker of Bradford and George a Greene present along with Robin and Scarlet. The psalmic syntax of the two lines may simply mean that "George a Greene the pinner of Wakefield loved us well at Bradford." Wakefield, near Bradford, was an important weaving and dyeing center in the West Riding of Yorkshire.
- 1286 Barnsley, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, was known for its market.
- 1288 Nunnes of Farnsfield. Farnsfield is located near Sherwood Forest, though no convent is known to have been there.
- 1290 Kendall greene. Though Robin Hood and his men are often associated with Lincoln green, as in the *Gest* (line 1685), here, according to M (1980, p. 500)

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Munday follows *A Mery Geste* where the May games are performed in Kendall green. Kendall, in Westmoreland, was noted for its green woollens since the Flemish weavers were established there in the reign of Edward III.

- 1291 Known for its manufacturing activities, Leeds was a center of coal and iron forging. As early as 1200, the monks of Kirkstall Abbey forged iron.
- 1292 *Rotheram* = Rotherham, West Riding, Yorkshire.
- 1295 *Mansfield*. In the heart of Sherwood Forest, in Nottinghamshire.
- 1296 *wrestling day*. See note to line 538 of the *Gest* on wrestling as a medieval sport.
- 1328 *Articles*. The six provisions constitute the outlaw code: 1) Earl Robert will henceforth be called Robin Hood; 2) Matilda will be called Maid Marian; 3) all yeoman swear to expel lustful thoughts about women; 4) all passers-by will be "invited" to feast with Robin Hood with the unstated condition that they pay for the privilege; 5) the outlaws swear never to wrong a poor man, but priests, usurers, and clerks are fair game; and 6) all yeoman swear to defend maids, widows, orphans, and distressed men. The last four items are drawn from the *Gest*.
- 1399 *renner*. C and H read *reaver*. Perhaps an archaic form of ME *renner*, a runner or fugitive. Or possibly a corruption of *renter*, "a farmer of tolls or taxes," which OED cites in Florio 1598 (sb.3); in which case a *lawlesse renner* would be one who doesn't pay his taxes. If C's emendation is sound, then the sense of *renner* is "robber."
- 1427 *Gifts stinke with proffer*. Proverbial. See Tilley S252: "Proffered service (or ware) stinks."
- 1429 Proverbial. See Tilley K51.
- 1437 Proverbial. See Tilley J57: "Joan is as good as my lady in the dark."
- 1439 *weye*. C reads *w/ye*, which is certainly the sense.
- 1446-47 Farnsfield and Southwell are near Sherwood Forest.

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- 1526 *proface.* A formula of welcome at a meal; in frequent use from the early sixteenth century to mid-seventeenth century; literally "may it do you good." See C. T. Onions *A Shakespeare Glossary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919), p. 169. See, for example, *Shakespeare 2 Henry IV*, v.iii.28.
- 1554 [*Enter Frier Tucke* . . . Not in L. See note to lines 1571-72 below.]
- 1556-65 More Skeltonics, which should be read in short, irregularly rhyming lines, as in lines 118-41, though here they are to be sung, perhaps in the manner of a street call, in a crude tetrameter. Keep in mind that the Friar is being played by Skelton, so perhaps he is simply being self indulgent. See note to lines 1587-1606 below.
- 1560 *chuse.* L: *cheape.* M's emendation, with note that *chuse* appears twice more in the song and functions as a refrain (1980, p. 505).
- 1563 *poting sticks.* A pote is a stick for poking, used for crimping linen to make ruffs.
- 1571-72 The stage direction in L reads: [*Enter Frier like a Pedlar, and Jinny, Sir Doncaster, and others weaponed.*] But Tuck and Jinny have entered at lines 1554-55 and conversed with Robin. Now, as Doncaster enters, Tuck addresses him.
- 1582 [*Sings.* M (1980, p. 505) suggests that the song of lines 1556-65 be repeated here.]
- 1587-1606 Clearly "Skelton" enjoys being the good guy as the Friar responds to Marian and then to Robin in Skeltonic verse. Earlier, lines 846 ff., the compositor printed the Skeltonics appropriately in short lines. Here, and in lines 1610-11, the lines are run together. In lines 2081-95 the lines are printed in tetrameter. Perhaps a different compositor is at work here, or the same one is short on space. I have maintained L's blocking of the lines so that the line count of this edition will correspond to M's critical edition and that of the Malone society.
- 1606 *certainely.* L: *certaine.* Emendation M's, for purposes of Skeltonic rhyme.
- 1628 [*Exeunt omnes.* Not in L; C's emendation, followed by all.]

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- 1737 *band*. Past tense of *ban*, "to curse."
- 1740 *Servant*. L: *Sor*. C emends to *Ser.*, followed by all.
- 1753 *Prior*. L omits speech prefix. But it is necessary and is added by C et al.
- 1754 C adds */Exit Servant* after this line and after line 1760.
- 1764 *Herald*. No speech prefix in L.
- 1770 M (1980) notes that "Primate of England" is a title granted by the Pope to the Archbishop of York, while "Primate of All England" is the title granted the Archbishop of Canterbury (p. 508). Holinshed B3 gives the story.
- 1777 C adds: *Exit Herald*.
- 1782 *Let Lester come*. Presumably his drum (line 1785) is already being heard.
- 1825 *Acon, Acre*. One and the same place: a city in Asia Minor. Grafton's Chronicle uses the name *Acon*; Holinshed uses *Acre*. Munday uses both. Richard's title was "king of Jerusalem," which included all domains from the Holy City to Cyprus.
- 1831 *mites*. Perhaps an allusion to the widow's mite in Mark 12.41–44.
- 1856 *Richards*. C suggests *King Richards*, which improves the meter.
- 1858–59 *guide of Greece . . . to Tenedos*. Tenedos is the island off the coast of Troy which Agamemnon, the "guide," used as a mustering point against the Trojans. It is mentioned in *The Aeneid*: "Offshore lies Tenedos, famed and storied island, / rich and a power while Priam's throne held firm" (*Aeneid* II.21–22, Copley's translation). Its fame as a storied place continued into the Renaissance where the beauty of Marlowe's Helen "summoned Greece to arms, / and drew a thousand ships to Tenedos" (2 *Tamburlaine* II.iv.87–88).
- 1862 *souldiours*. C and H emend to *Soldan's*, which makes good sense.
- 1878 *not*. Omitted in L. Hazlitt's emendation, accepted by M (1980).

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- 1881 *Joppa. Haifa.*
- 1885 *carpet knight.* One who earns glory not on the battle field but by sitting around at home; a term of derision.
- 1900-01 C speculates that these lines might better be spoken by the Queen.
- 1912 *Beare.* The "bear and ragged staff" denote the heraldry of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. M (1980) points out that Munday used the emblem in his book *Two godly and learned Sermons, made by . . . John Calvin*, which he dedicated to Leicester (pp. 512-13).
- 2011 */Exeunt.* Not in L, but in all others.
- 2020 *Phaeton.* Son of Helios, who presumed to drive his father's chariot. When he veered too close to earth, thereby scorching it, Jove smote him with a thunderbolt (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.755 ff.).
- 2021 */Enter Lester and Richmond.* Not in L. C/H place the entrance at line 2018; M (1980), at line 2021.
- 2032-61 See M (1980, pp. 514-16) on the popularity of the tale of Richard and the lion, which crops up in several sixteenth-century plays and romances. But probably Munday's source was a ballad such as that printed in Thomas Evans' *Old Ballads* (1784), I, 80-86.
- 2094 *guesse.* C/H's emendation to "guesste" is not followed by M (1980), who notes that *guesse* is a common Renaissance form of *guest*, whether singular or plural.
- 2118 *Oxen.* Probably Oxton, just north of Nottingham.
- 2128 *market man.* A man connected with the market: perhaps a vendor or a mercenary, or perhaps a pickpocket who haunts markets.
- 2138 L reads: *Enter Robin.* C adds: *and John.* John speaks at line 2159.
- 2147 *and.* L: *a.* A compositor's error for *&*.

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- 2179 burning irons. Robin, known for his generosity, here threatens Ely, though all know that he will not carry out his threat, including Ely (see lines 2185-86).
- 2200 *con verse*. Robin thoughtfully gives Ely dignified company with which to *con verse*. The phrase carries several meanings: "tell tales," "make merry," "pass the time," as well as "keep company."
- 2221 *merry jests*. Apparently Robin Hood plays, perhaps from May festivals, that were especially popular in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Skelton alludes to the story in *Colyn Cloute* (line 879). Or perhaps, as M (1980, p. 520) suggests, the allusion is to a specific play entered on the Stationers' Register in 1594 called a "pasorall plesant Commedie of Robin Hood and little John" in which Jinny was a prominent character and which included the friar-in-the-well story and an account of Greeneleaf's robbing the *Shrieve of Nottingham* (line 2224). The ballad *The Friar in the Well* (Child V, no. 276) tells part of the story but does not name the maid. In the *Gest* (line 596) Little John assumes the identity of Reynolde Greeneleaf after winning the shooting match.
- 2229 This line must remain from an early version in which Robin's death was to conclude the play.
- 2248 The scene is set in Sherwood Forest.
- 2261 *Bingham*. In Nottinghamshire, about eight miles east of Nottingham.
- 2272 M (1980, p. 522) remarks on the precision of Munday's knowledge of Nottinghamshire's geography.
- 2310 *Retford*. Probably Retford, Nottinghamshire, north of Sherwood Forest.
- 2313 *Jailer*. L omits the pre-speech designation, though clearly it is necessary.
- 2318 L: *thererfore*.
- 2320 *thin-cheekt*: L: *thick-cheek'r*. C changes to *thin-cheek'd*, followed by H and M (1980), to accord with *chinface*, which means "thin-cheeked," or "pinch-faced." But the Jailer is full of angry words and perhaps abuses the language, even as Mrs. Warman does, with his *thick-cheekt chinface*, in which case the

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emendation spoils the joke. Or maybe *thick-cheekt chynfase* means something like "fat-faced skinflint."

- 2329 C adds *Enter woman*, then takes her off again at line 2344, has her reenter at line 2347, then exits her at line 2355.
- 2344 The woman cruelly tricks Warman with a pun: a *caudle* is "a warm drink consisting of thin gruel mixed with wine or ale, sweetened and spiced, given chiefly to aid people, especially women in childbed; also to their visitors" (OED, sb. 1). Thus the starving Warman thinks she means to provide him with nurture. But *caudle* also refers to the hangman's noose (*hempen caudle*) which is in fact what she brings him, thus dashing his hopes and providing the reality check of his villainy from which he cannot escape.
- 2355 The woman's exit is not marked in L.
- 2365 sound hermonious. M (1980) suggests that the moment was probably preceded by bird-sounds produced by the company's musicians.
- 2419 *not*. Not in L. M's emendation.
- 2438 *rinksanker*. Not in OED. Halliwell is certainly right in calling it a term of contempt; Hazlitt glosses it as a term applicable to a "card sharper." M (1980) suggests that it's nothing more than a malapropism for "blind soothsayer," used here "in reference to Fitzwater's ability to 'hit so right' despite his blindness" (p. 524).
- 2490 *trusse*. A close-fitting garment or jacket (OED). M (1980, p. 524) notes that Hensloe's inventory of 13 March 1597/8 included "the fryers trusse in Roben Hoode" (*Papers*, p. 121).
- 2496 *Bawtry* = Bawtry, in southern Yorkshire.
- 2505 /*Exwest*. Not in L; added by C et al.
- 2509-10 From *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield*, lines 31-32.
- 2515 Another reference to the *Gest's Reynolde Grenelef*. See line 2224 and note to line 2221 above.

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- 2531-32 *crowne . . . noble.* Pun on two English coins, as well as on political hierarchy. A *noble* was worth half a *mark*.
- 2671-72 Compare *Adam Bell*, where the king makes William a gentleman "of clothynge and of fee" (line 661).
- 2681 M adds: */Exeunt Scarlet, John.*
- 2682 C adds: *Exit Much.* Not in L., but necessary for the sense.
- 2685 */Exit Warman.* Not in L. C's addition.
- 2691 */Enter Prior and Doncaster.* Not in L. C's addition followed by M (1980). C wonders if Warman might not enter here as well.
- 2706 *late lost sonne.* M (1980, p. 527) observes: "In *Look About You* (A2v), Robert, Earl of Huntington, is Richard's ward, which may have something to do with this line."
- 2721-23 Richard's apocryphal siege of Babylon is mentioned in Arnold's *Chronicle* and in romances of Richard and in some ballads. Wynkyn de Worde's *Kynge Rycharde cuer du lyon* (1528) includes the story. The title *Emperor of the East* occurs in *The Battle of Alcazar* (1594), A3. See M (1980, pp. 527-28).
- 2741 *Moonton my Chancellour.* John Morton, Bishop of Ely, was chancellor under Henry VII. Richard's chancellor was William Longchamp. Thus it would seem that Henry VII is the king Skelton is imagined to please in his production of this Robin Hood play. See above, "his Majesty" (line 9).
- 2787 ff. M (1980, p. 529) notes: "The details predicted for the sequel play make it plain that if the opening section of the *Death* was not fully written at the time this epilogue was composed, it was at least clearly planned."
- 2827 M's note (1980, p. 529) on Richard's return to Austria is worth quoting in full: "This is, of course, an apocryphal journey, deriving from the romances; there, Richard's imprisonment takes place on the return journey from a pilgrimage (not a crusade), and part of the work of the subsequent crusade then becomes a trip to settle with his captor. But in all the extant romance versions, the imprisonment (and hence the return trip) is set in Almaysn, not

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Austria, with the villain being the Emperor of Almeyn rather than the Duke of Austria. The ballad cited in 2032-6ln is the one exception; and it is possible that there was at one time a group of associated ballads dealing with the subject, or another version of the romance corresponding to the ballad."

- 2834 *The Catastrophe*. The sequel is *The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington*, which presents fair Matildas Tragedie (line 2835) and her becoming a nun at Dunmowe Abbey (line 2837), a priory located in Essex.
- 2837 *Dunmowe*. L: *Damwod*. Probably a compositor's error. The historical Fitzwater was patron of Dunmowe Priory in Essex. In *The Death*, Dunmowe is the Priory to which Matilda flees to escape the lewd advances of King John; there she is betrayed by the worldly prioress, poisoned, and, ultimately, buried.



Excerpts from *The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington*
by Anthony Munday

List of Characters

in the order of their appearance

Friar Tuck.	Aubrey De Vere, Earl of Oxford (alias Salisbury).
King Richard.	Mowbray (alias Hugh).
The Bishop of Ely.	Queen Isabel (anticipated in dumbshow).
Lord Fitzwater.	Young Bruce (alias Young Fitzwater).
Earl of Salisbury.	Old Bruce.
Earl of Chester.	Earl of Leicester (perhaps having appeared earlier in play).
Prince John (later, King John).	Earl of Richmond.
Little John.	A Boy, messenger (no speeches).
Scathlock.	Lady Bruce.
Much, a clown.	Winchester (alias Chester).
Sir Doncaster.	George, younger son of Old Bruce (no speeches).
Prior of York, Uncle to Robin Hood.	A Messenger to Oxford on the battlefield.
Robin Hood, formerly Robert, Earl of Huntington.	Will Brand.
Warman.	A Soldier, guide for Matilda (no speeches).
Eleanor, the Queen Mother.	Abbess of Dunmow.
Scarlet.	A Messenger to King John.
Matilda, Robin Hood's Maid Marian.	A Monk of Bury.
Jinny.	A Servant, messenger of Brand's death.
Chorus.	A Drummer.
Characters of the dumbshow: Austria, Ambition, Constance, Arthur, Insurrection, King of France, Hugh le Brun (Earl of March), Queen Isabel, two children.	Sir William Blunt (alias Sir Walter Blunt).
Hubert de Burgh (alias Bonville and possibly identical with Chorus).	King John's masquers, ladies, soldiers, nuns.

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

Scene I

[Enter Frier Tucke.]

Frier



olla, holla, holla: follow, follow,
followe. [Like noyse within.
Now benedicité, what fowle absur-
ditie, follie and foolerie had like to fol-
lowed mee! I and my mates, are addic-
tates, inviting great states, to see
our last play, are hunting the hay,

worthy dignitaries

with ho, that way, the goodly heart ranne, with followe
Little John, Much play the man; and I, like a sor, have
wholly forgot the course of our plot; but crosse-bowe
lye downe, come on friers gowne, hoode cover my
crowne, and with a lowe becke, prevent a sharpe
checke.

deer

Blithe sit yee all, and winke at our rude cry,
Minde where wee left, in Sheerewod merrily.
The king, his traine, Robin, his yeomen tall
Gone to the wedde to see the fat deare fall.
Wee left Maid Marian busie in the bower,
And prettie Jinny looking, every hower,
For their returning from the hunting game,
And therefore seeke to set each thing in frame.

baw
reproof

hour
put things in order

Warman all wofull for his sinne we left.
Sir Doncaster, whose villanies and theft
You never heard of, but too soone yee shall,
Hurt with the Prior; shame them both befall,
They two will make our mirth be short and small.
But least I bring yee sorrowe ere the time,
Pardon I beg of your well judging eyne,
And take in part bad prologue, and rude play:
The hunters holloo, Tucke must needs away.
Therefore downe weede, howe doe the deede, to make
the Stagge bleede, and if my hand speede, hey for a cry.

Wounded (Aggrieved)

lest
eyes

Robin Hood Plays

with a throat strained hie, and a lowde yell, at the beasts
fall. [Exit, *Holloo* within.]

high

[Enter King, Ely, Fitzwater, Salsbury, Chester,
Prince John, Little John, Scathlocke.

- 40 *King* Where is our mother?
Pr. John Mounted in a stand.
 Sir, fallowe deere have dyed by her hand.
Fitzwater Three stags I slewen.
Ely Two bucks by me fell downe.
45 *Chester* As many dyed by mee.
Salsbury But I had three.
Prince Scathlocke, wheres Much?
Scathlocke When last I saw him, may it please your Grace,
 He and the Frier footed it apace. were walking
50 *Prince* Scathlocke, no Grace, your fellowe and plaine John.
Lit. John I warrant you, Much will be here anone.
Prince Thinkst thou Little John, that he must Jinny wed?
Lit. John No doubt he must.
55 *Prince* Then to adorne his head, we shall have hornes
 good store.
King God, for thy grace,
 How could I misse the stagge I had in chase!
 Twice did I hit him in the very necke,
 When backe my arrowes flew, as they had smit
 On some sure armour. Where is Robin Hood
60 And the wighte Scarlet? Seeke them Little John. [Exit John. clever
 He have that stagge before I dine today.]
 [Enter Much.]
65 *Much* O the Frier, the Frier, the Frier.
King Why, how now Much?
Much Cry ye mercy, master King. Marry this is the matter;
 Scarlet is following the stagge you hit, and has al-
 most lodg'd him: now the Frier has the best bowe but
 yours, in all the field, which and Scarlet had, he would
 except for
 if

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- 70 have him straight.
King Where is thy master?
Much Nay, I cannot tell, nor the Frier neither.
Scathlocke I heare them holloo, farre off in the wod.
King Come Much, canst lead us where as Scarlet is?
75 *Much* Never feare you; follow me. [*Exeunt, hollooing.*]

Scene II

[Enter Sir Doncaster, Prior.

- 80 *Doncaster* You were resolved to have him poysoned,
Or kild, or made away, you car'd not how.
What divell makes you doubtfull to doo't? *devil*
Prior Why, Doncaster, his kindnesse in our needes.
Doncaster A plague upon his kindnesse, let him die.
I never temperd poyson in my life, but I employd it.
By th'masse and I loose this, *mixed*
85 For ever kooke to loose my company. *if I lose*
Prior But will you give it him?
Doncaster That cannot bee.
The Queene, Earle Chester, and Earle Salsbury,
If they once see mee, I am a deade man.
90 Or did they heare my name, Ile lay my life,
They all would hunt me, for my life.
Prior What hast thou done to them?
Doncaster Faith, some odde toyes,
That made me fly the south. But passe wee them. *tricks*
95 Here is the poyson. Will you give it Robin?
Prior Now by this gold I will.
Doncaster Or as I said, for ever I defile your company.
Prior Well, he shall die, and in his jollity;
And in my head I have a policy
100 To make him die disgrac't.

Robin Hood Plays

Doncaster O tell it Prior.

Prior I will, but not as now. [Call the Frier within.
Weele seeke a place; the wods have many cares,
And some methinkes are calling for the Frier.] *Exeunt.*

105

Scene III

[Enter, calling the Frier, as afore.]

John The Frier, the Frier?

Scathlocke Why, where's this Frier? [Enter Frier.]

Frier Here, sir. What is your desire?

110

[Enter Robin Hood.]

Robin Why, Frier, what a murren dost thou meane? pestilence
The King calis for thee. For, a mighty stagge,
That hath a copper ring about his necke,
With letters on it, which hee would have read,
Hath Scarlet kild, I pray thee goe thy way.

Frier Master, I will; no longer will I stay. [Exit.]

Robin Good unkle, be more carefull of your health,
And you, Sir Doncaster, your wounds are greene.

Both Through your great kindnes, we are comforted.

120

Robin And, Warman, I advise you to more mirth.
Shun solitary walkes, keepe company,
Forget your fault: I have forgiven the fault.
Good Warman be more blithe, and at this time,
A little helpe my Marian and her maide.
Much shall come to you straight. A little now,
We must al strive to doe the best we may.] *Exit winding.*

Warman On you and her lie waite, untill my dying day.

[*Exeunt, and as they are going out, Doncaster pulls Warman.*]

125

Doncaster Warman, a wod. My good Lord Prior and I
Are full of grieve, to see thy misery.

Warman My misery, Sir Doncaster? Why, I thanke God,

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- I never was in better state than now.
- Prior Why, what a servile slavish minde hast thou?
135 Art thou a man, and canst be such a beast,
 Ase-like to beare the burthen of thy wrong?
- Warman What wrong have I? Is't wrong to be reliev'd?
- Doncaster Reliev'd saist thou?
Why, shallow witted foole,
140 Dost thou not see Robins ambitious pride?
 And how he clymes by pittying, and aspires,
 By humble lookes, good deedes, and such fond toyas,
 To be a monarch, raigning over us, tricks
 As if wee were the vassals to his will?
- 145 Warman I am his vassall, and I will be still.
- Prior Warman, thou art a foole. I doe confess,
 Were these good deedes done in sincerite,
 Fittie of mine, thine or this knights distresse,
 Without vaine brags, it were true charite;
150 But to relieve our fainting bodies wants,
 And grieve our soules with quippes, and bitter braidis,
 Is good turnes overturnd. No thanks wee owe
 To any, whosoever helps us so.
- 155 Warman Neither himselfe, nor any that hee keepes,
 Ever upbraided mee, since I came last.
- Doncaster O God have mercie on thee, silly asse.
 Doth he not say to every gueste that comes:
 "This same is Warman, that was once my steward?"
- Warman And what of that?
- 160 Prior Is't not as much to say:
 "Why, here he stands that once did mee betray?"
- Doncaster Did hee not bring a troope to grace himselfe,
 Like captives waiting on a conquerours chaire,
 And calling of them out, by one and one,
 Presented them, like fairings, to the king? gifts from a fair
- 165 Prior O, I; there was a rare invention. Oh, indeed
 A plague upon the foole.
 I hate him worse for that than all the rest.

Robin Hood Plays

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|--|
| 170 | <i>Warman</i> | Why should you hate him? Why should you or you
Envie this noble Lord, thus as you doe? |
| | <i>Doncaster</i> | Nay rather, why dost thou not joyne in hate
With us, that lately liv'dst like us, in wealthy state?
Remember this, remember foolish man,
How thou hast bene the Shrieve of Nottingham. |
| 175 | <i>Prior</i> | Cry to thy thoughts, let this thought never cease,
I have bene Justice of my Soveraignes Peace,
Lord of faire livings; men with cap and knee,
In liveries waited howerly on mee. |
| | <i>Doncaster</i> | And when thou thinkst, thou hast bene such and such,
Thinke then what tis to be a mate to Much,
To runne when Robin bids, come at his call,
Be mistresse Marians man. |
| 180 | <i>Prior</i> | Nay thinke withall. |
| 185 | <i>Warman</i> | What shall I thinke? but thinke upon my need,
When men fed dogs, and me they would not feede,
When I despaird through want, and sought to die,
My pitious master, of his charitie,
Forgave my fault, reliev'd and saved mee. |
| 190 | | This doe I thinke upon, and you should thinke,
If you had hope of soules salvation,
First, Prior, that he is of thy flesh and blode,
That thou art unkle unto Robin Hood,
That by extortyon thou didst his lands. |
| 195 | | God and I know how it came to thy hands,
How thou pursyd him in his misery,
And how heaven plagyd thy hearts extreamitie.
Thinke, Doncaster, when, hired by this Frier,
Thou cam'st to take my master with the Frier, |
| 200 | | And wert thyselfe sane, how he set thee free,
Gave thee an hundred pound to comfort thee,
And both bethinke yee how but yesterday,
Wounded and naked in the field you lay, |
| 205 | | How with his owne hand he did raise your heads,
Pound baime into your wounds, your bodies fed,
Watcht when yee slept, wept when he sawe your woe. |
| | <i>Doncaster</i> | Stay Warman, stay. I grant that he did so, |

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- And you, turnd honest, have forsworne the villainie? villainy
- Warman Even from my soule, I villany defie.
- Prior A blessed hower, a fit time now to die!
- 210 Doncaster And you shall, Conscience. [Stab him, he falleth.]
- Warman O forgive mee, God,
And save my master from their bloodie hands.
- Prior What, hast thou made him sure?
- Doncaster Its deade sure: he is dead, if that be sure.
- 215 Prior Then let us thrust the dagger in his hand,
And when the next comes, cry he kild himselfe.
- Doncaster That must be now. Yonder comes Robin Hood.
No life in him.
- Prior No, no, not any life. [Enter Robin.]
220 Three mortall wounds have let in piercing ayre,
And at their gaps, his life is cleane let out.
- Robin Who is it, uncle, that you so bemone?
- Prior Warman, good nephew, whom Sir Doncaster and I
Found freshly bleeding, as he now doth lye.
- 225 You were scarce gone, when he did stab himselfe.
- Robin O God, he in his own hand houlds his own harts hurt;
I dreaded too much his distressed looke.
Belike the wretch despaird and slew himselfe.
- Doncaster Nay, that's most sure, yet he had little reason,
230 Considering how well you used him.
- Robin Well, I am sorie; but must not be sad,
Because the King is comming to my bower.
Help me, I pray thee, to remoove his bodie,
Least he should come and see him murdered.
- 235 Sometime anone he shall be buried. [Exit Robin, Doncaster, with body.]
- Prior Good, all is good. This is as I desire.
Now for a face of pure hypocrisie.
Sweete murder, cloath thee in religious weedes,
Raigne in my bosome, that with helpe of thee,
240 I may effect this Robins Tragedie.

Robin Hood Plays

[Enter Robin, Doncaster.

- Doncaster Nay, nay, you must not take this thing so heavily.
- Robin A bodies losse, Sir Doncaster, is much;
But a soules, too, is more to be bemon'd.
- 245 Prior Truly I wonder at your vertuous minde.
O God, to one so kinde, who'ud be unkinde!
Let goe this griefe, now must you put on joy,
And for the many favours I have found,
So much exceeding all concept of mine,
- 250 Unto your cheere, lie adde a pretious drinke,
Of colour rich, and red, sent mee from Rome.
There's in it Moly, Syrian Balsamum,
Golds rich Elixir — O tis precious!
- Robin Where it is uncle?
- 255 Prior As yesterday,
Sir Doncaster and I rid on our way,
Theeves did beset us, bound us as you saw,
And, among other things, did take from mee
This rich confection. But regardlesly,
- 260 As common drinke, they cast, into a bush,
The bottle, which this day Sir Doncaster
Feicht, and hath left it in the inner lodging.
I tell you, cosin (I doe love you well),
A pint of this ransomde the Sophies sonne,
- 265 When he was taken in Natolia.
I meant indeede to give it my liege lord,
In hope to have his favour; but to you
I put myselfe, be my good friend,
And, in your owne rescoring, mee reanore.
- 270 Robin Uncle, I will. You neede urge that no more.
But whatis the vertues of this pretious drinke?
- Prior It keepes fresh youth, restores diseased sight,
Helps natures weakeenesse, smoothes the scars of wounds,
And cooles the intrels with a balsme breath,
When they by thirst or travell boyle with heat.
- 275 Robin Uncle, I thanke you, pray you let me have
A cuppe prepared, gainst the King comes in,

precious

without regard

ransomed

before

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- To cool his heate. Myselfe will give it him.
- Priore And when he drinke, be bold to say he drinke
280 A richer draught than that dissolved pearle
Which Cleopatra dranke to Antonie.
- Robin I have much busynesse; let it be your charge
To make this rich draught readie for the King,
And I will quitt it, pray yee doe not faile. [Exit.]
- 285 Prior I warrant you, good nephew.
- Doncaster Better, and better still.
We thought before but to have poysond him,
And now shall Robin Hoode destroy the King.
Even when the King, the Queen, the Prince, the Lords
290 Joy in his vertues, this supposed vice
Will turne to sharpe hate their exceeding love.
- Priore Ha, ha, ha, I cannot chuse but laugh,
To see my cosin cosend in this sort.
Faile him quothe you? Nay hang mee if I doe.
295 But, Doncaster, art sure the poysons are well mixt?
- Doncaster Tut, tut, let me alone for poysoning. *you can rely on me*
I have alreadie turnd oce fourre or five *murdered*
That angerd mee. But tell mee Prior,
Wherefore so deadly dost thou hate thy cosin?
- 300 Prior Shall I be plaine? Because if he were deade,
I should be made the Earle of Huntington.
- Doncaster A prettie cause. But thou a church-man art.
- Priore Tut, man, if that would fall,
He have a dispensation, and turne temporall. *secular*
305 But tell mee, Doncaster, why dost thou hate him?
- Doncaster By the Mass, I cannot tel. O yes, now I ha't.
I hate thy cousin, Earle of Huntington,
Because so many love him as there doe,
And I myselfe am loved of so fewe.
- 310 Nay, I have other reasons for my hate;
Hee is a foole, and will be reconcilde
To anie foe hee hath; he is too milde,
Too honest for this world, fitter for heaven.
Hee will not kill these greedie cormorants. *rapacious persons (see note)*

Robin Hood Plays

- 315 Nor stripp base pesants of the wealth they have;
He does abuse a thieves name and an outlawes,
And is indeede no outlawe, nor no theefe —
He is unworthy of such reverent names.
Besides, he keepes a paltry whining girlie,
And will not bed, forsooth, before he bride. whining
320 He stand too't, he abuses maidenhead,
That will not take it, being offered,
Hinders the common wealth of able men.
Another thing I hate him for againe:
325 He saies his prayers, fastis eves, gives alms, does good.
For these and such like crimes, sweares Doncaster
To worke the speedie death of Robin Hoode.
- Prior* Well said, yfaith. Harke, hark, the King returns.
To doe this deede, my heart like fuel burns. [Exeunt.]

330 *Scene III*

[Windehornes. Enter King, Queene, John, Fitzwater,
Ely, Chester, Salbury, Lester, Little John, Frier Tuck, Scar-
let, Scashlocke, and Much. Frier Tuck carrying a stag
head, dauncing.]

- 335 *King* Gramercy, Frier, for thy gice, song
Thou greatly hast contented mee,
What with thy sporting and thy game,
I sweare I highly pleased am.
- 340 *Frier* It was my masters whole desire
That maiden, yeoman, swaine and frier
Their aris and wits should all apply,
For pleasure of your Majestie.
- Queene* Sonne Richard, looke I pray you on the ring
That was about the necke of the last stagge.
- 345 *Chester* Was his name Scarlet, that shot off his necke?
John Chester, it was this honest fellow Scarlet.
This is the fellowe, and a yeoman bold,
As ever courst the swift hart on the molde. pursued; earth

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- 350 King Frier, heres somewhat grav'd upon the ring,
I pray thee reade it. Meanwhile list to mee.
[This while, most compassing the Frier about the ring.
Scarlet and Scathlock, you bold bretherem,
Twelve pence a day I give each for his fee,
And henceforth see yee live like honest men.
- 355 Both We will, my Liege, else let us dye the death.
- Much A boone, a boone, upon my knee,
Good King Richard, I begge of thee.
For indeede, sir, the troth is, Much is my father, and he
is one of your tenants in Kings Mill at Wakefield all on
a greene. O there dwelleth a jolly pinder, at Wake-
field all on a greene. Now I would have you, if you wil
doe so much for mee, to set mee forward in the way of
marriage to Jinny: the mill would not be cast away upon
us.
- 365 King Much, be thou ever master of that mill;
I give it thee for thin inheritance.
- Much Thanks, pretious Prince of cursesie.
Ile to Jinny and tell her of my lands yfaith. [Exit.]
- John Here, Frier, here, here it begins.
- 370 Frier [reads]: "When Harold hare-foote raigned king,
About my necke he put this ring."
- King In Harolds time, more than a hundred yeare,
Hath this ring bene about his newe slaine deere!
I am scory now it dyde; but let the same
375 Head, ring and all be sent to Nottingham,
And in the castle kept for monuments.
- Fitzwater My Leige, I heard an olde tale long agoe,
That Harold being Goodwines sonne of Kent,
When he had got faire Englands government,
380 Hunted for pleasure once within this wood,
And singled out a faire and stately stagge,
Which, foote to foote, the king in running caught.
And sure this was the stagge.
- King It was no doubt.

Robin Hood Plays

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|---|
| 385 | <i>Chester</i> | But some, my Lord, affirme
That Julius Caesar, many yeares before,
Tooke such a stag, and such a poesie writ. |
| 390 | <i>King</i> | It should not be in Julius Caesars time:
There was no English bred in this land,
Untill the Saxons came, and this is writ
In Saxon characters. |
| | <i>John</i> | Well, 'twas a goodly beast. |
| | | [Enter Robin Hood.] |
| | <i>King</i> | How now Earle Robert? |
| 395 | <i>Frier</i> | A forfeit, a forfeit, my liege Lord.
My masters lawes are on record;
The Court-roll here your Grace may see. |
| | <i>King</i> | I pray thee, Frier, read them mee. |
| 400 | <i>Frier</i> | One shall suffice, and this is hee.
No man that commeth in this wod
To feast or dwell with Robin Hood
Shall call him Earle, Lord, Knight, or Squire;
He no such titles doth desire,
But Robin Hood, plaine Robin Hood, |
| 405 | | That honest yeoman stout and good,
On paine of forfeiting a marke,
That must be paid to me his clarke. |
| | | My liege, my liege, this lawe you broke,
Almost in the last word you spoke. |
| 410 | | That crime may not acquited bee,
Till Frier Tuck receive his fee. |
| | | [Cents hire purse.] |
| | <i>King</i> | Theres more than twenty marks, mad Frier. |
| | <i>Frier</i> | If thus you pay the clarke his hire, |
| 415 | | Oft may you forfeit, I desire. |
| | | You are a perfect penitent,
And well you doe your wrong repent.
For this your Highnesse liberall gift,
I here absolve you without shrift. |
| 420 | <i>King</i> | Gramercies, Frier. Now, Robin Hood,
Sith Robin Hood it needes must bee,
I was about to aske before |

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- | | | |
|-----|--------------|--|
| | | If thou didst see the great stags fall. |
| 425 | <i>Robin</i> | I did my Lord, I sawe it all.
But missing this same peating Frier,
And hearing you so much desire
To have the lozels companie,
I went to seek small honestie. |
| | <i>Frier</i> | But you found much, when you found mee. |
| 430 | <i>Robin</i> | I, Much my man, but a jot
Of honestie in thee, God wot. |
| | <i>Quene</i> | Robin, you doe abuse the Frier. |
| | <i>Frier</i> | Madam, I dare not call him lyer;
He may be bold with mee, he knowes.
How now, Prince John, how goes, how goes
This wod-mans life with you today?
My fellow Wodset you would bee. |
| 435 | <i>John</i> | I am thy fellowe, thou dost see.
And to be plaine, as God me save,
So well I like thee, merry knave,
That I thy company must have.
Nay, and I will. |
| | <i>Frier</i> | Nay, and you shall. |
| 440 | <i>Robin</i> | My Lord, you neede not feare at all,
But you shall have his company,
He will be bold I warrant yee. |
| 445 | <i>King</i> | Know you where ere a spring is ne? |
| | | Faine would I drink, I am right dry. |
| 450 | <i>Robin</i> | I have a drinke within my bower,
Of pleasing taste and soveraigne power.
My reverend uncle gives it mee
To give unto your Majestic. |
| | <i>King</i> | I would be loath indeede, being in heate,
To drinke cold water. Let us to thy bower. |
| | <i>Robin</i> | Runne Frier before, and bid my uncle be in readines. |
| 455 | <i>Frier</i> | Gon with a trice, on such good business. [Exaudi omnes. |

Robin Hood Plays

Scene V

[Enter Marian, with a white apron.]

- Marian What, Much? What, Jinny? Much? I say. [Enter Much.]
Much Whats the matter, mistrease?
460 Marian I pray thee see the fueller
Suffer the cooke to want no wodde.
Good Lord, where is this idle girl?
Why, Jinny?
- Jinny [within] I come, forsooth.
- 465 Marian I pray thee bring the flowers forth.
- Much Hee goe send her mistres, and help the cookes, if
they have any neede. [Exit Much.]
- Marian Dispatch, good Much. What, Jin, I say? *Hurry*
[Enter Jinny.]
- 470 Much Hie thee, hie thee: she calis for life. *Marian*
- Marian Indeede, indeede, you doe me wrong,
To let me cry and call so long.
- 475 Jinny Forsooth, I strawed the dining bowers
And smoth'd the walkes with hearbes and flowers,
The yeomens tables I have I have spied,
Drest salts, laid trenchers, set on bread —
Nay all is well, I warrant you.
- Marian You are not well, I promise you,
Your forslieves are not pind (fie, fie)
480 And all your bed-geere stands awry.
Give me the flowers. Goe in for shame,
And quickly see you mend the same. [Exit Jinny.]
- [Marian strawing flowers. Enter Sir Doncaster, Prior.]
- 485 Doncaster How baske mistrease Marian is?
She thinkes this is her day of blisse.
- Prior But it shall be the wofull'st day
That ever chanest her, if I may.

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Marian Why are you two thus in the ayre?
Your wounds are greene,
Good cur, have care.
- Prior Thanks for your kindnesse, gentle maid.
My cosin Robert us hath praid
To helpe him in this businesse.
- [Enter Frier.]
- Frier Sir Doncaster, Sir Doncaster?
- Doncaster Holla.
- Frier I pray you, did you see the Prior?
- Prior Why, here I am. What wouldst thou, Frier?
- Frier The King is heated in the chace,
And posteth hitherward apace.
He told my master he was dry,
And hee desires ye presently
To send the drinke whereof ye speake. [Hornes blowe.]
- Prior Come, it is here; haue let us make.
- [Enter Prior, Doncaster, and Frier.]
- [Enter King, John, Queene, Scarlet, Scathlocke, Ely, Fitzwater, Salisbury, Chester. Marian kneels downe.]
- Marian Most gratiouse Soveraigne, welcome once again.
Welcome to you and all your princely traine.
- King Thanks, lovely hostesse; we are homely guests.
Wheres Robin Hood? He promised me some drinke.
- Marian Your handmaid, Robin will not then be long.
The Frier indeede came running to his uncle,
Who with Sir Doncaster were here with mee,
And altogether went for such a drinke.
- King Well, in a better time it could not come,
For I am very hot and passing dry. [exceedingly]
- [Enter Robin Hoode, a cuppe, a towell, leading Doncaster, Tuck, and Much pulling the Prior.]
- Robin Traitor, Ile draw thee out before the King. [expose you]
- Prior Come, murderous Prior.

Robin Hood Plays

- Much Come yee, dogges face.
- King Why, how now Robin? Wheres the drink you bring?
- Robin Lay holde on these.
- 525 Farre be it I should bring your Majestic,
The drinke these two prepared for your taste.
- King Why, Robin Hoode, be briefe and answer me.
I am amazed at thy troubled lookes.
- Robin Long will not my ill lookes amaze your Grace.
530 I shortly looke, never to looke againe.
- Marian Never to looke? What will it still be night?
If thou looke never, day can never be.
What ailes my Robin? Wherefore dost thou faint?
- Robin Because I cannot stand; yet now I can. [King and Marian support him.
535 Thanks to my King, and thanks to Marian.
- King Robin, be briefe, and tell us what hast chaest?
- Robin I must be briefe, for I am sure of death,
Before a long tale can be halffway tolde.
- Fitzwater Of death, my sonne, bright sunne of all my joy?
540 Death cannot have the power of vertuous life.
- Robin Not of the vertues, but the life it can.
- King What dost thou speak of death? How shouldst thou die?
- Robin By poison and the Priors treachery.
- Queene Why, take this soveraigne pouder at my hands,
545 Take it and live in spite of poysons power.
- Doscastor I, set him forward. Powders, quoth ye? Hah,
I am a foole then, if a little dust,
The shaving of a horne, a Bezars stone,
Or any antidote have power to stay
The execution of my hearts resolve.
- 550 Tut, tut, you labour, lovely Queene, in vain,
And on a thanklesse groome your toyle bestowe.
Now hath your foe reveng'd you of your foe;
Robin shall die, if all the world sayd no.
- Aye
(see note)
- even if
- 555 Marian How the wolle howles! Fly like a tender kid
Into thy sheepheards bosom. Shield mee love.

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Canst thou not, Robin? Where shall I be hid?
O God, these ravens will staze upon thy dove.
- 560 *Robin* They cannot hurt thee, pray thee do not feare,
Base curres will couch, the Lyon being neare.
- Queene* How workes my powder?
- Robin* Very well, faire Queene.
- King* Dost thou feele any case?
- 565 *Robin* I shall, I trust, anone:
Sleepe falle upon mine eyes.
O I must sleepe, and they that love me, do not waken me.
- Marian* Sleepe in my lap, and I will sing to thee.
- John* He should not sleepe.
- 570 *Robin* I must, for I must die.
While I live therfore let me have some rest.
- Fitzwater* I, let him rest; the poyston urges sleepe.
When he awakes, there is no hope of life.
- Doncaster* Of life? Now by the little time I have to live,
He cannot live one hower for your lives.
- 575 *King* Villaine, what art thou?
- Doncaster* Why, I am a knight.
- Chester* Thou werst indeede.
If it so please your Grace,
I will describe my knowledge of this wretch.
- 580 *King* Doe, Chesster.
- Chester* This Doncaster, for so the felon hight,
Was, by the king your father, made a knight,
And well in armes he did himselfe behave.
Many a bitter storme, the windes of rage
585 Blasted this realme with, in those woful daies,
When the unnaturall fightis continued,
Betweene your kingly father and his sonnes.
This cut-throat, knighted in that time of woe,
Seaz'd on a beautious nunne at Barkhamsted
590 As wee were marching toward Winchester
After proud Lincolne was compeld to yield;

Robin Hood Plays

- Hee tooke this virgine straying in the field,
For all the nunnnes and every covent fled
The daungers that attended on our troopes.
For those sad times too oft did testifie,
Wars rage hath no regard of pietie.
- She humbly praid him, for the love of heaven,
To guid her to her fathers, two miles thence.
He swore he would, and very well he might,
For to the campe he was a forager.
- Upon the way they came into a wood,
Wherein, in briefe, he stript this tender maid
Whose lust, when she in vaine had long withstood,
Being by strength and torments overlaid,
- He did a sacrilegious deede of rape
And left her bath'd in her owne teares and blood.
When she reviv'd, she to her fathers got,
And got her father to make just complaint
Unto your mother, being then in campe.
- 610 *Queene* Is this the villaine Chester, that defilde
Sir Eustace Struiles chaste and beautious childe?
- 615 *Doncaster* I, Madam, this is hee,
That made a wench daunce naked in a wood;
And for shee did denie what I desirde,
I scourg'd her for her pride till her faire skinne
With stripes was checkred like a vintners gracie.
And what was this? A mighty matter sure.
I have a thousand more than she defilde,
And cut the squeaking throats of some of them:
I grieve I did not hirs.
- 620 *Queene* Punish him, Richard.
A fairer virgine never sawe the sunne.
A chaster maid was never sworne a nunne.
- 625 *King* How scap't the villaine punishment, that time?
Fitzwater I rent his spurres off, and disgraced him.
- 630 *Chester* And then he raid upon the Queene and mee.
Being committed, he his keeper slue,
And to your father fled, who pardond him.
- 635 *Richard* God give his soule a pardon for that sinne.

slew

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- 630 *Salisbury* O had I heard his name, or seen his face,
 I had defended Robin from this chance.
 Ah villaine, shut those gloomy lights of thine,
 Remembrest thou a little somme of mine,
 Whose nurse at Wilton fiesl thou ravishedst
 635 And slew'st two maids that did attend on them?
- 640 *Doncaster* I grant, I dasht the braines out of a beast,
 Thine if he were, I care not; had he bin
 The first borne comfort of a royll king.
 And should have yald when Doncaster cried peace,
 I would have done by him as then I did.
- 645 *King* Soone shall the world be rid of such a wretch.
 Let him be hangd alive, in the high way that joyneth to
 the bower.
- 650 *Doncaster* Alive or deade, I reck not how I die.
 You, them, and these, I desperately desie.
- 655 *Ely* Repent, or never looke to be absolv'd,
 But die accurst as thou deservest well.
- 660 *Doncaster* Then give me my desert; curse one by one.
- 665 *Ely* First I accuse thee, and, if thou persist,
 Unto damnation leave thee wretched man.
- 670 *Doncaster* What doe I care for your damnation?
 Am I not doom'd to death? What more damnation
 Can there issue your loud and yelling cryes?
- 675 *Prior* Yes divell. Heare thy fellowe spirit speake,
 Who would repent. O faine he would repent.
 After this bodies bitter punishment,
 There is an ever-during endlesse woe,
 A quenchless fire, and unconsuming paine,
 Which desperate soules and bodies must indure.
- 680 *Doncaster* Can you preach this, yet set me on, Sir Prior,
 To runne into this endlesse, quenchlesse fier?
- 685 *Prior* High heavens, shewe mercie to my many iis.
 Never had this bene done, but like a fiend,
 Thou tempiedst me with ceasellesse diavelish thoughts.
 Therefore I curse, with bitternesse of soule,
 690 The bower wherein I saw thy balefull eyes.
- devil
hour

Robin Hood Plays

My eyes I curse, for looking on those eyes.
My cares I curse, for harkning to thy tongue.
I curse thy tongue for tempting of myne cares,
Each part I curse, that wee call thine or mine:
Thine for enticing mine, mine following thine.

670

Doncaster A holy prayer. What collect have we next?
[This time *Robin* stirres.]

offering

675

Fitzwater My Marian waneth words, such is her woe;
But old Fitzwater for his girle and him
Begs nothing, but worlds plague for such a foe,
Which causelesse harmd a vertuous noble man,
A pitier of his griefes, when he felt griefe.
Therefore bethinke thee of thy hatefull deede,
Thou faithlesse Prior, and thou this ruthlesse theefe.

680

Prior Will no man curse me, giving so much cause?
Then, Doncaster, ourselves ourselves accuse,
And let no good betide to thee or mee.

[All the yeomen, *Frier, Much, Jinny* cry.]

685

All Amen, amen: accursed may ye bee,
For murdring Robin, flower of curtesie.

[*Robin* sits up.]

690

Robin O ring not such a peale for Robins death;
Let sweetie forgivenesse be my passing bell.
Art thou there, Marian? Then fly forth my breath.
To die within thy armes contents me well.

Prior Keepe in, keepe in a little while thy soule,
Till I have pow'd my soule forth at thy foote.

poured

695

Robin I slept not, unkle; I your grieve did hear.
Let Him forgive your soule that bought it deare.
Your bodies deede, I in my death forgive,
And humbly begge the King that you may live.
Stand to your cleargie, unkle, save your life,
And lead a better life than you have done.

Claim benefit of clergy

700

Prior O gentle nephew, ah my brothers sonne,
Thou dying glory of old Huntington,
Wishest thou life so such a murdrous foe?
I will not live, sith thou must life forgoe.

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- 705 O happie Warman, blessed in thy end,
Now too too late thy truth I doe commend.
O nephew, nephew, Doncaster and I
Murdered poore Warman, for he did denie
To joyne with us in this blacke tragedy.
- 710 *Robin* Alas, poore Warman. Frier, Little John,
I told ye both where Warmans bodie lay.
And of his buriall lie dispose anone.
- 715 *King* Is there no lawe, Lord Ely, to convict
This Prior, that confesseth murders thus?
- 720 *Ely* He is a hallowed man and must be tried
And punishit by the censure of the Church.
- 725 *Prior* The Church therin doth erre: God doth allowe
No canon to preserve a murderer's life.
Richard, King Richard, in thy grandires daies,
A law was made, the Cleargie sworne thereto,
That whatsoever Church-man did commit
Treason, or murder, or false felonie,
Should like a seculer be punished.
Treason we did, for sure we did intend
King Richards poisoning, soveraigne of this land.
Murder we did in working Warmans end,
And my deare nephewes, by this fatall hand,
And theft we did, for we have robd the King,
The state, the nobles, commons, and his men,
Of a true peere, firme piller, liberall lord.
- 730 *Fitzwater* Fitzwater we have robd of a kinde sonne,
And Marians love-joyes we have quite undoone.
- 735 *Doncaster* Whoppe, what a coyle is here with your confession?
Prior I aske but judgement for my fousle transgression.
King Thy own mouth hath condemned thee.
Hence with him.
Hang this man dead, then see him buried;
But let the other hang alive in chaines.
- Doncaster* I thank you, sir.

[*Exeunt yeomen, Frier, prisoners, Much.*

Robin Hood Plays

- 740 *John* Myself will goe, my Lord,
 And see sharpe justice done upon these slaves.
- Robin* O goe not hence, Prince John. A word or two
 Before I die I faine would say to you.
- 745 *King* Robin, wee see what we are sad to see,
 Death like a champion treading downe thy life,
 Yet in thy end somewhat to comfort thee,
 Wee freely give to thy betrothed wife,
 Beautious and chast Matilda, all those lands,
 Faine by thy folly, to the Priors hands,
 And by his fault now forfeited to mee.
750 Earle Huntington, she shall thy Countesse bee,
 And thy wight yeomen, they shall wend with mee,
 Against the faithlesse enemies of Christ.
- Robin* Bring forth a beere, and cover it with greene,
- 755 [A beere is brought in.]
 That on my death-bed I may here sit downe.
 [Beere brought, he sits.]
 At Robins buriall let no blacke be scene,
 Let no hand give for him a mourning gowne:
760 For in his death, his King hath given him life,
 By this large gift, given to his maiden wife.
 Chast Maid Matilda, Countess of account,
 Chase, with thy bright eyes, all these clouds of woe
 From these faire cheeke, I pray thee sweete do so.
765 Thinke it is booselesse folly to complaine,
 For that which never can be had againe.
 Queene Elianor, you once were Matildas foe;
 Prince John, you long sought her unlawfull love;
 Let dying Robin Hood intreat you both,
770 To change those passions: Madame, turne your hate,
 To princely love; Prince John, convert your love
 To vertuous passions, chaste and moderate.
 O that your gracious right hands would infolde,
 Matildas right hand, prisoned in my palme,
 And sweare to doe what Robin Hood desires.

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Quene I sweare I will, I will a mother be,
To faire Matildas life and chastitie.
- John When John solicites chaste Matildaes eares
With lawlesse sutes, as he hath often done,
Or offers to the altars of her eyes,
Lascivious poems, stufft with vanities,
He craves to see but short and sower daies,
His death be like to Robins he desires,
His perjur'd body prove a poysoned prey,
For cowled monkes, and barefoote begging friers.
- Robin Inough, inough. Fitzwater, take your child.
My dying frost which no sunnes heat can thawe
Closes the powers of all my outward parts;
My freezing blood runnes backe unto my heart,
Where it assists death, which it would resist.
Only my love a little hinders death.
For he beholds her eyes and cannot smite.
Then goe not yet, Matilda, stay a while.
Frier, make speede, and list my latest will.
- Matilda O let mee looke forever in thy eyes,
And lay my warme breath to thy bloodlesse lips,
If my sight can restraine deaths tyrannies,
Or keepe lives breath within thy bosome lockt.
- Robin Away, away.
Forbearc, my love; all this is but delay.
- Fitzwater Come, maiden daughter, from my maiden sonne,
And give him leave to doe what must be done.
- Robin First I bequeath my soule to all soules Saver,
And will my bodie to be buried
At Wakefield, underneath the abbey wall.
And in this order make my funerall:
When I am dead, stretch me upon this beere,
My beades and primer shall my pillowe bee;
On this side lay my bowe, my good shafts here,
Upon my brest the crosse, and underneath
My trustie sworde, thus fastned in the sheath.
Let Warmans bodie at my feete be laid,
Poore Warman, that in my defence did die;

stuffed
JOSEPH

Saviour

rosary: prayer book

Robin Hood Plays

- 815 For holy dirges, sing me wodmens songs.
As ye to Wakefield walke, with voices shrill.
This for myselfe. My goods and plate I give
Among my yeomen; them I doe bestowe
Upon my Soveraigne, Richard. This is all.
My liege farewell, my love, farewell, farewell.
- 820 Farewell, faire Queene, Prince John and noble lords.
Father Fitzwater, heartily adieu,
Adieu, my yeomen tall.
Matilda, close mine eys.
Frier farewell, farewell to all.
- 825 *Matilda* O must my hands with envious death conspire,
To shut the morning gates of my lives light?
- Fitzwater* It is a duetie, and thy loves desire,
He helpe thee girl to close up Robins sight. *duty*
- 830 *King* Laments are bootelesse, teares cannot restore
Lost life. Matilda, therefore weep no more.
And since our mirth is turned into mone,
Our merry sport, to tragick funerall,
Wee will prepare our power for Austria. *moan*
- 835 After Earle Robins timelesse buriall.
Fall to your wod-songs therefore, yeoman bold,
And deck his herse with flowers, that lovd you deare,
Dispose his goods as he hath them dispos'd.
Fitzwater and Matilda, bide you here. *unmely*
 (*see note*)
- 840 See you the bodie unto Wakefield borne,
A little wee will beare yee company,
But all of us at London point to meese.
Thither, Fitzwater, bring Earle Robins men:
And Frier, see you come along with them.
- 845 *Prier* Ah, my liege Lord, the Frier faints,
And hath no words to make complaints;
But since he must forsake this place,
He will awaite, and thanks, your Grace.
- 850 *Song:* Weepe, weepe, ye wod-men wale,
Your hands with sorrow wring:
Your master Robin Hood lies deade,
Therefore sigh as you sing.

The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington

- Here lies his primer and his beades,
His bent bowe and his arrowes keene,
His good sworde and his holy crosse,
Now cast on flowers fresh and greene:
And as they fall, shed teares and say,
Wella, wella day, wella, wella day;
Thus cast yee flowers and sing,
And on to Wakefield take your way. *prayer book*
- 855
- [*Exeunt all except Frier.*
- 860 *Frier* Here dothe the Frier leave with grievance.
Robin is deade, that grac't his entrance;
And being dead he craves his audience,
With this short play, they would have patience.
- [*Enter Chester.*
- 865 *Chester* Nay, Fryer, at request of thy kinde friend,
Let not thy Play so soone be at an end.
Though Robin Hoode be deade, his yeomen gone,
And that thou thinkst there now remaines not one,
To act an other Sciane or two for thee;
Yet knowe full well, to please this company,
We meane to end Matildas Tragedie.
- 870
- 875 *Frier* Off then, I with you, with your Kendall greene;
Let not sad grieve in fresh array be scene.
Matildas storie is repleat with teares,
Wrongs, desolations, ruins, deadly feares.
In, and attire yee. Though I tired be,
Yet will I tell my mistresse Tragedie.

[As Friar Tuck announces the woes to follow, Chorus (played perhaps by Chester, who must have exited after line 872), appears in block. Tuck says we must "suppose king Richard now is deade, / And John, resistlesse [i.e., without resistance], is faire Englands Lord" (lines 903-04). Chorus introduces a dumb show which reveals three dreams of the sleeping King John: Austria appears, tempting him to add to his kingdom by conquest, but the king puts by Ambition. Constance (wife of Geoffrey, Henry II's third son, who was John's older brother) then appears (line 937) leading her young son Arthur, Duke of Brittany; both seek the crown but King John's foot "overturneth them" (line 938). Next, Insurrection, led by the French King and Lord Hugh le Brun, brings the child Arthur back to menace the king; this time when the king's foot overthrows Arthur he is taken up dead (line 943) and Insurrection flees. In the third dumb show/dream Queen Isabel (John's second wife), with her two children (the Princes Henry and Richard), wrings her hands while John turns his attention to chaste Matilda in mourning veil. Smitten by love, John resumes his "jutes,

Robin Hood Plays

devices, practices and threats: / And when he sees all serveth to no end, / Of chaste Matilda let him make an end" (lines 891-93). During the next 2100 lines Matilda never yields to his pressure, takes refuge in a convent, but ultimately is poisoned by Brand, one of John's agents. The dying Matilda forgives her executioner, who, in remorse, confesses to having slain a hundred "with mine owne hands" (line 2621), including Lady Bruce and her young son George at Windsor Castle (lines 2622-23). Brand, stunned by Matilda's virtuous behavior at her death, escapes during the confusion and, Judas-like, hangs himself with his own garters in a tree. The branch breaks and his "bones and flesh / he gasht together in a poole of blodde" (lines 2694-95). Bruce, who arrives too late to save his mother and brother, seizes Windsor Castle, and the barons confront King John, knowing that King Louis of France has landed in England to support their cause against the king. But they will not serve Louis: "can noble English hearts beare the French yoke?" (line 2998). When Queen Isabel, who sides with the rebel barons, allows that they know not the French king's nature — he may be worse than John — Bruce makes peace with John, who, having learned of Matilda's death, is now deeply repentant (lines 878-3033):]

- Bruse Of Windsor Castle here the keyes I yield.
- 3035 King John Thanks, Bruse. Forgive mee, and I peay thee see
Thy mother and thy brother buried.
[*Bruse offers to kiss [the dead] Matilda.*
In Windsor Castle Church, doe kiss her cheeke.
Weepe thou on that, on this side I will weepe.
- 3040 Queen Chaste virgine, thus I crowne thee with these flowers.
- King John Let us goe on to Dunmow with this maid;
Among the hallowed nunnnes let her be laide.
Unto her tombe, a monthly pilgrimage
Doth King John vow in penance for this wrong.
3045 Goe forward maids; on with Matildas herse,
And on her toombe see you ingrave this verse:
Within this marble monument, doth lye
Matilda martyrd for her chastitie. [Exeunt.]
- Epilogus.
3050 Thus is Matildas story showne in act.
And rough heauen out by an uncurling hand,
Being of the most materiall points compackt,
That with the certainist state of truth doe stand.

FINIS.

Notes

The excerpts of *The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington* are based on the Malone Society's edited text in facsimile type (1965 [1967]) of William Leake's 1601 quarto printing, prepared by John C. Meagher. The full title in Leake was *The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington. Otherwise called Robin Hood of merrie Sherwodde: with the lamentable Tragedie of chaste Matilda, his faire maid Marian*. Imprinted at London, for William Leake, 1601. Line count corresponds to the idiosyncracies of Meagher's 1967 edition. Meagher based his reconstructed facsimile on the fourteen known copies of Leake's printing of the play, using xerographs of the Harvard copy as his base text against which he collated the two copies in the British Library, the two in the Bodleian, and the Lincoln College, Oxford, copy. He then checked variants against the other eight copies. Leake prints proper names in roman type, the text in black letter, and parentheticals in italics. I have ignored these distinctions in this edition. In the 4^o version, speakers are identified in various ways: e.g., Prince John, later King John, may be *Pr. John*, *Prin.*, *Joh.*, and, at the end of the play, *King*. I have identified speakers in boldface type and, space permitting, expanded Leake's abbreviations to give the full name; I usually have followed his designations, however, so Marian, for example, appears as *Marian*, *Marilda*, and *Marilda*, and Prince John according to the designation printed in Leake. I have silently expanded all abbreviations of pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions and followed the Middle English Texts Series policy of adjusting *u/v* and *i/j* to modern spelling. I have placed glosses of hard words in a smaller italic type at the right margin. I have not followed Leake's punctuation or idiosyncratic capitalizations, but have, rather, adhered to modern conventions, except where noted. I have not altered L's formations of genitive constructions, however; they remain as his compositor presented them. I have treated stage directions uniformly, marking them in italics at ends of lines, if that is where they appear in Leake, or between lines, but inset, if that is how they appear, since Meagher includes them, along with scene designations, in his line count in the edited facsimile edition.

Abbreviations: L = Leake's 1601 black-letter 4^o edition. C = Collier's 1828 edition. H = Hazlitt's 1874 edition. F = Farmer's 1913 facsimile edition. M = Meagher, with date identifying appropriate edition.

1 *Scene I. L: Sceane I.* In this play L marks scene divisions, which are included in the line count. They were not so marked in *The Downfall*.

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- 4-10 The irregular lines in this opening prose passage are headed by a large capital H in the 1601 edition, after which full length lines 11-16 complete the passage. I have maintained L's line division for the sake of reference to M's Malone Society edition.
- 4-16 Friar Tuck, with his rough Skeltonics, provides the play's Induction, somewhat as Skelton did in *The Downfall*. H suggests that the same actor played both roles (p. 219). In his bustle the Friar forgets even the plot (line 13) as Robin's Yeomen hunt for an audience ("the goodly heart") rather than deer; meanwhile, without missing a word, Tuck puts on his costume before our very eyes, then, in line 34, takes it off again to set the first scene. After Robin's death, the Friar takes his leave (lines 860 ff.) only to be interrupted by Chester, who objects that the play ends too soon, whereupon, Tuck provides a second Induction for the remainder of the play, serving as director and stage manager as the dumb show to *Matildae Tragedie* (line 871) is introduced. Compare his role in *The Downfall*, where Skelton is also in and out of character for comic effect.
- 1-863 It seems likely that some version of these lines was originally the conclusion to *The Downfall*. M (1980) suggests that the reintroduction of Skelton may once have been part of the ending of *The Downfall*, rounding the play off by returning to the role he had in the Induction (p. 83); M also notes that no fewer than thirteen characters disappear permanently after Robin's death. Most had roles in *The Downfall*.
- 7-8 followed. C and H emend to follow. M (1980) accepts *to followed*, as ellipsis for "to have followed," but allows that the C/H emendation may be sound.
- 17 Now in his role, the Friar moves into verse to present his Prologue.
- 18 where wee left. The Friar alludes to *The Downfall*, or Part I, which has, presumably, preceded this production. Such lines must have been added to what was once the conclusion to *The Downfall* as it was converted to what Henslowe referred to as Part II.
- 28 Hurt. H emends to Housed, explaining that there are two inside plotting together (p. 220). But in line 202 we learn that both men have been wounded in the field *but yesterday*, thus explaining their hurt today. See *The Downfall*, lines 2495-98, where we learn of their wounding and Robin's rescue of their lives.

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- 41 *Mounted in a stand.* Blinds were set up with bowmen in them toward which the game is driven with the hounds and hallooing. Queen Eleanor is herself presented as a Bowman, as well she may have been. See Malory, Bk. XVIII, *The Great Tournament*, where ladies hunt with bow the "barayne hynde" but wound the resting Lancelot in the buttock by an accidental overshot.
- 43-44 According to Turberville, *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting* (1575), a stag is a five-year-old male and a buck a six-year-old. See M's notes (1980) on hunting details in the play.
- 49 *and.* L: *and;* so too in lines 619, 714, 715, all compositor's errors.
- 54 To wear horns is to be cuckolded.
- 66 The speech prefix is omitted by L, but the lines are clearly spoken by Much in answer to the King. H's emendation, which I have followed.
- 82 *A plague upon his kindnessse, let him die.* Pairs of lurking villains who compete in villainy are common in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Robin's virtues are like goads to both Doncaster, a practiced murderer (see lines 83 and 297), and Robin's kinsman the Prior, who would destroy him simply because he is good. Together they embody the Machiavellian self-interest of the first two estates, the gentry and the church, against which the virtuous Robin so often competed and sought redress.
- 95 *Here is the poynson.* Both Sir Doncaster and the Prior are hypocrites who would rely on poison to accomplish their insidious evil while they practice their policy (line 99) and smilingly (line 247) profess to be helping Robin.
- 96 *by this gold.* Apparently Doncaster is bribing the Prior as well as playing upon his jealous hatred of Robin.
- 100 *To make him die disgrac't.* The jealous cousin's desire is not simply to murder Robin but to destroy his honor as well by having him unwittingly slay his friend the King through his acts of kindness.
- 104 C omits the *Exeunt*; M (1980) discusses the problem of taking the Prior and Doncaster off stage simply to bring them back on, observing: "it is never safe

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to take exit-lines too seriously. It may be that the scene-heading and the *exeunt* were both added by another hand" (p. 533).

- 108 */Enter Frier.* Not in L; C's emendation.
- 111 *murren.* "Hullabaloo" or "turmoil," but more literally "pestilence."
- 112 *The King calis for thee.* King Richard, desiring to have the letters upon the copper ring read, calls upon the Friar. Although the King is apparently unable to read himself, he is able to recognize the script as being English. See note to lines 388-91.
- 113-14 L places these lines in parentheses, which I have omitted.
- 148 *mine.* L: *minde.* C's emendation.
- 157 *not.* L: *nor;* a compositor's error.
- 165 *fairings.* Gifts brought from the fair. The implication is that Robin's presentations are tawdry and self-serving.
- 170 *Envie.* Warman sees through their "toyes" (line 142) and labels their villainy precisely.
- 210 *Conscience.* Envious Doncaster personifies Warman as Conscience, which he hates and has effectively slain in himself; he thus slays Warman as affirmation of his own dead conscience.
- 219 */Enter Robin.* Not in L; C's emendation.
- 234 *murdered.* Suicide is self-murder, and thus a mortal sin. See line 244 where Robin grieves for Warman's presumably lost soul.
- 235 */Exeunt Robin, Doncaster, with body.* L: *Exit.*
- 251 *Rome.* By claiming that the elixir came from Rome, the Prior insidiously suggests holy benefaction by papal endorsement.

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- 252 *Moly* is the fabulous herb endowed with magical powers that protected Odysseus from Circe's charms and left him sexually superior. Precisely what plant it might be is unclear, though it is identified by some in Renaissance lore with mandrake root and by others with wild garlic, which was thought by some to have the power to ward off evil spirits.
- Syrian Balsamum*. An aromatic resin thought to have soothing properties; sometimes called balm of Gilead or balsam of Mecca.
- 253 *Golds rich Elixir*. The elixir that would turn base metals into gold was sought by alchemists. Gold dust in liquid suspension was thought to have medicinal properties that could transform ill to good health. It was used into the eighteenth century in quack medicine. See Chaucer's Physician who, since "gold in phisik is a cordial, / Therefore he lovede gold in special" (CT I[A] 443-44).
- 263 cosin. In line 285 the Prior refers to Robin as his nephew and in line 700 as *gentle nephew . . . my brothers sonne*. Cousin here is a more general term for kinsman, frequently applied to nephew or niece, with a pun perhaps on "cousin" as victim, i.e., one who has been tricked, or "cousined." See also lines 293 and 307 where Robin is also identified as the Prior's cousin.
- 264 *Sophies sonne*. The Grand Sophy of Persia, a legendary ruler of fabulous wealth and power. See romances such as *The Sowdon of Babylon*, where his son is Pirambras who betrays him, or *The Tragical Reign of Selimus* (1594) where the virtuous Sophy is poisoned by his villainous sons. M notes that Sophies "is here anachronistic, since the rulers of Persia were so styled only after ca. 1500" (1980, p. 535). *Sowdon* is the medieval equivalent. Perhaps the *Sophies sonne* is in this instance the *Souldans sonne*, admiral of the Turkish fleet, defeated by Richard in *The Downfall*, line 1871. There the source may be *Kynge Rycharde Coeur du Lyon*.
- 265 *Natolia*. See Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Pt. II* (1590). According to Ethel Seaton "Natolia is much more than the modern Anatolia; it is the whole promontory of Asia Minor, with a boundary running approximately from the modern Bay of Iskenderun eastward toward Aleppo, and then north to Batum on the Black Sea" — "Marlowe's Map," *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, 10 (1924), 20. It appears also in *The Tragical Reign of Selimus* (1594) as a walled city of the Turkish empire.

- 267-68 *to you / I put myselfe.* A characteristic device of the con-man is to put himself in his would-be victim's debt as a means of allaying suspicion.
- 280 *dissolved pearle.* Pliny, *Natural History*, IX, lines 119-21, tells how Cleopatra scorned Antony's sumptuous feasting and bet that she could spend ten million sesterces on a single banquet. When Anthony mocked her after the main course she took a glass of vinegar and dissolved in it one of the finest pearls seen by man and drank it, thus winning the bet. English Renaissance playwrights delighted in this image of luxury and often drew upon it: e.g., Ben Jonson, *Volpone* III.vii.192 (Herford and Simpson edn.); Hoy (*Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, III, 292-93) cites other references: Dekker, *The Wonder of a Kingdom* III.i.50-51; and Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, II, 267), and Dekker in his commendatory verses to Brome's *The Northern Lasse* alludes to the marvel, as does *The Owles Almanacke* (1618) C2v. And, Thomas Rogers in "Leicester's Ghost" (c. 1598) writes: "What if I drinke nothing but liquid gold / Lactrina, christal, pearle resolv'd in wine, / Such as th' Egyptians full cups did hold, / When Cleopatra with her lord did dine; / A trifle, care not, for the cost was mine?" (lines 526-30). Pliny's modern editor, H. Rackham, in the Loeb Classic edition III, 244, is more sceptical and asserts that no such soluable vinegar exists and that Cleopatra "no doubt swallowed the pearl in vinegar knowing that it could be recovered later on."
- 306 *I cannot tel. O yes, now I ha' t.* Like Iago, Doncaster has trouble explaining reasons for his hatred; he just hates. Bernard Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to His Major Villains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 362-64, discusses Doncaster's villainous hatred in this passage at some length, stressing his professional pride in his villainy.
- 308-09 Doncaster provides a casebook definition of Envy in his hatred of Robin *Because so many love him as there doe, / And I myselfe am loved of so fewe.* See Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Book II, where the first aspect of Envy is grief at another man's joy and the second joy at another man's grief.
- 310 ff. Doncaster's litany of *reasons for my hate* defines the villain's practiced love of evil, in which he takes a kind of professional atheistic pride. In this regard he might be compared to Shakespeare's most envious villain, Iago, who begrimes all he looks upon.

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greedie cormorants. A long-necked sea-bird of voracious appetite; in Renaissance figurative language "an insatiably greedy or rapacious person" (OED, sb. 2), with the idiom "money-cormorant" in popular usage. Elyot (Gov. III, xxii) speaks of such people as cormorants to which "neither lande, water, ne ayre mought be sufficient"; Shakespeare, *Richard II* II.i.38, speaks of the "insatiate cormorant," and Greene (1592), *Upstart Courtier* in the *Harleian Miscellany* II.21, speaks of "cormorants or usurers . . . gathered to fill their coffers." Sometimes spelled "corvorant," as in Holinshed II.704, with pun on L. vorans, "devouring" (OED, sb. 3). That Doncaster specifies peasants to be greedy cormorants, along with the privileged, simply reflects his aristocratic view that he should have the wealth, the upstart lesser people nothing.

317

no theefe. Doncaster's point is that Robin was outlawed for financial reasons, not thievery, and thus abuses the good name of thief and outlaw that he (Doncaster) so villainously upholds.

356-57

A boone, a boone . . . thee. The phrasing often occurs in Robin Hood ballads. See, for example, *Robin Hood and the Curial Friar*, lines 97-98.

360-61

O there dwelleth a jolly pinder . . . on a greene. H observes that the lines are taken, with slight change, from *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield* (p. 232). Compare lines 1-2 of *The Jolly Pinder* in the present edition.

378-83

Ritson, *Notes and Illustrations of Robin Hood* (1828, I, 62), notes that Fitzwater confuses Harold Harefoot, the son and successor of Canute the Great, with Harold Godwin. M (1980) suggests that the confusion may be Fitzwater's rather than the dramatist's (pp. 537-38).

388-91

The King's sense of linguistics exceeds his wisdom in natural history. It does not seem to bother him that the deer would have to be some 1200 years old. His proof against Chester's suggestion that Julius Caesar may have banded the deer is that English is not written until after the establishment of the Saxons in the seventh century. Ritson (*Robin Hood* [London, 1832], p. lxxi) cites an inscription in *Rays Itineraries* (1760), p. 153, wherein a stag is found two miles from Leeds with a ring of brass about its neck with the inscription: "When Julius Caesar here was king, / About my neck he put this ring: / Whosoever doth me take, / Let me go for Caesar's sake." Perhaps Chester had been reading Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* VIII, 32, who mentions a deer over a hundred years old with a collar placed upon it by Alexander or Turberville (v. 41n.), who says that

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"Hartes and Hyndes may liue an hundredth yeres . . . And wee finde in auncient hystoriographers, that an Harte was taken, a hauing [sic] collier about his necke full three hundredth yeares after the death of Cesar, in which collier *Caesars* armes were engrased, and a note written, saying, *Caesarus me fecit*." See M's excellent note (1980, p. 537).

- 445 *yee.* L: *you.* C/H's emendation for the sake of rhyme; followed by M (1980).
- 455 *with a trice.* H emends to *in a trice*, objecting that with lies outside Renaissance idiom and is "no doubt wrong" (p. 235). But the emendation is unnecessary.
- 458 */Enter Much.* Not in L. C's emendation.
- 473 H identifies Jimmy as "a country wench" whose language (*strawed*) is dialectical.
- 505 */Exeunt Prior, Doncaster, and Frier.* L omits Doncaster. C's emendation.
- 518 *a cappe, a towell.* M (1980) notes: "These may be brought on as instruments for bleeding Robin in attempt to counteract the poison, but nothing is done with them. It will be remembered that all extant versions of Robin Hood's death written before this play have him meet his end by being bled to death under the pretense of a medical bleeding" (p. 539).
- 534 H's stage direction.
- 535 *Thanks.* L: *Thans.* Certainly a compositor's error.
- 548 Shavings of animal horns were thought to be medicinal. Harts-horn shavings were said to be a preservative against poison, so perhaps that is the powder the Queen produces. M cites *Joyfull Newes* (V.252a) on use of the unicorn's horn "for swilling in a drink as a precaution against poison (MM 2)" and identifies *Bezars stone* as a ruminant calcitrant, which "made into a pouder, in all kinde of venome . . . is the most principal remedy that we know nowe, and that which hath wrought best effect in many that haue beene poysoned" (*Joyfull News*, BB3v), noting that GG4v ff. has a separate treatise on the Bezar stone (1980, pp. 539-40). H cites Thomas Browne, *Vulgar Errors* (1658): "Lapis lasuli hath

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in it a purgative faculty, we know: That Bezoar is annidoral, Lapis Judaicus diuretical, Coral antipilapical, we will not deny." According to Browne, the bezoar nut has a "leguminous smell and taste, bitter like a lupine."

- 552-53 *thanklesse groome . . . foe.* M notes the reference to "the early part of the *Downfall*, where Eleanor becomes Robert's bitter enemy when he 'thanklessly' refuses her love (v. *Downfall*, lines 657-58). From this it may be inferred that the double-triangle shown in the opening part of the *Downfall* was retained when *Downfall* 1-781 was revised" (1980, p. 540).
- 555 *How the Wolfe howles.* Marian recognizes that she is among wolves who would destroy her, were it not for Robin's protection. By the end of the play the *ravens will seize upon thy dove* (line 558), but she will fly to heaven, unharmed, except by mortal poison.
- 560 *Lyon.* Robin knows that King Richard the Lion-Hearted will defend Marian, as long as he lives.
- 576 *I am a knight.* Doncaster audaciously claims the knighthood denied him earlier when his spurs were stripped. See note to line 625.
- 582 *your father.* I.e., Henry II, Queen Eleanor's husband, whose role as queen mother in *The Downfall* is prominent.
- 616 *vintners grate.* "The *grate* of a vintner was no doubt what is often termed in old writers the red lattice, grate, or checkered pattern painted on the doors of vintners, and still preserved at almost every public house" (H, p. 241). See also John Brand, *Popular Antiquities of Great Britain, Comprising Notices of the Moveable and Immoveable Feasts, Customs, Superstitions, and Amusements Past and Present*, with large corrections and additions by W. Carew Hazlitt. 3 volumes (London: John Russell Smith, 1870), II, 277-78, where there are citations of the figure in several Renaissance plays.
- 625 *rent his spurres off.* To win one's spurs is to be knighted (OED, *spurs*, sb. 3). To remove the spurs is to degrade the knight, to un-knight him, so to speak, thus denying him participation in the honored roles of chivalry. Bradford B. Broughton, *Dictionary of Medieval Knighthood and Chivalry* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), cites instances of the degraded knight's spurs being thrown onto a dung heap (pp. 156-57); such disgrace might lead to hanging or

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exile, but, at least, being cast out of privilege. Grant Uden, *A Dictionary of Chivalry* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1968), cites the example of Sir Francis Mitchell's spurs being "hewn off his heels and thrown, one one way, the other the other" (p. 160). It is this degradation as much as the crimes themselves that prohibits Doncaster from being seen amongst certain aristocratic company, where, should he reappear, he would be pursued to his death. Thus he needs the Prior to do the poisoning for him. See lines 87-100, where the two plan that Robin himself die disgraced, and line 576 where Doncaster tenaciously proclaims his knighthood.

- 643 *bower*. L: *power*. C/H emendation, followed by M (1980).
- 689 *Let sweete forgivenesse be my passing bell*. M (1980, p. 30) suggests that this may be the play's principal theme, if it may be said to have one. Matilda, at the end, will likewise so overwhelm Brand, her murderer, with her forgiveness that he, smitten with remorse, hangs himself.
- 714 Ely identifies the Prior as churchman and thus not subject to secular law. But the Prior knows the law better than his fellow churchman or king and seals his own doom (lines 716 ff.).
- 737 *hang alive in chaines*. According to *The Common-Wealthe of Englund* (1589) the most notable murderers were hanged in cords till they be dead and then "hanged with chaines while they rotte in the ayre." But before Elizabeth's reform the most villainous murderers were subject to the extraordinary torture of being hanged alive in chains. Henry Chettle, in *England's Mourning Garment* (1603), praises Elizabeth for her accepting of the death penalty as sufficient punishment in itself. See M (1980), p. 542.
- 753 *Against the faithlesse enemis of Christ*. King Richard announces his second crusade against the infidel on which he will take Robin's yeomen as his own. Thus they will not be available to help Marian against John as they were in *The Downfall*. The king's crusade figures prominently in subsequent Robin Hood adventures, where the king sets off not only prior to Robin's death but prior to there being a need for Robin and his yeomen.
- 762 *Chair Maid Marilda*. The spelling seems intentional. Here we find the two titles blended as Maid Marian, assuming the role of Countess of Huntington, resumes her noble name. Henceforth, after this moment as *Marilda*, she is Matilda.

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- 806–11 Robin's stylized composing of his bier reflects the ballad tradition as well as Renaissance stage conventions. See *Robin Hood's Death*, lines 133–42, in this volume.
- 835 wod-songs. This term does not appear in the OED, but evidently refers to the lament sung by Robin's wod-men, lines 848–59. Perhaps a pun is intended in wod (madness>grief); or perhaps wod simply alludes to the wood and its woodsmen, Robin's yeomen, that is, the common people who have joined him. The King exhorted Matilda and the nobility to cease their lamentation — *Laments are bootlesse, teares cannot restore / Lost life. Matilda, therefore weep no more* (lines 829–30) — as if to suggest that the shrill keening be performed by the common folk, while the nobility piously reflect upon life's transience.
- 859 *all except Frier*. Added to *Exeunt* by C/H.
- 871ff. *Matildaes Tragedie*. In constructing this portion of the new play, for which the author(s) borrowed lines from the conclusion to an earlier version of *The Downfall* (see note to lines 1–863 above), Munday has drawn heavily for plot details upon Michael Drayton's *The Legend of Matilda* (1594; augmented, 1596), where King John lecherously pursues Lord Fitzwater's daughter, grievously harming the nation's welfare. Drayton's poem was popular, which may account in part for the desire of theater impresario Philip Henslowe and the prolific playwright Henry Chettle to sponsor the new play as a sequel to *The Downfall*. Chettle may have assisted in the restructuring of the play into two parts to take advantage of the popularity of Drayton's poem by shifting the plot to the melodramatic hardships and death of the virtuous Matilda. The adaptation and continuation must have taken place rapidly, for Philip Henslowe purchased for the Admirals Men Munday's first Robin Hood play on 15 February 1597/98 and within five days made an initial payment for its sequel, which may not yet have been written. By the end of March the Master of the Revels licensed the two parts of "the downfall of earlie huntington surnamed Roben Hood," and the two plays were performed at the Rose Theatre.
- 872 *Kendall greene*. Perhaps referring to Chester, who at this point exits, though it seems odd that he would be dressed as a yeoman. Perhaps Chester put on green at Robin's dying request that none wear black. Or, perhaps, he's still in green from the previous play where Robin and the barons greet the returning King Richard, all dressed in green. See *The Downfall*, lines 2699–2700.

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- 3034 *Bruise* is the younger of the play's two (or perhaps three) Bruces who, as kinsmen to the banished Fitzwater (Matilda's father), lead the opposition to John. See M's extended discussion of the confusions (1980, pp. 554-56).
- 3036 Bruce's mother and brother had been murdered earlier. Their bodies were displayed as Bruce drew back a curtain (line 2778) to reveal them in "this wide gappe" (line 2865) through some sort of stage arras designed as a discovery space. M's note on staging of the scene is useful (1980, pp. 575-76).
- 3040 The Queen is now Isabel. Earlier in the play she, misled by John, had attacked Matilda, tearing her hair and scratching her face. When Matilda subsequently defended the queen from having done so, putting the blame on the soldiers instead, Isabel honored her for her chastity and kindness and became her defender. At the end she reappears at Matilda's death, holding her in her arms to comfort her as Matilda forgives her enemies and dies, instructing her soul: *Fly forth my soule, heavens king be there thy friend* (line 2667).
- 3041 *Dunmow*. A Priory in Essex, historically under the patronage of Fitzwater.
- 3048 *Matilda martyde for her chastitie*. Despite the sprawling structure of the play, the deaths of virtuous Robin and Marian/Matilda by poison provide a striking symmetry which Matilda, with gratitude to her executioner, emphatically recognized herself (lines 2589-2603).



Robin Hood and His Crew of Souldiers

Introduction

This play is preserved in a quarto pamphlet printed for James Davis in London in 1661 and, according to the title page, played in Nottingham on August 23rd of that year, the day of Charles II's coronation. Dobson and Taylor reprinted the text with a brief introduction (1976, pp. 237–42).

As a play, especially a Robin Hood play, this is unusual in that all genuine action takes place off stage. It begins with a distant shout and Little John goes off to discover what is happening, to return with news of the Restoration and the repression of all outlaws as rebels, including themselves. The king's messenger is resisted by the outlaws in argumentative mood, but when he invokes the king's royal authority Robin gives in at once, saying "I am quite another man; thaw'd into conscience of my Crime & Duty; melted into loyalty & respect to virtue" (lines 131–33).

Just as the play is less exciting than the usual vigorous action of a short Robin Hood drama, so are its politics new. This is a long way from the Robin who, while respecting the king, firmly resisted his authority, and the servile reception of the messenger is markedly different from the ruthless treatment of royal agents in earlier ballads.

However, neither the inactivity nor the royalism of this play are to be clearly sourced to the equally conservative gentrified tradition: this Robin is not seen as the noble dissident of Munday or Martin Parker, but simply presented as a criminal who becomes a post-war convert to the victorious cause. He is the social bandit rejected rather than the gentleman adapted. Nevertheless, the ideas of the play are not without context: the title may reflect Parker's use of "crew" in a somewhat negative sense (lines 38, 214, 466), just as the reading of Robin Hood as a revolutionary can be linked to a remark by Robert Cecil who in a letter of 1605 referred to the anti-parliament Gunpowder plotters as "the Robin Hoods in your part of the country" (Knight, 1994, p. 42). Closer yet in date, the arch-conservative jurist Edward Coke shared the messenger's view of Robin. Although he located him in Richard I's time, he described his actions in a contemporary criminal way as "robbery, burning of houses, felony, waste and spoile" (1634, p. 197).

The setting in Nottingham also relates to political events. This was where Charles raised his standard in 1642, but the city soon came under parliamentarian rule, and

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towards the end of the war its leaders did not readily accept royal rule. Francis Harker was executed in 1660 for refusing to recant, and although Colonel John Hutchinson, a major local leader, was reprieved, he refused to conform fully and died in jail in 1664. There were clearly reasons why the anti-royal spirit of Nottingham, as represented by its most famous resistant hero, needed to be theatrically and publicly constrained on coronation day — a process in which the old communal character of the Robin Hood play-game was appropriated by the triumphant royalist state.

Unique though it is, and uniquely political in its thrust, *Robin Hood and his Crew of Souldiers* seems to belong to a renaissance of Robin Hood publication shortly after the Restoration. This may in part be caused by the general flood of cultural activity in newly relaxed conditions, but it is striking how many of the texts from this period effectively divert the resistant force of the hero into less radical modes. The gentrified life of 1662, the inherently pacific garland of 1663, the generalized blandness of *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage* are other examples of a market-oriented and politically conservative recreation of what closer examination may show to be a Restoration Robin Hood, with this short play as the political cutting edge of that reformed figure.

A notable feature of the play in formal terms is its abandonment of sub-Shakespearean blank verse for prose after the opening scene. Originally it seems the stylistic change is for Little John to speak, but the dialogue remains in prose until the final song. This reduced stylistic grandeur matches the displacement of the outlaws as heroes. It also permits the play to lay out lucidly certain positions for rejection, and lets the messenger's determined king-worship have the appropriate modern form of a sermon.

It is noticeable that the outlaws represent a range of attitudes that are, post-Civil War, regarded as unacceptable. John at first sees their only values as enjoying "the sweets of theft and roguery," but a little later he takes a more principled position of dissent by speaking like one of the Levellers, that hard-core of revolutionaries:

Every brave soule is born a King; rule and command o're the fearfull rabbble, is natures stamp; courage and lofty thoughts are not ever confin'd to Thrones, nor still th' appendages of an illustrious birth, but the thatch't Hovell or the simple Wood oft times turns forth a mind as fully fraught with Gallantry and true worth as doth the marble Pallace . . . (lines 65-69)

Robin espouses a different rationale for resistance, and one that opposes royal rule from a quite different quarter. He asks "Why then should the severities of obedience, and the strait niceties of Law shackle this Noble soul, whom nature meant not onely

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free but soveraigne . . ." (lines 77-78). Stating that it is only "an easie fondnesse" (i.e., weak-mindedness) that allows men "to be manacled by Lawes" he, speaking as a "bold daring Spirit," sums up with a swashbuckling spirit, in a voice of curiously cavalier-sounding, yet actually anti-state, private interest:

No we have Swords, and Arms, and Lives equally engaged in our past account, and whilst these Armes can wield our Swords, or our uncurd' blood give vigor to those Arms, hopes of submission are as vain as is the strange request. (lines 92-95)

Ill-matched as John's socialism and Robin's rampant — almost Hobbesian — individualism might seem, they are both in fact implicit in some of the earlier material: the social bandit tradition can be re-read in the highly charged politicized context of post-Civil War England as a "levelling" position, and Martin Parker represented Robin as something like a rogue Cavalier. Both positions are equally dangerous to the monarchist state and are explored and rejected in this intriguing play.

Opposite as it is to the spirit and the vigor of most of the Robin Hood material, *Robin Hood and his Crew of Souldiers* still focusses on recurrent features of the myth: Robin is the leader, but others have a powerful and somewhat dissenting voice; loyalty is the central value, though here it is constrained into being loyal to the king and his officers, not to the outlaw band; and the text ends with a festal celebration, but that too is reconstructed. Not a celebration of forest fraternity, it is a suddenly imposed and distinctly literary royalist song which, for all its musicality, offers by way of climax the "halters" of execution and the "perpetual brand" of ferocious law. The text finally explores those fierce threats of violence and constraint that actually underlay the allegedly glorious Restoration and are shown in their full propaganda form in this remarkable play, which, while being in itself quite untheatrical, is nevertheless the most dramatic of all the reversals in the Robin Hood tradition.

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ROBIN HOOD
AND HIS
Crew of SOULDIERS.
A
COMEDY

Acted at Nottingham on the day of His
Sacred Majesties Coronation.
First Rev.

The Actors names.

Robin Hood, Commander.

Little John, }
William, }
Scadlock, }
Souldiers.

Messenger from the Sheriff.

LONDON,

Printed for James Davis. 1661.

Robin Hood and His Crew of Souldiers

A COMEDY

Acted at Nottingham on the day of His
Sacred Majesties Coronation.

Vivat Rex.

The Actors names

Robin Hood, Commander.	Scadlocke.
Little John.	Soldiers.
William.	Messenger from the Sheriff.

London,

Printed for James Davis. 1661

[A shour without the Bower.]

[Enter Robin Hood, Little John, William, Scadlocke, &c.]

(Robin) Whence springs this general joy?
What means this noise that makes Heavens
Arch'd vault echo? and the neighb'ring woods
Return a dreadfull answer? With what uneven
Measures the amaz'd Birds cut through the
Trembling ayr? How the whole Forrest shakes,
As if with us 'twas sensible of wonder, and
Astonishment. [Shout again.
Still the glad noise encreases
And with it our fear and wonder; Thus when
Unruly tempests force the weak banks,
Rolling the foamy billows o're the yielding
Strand, fear and amazement, confusion and
Distracting cares seize the neighb'ring villages,
And thus it is with us; the guilty breast
Still pants and throbs, when others are at rest.
Look out and learn the cause, and in the meanwhile
Each man betake himself to's arms. [Exit Little John.

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No danger unexpected to a mind
Prepar'd to meet the worst that it can finde.

[Enter Little John and Shierif's Messenger.]

Robin Speak, what's the news?

Lit. John Gives and Fetteres, Hatchets and Halters, stincking prisons, and the death of dogs is all we can expect.

Robin Why, what's the matter?

25 *Lit. John* Tis the Kings Coronation; and now the Shieriffe with a band of armed men, are marching to reduce us to loyalty, and the miseries of an honest life; this Messenger here can tell you a ruffall tale of obedience, that is expected.

Robin Peace, and let him declare his errand.

30 *Messenger* From my Master I am come to require and command your armes, and a chearfull and ready submission to his Majesties Laws, with a promise of future obedience; and that forthwith you joyn with us to solemnize his happy Coronation, which is this day to be celebrated; this done, and the rest of your lives running in a smooth stream of loyalty and honest allegiance, I here bring pardon of all past misdemeanors; but otherwise, expect the miseries of a sudden destruction: this told you, I wait your answer.

35 *Lit. John* Did not I tell you this? he talks of submission to government, and good Laws, as if we were the sons of peace and idleness, or had bin such Whay-blooded fools to live thus long honestly. And hath thy Master so little braine to think that we who know the sweets of theft and rogery, to whom dangers are as pleasant as dried suckets, who have been nurs'd & fed fat with blood and slaughter, can be content to bear part of your general joy, for that which takes from us the means of our beloved mirth.

40 *Will* Shall I change Venison for salt Cats, and make a bounteous meal, with the reversion of a puddings skin? Or shall I bid adieu to Pheasant and Partrige, and such pleasing Cates, and perswade my hungry maw to satisfaction with the bruis of an Egge-shell? Or shall it be said that thou O famous Little John becomes the Attendant of a Tripe-woman?

45 *Lit. John* The very thought of it is dangerous, I have got the gout only with the apprehension, I was born for action, but yet I cannot plow nor thresh, except it be mine enemy; and after all my fam'd exploits, to hang for stealing sheep 'twould grieve me. I hope our worthy Master will not credit the gingling words of pardon, and acts of grace, and sully all his former glories with a surviving repentance; for my part I had rather trust my self then any other with my life.

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- 55 *Will* If this gear takes then we may turn our Bows into Fiddle-sticks, or strangle our selves in the strings, for the daies of warre and wantonness will be done. Now must I whimper like a breecht School-boy, and make a face as soure as an Apes when he eates Crabs; and then learn manners, and to make legs with the patience of a setting-dog; and cry, I forsooth, and no forsooth, like a Country wench at a Churhing, Wakes and Bear-baitings, and a little Cudgel-play must be all our comfort, and then in some smoaky corner recount our past adventures, whilst the good wives blesse themselves at the relation. We must not dream of Venison, but be content like the Kings liege-people with crusts and mouldy Cheese.
- 65 *Liz. John* Every brave soule is born a King; rule and command o're the fearfull rabble, is natures stamp; courage and lofty thoughts are not ever confin'd to Thrones, nor still th' appendages of an illustrious birth, but the thatch Hovell or the simple Wood oft times turns forth a mind as fully fraught with Gallantry and true worth as doth the marble Pallace; bounteous nature ties not her selfe to rules of State, or the hard Laws that cruell men impose; shee's free in all her gifts, as the Suns generall light, which when it first peepes o're the Eastern hills, and glads the widow'd earth with its fresh beams, is not straight stracht into a Monarchs Court, and there imprisoned to guild his private luxurie, but spreads his welcome rayes, and cheares the poor Orphan and dejected Widow, with the same heat it doth the Persian Prince.
- 75 *Robin* Why then should the severities of obedience, and the strait niceties of Law shackle this Noble soul, whom nature meant not onely free but soveraigne, those ties that now by a boundless spreading force doe equally concern the brave and base; first chiefly toucht the vulgar herd and throng of men, that masse of feare and folly, who therefore closed together, and with an easie fondnesse suffered themselves to be manacled by Lawes, because distrustful of their own free strength, and since being nurst in idlenessse and soft intemperance, have grown inamoured of their Chaines, and caressed their slavery, and doat upon their hateful Bondage. But the bold daring Spirit hath in all times disown'd this sneaking lownesse, and with a commendable brav'y challeng'd their darling Liberty; and from th'insulting Lawes rescu'd their enslaved honour: Those famous Heroes in this gallant attempt wee've boldly followed, and should we now sit down, and whine a vain repentance; or tamely and coldly yield our hands and legs to fetters, and necks to the mercy of the halter, the world might well esteem us rash and heady Men, but never bold or truly Valiant. No we have Swords, and Arms, and Lives equally

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engaged in our past account, and whilst these Armes can wield our Swords,
or our uncurd'l'd blood give vigor to those Arms, hopes of submission are as
vain as is the strange request.

- 95 **Messenger** Doubtless were the quality of actions the justice or injustice to be measured
by the boldnesse or fear of the undertakers, what now is your shame, would
be your greatest glory, and your Rebellion would be worthy of an honourable
memory to eternal Ages; for none have begun and manag'd such wild designs
100 with more unshaken confidence, but since Laws were not made as you
formerly imagine, to enslave the Generous, but Curb the Proud and Violent,
th' ambitious and unruly nature, your disobedience betrays aboundlesse
105 pride, and desires unfix'd as mad-mens thoughts, and restless as the Seas
watry motion. That by the Laws which careful Princes make, we are com-
manded to do well and live vertuously, free both from giving and receiving
injuries, is not to be esteemed slav'ry but priviledge. And since we know the
power of doing wrong is seldom ununcompayned with a will someway
answerable, it's our perfection to have that fairly chek't that so virtue and
justice, the top and complement of our natures, may have their due
regard, which is the end of Lawes. Nor can a good or just Man, one who
110 dares be virtuous or honest (which is the truest gallantry) think it a loss of
freedom to wait and obey the commands of his Prince, especially, when with
his regality and Kingly power, are joyn'd the true embellishmens of piety and
real goodness. A Prince of such an influential sweetnesse, that every account
115 teaches a virtue and the meanest Subject by his great example grows up into
an Heroe, as if his Princely Soul was grown his peoples Genious. A King so
dear to Heaven as if he was it's onely care; His birth usher'd in by a bright
Star, and each minute of his Life link'd to the former by a miracle, whose
preservation was the amazement of his Enemies: and though the prayer, yet
scarce the hope of his most hearty Subjects; One who hath suffer'd injuries
120 beyond example, yet of such an unparalleled charity, he pardons them beyond
hope. Whose Virtue is as great as his Birth and his Goodness unlimited as
his Power, To whom the illustrious persons former Ages brag'd of were no
more comparable then the Nights Glimmering to the Noon-dayes Splendor.
125 This Great, this Gracious Prince is this day Crown'd, and offers Life, and
Peace, and Honour, if you will quit your wilde rebellions, and become what
your birth challenges of you, nay what ever your boasted gallantry expects of
you that is: loyall subjects.
- 130 **Robin** Ha! whence is this sudden change? That resolution which but now was
remorseless as a Rock of Diamonds, and unyielding as the hardned Steel, is
now soft and flexible as a weak womans passions. I am quite another man;

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thaw'd into conscience of my Crime & Duty, melted into loyalty & respect to
virtue. What an harsh savage beast I was before, not differing from the fiery
Lyon or the cruel Bear, but in my knowledge to doe greater ill, my strength
and eager rashness was all my boast. How all my pride now is undermin'd?
How am I dwarf'd in mine own sight? remov'd from that advantage ground my
fancy set me on, and shrunk to mine own low pitch? How am I torn now
from my selfe? sure some power great and uncommon hath quite transform'd
me, and consum'd all that was bad and vicious in me. Methinks these men,
companions in former ills, look like those Grecians, th' enchanted cup
transform'd: they've shapes of beasts, rude, uncomely and very affrightfull; yet
doe I see remorse bud in their blushing brows, as if with me they felt shame
and true penitence for their fore-past Crimes. Let us all then joyne in the
present sence of our duty, accept the profer'd pardon, and with one
voice sing, With hearty Wishes, health unto our King.

3 Rec.
Since Heaven with a liberal hand
Doth choicest blessings fling,
And hath (not only to our Land
Restor'd but) Crown'd our KING.

150 Let us to joy and generall mirth
This glad day set aside,
Let the Neighb'ring Woods now Echo forth,
Our shouts and Loyal Pride.

155 May Halters that Mans fate attend
That envies this dayes Glee
And's name meet a perpetual brand
For his Disloyalty.

[Exeunt.]

FINIS



Notes

The opening stage direction refers to the *Bower*; this is an occasional Robin Hood place name, referring to some natural formation where the band can be imagined gathering. The name has a curiously pastoral ring in the context of rebellious outlaws.

The next direction reads *Enter Hobin Hood*, presumably an error for "Robin," which is read here. It continues *Little John, William, Scadlocke, &c.* It is conceivable that other outlaws, indicated by &, are meant to be on the stage silent throughout the play, but this seems unlikely as the final song is for three voices, according to the direction *3 Voc.* Another peculiarity is that the punctuation seems also to suggest that William and Scadlocke are two separate characters. This could be viewed as a punctuation error except that the title page lists, beneath *Robin Hood, Commander*, three names one beneath each other, all followed by a full stop: *Little John. William. Scadlocke.* The three names are bracketed as *Souldiers*. Apart from John and Robin, only the character named Will speaks, and it seems that this apparent confusion must arise from the fact that the printer did not know that William Scadlock was an outlaw's full name and treated it as two.

In this edition I have maintained the capitalization and punctuation of the 1661 edition, except where noted.

- 1 The printed text does not assign a speaker to the opening lines, but it is Robin Hood who speaks.
- 22 *Gives and Fetteres.* Handcuffs and chains worn by prisoners. *Hatchets.* A light ax. *Halters.* A noose used in hanging.
- 29-30 I have deleted periods after *armes* and *Laws* and have supplied, instead, commas.
- 33 *smooth, smooth,* a compositor's error.
- 37 *Whay-blooded.* Having the nature or quality of whey: watery, thin, pale.
- 40 *suckets.* Sweetmeats or candied fruit.

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- 43 *salt Cats.* Item of choice foods, dainties or delicacies.
- 46 *bruis.* Breaking.
- 60 *Churching.* A purification rite for a mother after childbirth.
- 116 *his peoples Genious.* The guiding spirit of the nation.
- 130 The text reads *remorseless*, evidently a typesetter's error.
- 139 *these men.* Robin is alluding to the story of Circe whose potion transformed Odysseus' men into swine in Homer's *Odyssey*.



Later Ballads

Introduction

Robin Hood is one of the most popular topics in the broadside ballads of the seventeenth century, and as readerships and publishers grew more ambitious, the Robin Hood garland, a collection of ballads presented in booklet form, became a standard item of the bookseller's trade. Where the earlier ballads were in many cases chance survivals, these later ballads are often found in multiple copies.

The partially autonomous nature of the printed ballads is indicated by the fact that there is relatively little continuity between the late medieval Robin Hood ballads and the staple diet of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Of the ballads presented in *Early Ballads and Tales*, none appeared in broadside or garland form. This is partly a matter of length: the *Gest* and *Adam Bell* are printed texts, but far too long to make into a one page broadside or to fit into a garland. *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, *Robin Hood and the Potter* would, at more than two hundred lines, have been too long. It may also be that their inherently medieval themes would not have suited the newly urbanized audience; the only one which does have printed connections is the town-focused *Robin Hood and the Potter*; in a shortened and adapted form as *Robin Hood and the Butcher* it was a typical broadside and regularly appeared in the garlands.

Though the form and topics of the broadside and garland ballads differ from the earliest group of Robin Hood texts, the themes of the later ballads show many connections with the medieval period. A number of them dramatize the process by which "Robin Hood meets his match," that is encounters a stranger, fights a draw and invites him — in one case her — to join the outlaw band. This process is implicit in the earliest materials and is here dramatized in *Robin Hood and the Curial Friar*, *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield*, *Robin Hood and Little John*, *Robin Hood and Will Scarlet* (formerly called *Robin Hood Newly Revived*), and, remarkably, *Robin Hood and Maid Marian*.

Augmenting the outlaw band is also a feature of *Robin Hood and Allin a Dale*, but this is a result of Robin's doing a good deed, another theme fully consistent with the medieval tradition, as found in the *Gest*, and also in *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men* (known to Child as *Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires*). The latter ballad also maintains the hostility to the sheriff shown in the *Gest*, as does, in a somewhat

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diluted form, *Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow*. The vendetta against regular clergy is pursued in *Robin Hood and the Bishop* and *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*, and is a subtext in *The Death of Robin Hood*, which gives full details of the story already known to the author of the *Gest*; *Little John a Begging* has a similar satirical thrust against religious-seeming pilgrims.

Two of the ballads in this section deal with issues not present in the earlier material. *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham* tells how he became an outlaw through the oppressive stupidity of Nottingham foresters. This fierce and popular ballad may well have been developed as a "prequel" like some of the "Robin Hood meets his match" ballads — that concerning Little John especially. The theme of *Robin Hood's Fishing* (also called *The Noble Fisherman*), in which Robin becomes a maritime hero in Scarborough, is certainly not known earlier, and it must be regarded as a hybrid ballad of a literary inspiration: its high relevance to a newly mercantile and nationally conscious context is indicated by its great popularity, shown in terms of the times it has survived.

That measure may not, of course, be fully accurate, because survival must to some degree depend on chance. It is hard to believe that *Robin Hood and Little John* and *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*, which do not appear until quite late, but then in substantial numbers, were not distributed widely during the seventeenth century (and they were not as scarce as might seem: Child found two versions of *Robin Hood and Little John* that preceded the texts he lists in his main entry, and *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men* is in Percy's folio and was known to Munday). It is better to assume that those two were popular broadsides of the earlier seventeenth century that just did not survive. A more curious enigma of apparent unpopularity is that *The Death of Robin Hood*, a fine and long-known story, does not turn up in the printed versions until a late eighteenth-century garland. This may be no accident: it could be that although the garlands liked to shape a quasi-biography of the hero's career, they preferred to avoid its tragic ending.

Another source for a number of these ballads, and a sure sign of their being available by the mid seventeenth century at the latest, is Percy's folio manuscript. As is well known, this was torn in many places and most of the Robin Hood texts have suffered badly; it is also not a very accurate piece of scribal work. However, it provides texts of some value and also a link between the early and later texts: in addition to *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* and a copy of *Adam Bell* which is taken from a printed text, it offers versions of *Robin Hood and the Curial Friar*, *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield*, *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*, and *The Death of Robin Hood*. The recently discovered Forresters manuscript of c. 1670 has provided a better text than Child of *Robin Hood's Fishing* and the semi-gentrified archery contest story, *Robin Hood and Queen Catherine*.

Introduction

It is noticeable that the broadsides and garlands do not deal much with the gentrified Robin Hood, who basically belonged to higher genres — formal drama, ballad opera, and masque — but one of the texts in this section does aspire to such elevation, and ennobled the hero in a determined way. Martin Parker's *A True Tale of Robin Hood* belongs with the broadsides because of its date, technique, and sources, and also because it, like the other late ballads, reworks the tradition in terms of a new urban audience and their contemporary concerns. Parker names Robin as an Earl and then follows Grafton and Munday in making him fall from grace through a mixture of his own foolish generosity and the ferocious hostility of members of the Catholic Church. Yet although Robin is for Parker a hero, he was also visibly an enemy of the newly centralized state, and the final stanzas in particular show the problems an anti-authoritarian hero provides for a period where those who wish to keep popular with the ruling powers were wary of concepts of freedom and resistance.

Parker's stress on the viciousness of the unreformed church is a motif that in lighter form recurs through the broadside and garland ballads — abbots and bishops, rather than sheriffs, become Robin's direct enemies, though only Parker conceives of the outlaws' program of clerical castration. And literary, even modernized, as the thrust of the popular ballads clearly is, they are at the same time less politically conservative and austere focused than Parker's somewhat inflexible epic. The ballads, like all popular forms, remain in many ways contradictory and so they are dynamic: Robin tricks the monks in *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*, but to do it he appears in full Catholic dress as a friar; he peacefully studies the considerations of honor in *Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow*, but he massacres the foresters in *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham*. A trickster par excellence in *Robin Hood and Allin a Dale*, in *Robin Hood's Fishing* he is a hero of national and mercantile progress.

Like the earliest ballads, these later narratives are imbued with the sense of an elusive, polymorphic hero, a noble outlaw whose very appeal lies in the mobile, spirited dynamism that still comes clearly through the ill-printed, clumsily-illustrated, street-level texts that, for the harassed citizens of London, York, Bristol, and other urbanized ballad locations, imagined into being a hero who was, as far as the forces of law and order were concerned, still a moving target.

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Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar

Introduction

This ballad appears in the Percy folio manuscript but more than half has been torn away. It also appears, in a slightly expanded form, in a number of seventeenth-century versions, and the text from the garland of 1663 is used here to fill out the gaps. Lines 1-4, 35-67, 109-43 are from the Percy folio, while the garland text provides the remainder, with the insertion of one stanza from the garland at lines 125-28 where the Percy folio appears to have lost a few lines by scribal error; the two versions fit together well, with the change of one rhyme word needed at line 68.

Though this is not one of the earlier ballads in terms of its recording, it appears to have a late medieval origin. Friars themselves became outdated with the reformation, and there seems to be some relation between this fighting friar and the similar figure found in the play dated around 1475 and also in the more humorous play found at the end of Copland's *Gest of c. 1560*. Munday's *Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington* also presents a comic friar, played by a fictitious version of Skelton the poet. There remains a question whether this well-known figure should be identified with Friar Tuck. Percy's folio calls the ballad *Robin Hood and Fryer Tacke*, but the ballad itself does not use that name, unlike the plays. Child feels there is a separate tradition about the fighting hermit of Fountains Abbey (III, 122), but this may separate too much the elements of a single but varied tradition, especially as there are some early references to a rebellious Friar Tuck: a play of 1537 called *Thersites* refers to someone being "as tall a man as Friar Tuck" and, more remarkably, in 1417 a chaplain of Lindfield in Sussex took up a career of robbery under the alias Friar Tuck.

Although this ballad basically has a "Robin Hood meets his match" structure and the friar agrees at the end to join the outlaw band, few ballads, early or late, show the friar in action with the outlaws (*Robin Hood and Queen Catherin*, Child no. 145, a literary ballad, is an exception; while Robin impersonates a friar in *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*, there is no connection with Tuck). That absence might have been caused by reformation anti-church feeling, but as Child appears to have sensed, the friar-based material seems in some way extrinsic to the central narrative in the ballad genre, as distinct from its centrality in the performance versions of the outlaw myth.

Child nevertheless felt this "is in a genuinely popular strain and was made to sing, not print" (III, 121). Though the word *artillery* (line 10) seems thoroughly contemporary and

Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar

literary, this is not a bookish ballad: the rhymes are occasionally weak as in many early texts, and it is notable how much of the lyrical ballad technique of "repetition with variation" is found. If that suggests considerable antiquity it is also worth noting that the theme of the dogs that could match fighting men also seems to have quite ancient roots; the story is reminiscent of the encounter between Arthur's men and the ferocious ravens belonging to Owein in the medieval Welsh story *Breuddwyd Ronabwy*, "The Dream of Rhonabwy," found in the Mabinogion collection. While it is in many ways a comic and festal text, *Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar* also, with a holy warrior, mysteriously powerful dogs, and a conflict at what seems to be a ford, touches some of the deeper resources in the Robin Hood myth.



Robin Hood and the Curta Friar

But how many merry moones be in the yeere?
There are thirteen, I say;
The midsummer moone is the merriest of all,
Next to the merry month of May.

5 In summer time, when leaves grow green,
And flowers are fresh and gay,
Robin Hood and his merry men
Were disposed to play.

10 Then some would leap, and some would run,
And some would use artillery:
"Which of you can a good bow draw,
A good archer to be?

"Which of you can kill a buck?
Or who can kill a do?
15 Or who can kill a hart of greece,
Five hundred foot him fro."

female deer
fat hart

Will Scadlock he killd a buck
And Midge he killd a do,
And Little John killd a hart of greece,
20 Five hundred foot him fro.

from him

"God's blessing on thy heart," said Robin Hood,
"That hath such a shot for me;
I would ride my horse an hundred miles,
To finde one could match with thee."

25 That causd Will Scadlock to laugh,
He laughed full heartily:

Robin Hood and the Curta Friar

"There lives a curta frier in Fountains Abby
Will beat both him and thee.

(see note)

30 "That curta frier in Fountains Abby
Well can a strong bow draw;
He will beat you and your yeomen,
Set them all on a row."

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

generous (noble)

40 Robin Hood put on his harness good,
And on his head a cap of steel,
Broad sword and buckler by his side,
And they became him weel.

45 He builded his men in a brake of fearene,
A tittle from that nursery;
Sayes, "If you heare my little horne blow,
Then looke you come to me."

stationed

50 When Robin came to Fontaines Abey,
Whereas that fryer lay,
He was ware of the fryer where he stood,
And to him thus can he say:

Where

55 "I am a wet weary man," said Robin Hood,
"Good fellow, as thou may see;
Wilt beare me over this wild water,
For sweete Saint Charity?"

60 The fryer bethought him of a good deed;
He had done none of long before;
He hent up Robin Hood on his backe,
And over he did him beare.

remembered
not long before
took

Later Ballads

But when he came over that wild water,
A longe sword there he drew:
"Beare me backe againe, bold outlawe,
60 Or of this though shalt have enoughe."

Then Robin Hood bent the fryar on his back,
And neither sayd good nor ill,
Till he came ore that wild water,
The yeoman he walked still.

65 Then Robin Hood wett his fayre greene hose
A span above his knee;
Says "Beare me ore againe, thou cutted fryer
Or it shall breed thy gree."

70 The frier took Robin Hood on's back again,
And stept up to the knee;
Till he came at the middle stream,
Neither good nor bad spake he.

75 And coming to the middle stream,
There he threw Robin in:
"And chuse thee, chuse thee, fine fellow,
Whether thou wilt sink or swim."

80 Robin Hood swam to a bush of broom,
The frier to a wicker wand;
Bold Robin Hood is gone to shore,
And took his bow in hand.

One of his best arrows under his belt
To the frier he let fly;
The curtil frier, with his steel buckler,
He put that arrow by.

85 "Shoot on, shoot on, thou fine fellow,
Shoot on as thou hast begun;
If thou shoot here a summers day,
Thy mark I will not shun."

took

over

stockings

cause you grief

on his

willow tree

small shild

I will not hide from your shot

Robin Hood and the Curial Friar

90 Robin Hood shot passing well,
Till his arrows all were gone;
They took their swords and steel bucklers,
And fought with might and maine,

From ten o'th' clock that day,
Till four i'th' afternoon;
95 Then Robin Hood came to his knees,
Of the frier to beg a boon.

100 "A boon, a boon, thou curial frier,
I beg it on my knee;
Give me leave to set my horn to my mouth,
And to blow blasts three."

"That I will do," said the curial frier,
"Of thy blasts I have no doubt;
I hope thou'l blow so passing well
Till both thy eyes fall out."

105 Robin Hood set his horn to his mouth,
He blew but blasts three;
Half a hundred yeoman, with bows beat,
Came raking over the lee.

110 "I beshrew thy head," said the cutted friar,
"Thou thinkes I shall be sheate;
I thought thou had but a man or two,
And thou hast a whole convent.

115 "I lett thee have a blast on thy horne,
Now give me leave to whistle another;
I cold not bidd thee noe better play
And thou wert my owne borne brother."

120 "Now fate on, fute on, thou cutted fryar,
I pray God thou neere be still;
It is not the futing in a fryers fist
That can doe me any ill."

fear
you will

only

hurrying; open ground

destroyed

body of men

play on, whistle away

never

whistling

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The fryar sett his neave to his mouth,
A lowd blast he did blow;
Then halfe a hundred good bandoggs
Came raking all on a rowe.

flat

*fierce dogs
harrying*

- 125 "Here's for every man a dog,
And I myself for thee."
"Nay, by my faith," quoth Robin Hood,
"Frier, that may not be.

- 130 "Over God's forbott," said Robin Hood,
"That ever that soe shold bee;
I had rather be mached with three of the tikes
Ere I wold be matched on thee.

May God forbid

dogs

- 135 "But stay thy tikes, thou fryar," he said,
"And freindshipp I'le have with thee;
But stay thy tikes, thou fryar" he said,
"And save good yeomanry."

- 140 The fryar he sett his neave to his mouth,
A lowd blast he did blow;
The doggs the coucht downe every one,
They couched downe on a rowe.

they lay

"What is thy will, thou yeoman?" he said,
"Have done and tell it me."
"If that thou will goe to merry greenwood,
A noble shall be thy fee.

coin worth six shillings and eightpence

- 145 "And every holy day throughout the year,
Changed shall thy garment be,
If thou wilt go to fair Nottingham,
And there remain with me."

- 150 This curtal frier had kept Fountains Dale
Seven long years or more;
There was neither knight, lord, nor earl
Could make him yield before.

Notes

- 1-4 This stanza may well be meant as a chorus. The Percy MS reads *monthes* in line 1 and *thirteen in Mai* in line 2. Child emends *In May* to *I say* to make more sense but does not, unlike later versions of the ballad, change *monthe* in line 1 to *moone*, as is also required for sense. These changes are made here, though it is just conceivable that the manuscript is right and that the stanza (which is formulaic, and also used in *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*, see p. 515, lines 1-4) is an element of nonsense song, a genre not unknown in the period.
- 5 This stanza begins a more familiar opening to a Robin Hood ballad, the "green wood setting" from which the action develops and to which (in line 143) it will return.
- 15 The Forresters manuscript, which has a version of the 1663 garland text, apparently transmitted by memory, and is less sharp, here has the more common idiom "a heart in grease."
- 17 The earliest printed text has *Sadlock*. Although the character is hostile to locks (his name is given as *Scathelock* and *Scarlock*, as well as the somewhat euphemized *Scarlet*), this must be an error.
- 18 This character's name remains the same in all the versions of this ballad, so can hardly be emended; he is obviously the figure elsewhere called *Much*, and in earlier dialectal forms some version of OE *mycel* might have been the base of the form. This may also lie behind the error *Nick* (see *Robin Hood and All in a Dale*, line 22).
- 22 Child inserts *shor* after *hath*, but this seems unnecessary and does not appear until a much later version.
- 27 The term *curtel* has raised discussion. Most feel it refers to a shorter gown, worn for mobility: friars were associated with travel among the ordinary people, which was both a source of corruption and also, as in the Robin Hood tradition, popular acceptability. A "tucked friar" is another way of expressing this, which

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has become the basis for the friar's usual name, Tuck. Child, however, feels that *curtial* goes back to *curtilarias* or "gardener" and that this had been the friar's role (III, 122).

Fountains Abby: This Cistercian monastery (never a friary) is, like a number of other locations connected with Robin Hood, in North Yorkshire, very close to Ripon.

- 29 The fact that other outlaws know the reputation of the man who will challenge Robin is also a feature in *Robin Hood and the Potter*; it seems as if Robin himself is being tested.
- 33-34 Mary is a special object of Robin's devotion elsewhere, see *Robin Hood and the Monk*, line 28, and the *Gest*, lines 36-37. Robin's oath to abstain from eating is also curiously like King Arthur's refusal to eat until he has seen a guest; see also *Gest*, lines 23-26.
- 42 It is not clear why Fountains, always a masculine foundation, is called a nunnery: the term may be being generally used like *convent*, line 112.
- 48 After this line the Percy folio has a stanza describing the friar as a "yeoman"; both the term and the stanza seem misplaced and should presumably apply to Robin. The stanza is omitted here.
- 51 The Percy folio lacks *me* in this line, which seems necessary, as Child suggests; the manuscript has a number of simple scribal omissions of this kind; see also line 112.
- 53-54 It is not clear what the friar's *good deed done none of long before* (that is, recently) might be: could it be an ironical reference to the encounter with Will implied in lines 27-28?
- 56 If *beare* were emended to past tense *bore* the rhyme would work properly, but this would not fit with the auxiliary *did*, needed for the meter. The rhyme is not particularly bad for an early ballad.
- 68 In the transition at lines 67-68 from the Percy folio to the garland text, the latter's rhyme in line 68, "pain," needs emending to *gree*.

Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar

- 76 The earliest printed text reads *sing or swim*, and could be taken as a droll variation of the cliché. But all the other broadside and Garland versions have *sink or swim* and that seems the most sensible reading; Child's emendation is accepted.
- 78 Forresters has the simpler *willow for wicker*.
- 79 Here Forresters preserves a line that seems sharper than the 1663 garland; "Robin Hood went dropping to the stone" (i.e., dripping).
- 95 The text actually reads *came to knees*, but as the ellipsis is not needed for meter it seems best to treat it as a mistake.
- 99 As Child notes (III, 122), this is one of the many horn-blowing incidents in the myth, a feature which has frequent parallels in European folk-tale. This is the only instance, however, where his opponent has an answer to the assembly of the outlaws, which perhaps explains why the horn-blowing is stressed so much early in the ballad.
- 108 The text has *raking* but, especially in the light of the dogs' *raking* in line 124, this seems an error. Later texts emend the second reference to "ranging," but Child's emendation to *raking* is accepted.
- 109 *catted*. Referring to his shortened gown.
- 112 The Percy manuscript lacks *a* before *whole*, which seems necessary, as Child suggests.
The friar uses *covert* ironically; he is a religious hermit, but Robin brings a body of men against him.
- 117 Child reads the manuscript as *fate on, fate on* and emends both to *fute*, whistle, so fitting in with *futing* in line 119. In fact the MS reads *fate on, fute on*: this can be taken to mean "play on, whistle away" which makes good sense, and so the text is not emended here.
- 123 A *bandogg* is according to Child a hunting dog so fierce it needs to be kept in "bands" or chains. These dogs could be as big as Irish wolfhounds. In the expanded broadside versions they start to savage Robin and can catch arrows in

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their mouths, but the Percy version does not envisage such an elaborate and improbable encounter.

- 125-28 This stanza is taken from the garland text as the Percy manuscript merely writes twice the lines: "Every dogg to a man," said the cuttred fryar, / "And I myself to Robin Hood." Child inserts "of thine" before a dog in line 125, but this seems unnecessary.
- 146 Robin is offering the friar a "livery," that is, a new suit of clothing each year if he joins his service, as well as a joining fee of a noble, six and eightpence (line 144); Robin acts as a lord gathering a retinue.
- 147 As in the *Gest and Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, the outlaw appears to operate in the well-separated areas of Nottingham and Yorkshire. In those cases it is suggested that separate traditions have come together; here there can be no cause other than a sense of geographical mobility.



The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield

Introduction

This ballad, like *Robin Hood and the Curial Friar*, appears in Percy's folio manuscript and also in a number of seventeenth-century ballad and garland collections. It is, like other texts, damaged in the Percy MS: in this case too much is missing for that to be the basis of the text, but the Percy version provides some valuable corrections and extensions to the earliest complete broadside version, dated by Donald Wing to 1643 (*Short-Title Catalogue . . . 1641-1700*). There are two versions in the Forresters' manuscript, one an independent version of the garland text (A), the other a larger text apparently related to the prose history of *George a Greene* (B). Forresters' A is close to the Wood version, Child's favored text, but as it seems edited or erroneous, though with some good readings, it is merely referred to in the notes and occasionally used for emendation.

The story of Robin Hood's encounter with the doughty pinder of Wakefield had clearly existed for at least a century when Percy's manuscript was compiled: a ballad with this title was recorded in the Stationers' Register in 1557-59, is quoted in Anthony Munday's play, and was used in the Sloane *Life of Robin Hood* which appears to have been compiled in the late sixteenth century. Child suggests the ballad is mentioned in several Shakespeare plays, but he is only referring to the linking of the names "Robin and Scarlet and John": this does occur in a number of other ballads (albeit later recorded and somewhat literary ones, *Robin Hood's Delight* and *Robin Hood and the Prince of Aragon*), and in any case this evidence is not needed to prove the widespread nature of the Wakefield saga. A prose life of *George a Greene*, the Pinder's name, existed from the early seventeenth century (by 1632) and, most striking of all, there was a five-act play of the same title, almost certainly by Robert Greene, written by 1594.

The pinder of Wakefield, like the friar of Fountains Abbey, and even like Gamelyn or Gamwell, was one of the local heroes who were drawn into the Robin Hood myth, whose aficionados no doubt enjoyed hearing of his achievements against the great man, and so the range of the tales how Robin met his match was expanded. In some sense the ballad has the simple structure of the "equal fight" ballads where Robin, or more usually Robin, John, and Will (sometimes Much as well or instead) have a good demanding fight with some opponents, and end either by calling a truce or by

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engaging the antagonist to join the outlaw band.

Stressing the fight as it does, *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield* clearly belongs to that genre; yet it has resonances of a richer vein. The pinder is inherently a town official, controlling any stray animals and, as here, protecting the local crops from damage. Robin's conflict with the pinder and winning him over to the outlaws' side is not unlike his encounters with the sheriff and other urban forces. It is interesting to note that the play, *George a Greene*, incorporates Robin as a hero junior to the pinder, associating the outlaw to some extent with political rebellion and George with total loyalty to the crown (Knight, 1994, pp. 120–21).

These nuances are somewhat hidden in this "thoroughly lyrical" ballad (Child, III, 129) with its use of repeated lines and a number of imprecise rhymes and variation between a four- and six-line stanza. But popular as the ballad was, it does not delineate a central part of the myth so much as illustrate one of the difficult encounters between the hero and other cultural and social forces.



The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield

In Wakefield there lives a jolly pinder,
In Wakefield, all on a green.

impounder of stray animals

5 "There is neither knight nor squire," said the pinder,
 "Nor baron that is so bold,
Dare make a trespass to the town of Wakefield,
But his pledge goes to the pinfold."

punishment

10 All this he heard three wight young men,
 'Twas Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John;
With that they spied the jolly pinder,
As he sate under a thorn.

strong

thorn-bush

"Now turn again, turn again," said the pinder,
"For a wrong way have you gone;
For you have forsaken the king his high way,
And made a path over the corn."

through the field

15 "O that were great shame," said jolly Robin,
 "We being three, and thou but one."
The pinder leapt back then three good foot,
'Twas three good foot and one.

20 He leaned his back fast unto a thorn,
 And his foot unto a stone,
And there he fought a long summer's day,
A summer's day so long.

Till that their swords, on their broad bucklers,
Were broken fast unto their hands.

right up to

25 " Hold thy hand, hold thy hand," said Robin Hood,
 "And my merry men every one.

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"For this is one of the best pinders
That ever I saw with eye.
And wilt thou forsake the pinder his craft,
30 And live in green wood with me?"

"At Michaelmas next my cov'nant comes out,
When every man gathers his fee;
I'll take my blew blade all in my hand,
And plod to the green wood with thee."
35 "Hast thou either meat or drink," said Robin Hood
"For my merry men and me?"

"I have both bread and beef," said the pinder,
"And good ale of the best."
"And that is meat good enough," said Robin Hood,
40 "For such unbidden guest.

"O wilt thou forsake the pinder his craft,
And go to the green wood with me?
Thou shalt have a livery twice in the year,
The one green, the other brown."

"If Michaelmas day were once come and gone
And my master had paid me my fee,
Then would I set as little by him
As my master doth set by me.
I'll take my bowbowe in my hand,
50 And come into the grenwode to thee."

contract

food

long bow



Notes

- 1-2 This refrain is repeated after each stanza; the second and fourth lines of each stanza are also repeated, emphasizing the sung character of this ballad.

Wakefield, in West Yorkshire like a number of other places associated with Robin Hood, was thought by Joseph Hunter to be the home of the Robin Hood who served Edward II. More historically, it was a town of some importance in the wool trade and not far from the Yorkshire Barnsdale, so providing the tension between town and country that seems basic to much of the early Robin Hood material in the ballads.

A *pinder* is "an officer of a manor, having duty of impounding stray beasts" (OED). Also spelled "pinner." The green would be the *pinfold*, the place where the *pinder* will pin or pen the stray animals.

- 3 The text's reading *their* for *there* may be a variant version, but as the spelling of the two words is being distinguished at the time, it is better to treat it as an error and, with Child, emend.
- 4 The text has *barrot*, though Child prints *baron* without explanation.
- 6 This suggests more than the mere impounding of stray animals: the Pinder is, it seems, a general defender of the town's liberties, which is how he appears in the play and in the undercurrent of this ballad.
- 7 The texts agree on the word *witty* except for Forresters' A version, which has *wight*. Child says in his notes that "witty" is "a corruption of wight," and Forresters justifies the emendation Child did not have the evidence to make.
- 13 The text retains *high way* as two words, though Child prints it as one.
- 17 Forresters agrees with *thirty* here but has *three* in the next line. Both are numerals, and emendation seems justified.

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- 21 The day-long fight is an almost regular recurrence in these "Robin Hood meets his match" ballads, and is also found in many romances. Even major real battles were usually over in a few hours, so this must be a popular image of a grand and terrible conflict.
- 23 Child's lay-out of the ballad here departs from the four-line stanza, but to no good effect. He prints lines 19–24 as a six-line stanza with irregular rhyme (stone/king/hands) and then inserts a line of asterisks as if there were material missing. He also leaves a gap between lines 35–36. None of these responses seems necessary. As the ballad is laid out here there is a well-rhymed six-line stanza at lines 31–36, a weaker, but acceptably rhymed four-line stanza in lines 19–22, and a distinctly weaker one in lines 23–26. There may have been transmission damage to cause this bad rhyme, as there is another in the next stanza in Wood, but the Percy folio text, which is unavailable before this point, provides the proper rhyme there (see the next note).
- 28 Wood's earlier text does not rhyme here, since its line *That ever I try'd with sword* must rhyme either with line 26, *one*, or line 30, *me*. The Percy manuscript begins with this stanza and provides the line used here.
- 29 Wood's text has *thy pinder his craft*, which Child prints; this is clearly a double genitive. Hyper-correct usage expanded the genitive ending in -*s* to *his*, believing the 's was an abbreviation of the pronoun. Later texts abandon this, but emendation to *the pinder* is necessary, as found in line 41.
- 33 The blade is *blew* because it is made of good quality steel.
- 43 Robin offers *livery*, that is a new suit of clothes at regular intervals, as well no doubt as food and a fee for joining his band (like that offered the Curial Friar). The Pinder will accept this when his present service contract runs out at Michaelmas, September 29th, which was a traditional "quarter day" for bills and agreements of this kind.
- 44 Child adds *shal be* for rhyme, though none of the printed texts, or Forresters, feel the need, and so their model is accepted. Percy's mysterious rhyme "PICKLORY" may suggest a lost original, but it would hardly have been corrupted to a bad rhyme on *brown*. It is conceivable that all colors have been reversed

The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield

and there was originally a weak rhyme with green, but stanzas without rhyme do occur in the ballads and there seems no good cause to emend as dramatically as Child.

- 49-50 Wood's version ends at line 48, but Percy concludes with this firm couplet, making a six-line stanza. Broadside ballads were often cut to fit the page, which may be the case in Wood.

Note that the Pinder, who has fought with a sword, is also able to use the long bow.



Robin Hood and Little John

Introduction

This ballad was printed by Child from a text in a 1723 London anthology, *A Collection of Old Ballads*; he later found a copy printed by W. Onley in London in 1680–85 (V, p. 297); this text is followed here. As with *Robin Hood and the Curial Friar* and *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield*, there is clear evidence of the much earlier existence of this story. A play called *Robin Hood and Little John* was registered in 1594 but has not survived, and there was another from 1640, though they may of course have been general dramas based on sources like the *Gest* or even *Robin Hood and the Monk*. A ballad with this title was registered in 1624, and that date is quite possible for an original version of this text. Dobson and Taylor (1976, p. 165) suggest that it has "every sign of having been produced by a professional ballad writer" with the intention of explaining how Little John came by his name and, long ago, joined the outlaw band: this would be one of the "prequels" like *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham* and *Robin Hood and Will Scarlet* which exploit and rationalize an existing tradition about a character.

Child describes the ballad as having "a rank seventeenth century style" (III, 133), and its language and technique suggest something rather later than the 1624 date when the title at least was in existence, having in particular the internal rhyme in the third line which is shared by most commercial Robin Hood ballads of the later seventeenth and eighteenth century. Child is convinced that all these ballads had the same tune, that of *Arthur a Blaund* or *Robin Hood and the Tanner*. The rhymes and meter are, compared to earlier ballads, suspiciously smooth, and the language, which Dobson and Taylor found "very bathetic" (1976, p. 166), bears traces of the hack-writer's inkwell: *passionate fury and eyre*, line 71; *I prithee*, line 78; *accourements*, line 106; *And did in this manner proceed*, line 129; and, most remarkably, when the outlaws leave their entertainments it says *the whole train the grove did refrain*, line 152.

Nevertheless, this is a classic "Robin Hood meets his match" ballad, and bogus as some of it may be, there is a sign that the language and mannerisms grow more elaborate as the text proceeds, and there could be an earlier plainer ballad embedded in this one, signs of which may appear in lines 1–9, 26–33, 58–73 (except 71), 86–89, 94–113 (except 106), 118–27. Commercial as it may be, this ballad still outlines a focus of solidarity and tricksterism, presenting a central event in the myth which has

Robin Hood and Little John

remained dear, even obsessive, in the hearts of theatrical and film redactors over the centuries. In Hollywood, the same actor (Alan Hale) played Little John in 1922, 1938 and 1946, with the same enduring portrayal of the ballad.



Robin Hood and Little John

- When Robin Hood was about twenty years old,
With a hey down, down, and a down
He happen'd to meet Little John,
A jolly brisk blade, right fit for the trade,
For he was a lusty young man. young man
- Though he was call'd Little, his limbs they were large,
And his stature was seven foot high;
Wherever he came, they quak'd at his name,
For soon he wou'd make them to flee.
- How they came acquainted, I'll tell you in brief,
If you will but listen a while;
For this very jest, amongst all the rest,
I think it may cause you to smile. (see note)
- Bold Robin Hood said to his jolly bowmen,
"Pray tarry you here in this grove;
And see that you all observe well my call,
While thorough the forest I rove.
- "We have had no sport for these fourteen long days,
Therefore now abroad will I go;
Now should I be beat, and cannot retreat,
My horn I will presently blow." at once
- Then did he shake hands with his merry men all,
And bid them at present good by; God be with you (goodbye)
Then, as near a brook his journey he took,
A stranger he chanc'd to espy.
- They happen'd to meet on a long narrow bridge,
And neither of them wou'd give way;

Robin Hood and Little John

Quoth bold Robin Hood, and sturdily stood,
"I'll show you right Nottingham play."

true

30 With that from his quiver an arrow he drew,
A broad arrow with a goose-wing:
The stranger replyd, "I'll licker thy hide,
If thou offer to touch the string."

ass (beast)

35 Quoth bold Robin Hood, "Thou dost prate like an ass,
For were I to bend but my bow,
I could send a dart quite through thy proud heart,
Before thou couldst strike me one blow."

"You talk like a coward," the stranger reply'd;
"Well arm'd with a long bow you stand,
To shoot at my breast, while I, I protest,
Have naught but a staff in my hand."

nothing

45 "The name of a coward," quoth Robin, "I scorn,
Wherefore my long bow I'll lay by;
And now, for thy sake, a staff will I take,
The truth of thy manhood to try."

Then Robin Hood stept to a thicket of trees,
And chose him a staff of ground oak;
Now this being done, away he did run
To the stranger and merrily spoke:

oak sapling

50 "Lo! see my staff; it is lusty and tough,
Now here on the bridge we will play;
Whoever falls in, the other shall win
The battle, and so we'll away."

55 "With all my whole heart to thy humor I yield,
I scorn in the least to give out."
This said, they fell to't without more dispute,
And their staffs they did flourish about.

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And first Robin he gave the stranger a bang,
So hard that it made his bones ring;
60 The stranger he said, "This must be repaid;
I'll give you as good as you bring.

"So long as I am able to handle my staff,
To die in your debt, friend, I scorn."
Then to it both goes, and follow'd their blows,
65 As if they'd been thrashing of corn.

The stranger gave Robin a crack on the crown,
Which caused the blood to appear;
Then Robin, enrag'd, more fiercely engag'd,
And follow'd his blows more severe.

70 So thick and so fast did he lay it on him,
With a passionate fury and eyre,
At every stroke he made him to smoke,
As if he had been all on a fire.

75 O then into a fury the stranger he grew
And gave him a damnable look,
And with it a blow that laid him full low
And tumbl'd him into the brook.

"I prithee, good fellow, O where art thou now?"
The stranger in laughter he cry'd;
80 Quoth bold Robin Hood, "Good faith, in the flood,
And flotting along with the tide.

"I needs must acknowledge thou art a brave soul;
With thee I'll no longer contend;
For needs must I say, thou hast got the day,
85 Our battle shall be at an end."

Then, then, to the bank he did presently wade,
And pull'd himself out by a thorn;
Which done, at the last, he blow'd a loud blast
Straitways on his fine bugle-horn.

Robin Hood and Little John

90 The echo of which through the vallies did flie,
At which his stout bowmen appear'd,
All cloathed in green, most gay, to be seen;
So up to their master they steer'd.

95 "O what's the matter?" quoth William Stutely.
"Good master, you are wet to the skin."
"No matter," quoth he, "the lad which you see,
In fighting he tumbld me in."

100 "He shall not go scot free," the others reply'd; ¹
So straight they were seising him there, *straightaway*
To duck him likewise, but Robin Hood cries,
"He is a stout fellow, forbear.

105 "There's no one shall wrong thee, friend, be not afraid;
These bowmen upon me do wait; *attend*
There's threescore and nine; if thou wilt be mine,
Thou shalt have my livery strait.

110 "And other accoutrements fit for my train,
Speak up, jolly blade, ne'r fear;
I'll teach thee also the use of the bow,
To shoot at the fat fallow-deer."

115 "O here is my hand," the stranger reply'd,
"I'll serve you with all my whole heart;
My name is John Little, a man of good mettle;
Ne'r doubt me, for I'll play my part."

120 "His name shall be alter'd," quoth William Stutely,
"And I will his godfather be;
Prepare then a feast, and none of the least,
For we will be merry," quoth he.

¹ *scot free*: without paying his "scot" or shot, his bill

Later Ballads

- They presently fetch'd in a brace of fat does,
With hummin' strong liquor likewise; *extremely*
- 120 They lov'd what was good, so in the greenwood,
This pritty sweet babe they baptize.
- He was, I must tell you, but seven foot high,
And may be an ell in the waste; *forty-five inches*
- 125 A pritty sweet lad, much feasting they had;
Bold Robin the christ'ning grac'd,
- With all his bowmen, which stood in a ring,
And were of the Nottingham breed;
- Brave Stately comes then, with seven yeomen,
And did in this manner proceed:
- 130 "This infant was called John Little," quoth he,
"Which name shall be changed anon;
The words we'll transpose, so where-ever he goes,
His name shall be call'd Little John."
- They all with a shout made the elements ring,
135 So soon as the office was o're;
To feasting they went, with true merriment,
And tipl'd strong liquor gallore. *galore (in plenty)*
- Then Robin he took the pritty sweet babe,
And cloath'd him from top to the toe
- 140 In garments of green, most gay to be seen,
And gave him a curious long bow.
- "Thou shalt be an archer as well as the best,
And range in the green wood with us;
Where we'll not want gold nor silver, behold,
145 While bishops have ought in their purse.
- "We live here like esquires, or lords of renown,
Without e're a foot of free land;
We feast on good cheer, with wine, ale and beer,
And ev'ry thing at our command." *ever*

Robin Hood and Little John

- 150 Then musick and dancing did finish the day
At length when the sun waxed low,
Then all the whole train the grove did refrain,
And unto their caves they did go. grew
- 155 And so ever after, as long as he liv'd,
Although he was proper and tall,
Yet nevertheless, the truth to express,
Still Little John they did him call. Always



Notes

- 3 *Little John*: the earliest references feature the two outlaws and do not clearly privilege Robin. Scottish play-games link the two on nearly equal terms, sometimes as equivalent to the Abbot and Prior of Bonacord. There is some connection between Little John and the Derbyshire Peak district (tradition places his huge grave at Hathersage), and there are two Little John (not Robin Hood) sites in Leicestershire in the Charnwood area, not far from Derbyshire. The surname Naylor, sometimes attached to him, derives from a confusion after a Colonel Naylor, in 1715, owned "Little John's bow" and wrote his name on it (Walker, 1952, p. 131). As a figure, Little John can be interpreted as the helpful giant of folklore, and it can be argued that as Robin is gentrified, John is steadily downgraded into the equivalent of a non-commissioned officer (Knight, 1994, pp. 83-84).
- 12 *jest*. Here would at first appear to mean "adventure" as in the title of the *Gest*, but the reference to a smile in the next line appears to redefine it as "humorous story."
- 25 The sudden meeting with the stranger is a normal part of a "Robin Hood meets his match" ballad.
- 50 Although the *r* and *t* are very similar, the Onley text clearly reads *tough*, Child's reading. Later texts read "rough."
- 54 Later texts read "the stranger reply'd" instead of *to thy humor I yield*.
- 64 Later texts read "both," like Onley's; Child reads *each*, perhaps for number agreement — *each* goes.
- 65 Onley's text reads *they'd*, which is metrically superior to Child's *they had*.
- 73 Onley's *all on a fire* is metrically superior to Child's version, which omits the article *a*.

Robin Hood and Little John

- 86 *Then, then, to* seems acceptable: Child edits to *Then unto*.
- 108 *thee*: later texts have Robin using the polite plural *you* to John in this line.
- 114 William Stutely is a name that appears occasionally in the tradition; one seveneenth-century ballad describes the outlaw's rescue of him from the sheriff (Child, no. 141). Whether this is another form of Will Scathelock or Scarlet is not clear: in Munday there are two characters bearing those names, but not Stutely. Such name similarities and confusions are common in Arthurian romance as well.
- 125 Where Child ends the line with a full stop, the text has a comma and runs on into the next stanza — perhaps a sign of its somewhat bookish character; line 129 has a colon and is much the same in effect, but there also Child has a full stop against the syntax.
- 143 Though Child prints the word as *greenwood*, the sources have *green wood*, which is not quite the same. The concept of a single entity called greenwood is really a nineteenth-century concept influenced by Keats and Peacock (see Knight, 1996, ch. 5).
- 146 Later texts emend the meter by providing 'squires; no doubt this was the pronunciation expected in Onley.
- 153 The mention of *caves* is a rare moment of realism: most ballads locate the outlaws simply in "the green wood," as if the weather was never hostile.



Robin Hood and Allin a Dale

Introduction

This ballad appears in seventeenth-century broadsides but did not find a place in the garland collections, perhaps because Allin a Dale (Allen in the later texts) was not a well-known member of the outlaw band. The basic story is told in the late sixteenth-century Sloane *Life of Robin Hood*, but there the lover is Scarlock and Robin enters the church disguised as a beggar (not unlike his actions in *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*). The Forresters manuscript contains *Robin Hood and the Bride*, a reworked and diluted version of the text.

There is some sign that this is an "art" ballad in the fact that its plot structure is unusual: Allin a Dale joins the outlaw band, but this is not a "Robin Hood meets his match" story. Allin's joining is part of a "rescue" story as Robin and his men intervene to re-establish what he judges to be the "fit" situation (line 73). This involves elements of disguise, again in a composite mode, in this case both Robin as a harper and John as a priest. The latter sequence is more theatrical than trickster-like as John calls the banns seven times *Least three times should not be enough* (line 100), and the anti-clerical note is consistent with the tone of many of the ballads in this period. The frustration of the old knight on behalf of Allin and his love could be taken as consistent with Robin Hood's broad social mission, but is effectively derived from the genre of true love story, a stranger to the outlaw tradition.

Other "literary" features are the *Come listen to me* opening and the romantic song usage *finikin lass* (line 71, changed to glittering in later texts). Nevertheless, in spite of what Dobson and Taylor call the "mechanical obviousness of the language" (1976, p. 172), the text has some of the lively roughness, including uneven rhyme, found in relatively early Robin Hood ballads, and it lacks the jingling third line internal rhyme characteristic of the new popular ballads of the seventeenth century.

Allin a Dale ("of the dale") is unknown in other Robin Hood texts. The plot is used in a ballad opera of 1751, but the lovers have become Leander and Clorinda and the old knight is now Sir Humphrey Wealthy (Knight, 1994, pp. 149–50). The ballad was printed by Ritson, and then became a regular part of the tradition, especially in extended and stage versions, presumably because of its unusual love interest.

Robin Hood and All in a Dale

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

5 As Robin Hood in the forest stood,
All under the green-wood tree,
There was he ware of a brave young man,
As fine as fine might be.

10 The youngster was clothed in scarlet red,
In scarlet fine and gay,
And he did brisk it over the plain,
And chanted a roundelay.

lyrical love song

15 As Robin Hood next morning stood,
Amongst the leaves so gay,
There did he espy the same young man,
Come drooping along the way.

The scarlet he wore the day before,
It was clean cast away,
And every step he fetcht a sigh,
"Alack and a well a day!"

Then stepped forth brave Little John,
And Nick the millers son,
Which made the young man bend his bow,
When as he see them come.

25 "Stand off, stand off," the young man said,
"What is your will with me?"

Later Ballads

"You must come before our master straight,
Under yon green-wood tree."

30 And when he came bold Robin before,
Robin askt him courteously,
"O hast thou any money to spare
For my merry men and me?"

35 "I have no money," the young man said,
"But five shillings and a ring;
And that I have kept this seven long years,
To have it at my wedding.

40 "Yesterday I should have married a maid,
But she is now from me tane,
And chosen to be an old knights delight,
Whereby my poor heart is slain."

45 "What is thy name?" then said Robin Hood,
"Come tell me, without any fail."
"By the faith of my body," then said the young man,
"My name it is Allin a Dale."

50 "What wilt thou give me," said Robin Hood,
"In ready gold or fee,
To help thee to thy true love again,
And deliver her unto thee?"

property

55 "I have no money," then quoth the young man,
"No ready gold nor fee,
But I will swear upon a book
Thy true servant for to be."

60 "How many miles is it to thy true love?
Come tell me without any guile."
"By the faith of my body," then said the young man,
"It is but five little mile."

Robin Hood and Allin a Dale

- Then Robin he hasted over the plain,
He did neither stint nor lie,
Until he came unto the church,
Where Allin should keep his wedding.
- "What dost thou here?" the bishop he said,
"I prethee now tell to me."
"I am a bold harper," quoth Robin Hood,
"And the best in the north countrey."
- "O welcome, O welcome," the bishop he said,
"That musick best pleaseth me."
"You shall have no musick," quoth Robin Hood,
"Till the bride and the bridegroom I see."
- With that came in a wealthy knight,
Which was both grave and old,
And after him a finikin lass,
Did shine like glistering gold.
- "This is no fit match," quoth bold Robin Hood,
"That you do seem to make here;
For since we are come unto the church,
The bride she shall chuse her own dear."
- Then Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth,
And blew blasts two or three;
When four and twenty bowmen bold
Came leaping over the lee.
- And when they came into the church-yard,
Marching all on a row,
The first man was Allin a Dale,
To give bold Robin his bow.
- "This is thy true love," Robin he said,
"Young Allin, as I hear say,
And you shall be married at this same time,
Before we depart away."

stop nor delay

fine

open ground

Later Ballads

90 "That shall not be," the bishop he said,
"For thy word shall not stand;
They shall be three times askt in the church,
As the law is of our land."

95 Robin Hood pulld off the bishops coat,
And put it upon Little John;
"By the faith of my body," then Robin said,
"This cloath doth make thee a man."

100 When Little John went into the quire,
The people began for to laugh;
He askt them seven times in the church,
Least three times should not be enough.

"Who gives me this maid," then said Little John;
Quoth Robin, "That do I.
And he that doth take her from Allis a Dale
Full dearly he shall her buy."

pay for

105 And thus having ended this merry wedding,
The bride lookt as fresh as a queen,
And so they returnd to the merry green wood,
Amongst the leaves so green.



Notes

- 1 The "Come all ye" opening is only found in a few "commercial" Robin Hood ballads (*Robin Hood and Will Scarlet*, *Robin Hood and the Bishop* and, in restrained form, Parker's *A True Tale*). A more usual opening would be line 5; presumably this opening has been introduced in the process of production as a broadside.
- 9 Scarlet seems a suitable color for a lover, but there are early references to the outlaws wearing scarlet. Green as a color may itself be part of an early "green wood" consciousness. In the later development of the tradition, Allin a Dale and Will Scarlet often become confused, partly because they play the role of *ingenu*, perhaps also because of this shared color.
- 13 It is unusual to have this double opening; Robin usually stands still, sees something, and goes into action. This ballad seems structurally composite from the beginning.
- 22 Nick is presumably based on a misreading of Much, perhaps in a form closer to OE *mycel* (see Midge in *Robin Hood and the Curial Friar*, line 18. Dobson and Taylor emend to Midge [p. 173]). See also Munday's *The Downfall*, line 523, where Warman's wife calls Much Nick.
- 27 The ballad begins as if Allin is a stranger, about to be robbed by the outlaw. But his honesty takes the outlaws off on another narrative track, and the sequence resembles the opening of the episode with Sir Richard in Fitt 1 of the *Gest*.
- 44 There are no other references to this character in the ballads. In the post-Ritson development of the myth, Allin is usually a minor figure, perhaps reaching his zenith as Alan A. Dale, played by Bing Crosby in *Robin and the Seven Hoods* (1964).
- 50 Like the knight in the *Gest*, Allin offers fidelity rather than money, and Robin accepts this as a basis for helping him.

Later Ballads

- 63 Disguise as a harper is one of the most familiar versions of this motif; the reference to *the north country* (line 64) does not necessarily set this story in the north: harpers would be expected to come from the less urbanized parts of Britain.
- 83 The motif of the young hero who joins a band and at once becomes a leading figure because of his quality is common in folklore; another instance is in *Gamelyn*.
- 91 The bishop refers to the requirement to announce a forthcoming marriage three times — “calling the banns” — usually over a three-week period. John burlesques the tradition by asking the congregation seven times on the wedding day, a tricksterish feature.
- 96 The comment is both ironical and quite searching: in earlier culture clothes did in some sense establish the powers of the person. Hence the many “sumptuary” laws which regulated the clothing to be worn by specific grades of people. In this instance, a man of the cloth (the bishop) loses his cloth (clothes).
- 107–08 As with so many of these ballads, the final sequence is a festival in the forest, linking in some way with the nature rituals of the Robin Hood play-game.



Robin Hood and Maid Marian

Introduction

This ballad has only survived in a broadside ballad which, from its tone, may well be post-Restoration. Much about this ballad suggests that it was deliberately constructed to add an element to the Robin Hood tradition. It is the only ballad where Maid Marian plays a part; she is briefly mentioned in *Robin Hood and Queen Catherin* and *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*. The diction seems characteristic of popular literary style (*gallant dame*, line 5; *Perplexed and vexed*, line 30; *a shaded bower*, line 63), while also having a distinctly broadside element (*With finger in eye, shee often did cry*, line 28; *With kind imbraces, and jobbing of faces*, line 56). The internal rhyme in the third line indicates a late and popular production.

Commentators have been severe on the ballad. Child calls it "this foolish ditty" (III, 218), while Dobson and Taylor speak of its "complete lack of literary merit" and call it an "extreme and implausible attempt" to combine Robin the lover and fighter (1976, p. 176). The events of the ballad had already been foreshadowed in Munday's play, where Matilda Fitzwater goes to the forest, becoming Marian in the process, to meet the Earl of Huntington, alias Robin Hood. The popularity of Robin Hood ballads was so great that several of these "prequels" seem to have been produced, as in *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham* and *Robin Hood and Little John*. Structurally the interesting thing about *Robin Hood and Maid Marian* is that it shows the only credible way to join the outlaw band is to fight a draw with the leader: this is a "Robin Hood meets his match" ballad in a wider sense than usual. Foolish as commentators have found it, the notion of the hero's fight with his lover is a potent one, whether it testifies to the woman's possible martial skill, or the enormity of mistreating woman, or both at once. Found in the recent film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), the motif is here taken quite seriously, down to the length of the fight and the sight of blood, however improbable it may be that Marian does not hear Robin's voice until he asks for respite (line 50).

Robin Hood and Maid Marian clearly shows the gentrification process finding its way into the popular genres, but it does not seem to have been very popular, never appearing in the garlands and very little referred to or reworked even after Ritson made it well known.

Robin Hood and Maid Marian

A bonny fine maid of a noble degree,
With a hey down down a down down
Maid Marian callid by name,
Did live in the North, of excellent worth,
For she was a gallant dame.

5

For favour and face, and beauty most rare,
Queen Hellen shee did excell;
For Marian then was praisd of all men
That did in the country dwell.

10

'Twas neither Rosamond nor Jane Shore,
Whose beauty was clear and bright,
That could surpass this country lass,
Beloved of lord and knight.

(see note)

15

The Earl of Huntington, nobly born,
That came of noble blood,
To Marian went, with a good intent,
By the name of Robin Hood.

20

With kisses sweet their red lips meet,
For shee and the earl did agree;
In every place, they kindly imbrace,
With love and sweet unity.

25

But fortune bearing these lovers a spight,
That soon they were forced to part;
To the merry green wood then went Robin Hood,
With a sad and sorrowfull heast.

dislike

And Marian, poor soul, was troubled in mind,
For the absence of her friend;

Robin Hood and Maid Marian

With finger in eye, shee often did cry,
And his person did much comend.

30 Perplexed and vexed, and troubled in mind,
Shee drest her self like a page,
And ranged the wood to find Robin Hood,
The bravest of men in that age.

35 With quiver and bow, sword, buckler, and all,
Thus armed was Marian most bold,
Still wandering about to find Robin out,
Whose person was better then gold.

40 But Robin Hood hee himself had disguis'd,
And Marian was strangly attir'd,
That they prov'd foes, and so fell to blowes,
Whose valour bold Robin admir'd.

45 They drew out their swords, and to cutting they went,
At least an hour or more,
That the blood ran apace from bold Robins face,
And Marian was wounded sore.

"O hold thy hand, hold thy hand," said Robin Hood,
"And thou shalt be one of my string.
To range in the wood with bold Robin Hood,
To hear the sweet nightingall sing."

50 When Marian did hear the voice of her love,
Her self shee did quickly discover,
And with kisses sweet she did him greet,
Like to a most loyall lover.

reveal

55 When bold Robin Hood his Marian did see,
Good lord, what clipping was there!
With kind imbraces, and jobbing of faces,
Providing of gallant cheer.

embracing
thrusting

Later Ballads

For Little John took his bow in his hand,
And wandring in the wood,
To kill the deer, and make good chear,
For Marian and Robin Hood.

A stately banquet they had full soon,
All in a shaded bower,
Where venison sweet they had to eat,
And were merry that present hour.

Great flaggons of wine were set on the board,
And merrily they drunk round
Their boles of sack, to strengthen the back,
Whilst their knees did touch the ground.

sack (*dry white wine*)

First Robin Hood began a health
To Marian his onely dear,
And his yeomen all, both comly and tall,
Did quickly bring up the rear.

For in a brave veine they tost off the bousl,
Whilst thus they did remain,
And every cup, as they drank up,
They filled with speed again.

manner

At last they ended their merriment,
And went to walk in the wood,
Where Little John and Maid Marian
Attended on bold Robin Hood.

In solid content together they livd,
With all their yeomen gay.
They livd by their hands, without any lands,
And so they did many a day.

But now to conclude, an end I will make
In time, as I think it good,
For the people that dwell in the North can tell
Of Marian and bold Robin Hood.

Notes

- 4 Marian's residence in the north is probably suggested more by Parker's *A True Tale* and its stress on the north than by any older connection with Yorkshire or even Scotland.
- 10 While Helen in line 7 is a familiar classical reference to beauty, Rosamond and Jane Shore are famous medieval English beauties: "Fair Rosamond" was Henry II's great love, and Jane Shore a mistress of Edward IV. Neither they, nor Helen, had particularly happy careers, but there seems no irony intended.
- 14 Robin is very rarely identified as the Earl in a ballad. The other instances are Parker's *True Tale* and, simply through attaching his epitaph, *Robin Hood and the Valiant Knight*, Child no. 153. The reference here is part of the unusual and unqualified gentrification of this ballad.
- 24 The green wood has, it seems, become conventionally *merry* even when the hero has a *sad and sorrowfull heart* (line 25).
- 34 The reason why Marian is so heavily armed while dressed as a page is, like her failure to identify Robin's voice until after the fight, one of the logical incoherences — and conventions — of this ballad.
- 38 The text places a comma after *hee* as well as before; Child only prints the first, and this changes the stress for the worse.
- 62 The text has *the had*, and while in early texts *the* is often used for *they*, in this case it seems to be a printer's error and should be emended, as Child does.
- 74 The text has *vente*, which could perhaps mean "vaunt" or "celebration." Percy's handwritten copy of this ballad here reads *venie*. Child speculates that *venie*, presumably a variant for *veine* is correct and was misread by the compositor as *vente*. Though *vente* is technically the harder reading and might therefore be preferred, the phrase *in a brave veine* has just the conventional character of this ballad, and is accepted here.

Later Ballads

- 74 The text has only *the bowls*; Child's emendation to *their* seems unnecessary.
- 84 Robin and Marian, though lord and lady, do not live off their lands. They are in some form of exile, but there also seems to be a rapprochement here between the gentrified overlay of this ballad and the "yeoman" basis to the tradition. The ballad does not finally re-establish Robin as Earl, so perhaps indicating its hybrid status, but also suggesting Parker's influence: his version ends with Robin's death, and so is not a full gentrification narrative in that the dispossessed nobleman is not restored to his dignities.



Robin Hood and Will Scarlet

Introduction

This ballad is found in seventeenth-century broadsides and early garlands under the title *Robin Hood Newly Revived*. Child printed it under that title, which has been generally accepted. Ritson, however, decided this was *Robin Hood and the Stranger*, for which a tune was known (and other ballads were said to be sung to it) but no words. Ritson's title is not appropriate because other ballads are as well qualified for that title, but *Robin Hood Newly Revived* is itself a poor name as it has nothing to do with the content of the ballad and is basically a publicist's blurb. In this edition the ballad is named *Robin Hood and Will Scarlet* because it appears to be dedicated to explaining the arrival in the outlaw band of a well-known figure (like other ballads in this section) and so deserves a parallel name.

However, the outlaw who is introduced seems quite different from the hard-handed figure who began his career as Will Scathelock and stood with Little John beside his leader as Cai and Bedwyr support Arthur in early Welsh tradition. This ballad uses the "prequel" pattern as a way of absorbing into the tradition the materials surrounding Gamelyn, hero of a separate epic romance, and perhaps also as a way of using materials from the lyric ballad *Robin and Gandelyn*.

Robin Hood and Will Scarlet has a familiar set of opening moves, so familiar they may smack of a written rather than oral tradition: a "Come all ye" opening; the motif of adventure before food; Robin meets a stranger in the forest. This stranger is distinctly aggressive (as others have been, like the Beggar and the Tinker whom Robin meets in minor ballads, Child nos. 133 and 127). Robin's threat to shoot is matched by the stranger and it seems that the fatal situation of *Robin and Gandelyn* is developing. But instead a fierce sword fight follows.

So much is familiar in the "Robin Hood meets his match" tradition. But the stranger reveals he is "Young Gamwell," who is fleeing to seek his uncle, Robin Hood. This action is reminiscent of *Gamelyn*, where the hero flees to the forest having killed his brother's porter and is welcomed by the outlaw king. Gamwell, it transpires, is Robin's sister's son (an especially strong version of the uncle-nephew relationship) and he is welcomed, absorbed into the band and immediately becomes one of the inner group, with Little John and Robin (as seen in *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield* and other ballads).

Later Ballads

In form the ballad seems relatively early and not too heavily marked as literary. It has some strong colloquial diction, as in *For we have no vittles to dine* (line 9) or *Go play the chiven* (line 30), and the ballad in general lacks the elaborate diction and internal third-line rhyme that tend to mark the commercial products of the period; the occasional weak rhyme also looks back to the earlier and orally oriented ballads.

However, unlike other seventeenth-century ballads, there are no other references to suggest that this story existed early, though the title *Robin Hood Newly Revived* might be taken to suggest that a previous text had been reshaped for publication. In its earliest form, as its final lines indicate, it has attached to it seven stanzas of *Robin Hood and the Scorchman*, and there is a second part to this ballad which exists separately as *Robin Hood and the Prince of Aragon*. In spite of the possibility that an earlier ballad existed connecting Gamwell directly to the Robin Hood tradition, there is nothing to suggest that this whole ballad was not itself produced in the commercial context by a writer particularly well attuned to the earlier style of ballad. Intriguing as the connections of this ballad may be, all that can be said certainly is, as Child sums up, that it appears to "have been built up on a portion of the ruins, so to speak, of the fine tale of Gamelyn" (III, 144).



Robin Hood and Will Scarlet

Come listen a while, you gentlemen all,
With a key down, down, a down down,
That are in this bower within,
For a story of gallant bold Robin Hood
I purpose now to begin.

chamber

"What time of the day?" quoth Robin Hood then;
Quoth Little John, "Tis in the prime."
"Why then we will to the green wood gang,
For we have no vittles to dine."

early morning
go
vittals (food)

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

by a skiffall

15 His doublet it was of silk, he said,
His stockings like scarlet shone,
And he walkt on along the way,
To Robin Hood then unknown.

A herd of deer was in the bend,
All feeding before his face:

bent (grassy field)

20 "Now the best of ye I'lle have to my dinner,
And that in a little space."

time

Now the stranger he made no mickle ado,
But he bends and a right good bow,
And the best buck in the herd he slew,
Forty good yards him full froe.

great fass

from him

"Well shot, well shot," quoth Robin Hood then,
"That shot it was shot in time,

with good timing

Later Ballads

And if thou wilt accept of the place
Thou shalt be a bold yeoman of mine."

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------------|
| 30 | "Go play the chiven," the stranger said,
"Make haste and quickly go,
Or with my fist, be sure of this,
I'll give thee buffets store." | Run away
aplenly |
| 35 | "Thou hadst not best buffet me," quoth Robin Hood,
"For though I seem forlorn,
Yet I can have those that will take my part,
If I but blow my horn." | lost (alone) |
| 40 | "Thou wast not best wind thy horn," the stranger said,
"Beest thou never so much in hast,
For I can draw out a good broad sword,
And quickly cut the blast." | If you be
stop the sound |
| 45 | Then Robin Hood bent a very good bow,
To that shoot, and he wold fain;
The stranger he bent a very good bow,
To shoot at bold Robin again. | eagerly |
| 50 | "O hold thy hand, hold thy hand," quoth Robin Hood,
"To shoot it would be in vain;
For if we should shoot the one at the other,
The one of us may be slain. | |
| 55 | "But let's take our swords and our broad bucklers,
And gang under yonder tree."
"As I hope to be savd," the stranger he said,
"One foot I will not flee." | |
| 60 | Then Robin Hood lent the stranger a blow,
Most scar'd him out of his wit;
"Thou never felt blow," the stranger he said,
"That shalt be better quit." | dealt
Almost |

Robin Hood and Will Scarlet

The stranger he drew out a good broad sword,
And hit Robin on the crown,
60 That from every haire of bold Robins head
The blood ran trickling down.

"God a mercy, good fellow!" quoth Robin Hood then,
"And for this that thou hast done,
Tell me, good fellow, what thou art,
65 Tell me where thou doest woon."

dwell

The stranger then answered bold Robin Hood,
"I'll tell thee where I did dwell;
In Maxfield was I bred and born,
My name is Young Gamwell.

70 "For killing of my own fathers steward,
I am forc'd to this English wood,
And for to seek an uncle of mine;
Some call him Robin Hood."

75 "But thou art a cousin of Robin Hoods then?"
The sooner we should have done."
"As I hope to be sav'd," the stranger then said,
"I am his own sisters son."

relative

80 But Lord! what kissing and courting was there,
When these two cousins did greet!
And they went all that summers day,
And Little John did meet.

cousins or male relatives

85 But when they met with Little John,
He thereunto did say,
"O master, where have you been,
You have tarried so long away?"

"I met with a stranger," quoth Robin Hood then,
"Full sore he hath beaten me."
"Then I'll have a bout with him," quoth Little John,
"And try if he can beat me."

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90 "Oh, oh, no," quoth Robin Hood then,
"Little John, it may be so;
For he's my own dear sisters son,
And cousins I have no mo.

95 "But he shal be a bold yeoman of mine,
My chief man next to thee,
And I Robin Hood and thou Little John,
And Scarlet he shall be,

100 "And wee'll be three of the bravest outlaws
That is in the North Country."
If you will have any more of bold Robin Hood,
In his second part it will be.



Notes

- 9 This seems like a simple version of Robin's unwillingness, like that of King Arthur, to dine before an adventure is enjoyed; see the *Gest*, lines 21–24.
- 10 A characteristic "Robin Hood meets his match" beginning, with language not unlike the first meeting with Allin a Dale.
- 25 Forty yards, while perhaps realistic as a good hunting shot, is far shorter than the distances alleged to have been mastered by archers in the earlier texts: four hundred yards would be a commoner claim. It is conceivable that the Roman numerals for 400 yards have been misread as "iiii," a version of "forty."
- 30 Gamwell is not only brusque to Robin, but offers him a distinctly ungentlemanly form of violence with his fists — both are characteristics of Gamelyn.
- chiven. "A very shy fish that hides in holes" (OED). To "play the chiven" is to run away precipitately.
- 43 The text reads *To that shoar and he wold fain*. Child emends to *To shoar and that he wold fain*, which makes good sense and is a little smoother, but the existing reading is unlikely to have been a compositor's error and does make sense; so it is retained.
- 49 Robin refers to what is the actual outcome in this situation in *Robyn and Gudewyn*. Perhaps this is a euphemized version of that ballad.
- 52 The two earlier sources lack *he*, but both meter and the parallels with line 55 indicate it is necessary.
- 68 Maxfield. This place name recurs in *Robin Hood and the Prince of Aragon* when Will Scadlock's father is described as "Of Maxfield earl." There is a Maxfield in East Sussex, but this is a long way away from the ballad areas, though curiously a Gilbert Robynhood was recorded from this area in 1291 (Dobson and Taylor, 1976, p. 12). It may be that here, as in other obscure place names,

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North Yorkshire is the best location, with Maxfield Plain. While it may seem tempting to link these references to Macclesfield in Derbyshire, which still has an Earl, that title was not established until 1721, well after both ballads were in printed form.

- 70 In the *Gest* the knight's son had killed a knight of Lancaster and a squire (lines 209–10), but it was not clear what happened to him afterwards; Gamelyn is forced to flee to the woods after he has, among other crimes, killed his brother's (and before that his father's) porter.
- 83 Child reads *there unto him*, but the text reads only *therewante*: the stress falls on the initial *He*, and there is no need to insert *him* for meter.
- 88 In a "Robin Hood meets his match" ballad it is usual for the other outlaws to want to revenge Robin, or for Robin to intervene, as here.
- 90 The text reads *Oh, oh, no*. Child inserts another *no*, presumably for meter, but it is not needed.
- 91 The text lacks *not* in this line, which Child inserts, though there is no room for it in the meter. If Robin's words are taken to mean "It must be so," then the line makes sense in the original, which is retained.
- 97 The name Scarlet is introduced with very little fuss, and the next line seems to refer to the well-known opening of ballads which named the three outlaws Robin, John, and Will. This is the line which Child thought was taken from *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield* to appear in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV Part 2* and Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* (III, 129).
- 99 The *North Country* is again the expected domain of the outlaw's activities; this ballad almost certainly post-dates Parker's *A True Tale*, which specified that as Robin Hood's area, and the idea is probably from there, not from the northern activities in the *Gest* or Andrew of Wyntoun's chronicle.
- 101 The second part is discussed in the Introduction to this ballad, p. 500.

Robin Hood's Progress To Nottingham

Introduction

This ballad appears in several seventeenth-century broadsides and the early garlands, and is the first to appear in the Forresters manuscript, under the title *Robin Hood and the Forresters*: that text seems a retelling, with some literary effect, of the Wood text dated by Wing in 1656. It represents a story that was certainly known by the time of the Sloane *Life of Robin Hood* in the late sixteenth century, so it is not clear why Child calls it "a comparatively late ballad" (III, 175) and prints it so late in his volume (no. 139), when, because of the earlier nature of the story, it should stand between *The Jolly Pinder* and *Robin Hood and Little John* (as no. 125).

The fierce tone of the ballad is very different from most that first appear in the seventeenth century: it tells how Robin, harassed by fifteen foresters, shoots them down in what seems an orgy of self-defence. Even the people of Nottingham are badly hurt as they chase the young hero, and there seems to be a *grand guignol* relish about the fact that in the process *Some lost legs, and some lost arms* (line 67). There is no sign that the ballad was meant to be read as grotesque or ironic, and it remained popular in the garlands. It harks back to the violent anti-forester spirit of *Johnie Cock* (which Child carefully placed just before the Robin Hood ballads) and has similarities in that way with the conflict between Robin and Guy of Gisborne.

The language and rhyme suggest this is a fairly old ballad, quite possibly of sixteenth-century origin as the Sloane *Life* would suggest, though it was presumably produced in prequel mode as a way of explaining how Robin became an outlaw, quite different from the gentrified explanations that he was over-generous (Grafton and Parker) or simply had clerical enemies (Munday). In this respect this ballad shows the multiple character of the tradition, and that the earlier severity of the outlaw survived in contrast to more sophisticated versions. The garlands of 1663 and 1670 print somewhat gentrified pieces like *Robin Hood and Queen Catherine* (Child no. 145) alongside this ballad's powerful assertion of how a social bandit can be created by the violent malice of the agents of law.

Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham

Robin Hood hee was and a tall young man,

fit (strong)

Derry derry down

And fifteen winters old,

And Robin Hood he was a proper young man,

5 Of courage stout and bold.

Hey down derry derry down.

Robin Hood he would and to fair Nottingham,

With the general for to dine;

To eat with the people

There was he ware of fifteen forresters,

10 And a drinking bear, ale, and wine.

beer

"What news? What news?" said bold Robin Hood;

"What news, fain wouldest thou know?

Our king hath provided a shooting-match,

And I'm ready with my bow."

15 "We ho'd it in scorn," then said the forresters,

bold

"That ever a boy so young

Should bear a bow before our king,

That's not able to draw one string."

20 "I'll hold you twenty marks," said bold Robin Hood,

bet

"By the leave of Our Lady,

That I'll hit a mark a hundred rod,

And I'll cause a hart to dye."

25 "We'll hold you twenty mark," then said the forresters,

"By the leave of Our Lady,

Thou hitst not the marke a hundred rod,

Nor causest a hart to dye."

Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham

Robin Hood he beat up a noble bow,
And a broad arrow he let flye,
He hit the mark a hundred rod,
30 And he caused a hart to dy.

broad-headed
550 yards

Some said hee brake ribs one or two,
And some said hee brake three;
The arrow within the hart would not abide,
But it glanced in two or three.

35 The hart did skip, and the hart did leap,
And the hart lay on the ground.
"The wager is mine," said bold Robin Hood,
"If's were for a thousand pound."

40 "The wager's none of thine," then said the foresters,
"Although thou beest in haste;
Take up thy bow, and get thee hence,
Lest wee thy sides do baste."

baste

45 Robin Hood hee took up his noble bow,
And his broad arrows all amain,
And Robin Hood he laugh, and began to smile,
As hee went over the plain.

strongly

Then Robin Hood he bent his noble bow,
And his broad arrows he let flye,
Till fourteen of these fifteen foresters
50 Upon the ground did lye.

He that did this quarrel first begin,
Went tripping over the plain,
But Robin Hood he bent his noble bow,
And hee fecht him back again.

hurrying

55 "You said I was no archer," said Robin Hood,
"But say so now again."
With that he sent another arrow
That split his head in twain.

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- 60 "You have found mee an archer," saith Robin Hood,
 "Which will make your wives for to wring,
 And wish that you had never spoke the word,
 That I could not draw one string."

The people that lived in fair Nottingham
Came runing out amain,
Supposing to have taken bold Robin Hood,
With the foresters that were slain.

Some lost legs, and some lost arms,
And some did lose their blood,
But Robin Hood hee took up his noble bow,
And is gone to the merry green wood.

They carried these foresters into fair Nottingham,
As many there did know:
They digd them graves in their church-yard,
And they buried them all a row.



Notes

- 1 The Forresters text opens strangely with the line "Randolph kept Robin fifteen winters." It is hard to believe this is the Randolph, Earle of Chester, mentioned in *Piers Plowman* as appearing in "rhymes" with (or against) Robin, yet there seems no other link between the names. Perhaps the literary interests evident elsewhere in Forresters inspire a rationalization of the *Piers Plowman* reference, just as *Robin Hood and Will Scarlet* seems to rationalize the link between Gamelyn and the king of the outlaws.
- 7 It is not clear where Robin is coming from. The implication is that the end of the ballad is when he takes to the forest for the first time, so he must be coming to Nottingham from one of the surrounding villages, presumably those to the north, adjacent to or even within Sherwood forest.
- 11-14 The number of the speakers in this stanza is, according to Child, unclear. He feels that Robin speaks the first and last line, and the foresters the middle two lines, though he admits in his notes it is unlikely "in an older ballad" to have "three speeches in one stanza" (III, 177). But as he places this ballad fairly late, he presumably feels his punctuation is correct. In fact it seems quite improbable. There is no difficulty with Robin speaking the whole stanza, informing the foresters that there is news, and what it is.
- 15 The earliest text reads *ho'd*, a dialectal form of "bold."
- 21 A hundred rod, or five hundred and fifty yards, is about the limit of possible archery skills in the early ballads, especially for a fifteen year old. In the Forresters MS, no mark is mentioned, just the *bar*, which is clearer.
- 28 The broad-headed arrow is used for felling sizeable game, including men. Robin is heavily armed for a shooting-match.
- 39 Characteristic of Forresters' literary tone is "thou dost provoke us," the Forresters' response instead of the colloquial *The wager's none of thine*.

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54

Presumably the text means that Robin stopped his flight with a near miss, made him run in the other direction back towards his dead colleagues, and then killed him.



Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men

Introduction

This ballad has many slightly different versions, some of which show the influence of other Robin Hood ballads. Such a complex set of overlapping texts is common in the case of the "big" ballads like *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight* or *Clerk Saunders* but unusual in the Robin Hood tradition. As a result, the title of this ballad itself is not easy to fix: Child calls it *Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires*, but only in some versions are the potential victims called squires. In others they are the widow's three sons or three brothers, and sometimes they are Robin's own men. The essence of the ballad is that Robin disguises himself as the hangman in order to rescue wrongfully condemned men, and a general title, *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*, seems the best.

The ballad is found in a much damaged form in Percy's folio MS and the base text here is the earliest full version, found in an eighteenth-century garland; though the Percy version is a little different it only covers two incidents in a fairly long ballad, and while these are useful for collation and emendation, it would be inappropriate and require substantial editorial invention to link those episodes into the other text. The story clearly goes back some way; this is the only substantial borrowing from the ballad tradition to appear in Munday's *The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington*, of 1598–99, where the rescue is of Scathelock and Scarlet, Robin's men and sons of Widow Scarlet. In that and in other versions of the ballad there seems some link between this old woman and the one who changes clothes with Robin for his protection in *Robin Hood and the Bishop*. On his way to rescue the young men Robin usually changes clothes with a beggar, in a scene that resembles one from *Robin Hood and the Beggar I* (Child, III, 157, see stanzas 16–18), though there the Beggar then becomes a worthy opponent in a "Robin Hood meets his match" structure.

The ballad, though recorded late in full form, appears to have a direct style likely to derive from the early seventeenth century at the latest: rhyme is reasonably accurate but not over-precise, diction is colloquial and direct with no sign of bookish invention. There is a good deal of repetition with change (lines 13–20, 37–48) as well as a good deal of rhetorical repetition (lines 73–74, 77–79, 89–92), both of which suggest an oral context of some kind. This is also a strong story of quick and decisive action, where Robin moves between the widow, the beggar, and the sheriff

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with speedy confidence. The ballad has the dramatic flavor of the earliest texts, and at least some of their sense of social conflict; the outlaws' real threat to bad authority is suggested when they move the gallows from the town to hang the sheriff in the glen, their own territory, where he has done his damage.

Uncolaborate but highly effective, *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men* is clearly one of the more strongly popular of the mainstream outlaw ballads, and its multiplicity and manifold changes indicate how close it remained to the popular voice, rather than, like some others, becoming set in a literary form.



Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men

There are twelve months in all the year,
As I hear many men say,
But the merriest month in all the year
Is the merry month of May.

5 Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met a silly old woman,
Was weeping on the way.

(see note)

10 "What news? what news, thou silly old woman?
What news hast thou for me?"
Said she, "There's three squires in Nottingham town
To-day is condemned to die."

15 "O have they parishes burnt?" he said,
"Or have they ministers slain?
Or have they robbed any virgin,
Or with other men's wives have lain?"

20 "They have no parishes burnt, good sir,
Nor yet have ministers slain,
Nor have they robbed any virgin,
Nor with other men's wives have lain."

"O what have they done?" said bold Robin Hood
"I pray thee tell to me."
"It's for slaying of the king's fallow deer,
Bearing their long bows with thee."

25 "Dost thou not mind, old woman," he said,
"Since thou made me sup and dine?

remember

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By the truth of my body," quoth bold Robin Hood,
"You could not tell it in better time."

remind me of it

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met with a silly old palmer,
Was walking along the highway.

pilgrim

"What news? what news, thou silly old man?
What news, I do thee pray?"
Said he, "Three squires in Nottingham town
Are condemnd to die this day."

"Come change thy apparel with me, old man,
Come change thy apparel for mine;
Here is forty shillings in good silver,
Go drink it in beer or wine."

"O thine apparel is good," he said,
"And mine is ragged and torn;
Wherever you go, wherever you ride,
Laugh neer an old man to scorn."

Never laugh

"Come change thy apparel with me, old churl,
Come change thy apparel with mine;
Here are twenty pieces of good broad gold,
Go feast thy brethren with wine."

Then he put on the old man's hat,
It stood full high on the crown:
"The first bold bargain that I come at,
It shall make thee come down."

dispute (fight)

Then he put on the old man's cloak,
Was patchd black, blaw, and red;
He thought no shame all the day long
To bear the bags of bread.

Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men

Then he put on the old man's breeches,
Was patch'd from ballup to side:

*breeches
groat*

"By the truth of my body," bold Robin can say,
"This man lowd little pride."

60

Then he put on the old man's hose,
Were patch'd from knee to waist:
"By the truth of my body," said bold Robin Hood,
"I'd laugh if I had any list."

wish [to do so]

65

Then he put on the old man's shoes,
Were patch'd both beneath and above,
Then Robin Hood swore a solemn oath,
"It's good habit that makes a man."

on top

70

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a down,
And there he met with the proud sheriff,
Was walking along the town.

"O save, O save, O sherrif," he said,
"O save, and you may see!"

God save [you]

75

And what will you give to a silly old man
To-day will your hangman be?"

"Some suits, some suits," the sheriff he said,
"Some suits I'll give to thee;
Some suits, some suits, and pence thirteen
To-day's a hangman's fee."

80

Then Robin he turns him round about,
And jumps from stock to stone.
"By the truth of my body," the sheriff he said,
"That's well jumpt, thou nimble old man."

85

"I was neer a hangman in all my life,
Nor yet intends to trade,
But carst be he," said bold Robin,
"That first a hangman was made."

never

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90 "I've a bag for meal, and a bag for malt,
And a bag for barley and corn,
A bag for bread, and a bag for beef,
And a bag for my little small horn.

95 "I have a horn in my pocket,
I got it from Robin Hood,
And still when I set it to my mouth,
For thee it blows little good."

100 "O wind thy horn, thou proud fellow,
Of thee I have no doubt;
I wish that thou give such a blast,
Till both thy eyes fly out."

The first loud blast that he did blow,
He blew both loud and shrill;
A hundred and fifty of Robin Hood's men
Came riding over the hill.

105 The next loud blast that he did give,
He blew both loud and a main,
And quickly sixty of Robin Hood's men
Came shining over the plain.

110 "O who are you," the sheriff he said,
"Come tripping over the lee?"
"They're my attendants," brave Robin did say,
"They'll pay a visit to thee."

115 They took the gallows from the slack,
They set it in the glen.
They hangd the proud sheriff on that,
Releas'd their own three men.

fear

strongly

shining (harrying)

*town common
valley*

Notes

- 1-4 This is very close to the stanza found at the beginning of *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield*. It may have been a chorus in sung versions, referring to the late Maytime connections of Robin Hood activities.
- 7 The word *silly* here has resonances of its meaning as OE *saelig*, simple, blessed; modern British English "poor old" transmits the sense fairly accurately. See *Robin Hood and the Bishop* for another instance of Robin's alliance with an old widow.
- 24 In this version, as in a number of others, the young men, though called *squires* (line 35), are associates of Robin and his band.
- 31 A palmer is technically a pilgrim who has been to Jerusalem and so wears either a palm leaf or a badge representing a palm.
- 39 Forty shillings is a very substantial sum equivalent to many weeks' work; elsewhere Robin offers a noble (six shillings and eightpence) as a fee for joining his band.
- 56 The text reads *To wear the bags of bread*. One later text emphasizes the shame by adding the adjective *poor* before *bags*, and Child accepts *poor*: this seems unnecessary, partly because it is obviously an addition and also because it disrupts the meter. Child retains *wear*, but it seems hard to grasp how Robin, or the beggar, would actually "wear" the bags of bread, even if they are secreted in his old cloak. Later on it seems as if they are evident, lines 89-92. Emendation to *bear* seems sensible, better than imagining that *wear* means "carry."
- 68 This is similar to the remark made by Robin, equally ironically, when John plays the bishop in *Robin Hood and Allin a Dole*. Ideas about authenticity and pretence recur in the tradition and can be taken as the thematic version of disguise as a plot-motif.

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- 76 This is the disguise motif, but here Robin is not just a harper or a potter — he is actually accepted as an agent of town authority, so the motif strengthens into one of infiltration.
- 77 It was traditional for the executioner to receive the clothes of the condemned person.
- 89–92 This stanza is very similar to stanza 18 of *Robin Hood and the Beggar I* (Child no. 133); Child thought that what he called *Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires* was the source of the influence, which extends to plot in the later part of *Robin Hood and the Beggar I*, III, 156.
- 93–94 The statement is parallel to the claim of the pseudo-potter in *Robin Hood and the Potter* that he received his bow from Robin Hood. It seems that there is a kind of mythic presence of the outlaw before his real presence is revealed; this meshes with the common proverbial utterances about him, his mysterious strength and ubiquity.
- 96 The text reads *For me* which seems hard to understand; Child emends to *thee* and this is accepted.
- 100 Child emends *fly* to "fall," which seems unnecessary.
- 109 The text reads *O who are you?* Child emends to *who are you*, feeling that Robin cannot really be part of the new arrivals. It is true that *yon* is the reading of the later texts and the two letters are often confused. Yet *who are yon* is a strange remark, and it is quite possible to make sense of the original reading, in that the sheriff suddenly realizes the supposed hangman has allies. The text is not emended here.
- 111 Child prints *The're my attendants* as in the source, but the substitution of *the* for *they* must at this late date be an error rather than a dialect variant; the text needs to be emended to *They're*.
- 113 This curious detail seems to relate to the common idea that criminals should be hanged at the site of their crimes, and so the sheriff is hanged on the outlaw's territory. More generally, taking away the gallows, like providing the hangman, is a blow at the whole system of oppressive law, expressing the elusive capacity of the outlaws, and their own form of justice.

Little John a Begging

Introduction

Little John a Begging appears in the Percy folio in a form too damaged by torn pages to be used as the basis for a text, but the earliest broadside is of a similar date as it was printed for William Gilbertson, who was active between 1640 and 1663. This text describes it as a "merry new song" (line 86) and while broadside publishers were not above claiming modernity for something borrowed, it does have the characteristics of a new creation. Both the internal rhyme in the third line and the stylistic fluency argue against antiquity, the refrain line "With a hey down down a down down" is common to many of the mid-century ballads, and the plot appears to be a composite of earlier narratives, focused for a change on Little John. This ballad appears towards the end of the Forresters manuscript and is one of the late texts apparently related, with some minor variations to the 1670 garland, so it has the curious status of apparently having been twice copied in manuscript from print.

The story opens with John being sent to beg for the outlaws in a palmer's clothes (reminiscent of *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*, including the "bag" motif in lines 12-17). He meets beggars who claim poverty as do the monks met by outlaws in earlier ballads; he finds in their bags two lots of gold in hundreds of pounds, and the outlaws celebrate their new wealth. The plot is simple, and its only added complexity is the idea of false beggars who pretend to be dumb, blind, and crippled. The notion is found as early as Langland's *Piers Plowman* and its exposure of "faitors," but it has a contemporary ring in its critique of "sturdy beggars." A different formation lies in the idea that the hero can disguise himself as a beggar; this is central to the popular ballad "Hind Horn" (Child, no. 17, 1965, I, 202-07), Robin Hood does it in *Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires*, and William Wallace does the same in a major episode in the late fifteenth-century epic that bears his name. A recurring structural feature is that the outlaws disguise themselves to expose the falsity of their enemies, with Robin appearing as a friar in *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*, and as a shepherd in *Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford*. In one sense John plays a tradesman (at the "begging-trade," line 66) with the same success as Robin had playing potter, or butcher, or even sailor, and yet these beggars are morally corrupt in a way that the mercantile figures whom Robin imitated were not. In this case the polymorphic capacity of the hero is an instrument of his power of social evaluation: like Hamlet he pretends only to expose pretense.

Little John a Begging

All you that delight to spend some time
With a hey down down a down down
A merry song for to sing.
Unto me draw neer, and you shall hear
How Little John went a begging.

5 As Robin Hood walked the forrest along,
And all his yeomandree,
Sayes Robin, "Some of you must a begging go,
And Little John, it must be thee."

10 Sayes John, "If I must a begging go,
I will have a palmers weed,
With a staff and a coat, and bags of all sort,
The better then shall I speed.

15 "Come give me now a bag for my bread,
And another for my cheese,
And one for a penny, when as I get any,
That nothing I may leese."

20 Now Little John he is a begging gone,
Seeking for some relief,
But of all the beggars he met on the way,
Little John he was the chief.

25 But as he was walking himself alone
Four beggars he chanced to spy,
Some deaf and some blind, and some came behind:
Says John, "Here's brave company!"

yeomanry (men)

pilgrim's clothing

lose

Little John a Begging

"Good morrow," said John, "my brethren dear,
Good fortune I had you to see;
Which way do you go? Pray let me know,
For I want some company.

- 30 "O what is here to do?" then said Little John.
"Why rings all these bells?" said he.
"What dog is a-hanging? Come let us be ganging, *let us go*
That we the truth may see."
- 35 "Here is no dog a-hanging," then one of them said,
"Good fellow, we tell unto thee;
But here is one dead wil give us cheese and bread, *Even if*
And it may be one single penny."
- 40 "We have brethren in London," another he said,
"So have we in Coventry,
In Barwick and Dover, and all the world over,
But nere a crookt carril like thee. *crooked charl*
- 45 "Therefore stand thee back, thou crooked carel,
And take that knock on the crown." *head*
"Nay," said Little John, "I'le not yet be gone,
For a bout will I have with you round.
- 50 "Now have at you all," then said Little John,
"If you be so full of your blows;
Fight on all four, and nere give ore, *never; over*
Whether you be friends or foes."
- 55 John nipped the dumb, and made him to roar,
And the blind that could not see,
And he that a cripple had been seven years,
He made him run faster then he.

And flinging them all against the wall,
With many a sturdie bang.
It made John sing, to hear the gold ring,
Which against the walls cryed "Twang."

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- Then he got out of the beggars cloak
Three hundred pound in gold.
- 60 "Good fortune had I," then said Little John.
"Such a good sight to behold."
- But what found he in a beggars bag,
But three hundred pound and three?
"If I drink water while this doth last,
65 Then an ill death may I dye!
- "And my begging-trade I will now give o're,
My fortune hath bin so good,
Therefore I'le not stay, but I will away,
To the Forrest of merry Sherwood."
- 70 And when to the Forrest of Sherwood he came,
He quickly there did see,
His master good, bold Robin Hood,
And all his company.
- 75 "What news? What news?" then said Robin Hood,
"Come, Little John, tell unto me,
How hast thou sped with thy beggars trade?
For that I fain would see."
- 80 "No news but good," then said Little John,
"With begging ful wel I have sped;
Six hundred and three I have here for thee,
In silver and gold so red."
- Then Robin took Little John by the hand
And danced about the oak tree.
"If we drink water while this doth last,
85 Then an ill death may we die!"
- So to conclude my merry new song,
All you that delight it to sing,
Tis of Robin Hood, that archer good,
And how Little John went a begging.

Notes

- 8 No other ballad shows the outlaws directly begging for money; in the *Gest* Robin orders his men off to seek money by robbery, but it seems unlikely that they would demean themselves by begging. The improbability of this opening is dictated by the later action in which John the false beggar exposes even faker beggars, but this forced quality is not found in the earlier ballads, which open with dramatic but inherently credible sequences.
- 11 The wording here closely resembles that of *Robin Hood Rescues Three Young Men*, 89–92; this is not so clearly the case in the version in the Percy Folio and some cross-influence in the London broadside industry appears to have occurred.
- 23 There are three beggars in the Percy version, not four; later in this ballad when Little John deals with them separately, only three are identified, see lines 50–53.
- 31 Little John pretends to hear bells ringing when, as becomes clear (and as he presumably has guessed), it is the coins he hears jingling in the coat pockets and bags.
- 38 In addition to London, the beggars mention two towns at opposite ends of England (Berwick in the north and Dover in the south) and Coventry in the midlands.
- 41 The "beggars" call John a crooked carril, or churl, because he is stooping in disguise; like them he is pretending to be physically disabled.
- 48 *new*. The version in the 1663 garland has "never" in this line, which is perhaps metrically better, but this does not seem good enough reason to emend.
- 53 Wood's text reads "them," as if John makes all three beggars run, but the sense is sharper if "him," the reading of the 1663 and 1670 garlands and that of Child,

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is accepted, as then John makes each of the beggars breach his previous pretence.

- 59 At a time when, it has been estimated, a craftsman earned three pounds a year, these are unimaginably large sums of money, perhaps equivalent to the astronomical "street value" quoted today for drugs impounded by police.
- 64 John's humorous oath, repeated by Robin at line 84, swears never to drink water until all the money is expended.
- 76 John's success at the "beggars trade" is reminiscent of Robin's as a potter or a butcher, and even John's as the sheriff's yeoman in the *Gest*. The outlaws expose the corrupt or improper nature of a trade and also make huge profits.
- 80 Both the 1663 and 1670 garlands read "Three hundred and three" but this must be an error as John collects two sums adding up to six hundred and three.



Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage

Introduction

This ballad was moderately well-known, with three versions surviving from the seventeenth century, that in the Roxburghe collection (dated by Wing at 1681-84) seeming earlier than the two collected by Pepys, and therefore the basis for this text. It appeared in three eighteenth-century collections before Ritson, but is not included in the early garlands, which may suggest it is less than fully popular in its distribution. That accords with its character: it is patently a literary confection, and unlike the author of *Robin Hood and Queen Catherin* the composer has wandered well outside the Robin Hood tradition for materials. The final reference to the King and the national hope for heirs appears to locate it soon after the Restoration in 1660 when there was a good deal of activity in constructing new forms of the Robin Hood tradition, as in *Robin Hood and His Crew of Souldiers*, the 1662 *Life*, and what appears to be the first of the garlands from 1663.

The title alone suggests an overview close to the gentrified tradition of heroic biography, but the ballad is actually less grand than its title might suggest. Robin has gentry connection, in that he is the nephew of Squire Gamwell of Gamwell Hall — a connection to be made much of in the lengthy development of the Victorian novel, especially Pierce Egan the Younger's *Robin Hood and Little John* (1840). Yet Squire George is a robust character, who could hardly be accused of gentrification, even though he comes from the gentry. He resembles Fielding's Squire Western in this, and another character projects a similar surprising rural directness. Robin has the good fortune to meet and instantly become engaged to a woman from the realms of pastoral, Clorinda the Queen of the Shepherdesses. But although she resembles Ben Jonson's Maid Marian (from *The Sad Shepherd*) in being a serious hunter, there is a direct quality to her instant agreement to marriage and her felling a buck, and also in her glee at the Tutbury Christmas fair — not to mention her shout to her forest lover as he has just killed five foresters:

The bumpkins are beaten, put up thy sword, Bob,
And now let's dance into the town. (179-80)

The same vigorous eclecticism infects the author's assemblage of material. After two

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relatively familiar opening stanzas, Robin's father is introduced, to be instantly supplanted by a flood of characters from parallel traditions (the Pinder of Wakefield, already connected to Robin in a famous ballad), and the Cumberland outlaws Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudeslie, whose ballad was popular through the period. From further off he brings Robin's mother's uncle, Sir Guy of Warwick, from medieval romance and popular tradition. And then there is the question of the origin of the name Gamwell. As has been discussed in the context of *Robin Hood and Will Scarlet* (see p. 499) this may well have been another parallel outlaw story which simply becomes entangled in various ways with the Robin Hood story, much as that of Owein, Yvain, or Ywain did with the Arthur saga. After this improbably wide-ranging presentation of characters comes a brisk story in a highly competent style which celebrates the jovial squire and especially the bold, entrancing Clorinda, dark of hair and quick to shoot. But there is also rough action and comedy: Robin and John kill five of the eight foresters and then all involved enjoy the direct pleasures of the Tutbury Christmas fair, including the now defunct English market town sport of bull-running.

Tutbury, in Staffordshire, is in just the region of the Robin Hood riot that broke out in Walsall in 1497 (Knight, 1994, p. 108), and there are indications that this ballad is concocted with some local reference. The emphasis on specific personal names in lines 185–96 and at line 215 suggest that this ensemble of styles and stories is also locally connected, much as the nineteenth-century pantomimes, with just the same range of transgressiveness, also focus at times on local personalities and events.

Child found this ballad "jocular" (1965, III, 214), and while purists might frown at the mixed nature of its materials and tone, it has an undeniable vigor, not unlike some of the crass but energetic outlaw films of this century. It is particularly interesting that here, as in *Robin Hood and Queen Catherin*, some elements of gentrification are visible, yet the ballad as a whole lacks the constraint and the conservatism of that part of the tradition. While respectability was closing about some elements of the outlaw myth, the tricksterish and carnival forces that so often energize the material are seen, here at least, to be a good match for the forces of respectability: in later versions of this ballad the King offers Robin a place at court but, in the spirit of the *Gest*, he refuses.

Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage

Kind gentlemen, will you be patient awhile?

Ay, and then you shall hear a

at once

A very good ballad of bold Robin Hood,
And of his man, brave Little John.

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

10 The father of Robin a forrester was,
And he shot in a lusty long bow,
Two north country miles and an inch at a shot,
As the Pinder of Wakefield does know.

15 For he brought Adam Bell, and Clim of the Clugh,
And William a Clowdeslé
To shoot with our forrester for forty mark,
And the forrester beat them all three.

His mother was neece to the Coventry knight,
Which Warwickshire men call Sir Guy,
For he slew the blue bore that hangs up at the gate,
Or mine host of The Bull tells a lye.

20 Her brother was Gamwel, of Great Gamwel Hall,
And a noble house-keeper was he,
Ay, as ever broke bread in sweet Nottinghamshire,
And a squire of famous degree.

social status

25 The mother of Robin said to her husband,
"My honey, my love, and my dear,

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Let Robin and I ride this morning to Gamwel,
To taste of my brothers good cheer."

30 And he said, "I grant thee thy boon, gentle Joan,
Take one of my horses, I pray;
The sun is a rising, and therefore make haste,
For tomorrow is Christmas-day."

Then Robin Hoods fathers grey gelding was brought,
And saddled and bridled was he;
35 God wot, a blew bonnet, his new suit of cloaths,
And a cloak that did reach to his knee.

She got on her holiday kirtle and gown,
They were of a light Lincoln green.
The cloath was homespun, but for colour and make
40 It might a beseemed our queen.

have sauted

And then Robin got on his basket-hilt sword,
And his dagger on his tother side,
And said, "My dear mother, let's haste to be gone,
We have forty long miles to ride."

other

45 When Robin had mounted his gelding so grey,
His father, without any trouble,
Set her up behind him, and bad her not fear,
For his gelding had oft carried double.

50 And when she was settled, they rode to their neighbours,
And drank and shook hands with them all.
And then Robin gallopt and never gave ore,
Til they lighted at Gamwell Hall.

stopped

55 And now you may think the right worshipful squire
Was joyful his sister to see,
For he kist her and kist her, and swore a great oath,
"Thou art welcome, kind sister, to me."

Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage

To-morrow, when mass had been said in the chapel,
Six tables were coverd in the hall,
And in comes the squire and makes a short speech,
It was "Neighbours, you're welcome all.

60 "But not a man here shall taste my March beer,
Till a Christmas carrol be sung."
Then all clapt their hands, and they shosted and sung,
Till the hall and the parlour did ring.

65 Now mustards, braun, roast beef and plumb pies
Were set upon every table,
And noble George Gamwell said, "Eat and be merry,
And drink, too, as long as you're able."

boar flesh

70 When dinner was ended, his chaplain said grace,
And "Be merry, my friends," said the squire,
"It rains and it blows, but call for more ale,
And lay some more wood on the fire.

75 "And now call ye Little John hither to me,
For Little John is a fine lad
At gambols and juggling and twenty such tricks
As shall make you merry and glad."

80 When Little John came, to gambols they went,
Both gentlemen, yeomen and clown;
And what do you think? Why as true as I live
Bold Robin Hood put them all down.

yokel

And now you may think the right worshipful squire
Was joyful this sight for to see,
For he said, "Cousin Robin, thou'st go no more home,
But tarry and dwell here with me.

85 "Thou shalt have my land when I dye and till then
Thou shalt be the staff of my age."
"Then grant me my boon, dear uncle," said Robin,
"That Little John may be my page."

assistant

Later Ballads

90 And he said, "Kind cousin, I grant thee thy boos,
With all my heart, so let it be."
"Then come hither, Little John," said Robin Hood
"Come hither, my page unto me.

"Go fetch me my bow, my longest long bow,
And broad arrows, one, two, or three,
95 For when it is fair weather we'll into Sherwood,
Some merry pastime to see."

When Robin Hood came into merry Sherwood
He winded his bugle so clear,
100 And twice five and twenty good yeomen and bold
Before Robin Hood did appear.

New

"Where are your companions all?" said Robin Hood,
"For still I want forty and three."
Then said a bold yeoman, "Lo, yonder they stand,
All under a green wood tree."

105 As that word was spoke, Clorinda came by,
The queen of the shepherds was she,
And her gown was of velvet as green as the grass,
And her buskin did reach to her knee.

high boot

110 Her gait it was graceful, her body was straight,
And her countenance free from pride;
A bow in her hand, and quiver and arrows
Hung dangling by her sweet side.

Her eye-brows were black, ay and so was her hair,
And her skin was as smooth as glass;
115 Her visage spoke wisdom, and modesty too:
Sets with Robin Hood such a lass.

Saint

120 Said Robin Hood, "Lady fair, whither away?
Oh whither, fair lady, away?"
And she made him answer, "To kill a fat buck,
For tomorrow is Titbury day."

Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage

Said Robin Hood "Lady fair, wander with me
A little to yonder green bower;
There sit down to rest you, and you shall be sure
Of a brace or a lease in an hour."

two or three

- 125 And as we were going towards the green bower
Two hundred good bucks we espy'd;
She chose out the fattest that was in the herd
And she shot him through side and side.

- 130 "By the faith of my body," said bold Robin Hood,
"I never saw woman like thee;
And comst thou from east, ay, or comst thou from west,
Thou needst not beg venison of me.

- "However, along to my bower you shall go,
And taste of a foresters meat."
135 And when we come thither, we found as good cheer
As any man needs for to eat.

- For there was hot venison and warden pies cold,
Cream-clouted with honey-combs plenty.¹
And the savitors they were, beside Little John,
140 Good yeomen at least four and twenty.

- Clorinda said, "Tell me your name, gentle sir."
And he said, "'Tis bold Robin Hood;
Squire Gamwel's my uncle, but all my delight
Is to dwell in the merry Sherwood.

- 145 "For 'tis a fine life, and 'tis void of all strife."
"So 'tis sir," Clorinda reply'd.
"But oh," said bold Robin, "how sweet would it be,
If Clorinda would be my bride!"

¹ cold pear pies / With clotted cream and honey

Later Ballads

She blushed at the notion, yet after a pause
150 Said, "Yes, sir, and with all my heart."
"Then let's send for a priest," said Robin Hood
"And be married before we do part."

But she said, "It may not be so, gentle sir,
For I must be at Titbury feast;
155 And if Robin Hood will go thither with me,
I'll make him the most welcome guest."

Said Robin Hood, "Reach me that buck, Little John,
For I'll go along with my dear;
Bid my yeomen kill six brace of bucks,
160 And meet me tomorrow just here." pales

Before we had ridden five Staffordshire miles
Eight yeomen, that were too bold,
Bid Robin Hood stand and deliver his buck:
A true tale never was told.

165 "I will not, faith," said bold Robin. "Come, John,
Stand to me and we'll beat 'em all."
Then both drew their swords, and so cut em and slasht em,
That five of them did fall.

170 The three that remaind callid to Robin for quarter,
And pitiful John beggd their lives; merciful
When John's boon was granted, he gave them counsel,
And so sent them home to their wives.

This battle was fought near to Titbury town,
When the bagpipes bated the bull; teased
175 I am king of the fiddlers and sware't is a truth,
And I call him that doubts it a gull. fool

180 For I saw them fighting, and fiddl the while,
And Clorinda sung, "Hey derry down!
The bumpkins are beaten, put up thy sword, Bob,
And now let's dance into the town."

Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage

Before we came to it we heard a strange shouting,
And all that were in it lookd madly,
For some were a bell-back, some dancing a morris,
And some singing Arthur-a-Bradly.

- 185 And there we see Thomas, our justices clerk,
And Mary, to whom he was kind;
For Tom rode before her and callid Mary "Madam"
And kist her full sweetly behind.
- 190 And so may your worships. But we went to dinner,
With Thomas and Mary and Nan;
They all drank a health to Clorinda and told her
Bold Robin Hood was a fine man.
- When dinner was ended, Sir Roger, the parson
Of Dubbridge, was sent for in haste;
- 195 He brought his mass-book and he bade them take hands,
And he joyned them in marriage full fast.
- And then, as bold Robin Hood and his sweet bride
Went hand in hand to the green bower,
The birds sung with pleasure in merry Sherwood,
200 And 'twas a most joyful hour.
- And when Robin came in the sight of the bower,
"Where are my yeoman?" said he.
And Little John answered "Lo, yonder they stand,
All under the green wood tree."
- 205 Then a garland they brought her, by two and by two,
And plac'd them at the bride's bed;
The music struck up, and we all fell to dance,
Til the bride and the groom were a-bed.
- 210 And what they did there must be counsel to me,
Because they lay long the next day,
And I had haste home, but I got a good piece
Of the bride-cake, and so came away.

kept secret by me

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- Now out, alas! I had forgotten to tell ye
That marryd they were with a ring;
215 And so will Nan Knight, or be buried a maiden,
And now let us pray for the king:

That he may get children, and they may get more,
To govern and do us some good;
And then I'll make ballads in Robin Hood's bower
220 And sing 'em in merry Sherwood.



Notes

- 5 *Locksly* is here located in Nottinghamshire, which does not seem historically to be an option. Near Sheffield in Yorkshire is the usual location for this place which the Sloane *Life*, c. 1600, is the first to link to the hero, but it does also mention other possible origins for the hero in Nottinghamshire which may have led to the error here.
- 11 Two miles and an inch is, according to Child, the longest of the feats of archery in the Robin Hood tradition: he comments on this in his "Index of Matters and Literature" (1965, V, 471), under the rubric "not to be taken seriously."
- 12 The Pinder did not in fact meet Robin's father in the ballad bearing his name. It is not clear if "he" in the next line refers to the Pinder or to Robin's father; it hardly seems important in this fast moving piece of name-juggling.
- 18 Sir Guy of Warwick is the hero of a major medieval romance, but he also became well-known in less elevated forms and continued to appear in chap-book stories into the nineteenth century.
- 21 For Gamwell see the discussion of *Robin Hood and Will Scarlet*; this family name came, through the mediation of Peacock in *Maid Marian*, into the mainstream of the Victorian novel. It plays a major part in Pierce Egan's 1840 *Robin Hood and Little John* and also in Alexandre Dumas's *Robin Hood, Prince des Voleurs* of 1872.
- 32 The fact that it is Christmas Eve marks a strong departure from the normal Robin Hood tradition; this is a festive Christmas ballad, not an early summer adventure.
- 35 Unusual and quite pantomime-like in effect is the fact that Robin wears light blue and his mother Lincoln green. The elements of the outlaw ballads are no longer understood, but are being deployed for merely theatrical effect.

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- 41 *basket-hilt sword*. A sword with an openwork metal protection for the hand around the hilt.
- 61 *March beer*. According to the OED, a strong beer brewed in March; it would be especially strong by Christmas, as here.
- 62 Child emends *be sung* to "he sing," but this is in none of the texts and seems unnecessary.
- 65 The Roxburghe text reads *Mustards, brawn*, but Child accepts the Pepys texts which read "Mustard and brawn." This seems a false simplification, however, because the mustard would have been served with both the brawn (pork roast) and the roast beef and so should not be linked to the brawn by "and."
- 78 Child follows the Pepys texts with "gentleman, yeoman" but Roxburghe's plural makes good sense, and there seems no reason to emend.
- 97 There is no explanation of why Robin might have all these yeomen in Sherwood forest, since he is a respectable member of local gentry society.
- 105 Clorinda, or Clarinda, becomes a favorite name for Robin's partner in the moderately gentrified ballad operas of the eighteenth century.
- 108 The *baskin* is the chopine or high-heeled knee boot which was associated with tragic plays; it is a mark of Clorinda's dignity.
- 118 Child prefers "O" from the Pepys texts, but there seems no reason to emend Roxburghe's *Oh*.
- 119-20 The fierce skill Clorinda displays here is not unlike the dedicated hunting of Maid Marian in Ben Jonson's *The Sad Shepherd*.
- 120 *Titbury day*. The annual celebration and fair day at Titbury.
- 125 *we*. The ballad apparently is being sung by a local bard in the company of the foresters (an Allin a Dale type?), who joins in the feast (line 135). Later, in line 175, he claims to be *king of the fiddlers*, who saw it all. The first-person device such as this is unusual in the ballads. See note to line 175.

Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage

- 149 All the existing texts have "motion" which Child retains. However, this reading seems most improbable, and the obvious emendation is notion.
- 152 Roxburghhe reads "be merry," but the Pepys texts' *be married* seems to make much more sense in the context of the priest in the previous line.
- 159 Child prefers to start the line with "Go" as in the Pepys texts, but this seems both unnecessary and, with go in the previous line, clumsy.
- 161 The implication might be that Staffordshire miles, like Irish miles, might be unusually long, though this is not recorded elsewhere; when "Staffordshire" is used as a colloquial epithet it usually refers to blows with a club, or staff, as in "Staffordshire Law," martial or directly violent law. It is conceivable that the phrase here suggests "very dangerous miles."
- 171 Child prints "good" from the Pepys texts after *them*, but it seems unnecessary for sense or meter and is, as in the Roxburghhe text, omitted here.
- 175 It is unusual in ballads for the narrator to be so visible (see note to line 125), but this feature appears to fit the eclectic and somewhat art-oriented character of this particular version.
- 184 Arthur-a-Bradly. A popular song about a young hero; may be the same as "Arthur a Bland," the tune of which is thought to have been used for several Robin Hood ballads. See Dobson and Taylor, 1976, p. 166.
- 194 Dubbridge is not a recorded place in Britain; the closest might seem to be Dadbridge in Gloucestershire, but the West Midlands have no real connection with the later Robin Hood tradition. North Yorkshire, on the other hand, is often represented in the myth, and the source here could be a number of Dub-place names in that area such as Dub Cote and Dub Garth. Apart from their credible location, these have the same unusual structure as Dubbridge: dubh is Gaelic for "black" or "dark" and these two names, like Dubbridge, combine the Celtic epithet with a non-Celtic location.
- 205 The Roxburghhe text reads "the" which must at this stage be a compositor's error, not a dialect form of *they*.
- 206 The texts differ in this line: Roxburghhe has the garlands placed at the bride's

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bed, while Pepys has "on the bride's head." The choice is between the awkwardly repeated rhyme in Roxburgh and the rather bizarre idea of Clorinda wearing what seem to be thirty-four garlands on her head. Child prefers the latter, as in a number of other cases selecting Pepys for no good reason. It seems more likely that Pepys is edited for rhyme without remembering how many yeomen there are, rather than that Roxburgh is in error — its clumsiness does in fact make it the harder reading, and is retained here.

- 217 The reference to the king and his hope of heirs would seem to place this soon after the restoration in 1660 when a substantial number of Robin Hood texts of a non-radical character were produced; see the comments in the Introduction to *Robin Hood and his Crew of Souldiers*.



Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow

Introduction

This ballad is not recorded until an eighteenth-century garland, though it was known to the compiler of the Forresters manuscript and is used in *Robyn Hod and the Skyriff*. It describes the archery contest, a favorite episode in the outlaw tradition, found as early as the *Gest*. The question must be whether it is a literary reworking of that source, or a long preserved separate account. Child obviously thinks the former is the case as he says, "The first twenty-three stanzas are based upon the *Gest*, sts 282-95" (i.e., 1127-82, III, 223).

The description of the arrow (lines 26-27) and Robin's response (lines 32-33) certainly seem gaided by the *Gest*, lines 1137-52, but the rest of the story is rather different. In the *Gest* Robin is identified and pursued, Little John is wounded, and the outlaws take refuge in Sir Richard's castle. Here Robin wins, but is not identified, and the outlaws think it is a matter of honor to inform the sheriff of Robin's victory with a message arrow, which makes the sheriff extremely angry. This resembles the way Arthurian romance carefully accords praise to combatants at a tournament, some of whom may have been incognito.

While honor is a fully medieval concept, it seems unlikely that such an actionless resolution to a Robin Hood ballad would have derived from the earlier period, and it seems most likely that this is a late reworking of the *Gest*'s episode of the archery contest rather like the Forresters ballads that derive from the *Gest* in combination with a broadside. Modern versions of the archery contest go back to the daring and danger of the earlier version (including even the Disney cartoon of 1973), rather than the somewhat smug contrivance of this later ballad.

The language and style of the text bespeak its late origin, with internal rhyme in the third line, rather precise rhyming and occasionally fussy language (*tricking game*, line 15; *whateer ensue*, line 57; *They thought no discretion*, line 65; *brave pastime*, line 101). In the same way, the idea that the sheriff is properly treated by being left chafing in his grease, line 130 — really annoyed to have missed Robin and also awarded him the honor — seems a far cry from the ferocity of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, when an arrow through the head was thought an adequate response to the oppressions of royal law, rather than this distinctly unheroic outwitting.

Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow

When as the sheriff of Nottingham
Was come with mickle grief,
He talkd no good of Robin Hood,
That strong and sturdy thief.

mach

5 Fal lal dal de

So unto London-road he past,
His losses to unfold
To King Richard, who did regard
The tale that he had told.

10 "Why," quoth the king, "what shall I do?
Art thou not sheriff for me?
The law is in force, go take thy course,
Of them that injure thee."

15 "Go get thee gone, and by thyself
Devise some tricking game
For to enthrall yon rebels all;
Go take thy course with them."

20 So away the sheriff he returnd,
And by the way he thought
Of the words of the king, and how the thing
To pass might well be brought.

25 For within his mind he imagined
That when such matches were,
Those outlaws stout, without doubt,
Would be the bowmen there.

So an arrow with a golden head
And shaft of silver white,

Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow

Who won the day should bear away,
For his own proper right.

30 Tidings came to brave Robin Hood,
Under the green-wood tree.
"Come prepare you then, my merry men,
We'll go yon sport to see."

35 With that stept forth a brave young man,
David of Doncaster.
"Master," he said, "be ruld by me,
From the green-wood we'll not stir.

40 "To tell the truth, I'm well informed
Yon match is a wile;
The sheriff, I wiss, devises this
Us archers to beguile." know

45 "O thou smells of a coward," said Robin Hood,
"Thy words does not please me;
Come on't what will, I'll try my skill
At yon brave archery." of it

50 O then bespoke brave Little John:
"Come, let us hither gang,
Come listen to me, how it shall be
That we need not be kend." go known

55 "Our mantles, all of Lincoln green,
Behind us we will leave;
We'll dress us all so several
They shall not us perceive." differently

"One shall wear white, another red,
One yellow, another blue;
Thus in disguise, to the exercise,
We'll gang, whateer ensue."

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Forth from the green wood they are gone,
With hearts all firm and stout,
60 Resolving with the sheriffs men
To have a hearty bout.

So themselves they mixed with the rest,
To prevent all suspicion,
For if they should together hold
65 They thought no discretion.

So the sheriff looking round about,
Amongst eight hundred men,
But could not see the sight that he
Had long expected then.

70 Some said, "If Robin Hood was here,
And all his men to boot,
Sure none of them could pass these men,
So bravely they do shoot."

75 "Ay," quoth the sheriff, and scratchd his head,
"I thought he would have been here;
I thought he would, but, tho he's bold,
He durst not now appear."

80 O that word grieved Robin Hood to the heart;
He vexed in his blood;
"Eer long," thought he, "thou shalt well see
That here was Robin Hood."

85 Some cried, "Blue jacket!" Another cried, "Brown!"
And the third cried, "Brave Yellow!"
But the fourth man said, "You man in red
In this place has no fellow."

For that was Robin Hood himself,
For he was cloathd in red;
At every shot the prize he got,
For he was b'oth sure and dead.

a dead shot

Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow

90 So the arrow with the golden head
And shaft of silver white
Brave Robin Hood won, and bore with him
For his own proper right.

These outlaws there, that very day,
95 To shun all kind of doubt,
By three or four, no less no more,
As they went in, came out.

100 Until they all assembled were
Under the green wood shade,
Where they relate, in pleasant sport,
What brave pastime they made.

Says Robin Hood, "All my care is,
How that yon sheriff may
Know certainly that it was I
105 That bore his arrow away."

Says Little John, "My counsel good
Did take effect before,
So therefore now, if you'll allow,
I will advise once more."

110 "Speak on, speak on," said Robin Hood,
"Thy wit's both quick and sound;
I know no man amongst us can
For wit like thee be found."

115 "This I advise," said Little John;
"That a letter shall be pend,
And when it is done, to Nottingham
You to the sheriff shall send."

120 "That is well advised," said Robin Hood,
"But how must it be sent?"
"Pugh! when you please, it's done with ease,
Master, be you content.

Later Ballads

"I'll stick it on my arrow's head,
And shoot it into the town;
The mark shall show where it must go.
When ever it lights down."

125

The project it was full performd;
The sheriff that letter had;
Which when he read, he scratchd his head,
And rav'd like one that's mad.

130

So we'll leave him chafing in his grease,
Which will do him no good;
Now, my friends, attend, and hear the end
Of honest Robin Hood.

cooking fat



Notes

- 24 Child inserts *all* before *doubt* with the later texts, but this is not necessary.
- 35 David of Doncaster is not mentioned elsewhere in the ballads. Though Roger of Doncaster is mentioned at the end of the *Gest* and a cleric called Doncaster appears in Munday's plays, they are both Robin's enemies, unlike David here, who plays the familiar role of the member of the outlaw band who advises Robin against his heroic rashness. Doncaster is in the area of the Yorkshire Barnsdale and the name may simply be constructed on the model of the Pinder of Wakefield, Robin of Loxley, John of Hathersage, and so on.
- 40–41 In some early ballads one of the outlaws tries to persuade Robin not to put himself in danger in this way; see *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *The Death of Robin Hood*.
- 47 In the text Little John says *hither*, and Child, following a later text, emends to *thither*. This does make a little more precise sense, but the context is general and the emendation seems unjustified.
- 60 Child inserts *then* after *Resolving* for the internal rhyme, but none of the texts have the word, and not all third lines have internal rhyme.
- 65 Child inserts *ir* after *thought*; the later texts have this, but it seems more likely to be a compositor's fill-in than an error in the oldest text.
- 82–84 The colors do not quite match the outlaws' jackets described in lines 54–55 in that there is a brown jacket mentioned here and white there; otherwise it seems that the outlaws are the outstanding archers, with Robin as the champion.
- 100 The text has *relate*, and to obtain internal rhyme Child emends to *report*. But not all the third lines have internal rhyme, and the emendation, though not unlikely, is not adequately justified.

Later Ballads

- 102 This discussion is curiously like the final sequence in an Arthurian romance when the public acknowledgement of the hero's honor seems even more important than his actual achievements.
- 112-13 The earliest text lacks these lines; they are printed by Child from a garland of 1811. The lines are not actually needed for sense but as the rhyming and stanza divisions in this ballad are very precise, it is not likely that the earliest version meant lines 110-11 to be part of a six-line stanza with the following four-line stanza, and so Child's emendation is accepted, even though lines 112-13 do read somewhat like an editorial fill-in.
- 122 In Parker's *A True Tale of Robin Hood* a message is sent on an arrow point to the king (lines 312-13), and this may well be the source of this sequence.
- 132 The reference is to the fact that this ballad is followed in the garlands by *The Death of Robin Hood*.



Robin Hood and the Bishop

Introduction

This ballad is found in seventeenth-century broadsides and early garland collections, and while there is no clear sign it existed before that, the incidents have an air of familiarity, being, as Child said (III, 191), "variations on a theme" of disguise found through many of the ballads (and in the story of Eustace); they also express the hostility to the established church found in the *Gest* and *Robin Hood and the Monk*. This story is told in the Forresters manuscript under the title *Robin Hood and the Old Wife*, with the sheriff playing the role of villain. While it is conceivable this was the original structure, and a hostile bishop introduced after the Reformation, this is probably a ballad originally starring the bishop, adapted by the highly inventive Forresters compiler, drawing here, as elsewhere, on the *Gest* as a source for the sheriff as villain.

The action contains some unusual features in that the bishop appears to be acting as the sheriff normally does, hunting the outlaws. This is not inherently unrealistic, as bishops were frequently of aristocratic class and perfectly capable of military actions, but the real source may be, as in Parker's *A True Tale of Robin Hood*, the post-Reformation tendency to make the church the major enemy of the outlaw. The final treatment of the bishop, tied back to front on his horse, has medieval carnival features but also serves a distinctly seventeenth-century anti-Catholic purpose.

In form this appears to be a characteristic commercial ballad, with the "Come all ye" opening, the internal rhyme in the third line and a distinctly literary feel to some of the language (lines 5–6, 39–40, 54). But it also has some clearly colloquial material (lines 33–36, 69–72), and the diction is fairly straightforward. By no means all of the third lines have internal rhyme, and this feature tends to grow rarer towards the end. That might suggest that an earlier ballad has been reworked for the commercial style — if the two opening stanzas and some stylistic titivation were removed this could be a plain ballad of the sixteenth century, though still literary in mode because it lacks the rhetorical repetition characteristic of the orally oriented early material. It is a swiftly told and tricksterish tale, reworking in basically comic form the aggressiveness of the early social bandit. Stallybrass has argued that the ending embodies a distinctly radical form of carnival (1985, p. 119), but while that might be the case if these events actually happened, as in a sense they did in Edinburgh in 1561, the tone of this enduringly popular ballad is basically comic.

Robin Hood and the Bishop

Come, gentlemen all, and listen a while,
Hey down down an a down
And a story I'le to you unfold:
I'le tell you how Robin Hood served the Bishop,
When he robbed him of his gold.

5 As it fell out on a sun-shining day,
When Phebus was in her prime,
Then Robin Hood, that archer good,
In mirth would spend some time.

classical sun-god

10 And as he walkd the Forrest along,
Some pastime for to spy,
There was he aware of a proud bishop,
And all his company.

15 "O what shall I do?" said Robin Hood then,
"If the Bishop he doth take me;
No mercy he'l show unto me, I know,
But hanged I shall be."

20 Then Robin was stout, and turnd him about,
And a little house there he did spy,
And to an old wife, for to save his life,
He loud began for to cry.

brave

"Why, who art thou?" said the old woman,
"Come tel it to me for good."
"I am an out-law, as many do know,
My name it is Robin Hood.

25 "And yoader's the Bishop and all his men,
And if that I taken be,

Robin Hood and the Bishop

Then day and night he'll work me spight,
And hanged I shall be."

do me harm

30 "If thou be Robin Hood," said the old wife,
"As thou doth seem to be,
I'lle for thee provide, and thee I will hide,
From the Bishop and his company.

35 "For I well remember, on Saturday night
Thou bought me both shooes and hose;
Therefore I'lle provide thy person to hide,
And keep thee from thy foes."

40 "Then give me soon thy coat of gray,
And take thou my mantle of green;
Thy spindle and twine unto me resign,
And take thou my arrows so keen."

at once

And when that Robin Hood was so afraid,
He went straight to his company;
With his spindle and twine, he oft lookest behind
For the Bishop and his company.

45 "O who is yonder," quoth Little John,
"That now comes over the lee?
An arrow I will at her let flie,
So like an old witch looks she."

50 "O hold thy hand, hold thy hand," said Robin then,
"And shoot not thy arrows so keen;
I am Robin Hood, thy master good,
And quickly it shall be seen."

55 The Bishop he came to the old woman's house,
And he called with furious mood,
"Come let me soon see, and bring unto me,
That traitor Robin Hood."

Later Ballads

The old woman he set on a milk-white steed,
Himselfe on a dapple-gray,
And for joy he had got Robin Hood,
He went laughing all the way.

60 But as they were riding the forrest along,
The Bishop he chanc'd for to see
A hundred brave bow-men bold
Stand under the green-wood tree.

65 "O who is yonder," the Bishop then said,
"That's ranging within yonder wood?"
"Marry," says the old woman, "I think it to be
A man callid Robin Hood."

70 "Why, who art thou," the Bishop he said,
"Which I have here with me?"
"Why I am an old woman, thou cuckoldly bishop;
Lift up my leg and see."

75 "Then woe is me," the Bishop he said,
"That ever I saw this day!"
He turnd him about, but Robin so stout
Callid him and bid him stay.

80 Then Robin took hold of the Bishops horse,
And ty'd him fast to a tree;
Then Little John smil'd his master upon,
For joy of that company.

85 Robin Hood took his mantle from's back,
And spread it upon the ground,
And out of the Bishops portimantle he
Soon told five hundred pound.

from his

travelling bag
At once counted

"So now let him go," said Robin Hood;
Said Little John, "That may not be;
For I vow and protest he shall sing us a mass
Before that he goe from me."

Robin Hood and the Bishop

Then Robin Hood took the Bishop by the hand,
90 And bound him fast to a tree,
And made him sing a mass, God wot,
To him and his yeomanry.

yeomanry (men)

95 And then they brought him through the wood,
And set him on his dapple-gray.
And gave the tail within his hand,
And bade him for Robin Hood pray.



Notes

- 6 The text has *her*, corrected to *his* in later texts. Child emends, but the flavor of the broadsides is well communicated by this error.
- 16 The representation of the Bishop as a secular power capable of executing people is anachronistic, and no doubt part of post-reformation anti-Catholicism.
- 30 The earliest texts read *doth*, which is corrected to *dost* in all later texts, but like *her* in line 6, deserves to be left unemended as characteristic of the genre.
- 33 Child emends the text's *on Saturday night* to the more distant one *Saturday night*, but this reading does not appear until one of the later versions, and seems unnecessary: immediacy is often the essence of these stories.
- 39 The outlaw's disguise as a woman spinner is seen in *Eustache le Moine*; it also appears in Blind Harry's *William Wallace*.
- 47 The internal rhyme is awkward, requiring a caesura after *I*.
- 57 The horses come from a romance formula, sounding like suitable mounts for Sir Launfal and Dame Triamour.
- 62 The earliest text has *chance*. Although its peculiarities are accepted in lines 6 and 30, this would be a sudden change of tense as well as an erroneous form, and should be regarded as a compositor's error and emended, as Child has it.
- 71 Being unmarried, a Catholic bishop can hardly be a cuckold. The term seems generalized abuse, meaning something like "weakling" with, as the next line implies, a sense of sexual insult retained. Child records *cuckoldy* in the 1670 garland, but in fact it too has the full adverbial form *cuckoldly*.
- 72 *Lift up my leg and see.* The bawdy tone of this line is strongly reminiscent of the scene in *Eustache le Moine* in which the outlaw, disguised as a prostitute, mounts the sergeant's horse and offers to have sex with him.

Robin Hood and the Bishop

- 81-84 Counting out the clerics' money seems a compulsive element in these stories, and the sums involved are usually enormous, as here.
- 83 The run-on line is rare, though the lack of internal rhyme suggests this line has not been rewritten by an editor. The final *he* which causes the run-on may well originally be a compositor's error, but remains in the later texts and should not be emended simply for being unusual.
- 87 The forced mass, mounting in reverse, and making the bishop pray for the outlaws are all elements of carnival which here seem to have burlesque rather than seriously radical force. On the practice of punishing venal ecclesiastics (especially summoners) by tying them backwards onto horses, then driving them from town, see Thomas Hahn and Richard W. Kaeuper, "Text and Context: Chaucer's *Friar's Tale*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 5 (1983), 67-101. See also *A True Tale of Robin Hood*, lines 101-04.



Robin Hood's Golden Prize

Introduction

This is a mid-seventeenth-century ballad found in broadsides and garlands, and recorded in the Stationers' Register in 1656; Wing attributes it to Laurence Price, whose initials appear on an early copy, which Wing dates at 1650. The story, Child notes (III, 208), is one found in folklore, the essence being that the outlaw plays a trick on someone — usually a priest — by pretending that a miracle has occurred and money has emerged in return for prayer, when he knew quite well the money was there all the time. This robbery by cunning fits well with the trickster element of Robin Hood and also supports anti-clerical feeling, so strong a strain in the tradition in this period.

The ballad has a commercial ring in its opening, with elaborate language (*accoutered in his array*, line 12; *Come riding gallantly*, line 18). The first stanzas also advertize the Robin Hood connection and the special quality of this tale (line 8). But for the most part this is a fast-moving tale of Robin Hood's justified robbery, without the ferocity of the early ballads; as the verse introduction states, this is a "jest" of Robin Hood in both its senses, adventure and trick.

The image of a friar, fully realized in Catholic form (lines 11-13), does seem an odd choice in the protestant seventeenth century for Robin's disguise in which to humiliate the equally Catholic monks. This suggests either a remarkably tolerant audience or that the early idea that friars are more acceptable to the outlaw spirit than other regular clergy has somehow survived the reformation, and indeed lasted to the present. However, the somewhat pompous tone of the commercial ballad asserts itself finally as Robin returns to the green wood: *With great joy, mirth, and pride* (line 98).

Robin Hood's Golden Prize

I have heard talk of bold Robin Hood,
Derry derry down
And of brave Little John,
Of Fryer Tuck, and Will Scarlet,
5 Loxley, and Maid Marion.
Hey down derry derry down

But such a tale as this before
I think there was never none,
For Robin Hood disguised himself,
10 And to the wood is gone.

Like to a fryer, bold Robin Hood
Was accostered in his array;
With hood, gown, beads and crucifix,
He past upon the way.

15 He had not gone miles two or three,
But it was his chance to spy
Two lusty priests, clad all in black,
Come riding gallantly.

20 "Benediceté," then said Robin Hood,
"Some pity on me take;
Cross you my hand with a silver groat,
For Our dear Ladies sake.

Bless you

25 "For I have been wandering all this day,
And nothing could I get;
Not so much as one poor cup of drink,
Nor bit of bread to eat."

Later Ballads

- "Now, by my holydame," the priests repli'd,
"We never a peny have;
For we this morning have been robd,
And could no mosy save." *holy relic (sanctity)*
- 30
- "I am much afraid," said bold Robin Hood,
"That you both do tell a lye,
And now before that you go hence,
I am resolv'd to try." *test (you)*
- 35 When as the priests heard him say so,
They rode away amain; *quickly*
But Robin Hood betook him to his heels,
And soon overtook them again.
- 40 Then Robin Hood laid hold of them both,
And pull'd them down from their horse:
"O spare us, fryer!" the priests cry'd out,
"On us have some remorse!"
- 45 "You said you had no mosy," quoth he,
"Wherefore, without delay,
We three will fall down on our knees,
And for mosy we will pray."
- 50 The priests they could not him gainsay,
But down they kneeled with speed. *refuse*
"Send us, O send us," then quoth they,
"Some mosy to serve our need."
- The priests did pray with mournful cheer,
Sometimes their hands did wring,
Sometimes they wept and cried aloud,
Whilst Robin did merrily sing.
- 55 When they had been praying an hours space,
The priests did still lament; *ever (perpetually)*
Then quoth bold Robin, "Now let's see
What mosy heaven hath us sent.

Robin Hood's Golden Prize

60 "We will be sharers now all alike
Of the mony that we have,
And there is never a one of us
That his fellows shall deceive."

The priests their hands in their pockets put,
But mony would find none.

refused to find

65 "We'll search our selves," said Robin Hood,
"Each other, one by one."

Then Robin Hood took pains to search them both,
And he found good store of gold;
Five hundred peeces presently
70 Upon the grass was told.

"Here is a brave show," said Robin Hood,
"Such store of gold to see,
And you shall each one have a part,
Cause you prayed so heartily."

75 He gave them fifty pound a-pece,
And the rest for himself did keep;
The priests durst not speak one word,
But they sighed wondrous deep.

80 With that the priests rose up from their knees,
Thinking to have parted so;
"Nay, stay," said Robin Hood, "one thing more
I have to say ere you go.

85 "You shall be sworn," said bold Robin Hood,
"Upon this holy grass,
That you will never tell lies again,
Which way soever you pass.

90 "The second oath that you here must take,
All the days of your lives
You never shall tempt maids to sin,
Nor lye with other mens wives.

Later Ballads

"The last oath you shall take, it is this,
Be charitable to the poor;
Say you have met with a holy fryer,
And I desire no more."

- 95 He set them upon their horses again.
And away then they did ride;
And bee returnd to the merry green-wood,
With great joy, mirth, and pride.



Notes

- 5 This is a unique reference to Loxley as a character who is apparently not Robin; the place (near Sheffield) is mentioned in the Sloane *Life*, which is presumably the source here, as the birthplace of the hero. Scott used the name in *Frankie* as part of his downgrading of the hero's status.
- 13 The earliest text, unrecorded by Child, has a compositor's error in *kood*.
- 13–14 This very Catholic image would normally in this period be the basis for a character's humiliation like that of Archimago in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. In fact, in this guise Robin triumphs over the priests and finally insists on his status as a friar. This carries tricksterism to the point of pro-Catholicism, and is somewhat surprising if, as seems likely, the ballad was entered during the Commonwealth. The religious detail is so clear that there may be an earlier pro-friar song or ballad at the root of this one, but it would still be surprising that the detail is retained.
- 15 Child inserts *post* before *miles*, as in later texts, but this seems unnecessary.
- 27 *Holydome*. Although the term *halidom*, a thing which one might swear by, refers to one's sanctity or holiness, the substitution of *dome* in this suffix was apparently due to popular etymology taking the word to mean "Our Lady." See OED for *halidom*. The sense of "holy relic" or "holy thing" was common in oaths and adjurations into the sixteenth century.
- 36 All the earlier texts lack *Then* at the start of the line; not needed for meter, it is not clear why Child inserts it.
- 84 The idea that the grass is holy is presumably part of the burlesque tone here.
- 89 The oath Robin makes the priests swear is one that, in late medieval tradition, is more appropriate to friars (see the remarks of the Wife of Bath on this topic at the beginning of her tale), which both suggests the anachronism of the ballad

Later Ballads

and also makes more curious the purity of the friar's position in it. Perhaps that incongruity is part of Robin's jest.



Robin Hood and Queen Catherin

Introduction

Robin Hood and Queen Catherin was a popular ballad in the seventeenth century. It is in Percy's Folio, but too much of the text has been lost through ripped pages for this to be used as a basis for the text. A closely related version, entitled *Renowned Robin Hood*, exists in six separate broadsides and the two early garlands of 1663 and 1670. The earliest full text of this version in the Wood collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, must have been produced by 1655 when Grove, the printer, ceased operations. To judge from its royal content its publication is likely to have derived from before the Civil War began in earnest in 1642: Wing dates the earliest copy c. 1630. However, this ballad has always seemed somewhat incoherent in its opening section and quite unfollowable in its account of the archery contest: it was not clear how many of Robin's men shoot and what aliases they used — and was Clifton one of their disguises or the name of the king's leading archer? These problems were resolved with the discovery of the Forresters manuscript in 1993. This is one of the two ballads where Forresters is clearly superior to Child's versions, apparently because they represent a fuller text before it was cut down to fit a broadside page (the other is *Robin Hood's Fishing*). This is the text printed here.

The ballad seems to have been derived from a number of sources. The Gest, Parker's *A True Tale of Robin Hood*, *Robin Hood and the Bishop*, probably Munday's *Downfall* and perhaps *Adam Bell* were all known to the compiler of what is effectively a Robin Hood adventure within the framework of the court of Henry VIII. Although Robin is on good terms with the queen and becomes accepted by the king, this is not really a gentrified ballad, in that Robin is merely a highway robber and fine archer. The only truly gentrified touch is in the ending added to the ballad in the 1663 garland, where the king finally pardons Robin and makes him "Earle of fair Huntington." Both Wood and Forresters (the end of Percy is missing) conclude with a disagreement between Robin and John, rather unusual for this late date, and reminiscent of their earlier differences of opinion as in *Robin Hood and the Monk* or *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*.

Even in its somewhat confused broadside form, this was an effective and popular ballad. Child found it "very pleasant" (1965, III, 197), but he also recognized its "exaggeration" and that it was a "piece of regular hack work." It clearly is a made-up

Later Ballads

ballad drawing on several popular elements. The idea that the queen sympathizes with outlaws is also found in the popular *Adam Bell, Robin Hood and Queen Catherin* is constructed for an audience in what the Percy version calls "lovely London," apart from Nottingham which is placed, perhaps in irony, far in the North, line 60. It is tempting to think the ballad may have been produced soon after Martin Parker's *A True Tale of Robin Hood*, which has royal connections, action in the north, and a sense of the conflict among the outlaws with which this full and, in the Forresters version, well-constructed ballad ends.



Robin Hood and Queen Catherin

Gold taken from the kings harbengers
As seldom hath been seen
And carried by bold Robin Hood
A present to the queen.

messengers

5 "If that I live a year to an end,"
Thus gan Queen Catherin say,
"Bold Robin Hood, I'le be thy friend,
And all thy yeomen gay."

did

10 The king and queen to th' gardens gon,
To passe the time away,
And lovingly with one another
Till evening they did stay.

15 "What game, what game, my queen," he said
"For game or also for glee?"
"I'le have a shooting," she reply'd
"So please your majestic."

20 "Ile have a shooting for your sake,
The best in Christentie."
"Make lite the wager, sir," she said,
"And holden you shall bee."

taken up

"Ile make the wager light my queen,
For that you need not fear,
Three hundred tunn of Renish wine,
Three hundred tunn of beer.

barrels; Rhine

25 "Three hundred of the fattest harts
That run on Dalum Lee."

deer

Later Ballads

"That's a princely wager," said our queen,
"Bravly holden you shall bee."

The queen is to her chamber gon
As fast as she can wend,
She calls to her her lovely page,
His name was Pattrington.

"Com hether to me my lovely page.
Com hether unto me,
For thou must post to Notingham
As fast as thou canst dree.

"And when thou comst to Notingham
Search all that English wood;
Enquire of each good yeoman thou meetst
To finde out Robin Hood.

"And whan thou comst Robin Hood before
Deliver him this ringe,
And bid him post to London towne
And not fear any thing.

"I've made a shooting with the king
The best in Christentee,
And I have chosen bold Robin Hood
To be of my partie."

He tooke his leave of the royll queen
And fast away is gan,
Somtimes he rode, sometimes he rann,
Till he came to Nottingham.

And when he came to Nottingham
And there took up his inn,
He call'd for a pottle of Renish wine
And dranck a health to his queen.

go

harry
go

lodging
pot

Robin Hood and Queen Catherin

Then sate a yeoman by his side
"Tell me, sweet page," said hee,
"What is thy businesse or thy cause
60 So farr in the North contrie?"

Then

"This is my business and my cause
I tell it you for good:
I com from London," said the page,
"To seeke bold Robin Hood."

65 "He take my horse betimes i'th morn
Be it by break of day,
And he show thee bold Robin Hood
And all his yeomen gay."

*early
Even at*

70 He took his horse betimes i'th morne
As soon as he could see,
And had him to bold Robin Hood
And all his archerie.

75 When the page came to Robin Hood
He fell downe on his knee.
"Queen Catherin she doth greet you well
She greets you well by mee.

80 "Queen Catherin she dooth greet you well
And sends you here her ring.
She bids you post to London towne
And not fear any thing.

"She hath made a shooting with our king
The best in Christenland,
And desires you, bold Robin Hood,
To be of her partie."

85 Robin tooke his mantle from his back,
It was of Lincolne green;
"Here take my mantle," said Robin Hood,
"A present for the queen.

cloak

Later Ballads

- 90 "And go thy way thou lovely page
And to Queen Catherin say
'If Robin Hood doth loose the match
He will the wager pay.'"

Fitt 2

- In summer time when leaves grow green
'Twas a seemly sight to see
95 How Robin Hood himselfe had drest
And all his yeomandrie.

He clad himselfe in scarlett red
His men in Lincoln green
And so prepares for London towne,
100 To shoot before the lovly queen.

They had bows of ewe and strings of silke
Arrows of silver chest,
Black hats, white feathers all alike
Full deftly they were drest.

yew
chased (engraved)
neatly

- 105 "Com Little John, thou shalt be one,
One Clifton thou shall bee,
And so shall Midge the Millers son
To bere us companie.

"Will Scathlock to shall go alonge
110 For he will never faile,
But Renett Browne shall stay behinde
And look to Brensdale."

too
guard

- 115 Robin came before the queen,
He kneeld downe on his knee.
"Thou'rt welcome, Loxley," said our queen
"And these thy yeomandrie.

Robin Hood and Queen Catherin

"Thou'rt welcom," said the queen,

"And these thy archers good.

I hope ere this day be at an end

before

120 To call thee Robin Hood."

The queen's to the king's chamber gon,

As fast as she can dree,

go

"God save you lovly prince," she said,

"Welcom, my queen," quoth he.

125 "Our match goes ill and please your grace,

As far as I can ken,

can tell

Ther's not an archer in all my court,

Will shoot against your men."

"I knew it very well," said our king,

130 "My archers are so good,

That never a man durst shoot with them

dared

Except it were Robin Hood."

"Double the wager," said the queen,

"Brave holden you shall bee."

135 "No, by my truth," then said our king,

"Woman's full of subteltie."

Fox 3

Our king is unto Finsbury gon

In all his best array,

The queen she follows after him,

140 With all her archers gay.

"Come hether, Tempest," said the king,

"Bow berer unto mee,

Ther's not in England, France, nor Spaine

An archer like to thee."

Later Ballads

- 145 The queen took Loxly by the hand
And gave him on his head tappes three,
"Look wel to this man, my leig," she said,
"Hee'l prove as good as hee." *leige (lord)*
- 150 "Com hether, Tempest," said the king,
"The best in Christentie,
And measure out here with thy line
How long the marks shall bee."
- 155 With that bespoke bold Loxly then,
Full quickly and full soon,
"Mesure no marks for us, my leige,
Wee'l shoot at sun and moon."
- 160 "Full fifteen score your marks shall bee,
Full fifteen score shall stand.
I'le lay my bow," quoth Clifton thea,
"I'le cleave the willow wand." *spar*
- Then the king's archers led about
Till it was three and none.
With that the ladys began to pout,
"Madam, the game is goa."
- 165 "A boon, a boon," then sais the queen,
"Please your grace grant to mee.
Two of your privy councillors
To be of my partie."
- 170 "Have I two in my privy councell,
This day will pleasure thee,
If they bett any thing on thy side,
Right welcom shall they bee."
- 175 "Com hether then Sir Richard Lee,
Thou art a knight right good,
Full well I know thy pedigree
Thou'rt sprung from Gawain's blood. *family*

Robin Hood and Queen Catherin

"And come hether thou Bishop of Hereford,"

A noble preist was hee.

"By my silver myter," said the bishop,

bishop's crown

180 "I'le not bett one penny.

"Our king hath archers of his owne

Full redy and full light,

But these are strangers every one

I know not how they height."

are named

185 "What wilt thou bett," said Robin Hood,

"Thou seest our gam's the worse."

"By my silver myter," said the Bishop,

"All the money in my purse."

"What's in thy purse?" quoth Robin tho,

then

190 "Tell it downe on the ground."

Count

"Fifteen score of nobles," quoth the bishop.

"It's neer a hundred pounds."

Robin tooke his mantle from his back,

And threw it on the mould,

ground

195 Forth he pluck'd a velvett pouch,

It was well lin'd with gold.

Forth he pluck'd his velvet pouch

He told the gold on the green,

counted

Then cry'd Midge the Millers son,

200 "I know who the gold will win."

In came Will Scathlock to the rest

And to Little John did thrust,

"They shall not gett another shoot

And all their hearts would brust."

If: burst

205 Then the queen's archers led aboute

Till it was three and three,

And then the ladies gave a shoute,

"Woodcock, bewere thine eye."

Later Ballads

- 210 “Tis three and three now,” says our king,
“The next three pays for all.”
Then Robin whisper’d to the queen
“The king’s part will be but small.”
- 215 Then shot Tempest for the king
He led it gallantly.
Then shott Loaly for our queen
And clove his arrow in three. split
- 220 Then shott Midge the Millers son,
He was not far the worse,
Within a finger of the pegg. finger’s breadth; ball’s eye
“Bishop, bewere thy purse.”
- 225 The yeoman of the crowne who stod him by
Hee shott underhand,
But Clifton with a bearded arrow
He clove the willow wand.
- 230 “The upshott now,” said Will Scathlock, result
“For the honor o’th queen and mee,”
Hee tooke the prick on arrow poynst ball’s eye
The king and all did see.
- 235 Then spoke Tempest to our king,
“These archers are so good,
I’m sore afraid and like your grace,
They learn’d of Robin Hood.”
- 240 “But fear not that,” our king did say
For t’was told me of late
That Robin Hood and his wel wight men very strong
Were slaine at pallas gate.” killed; palace
- “A boon, a boon,” Queen Catherin cry’d,
“I aske it on my knee,
Your grace will angry be with none
That are of my partie.”

Robin Hood and Queen Catherin

"They shal have forty days to come
And forty days to go
Twice forty days to sport and play
Then welcom friend or foe."

245 "Welcom Robin Hood," then said the queen,
"And so is Little John,
And so is Midge the Millers son,
Will Scathlock every one."

250 "Is this Robin Hood," then said the bishop,
"As it seems well to bee?
Had I knowne thad bin that bold outlaw
I'de not bett one penny.

255 "Hee tooke me late one Satterday night,
And bound me to a tree,
And made me sing a masse, God wot,
To him and's companie."

260 "What if I did?" said Robin tho;
"Of that masse I was full faine.
To recompence thee for that deed,
Heers halfe thy gold again."

"Now nay, now may," sais Little John,
"Master, that may not bee.
Wee must give gifts to th' kings officers
Twill serve both you and wee."



Notes

- 1 A sign that this ballad is a literary invention is that the robbing of the king's "receivers" occurs in Parker's *A True Tale of Robin Hood*, see lines 129–36; this ballad appears to have been developed using that event as the motive for an archery competition.
- 6 This is presumably one of the Queen Katherines to whom Henry VIII was married. Munday's play is set at his court, while the Robin Hood games in which he was involved, mentioned by Hall in his Chronicle (see Knight, 1994, p. 110), were dated in 1510 and 1515, that is Henry's younger days when he was married to Catherine of Aragon. The ballad appears to refer to a queen of her authority and activity, rather than the young Catherine Howard, who was executed after being queen in 1540–42, or Catherine Parr who tended the aged Henry from 1543–47.
- 23 These are very large quantities of wine, though they may be thought of as sums of money; a courtier like Chaucer — and like the Poet Laureate to the present day — was rewarded with stipulated amounts of wine, which could be commuted into cash at recognized rates.
- 26 Dalum Lee is not a known place name: the closest resemblance is Dalham, a small town about five miles east of Newmarket in East Anglia, but Dallow Moor, in North Yorkshire, may be a more probable original, as many Robin Hood connected place-names come from this area.
- 32 This does not appear to be a reference to a specific person, though like other elements in the Robin Hood tradition, the surname is associated with Yorkshire, as in Stephen Patrington, Bishop of Chichester, who died in 1417.
- 35 While to travel post is associated with eighteenth-century activities, the OED records usages from the early sixteenth century; it means to have fresh horses "posted" at intervals, so the traveller, or the mail, can keep moving at a fast pace.

Robin Hood and Queen Catherin

- 41 Stanza 14, lines 53–56 is written here out of place in the manuscript before stanza 11, lines 41–44, but the stanza numbers in the left margin give it correctly as 14, a sign of careful editorial checking after the scribes had completed their work.
- 51 Presumably he was resting his horse when he ran. The line is also in the Wood versions.
- 57 The manuscript has *The*, which may well be a scribal error for *Then*, but the scribes make few simple errors of that kind and it is likely that the original might have read *Tho*, the older form for *Then*.
- 60 The London location of the ballad's creation is suggested by the idea that Nottingham is in the far North. The city was usually regarded as the beginning of the northern or highland zone of England, but is effectively a Midland town, so this seems a rather extreme idea, perhaps meant as a local joke by the yeoman.
- The manuscript reads *contie*, which is presumably an error for *contrie*, the form printed here, rather than a spelling for "county"; "the North county" is not a known phrase.
- 79 The earliest Wood version reads "London court" here which could be taken as a better, because harder, reading than "London towne," but, as it rhymes with "sport," that argument seems to have little force (though it is the first of the two rhyme-words).
- 86 Robin's sending of a Lincoln green mantle to the queen appears to be a conscious memory of the king's choice of such a robe in the *Gest*.
- 92 The manuscript reads *Heel will*, but there is a correction point below the second *e* of *Heel*. The scribe at first wrote a contracted form of "He will" and the editor presumably marked the error, as with the stanza misplacement at lines 53–56.
- 93 This stanza sounds like the traditional opening of a Robin Hood ballad; the action is beginning now after the explanatory preliminaries. It seems proper to mark this as a new fit, though the manuscript has no such indication.

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- 97 Robin's wearing of red both makes him stand out as leader in a way suitable to a generally gentrified context, but also links with a number of early references to red as the outlaw's color. To this day hunters often wear a bright color in order not to be shot themselves in the woods. The earliest texts do not mention the famous "Lincoln green" or its occasional variant "Kendal green." It could be that wearing green is a semi-pastoral reworking of an earlier tradition in which the outlaw's clothes were not described (unlike Chaucer's yeoman and his devil-forester in the Friar's Tale, who do wear green) or were a more probable bright color.
- 100 The word *lovely* is inserted above the line in the same scribal hand.
- 102 The manuscript reads *sugar*, an obvious error for silver. This suggests that the scribe is copying from an original written in a late gothic hand, when v was written somewhat like an elaborate g.
- 109 Scathlock is one of the older names of this outlaw; however, it is used in Munday and so is no sign of antiquity in this ballad.
- 111 *Reneit Browne* is elsewhere unknown, though his Christian name is presumably a version of Reynold, a name which does occur at times as a minor figure or alias, including that of Little John in the *Gest*.
- 116 At this point the broadside texts begin to become confused about how many archers came with Robin and who they were. All but the last version of the Wood texts reads "yeomen three" here. Child felt that "yeomandry" as in the 1663 garland and the last Wood text must be right, and the Forresters' evidence supports his judgment. However, even Child (like all the versions except Forresters, and presumably except Percy, though it is too damaged to judge) appears to have misunderstood the outlaws' aliases, a confusion which seems based in thinking that Robin came with three archers, itself deriving from this misreading or mishearing of *yeomandrie* as "yeomen three."
- 137 As the action changes place here, it seems a natural break for a fist. The manuscript has no sign of one, however. Finsbury Fields, as Child remarks, was an open area just north of the old City of London wall which was much used for archery practice (1965, III, 197-98).

Robin Hood and Queen Catherin

- 141 In the Wood version, the name is given as *Tepus*; while this could well be seen as a harder reading, with priority over *Tempest*, the origins of both names seem obscure, and it seems best to use the Forresters version.
- 143 The manuscript reads *nor* instead of the necessary *nor*.
- 157 Three hundred paces, or yards, is not one of the longer distances described as being within the range of a good longbowman, though it is improbable that targets could be hit with accuracy, let alone arrows or wands be split at that distance.
- 165 The Queen is seeking someone to lay a bet on her side, but without immediate success. However, when Robin asks the bishop to bet in line 185, he gives in at once — presumably a sign of Robin's innate force. The wager on the archery contest remains a basic feature of the scene in whatever version.
- 173 Sir Richard Lee is the name of the knight Robin helps in the *Gest*.
- 176 All the Wood texts have "Goweres blood," which Child retains, while the Percy folio reads "Gawiins blood." The fact that Forresters also reads "Gowers blood" suggests either that Percy has adapted the name in the context of its own romance orientation, or that the source of Forresters shared an error with the ballads. It seems likely that the creator of the ballad would have referred to King Arthur's heroic nephew rather than the late-fourteenth-century poet John Gower. Though he was of knightly family and had a coat of arms, Gower was entirely intellectual in his activities; he might have been known in the seventeenth century from his role as Prologue to Shakespeare's *Pericles*, but the reference to him seems a characteristic piece of ballad-mongering confusion, and should be emended to "Gawains."
- 177 The Bishop of Hereford is Robin's opponent in a ballad that names them both in its title (Child no. 144). In the Percy version, the bishop refers to this episode at this point in the plot, but all other versions give the reference later (see line 249). The other ballad also appears in Forresters, but under the name *Robin Hood and the Bishop*; Child's ballad by that title has been reworked into *Robin Hood and the Sheriff* in Forresters. The fact that the bishop refers to the action of the ballad at lines 253–56 suggests that it might have been a partial source for *Robin Hood and Queen Catherin*. Hereford, though in rich countryside and in the turbulent Welsh borders, is not a major see, and there may be

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a particular bishop at the basis of the figure's role in the ballads. It is unlikely that William de Vere, courtier and bishop (1186–99) under Richard I, is the original, as this is the period used in gentrified texts which rarely retell robbery narratives. Peter de Aquabella, bishop from 1239–68, who was notoriously corrupt and whose money was in fact redistributed among the barons under Henry III, is a possible candidate, but most likely is Adam of Orleton, opponent of Edward II, who also became unpopular with Edward III; he seems the sort of mighty cleric who might have been lampooned in the ballads that were apparently in popular circulation by the mid-fourteenth century.

- 190 In making the bishop count out his purse, Robin's action is reminiscent of the ballads where he robs a wealthy churchman, and effectively the compiler of *Robin Hood and Queen Catherin* has added that motif to the "betting on the archery contest" structure.
- 192 The bishop's remark is unnecessarily vague: a noble was six shillings and eightpence, and three hundred of them are exactly one hundred pounds. The Wood version has precisely the same phrasing.
- 205 All the broadside versions of the ballad and Forresters here have "kings"; the Percy folio has *queens*, which must be correct (see line 161–62). The case is the same as with "Gawains" in line 176. It is surprising that no editor or compositor corrected this obvious error.
- 208 The later Wood versions here read *thy knee* and the earliest has *thy nee*. This is a possibly aural error for the reading on which Percy and Forresters agree, *thy eye* (spelled in Percy as *ee*). Presumably this refers to a proverbial sign of a supreme archer — he could shoot out a woodcock's eye.
- 209 Only Forresters has a clear account of how the shooting match is resolved; the other texts omit entirely the king's archers, and also name Robin and Midge as such but leave Clifton in alias, so it sounds as if he (not in them known to be Little John) might be the king's archer. But the confusion does not seem to have been caused primarily by cutting: the Forresters sequence is only one stanza longer.
- 216 This appears to be the first instance of "splitting the arrow" in the Robin Hood myth; modern versions have all descended from the scene in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* in Chapter 13 when Locksley splits the arrow of Hubert, the king's

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archer. As there is no sign that Scott knew the Forresters manuscript, and the resemblance is so close between the two incidents, there would seem to have been a common source for the two, but it is not known.

- 222 In the Wood version it is Robin who shoots *underhand*, as a result of the text being condensed, but this appears to mean "below the target," and indicates a failure.
- 223 Clifton suddenly appears in the text in the Wood versions, to split the wand. The aliases are thoroughly confusing and the Percy folio is much too damaged to be of any help. Child thought he was Will Scarlett (1965, III, 197). Forresters has made things clear: Clifton is Little John (see line 105).
- 223 A "bearded" arrow carried longer feathers as flights and so could give more accuracy, though it required more power; it is appropriate for the giant archer Little John. Note that his achievement is the more traditional one of "splitting the wand"; in some of the very early ballads his archery skill seems greater than Robin's, but here "splitting the arrow" seems to give Robin precedence.
- 224 The manuscript reads willow.
- 225 Will appears to shoot fourth, score a bullseye, and clinch victory. Even Forresters does not have a very clear account of what happens here, though at least we know the order of shooting.
- 235-36 The king's notion that Robin has been killed in a gateway in the north sounds like a vague reference to the fighting in *Adam Bell*, lines 310-67. However, the manuscript reads "Pallarsgate" as if this were a place-name like Harrogate. If the original were "palace gate," as seems most likely (the Wood version), then the Forresters reading is probably an aural error, itself an interesting sign of the transmission of the text. But it is just conceivable that there was some other version of Robin's death occurring not at Kirklees (or its erroneous version Birklees) but somewhere sounding like "Pallarsgate" which was simplified in transmission into "palace gate." This is highly speculative, however, and the Wood reading is accepted. It is curious that the phrase "pallace gate" occurs in *Adam Bell* at line 449, but the context is different.
- 241 The king offers generous terms to the outlaws: they can travel freely for forty days in either direction without being taken, and have a parole of eighty days

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(one hundred and twenty in the Wood versions) for their pleasure in between.

- 249 Although the bishop takes his name from the ballad *Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford*, he actually refers to an incident in the different ballad *Robin Hood and the Bishop*, which has an almost identical stanza, lines 89–92. The latter does not appear in Forresters, though the former does — under the title *Robin Hood and the Bishop*. In Forresters, Child's *Robin Hood and the Bishop*, no. 143, the one adapted in this stanza, has been reworked as *Robin Hood and the Sheriff* and does not use the "tying up" stanza.
- 252 The texts divide on tense here: Forresters and the two earliest versions of the Wood text omit "have" in this line. The others, including the Percy folio version, have the past tense; this is probably chance, as "have bet" is an easy change from the present tense, and there is no other sign of the later Wood texts having any access to Percy's version.
- 257 The Percy folio and the Wood texts read *and if* here (*as if*, the more correct form, in the second of Wood's versions). Forresters' simple "if" is one of its few signs of being smoother and possibly editorial compared with the Wood texts and must be taken as a free variation. There is no need to emend Forresters.
- 261 The manuscript reads *No nay, no nay* (possibly the second is *no-nay*), and while it is conceivable that the Wood reading *Now nay, now nay* is a simplification of this highly emphatic negative, it seems more likely that the Forresters' scribe, near the end of the long ballad, simply misremembered his source (if it was written in a late-Gothic hand as suggested above, he could hardly misread it, as in that script w was a very emphatic letter).



Robin Hood's Fishing

Introduction

This ballad is found in seventeenth-century broadsides and garlands and was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1631. The earliest of the Wood texts, which Child relied on (dated by Wing at 1650?), is quite unclear in the final action and appears to have been cut down to fit onto a broadside sheet. The version found in the Forresters manuscript has a fuller and more lucid sequence of final action, and, as its sense of completeness appears most unlikely to have been generated editorially from the broadside version, its text is used here.

Robin Hood's Fishing has Robin leaving the forest to make more money as a fisherman in Scarborough, Yorkshire. He is very poor at that trade, but proves his heroic quality with the bow and sword when a French pirate ship tries to steal the catch. Unique as this theme is, other connections of Robin with the sea are not completely absent — for example the remarkable occurrence of a ship named "Robin Hood" in Aberdeen as early as 1438, as well as the coastal village named Robin Hood's Bay (known as a smuggler's haven), south of Whitby and only twenty miles from Scarborough. The ballad itself has some connection with the north and probably with Yorkshire in what appears to be its underlying dialect, clearest in the Forresters version.

In its broadside versions the ballad is usually called *The Noble Fisherman*, with the subtitle *Robin Hood's Preferment*, which implies something like "professional advancement." It was entered in the Stationers' Register under the title *Robin Hood's Great Prize*, but this title was lost, perhaps confused with *Robin Hood's Golden Prize*, an archery contest ballad. Commentators have been severe on the ballad in general: Child thought it "may strike us as infantile" (III, 21), and Dobson and Taylor felt it was a "bizarre metamorphosis" for the hero (1976, p. 179). Yet the ballad was also extremely popular, appearing in "an exceptionally large number" of seventeenth-century broadsides (Dobson and Taylor, 1976, p. 179).

They attributed this to the "commercial attractions" of a song about Britain's most popular hero set in "the almost equally popular genre of a successful sea victory over the national enemy" (1976, p. 180). But it is not so clear that France was the only national enemy at the time, and it is an act of piracy, not national aggression, that Robin single-handedly frustrates. Dobson and Taylor do not follow up the interesting

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possibilities of their own term "metamorphosis": this ballad, for all its nautical setting is in many respects structured like *Robin Hood and the Potter*. In both, the hero goes from a greenwood setting to a mercantile trade, which he handles badly and so receives humiliation; yet his innate courage and skill bring him to both victory and wealth, which he shares generously. Curiously, both ballads involve Robin more or less platonically with a woman, here the widow and owner of the ship, there the Sheriff's wife.

In style the ballad has traces of a commercial author in the first attention-catching stanza, and some occasional Grub-Street-like usages — *most desperately* (line 80), *most gallantly* (line 122). But otherwise it is straightforward in diction and technique, without the third-line internal rhyme of the commercial songsters. The name Robin chooses, Symon of the Lee, sounds like a reference to the *Ges*, which also seems in mind when the hero wishes to be back in Hampton Park (line 71). In general *Robin Hood's Fishing* is a skilful reorientation of the outlaw tradition, certainly exploiting a range of national feeling against the French, but also more in tune with the spirit of the Robin Hood material than has been realized by those who have treated this ballad simply as an oddity.



Robin Hood's Fishing

In sumer time when leaves grow green,
When they do grow both green and long,
Robin Hood that bold outlaw
It is of him I sing my song.

- 5 "The thrassle cock and nightengal
Do chaunt and sing with merry good cheer;
I am weary of the woods," said hee,
"And chasing of the fallow deer.

10 "The fisher-man more mony hath
Then any marchant two or three;
Therefore I will to Scarburrough go
And there a fisher-man will bee."

15 Hee cald togeather his weight men all,
To whom he gave or meat or fee,
Paid them their wage for halfe a year,
Well told in gold and good monie.

20 "If any of you lack mony to spend
If your occasions lie to speake with mee,
If ever you chance to Scarburrough com,
Aske for Symon of the Lee."

Hee tooke his leave there of them all,
It was upon a holy day;
Hee took up his inn at a widdows house,
Which stood nigh to the waters gray.

25 "From whence came thou, thou fine fellow,
A gentleman thou seemist to bee."

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"I' th contrey, dame, where I came from
They call me Symon of the Lee."

30 "Gen they call the Symon of the Lee,
I wish well may thou brook thy name."
The outlaw knew his courtisie,
And so replied "Gramercy, dame."

*If you
enjoy*

35 "Symon," quoth shee, "wilt bee my man,
I' le give to thee both meat and fee."
"By th'Masse, dame," bold Robin said,
"I' le sarve yea well for years three."

*if you will be
serve*

40 "I have a good shipp," then she said,
"As any goes upon the sea.
Ancors and plancks thou shalt want none
Nor masts nor ropes to furnish thee.

"Oars nor sayle thou shalt not want,
Nor books fail to thy lines so long."
"By my truth, dame," quoth Symon then,
"I weat ther's nothing shall go wrang."

*lack
be lacking
know*

45 They hoyst up sayle and forth did hale
Merrylie they went to sea
Till they came to th'appoynst place
Where all the fish taken should bee.

set out

50 Every man bayted his line
And in the sea they did him throw;
Symon lobb'd in his lines twaine
But neither gott great nor smaw.

*two
small*

55 Then bespake the companie,
"Symon's part will bee but small."
"By my troth," quoth the master man,
"I thinke he will gett none at all.

captain

Robin Hood's Fishing

"What dost thou heer thou long luske,
What the fiend dost thou upon the sea.
Thou hast begger'd the widow of Scarburrough,
I weat for her and her children three."

lazy fellow
devil

think

60

Still every day they baysted their lines
And in the sea they did then lay,
But Symon he scrap'd his broad arrows,
I weat he suned them every day.

sunned

65

"Were I under Plumpton Parke," said hee,
"There among my fellows all,
Look so little you sett by mee,
I'd sett by yee twyce as small.

70

"Heigh ho," quoth Symon then,
"Farwell to the green leaves on the tree,
Were I in Plumpton Parke againe,
A fisher-man I nare would bee."

never

75

Every man had fish enough,
The shipp was laden to passe home.
"Fish as you will," quoth good Symon,
"I weat for fishes I have none."

travel

know

80

They weyd up ankere, away did sayle,
More of one day then two or three,
But they were awar of a French robber
Coming toward them most desperately.

weighed (lifted)
than

85

"Wo is me," said the master man,
"Alas, that ever I was borne,
For all the fish that wee have tane,
Alas the day, 'tis all forlorne.

taken

lost

"For all the gold that I have tane
For the losse of my fish I do not care,
For wee shall prisoners into France,
Not a man of us that they will spare."

shall go as

Later Ballads

- 90 Symon staggerd to the hatches high,
Never a foot that he could stand.
"I would gladly give three hundred pounds
For one three hundred foot of land."
- 95 Quoth Symon, "Then do not them dread,
Neither master do you fear.
Give me my bent bow in my hand,
And not a Frenchman I will spare."
- 100 "Hold thy peace thou long lubber,
For thou canst nought but bragg and boast
If I should cast thee over boord,
There were nothing but a lubber lost."
- 105 Quoth Symon, "Ty me to the main mast
That at my marke I may stand fare,
Give me my bent bow in my hand
And not a Frenchman I will spare."
- 110 They bound him fast to the main mast tree,
They bound Symon hard and seare,
They gave him a bent bow into his hand,
And not a French man he would spare.
- 115 "Whom shall I shoot at, thou master man,
For God's love speake the man to mee."
"Shoot at the steersman of yon shippe,
Thou long buske now let me see."
- 120 Symon he took his noble bow,
An arrow that was both larg and long;
The neerest way to the steersmans heart,
The broad arrow it did gang.
- He fell from the hatches high
From the hatches he fell downe below,
Another took him by the heels,
And into the sea he did him throw.

clumsy landsman

fairly, properly

sorely (slightly)

indicate

go

Robin Hood's Fishing

Then quickly took the helme in hand,
And steer'd the shipp most gallantly,
"By my truth," quod good Symon then,
"The same fate shall follow thee."

- 125 Symon he took his noble bow
And arrow which was both streight and long,
The neerest way to the Frenchman's heart
The swallow tayle he gard gang. straight
caused to go
- 130 He fell from the hatches high
From the hatches he fell downe below,
Another took him by the heele
And into the sea did him throw.
- 135 The shipp was tossed up and downe
Not one durst venture her to steer,
The Scarburough men were very faine
When they saw that robber durst not com near. dared
pleased
- 140 "Com up master," Symon said,
"Two shoots have I shott for thee.
All the rest are for myselfe,
This day for Gods love merry be."
- "Gods blessing on thy fingers, Symon," he said
"For weel I see thou hast good skill;
Gods blessing on thy noble heart,
Who hast employed thy bow so weele."
- 145 "I vow for fish thou shalt want none,
The best share, Symon, Ile give thee,
And I shall pray thee, good Symon,
Thou do not take thy marke by mee." aim at me
- 150 "I had thirty arrows by my side,
I thinke I had thirty and three,
Thers not an arrow shall go waste,
But through a French heart it shall flee.

Later Ballads

- 155 "Loose me from the mast," he said,
"The pitch ropes they do pinch me sare,
Give me a good sword in my hand,
Feind a French man I will spare." *tarred ropes*

160 Together have the two shippes run
The fisher and the waver free.
Symon borded the noble shipp
Found never a man alive but three. *man of war (bold warrior)*

165 He took a lampe unto his hand
The ship he searched by the light.
He found within that shipp of warr
Twelve hundred pounds in gold so bright.

170 "Com up, master," Symon said
"This day for God's love merry bee,
How shall we share this noble shipp,
I pray thee master, tell to me."

175 "By my troth," quoth the masserman,
"Symon, good councell ile give thee:
Thou wonst the shipp with thine owne hands,
And master of it thou shalt bee."

180 "One half," quoth Symon, "of this shipp,
Ile deale among my fellows all; *share out*
The other halfe I freely give
Unto my dame and her children small.

185 "And if it chance to bee my lott,
That I shall gett but well to land,
Ile therefore build a chappell good,
And it shall stand on Whitby strand.

190 "And there ile keep a preist to sing
The masse untill the day I dye.
If Robin Hood com once on shore,
Hee com no more upon the see."

Notes

- 1 The opening lines show familiarity with the "green wood" beginning common to a number of the outlaw ballads.
- 5 This unsurprising line replaces the highly unusual "lily leaf and elephant" in the Wood version ("lily-leaf and cowslip sweet" in the version printed by Dobson and Taylor [1976, p. 80]): although Forresters provides a structurally superior ballad, Wood's text may well have access to a different earlier tradition: its reading here seems unlikely to have been constructed by editorial processes. Forresters reading "nightengaal" seems unlikely to be a scribal error and may indicate that the source used here followed at least at times the practice of doubling vowels to indicate length.
- 7 In a number of ballads Robin separates from the outlaw band, but this is because of his sometimes rash adventurousness; the financial planning with which this ballad opens marks a major and mercantile-minded variation from the tone of earlier openings.
- 8 The manuscript reads *follow*.
- 17 The earliest Wood texts have with *Robin*; with is obviously a compositor's error for an abbreviated *quoth* (a sign of manuscript origin), and Child emends accordingly. Forresters here shows the quality of its detailed readings as well as its overall value.
- 19 The rapid leap from forest to Scarborough is in all the versions, and is not unlike the rapid transitions in some other ballads, which have at times led editors to think material is missing (e.g., see *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*, lines 6-7).
- 24 The first letter of *gray* is not well written and appears to be corrected from, perhaps, the letter *b*, again indicating the possibility of a source in late gothic handwriting. It does not appear to be any other letter, certainly not *sp* from a notional "spray."

Later Ballads

- 25 The *a* of *came* is overwritten, a sign of careful correction. The scribe first wrote the more familiar *From whence come thou*.
- 28 The locational surname "of the Lee" is very common, but it is used of the knight in the *Gest*, and recurs in *Robin Hood and Queen Catherin*, so it seems to be close to the outlaw in several ways. A "lee" was an open moor or untilled land, so just the place where an outlaw might be looking for game, animal or human; it is also, of course, a nautical term.
- 30 Presumably the widow is referring to the fisherman Simon in the New Testament, later known as Peter, as a model for Robin's behavior.
- 33 The widow has apparently inherited a fishing business from her husband; this was a common occurrence, and the techniques of business find their way into the outlaw myth here as they do in *Robin Hood and the Potter*.
- 36 Presumably *yea* is a variant spelling of "ye," not the idiom "yea well," meaning "very well," still heard in the USA.
- 44 *wrong*: the manuscript has a half-rhyme here; perhaps the source read *long* (a northern form) in line 42. So too in lines 114 and 126.
- 49 The Wood versions, like *Forresters*, have *bare lines*, but Dobson and Taylor printed, from a garland of c. 1750, *bare lines* (1976, p. 181), though they state in a note it is a mistake in that garland. They feel that Robin throws in unbaited hooks in ignorance. Child proposes it was "wantonness" (1965, III, 211), suggesting a kind of tricksterish folly not unlike Robin's pricing policy in *Robin Hood and the Potter*.
- 57 The word in *Forresters* is clearly *luske*: "lubber" is what might be expected and appears in the Wood versions in about this position, though the narrative is a little different hereabouts.
- 60 The manuscript *I weat for* makes sense and is more metrical than the more grammatical *I wear*; it sounds like scribal padding, but should not be emended on that ground. The Wood versions have no parallel to this line.
- 64 *suned* is clearly the word in *Forresters*.

Robin Hood's Fishing

- 65 For Plumpton Park as a Robin Hood location, see the *Gest*, line 1427.
- 85 The manuscript has no noun after *the* in this line; it would seem that only "prize" or "gold" make sense, and the later is preferred because more familiar and so more easily dropped.
- 87 The phrase "go as" is understood after *shall*.
- 89 Wood's earliest text reads *ship-hatch*, which Child printed, but the plural as found in Forresters is more probable, even for a fairly small fishing boat.
- 126 The source's *And* might be thought an error for "an," which might fit better, but *And* makes sense and is retained.
- 128 *The swallow tayle* is an image of an arrow, with its feather flights having a shape at the rear not unlike a swallow's double-pointed tail.
- 136 MS: *now*. This does not make sense and might be an error for *not*.
- 148 MS: *Tho*. This needs emending to *Thow*.
- 155 In Wood Simon asks to be released and to have his "bent bow" in his hand. This is obviously a repetition from line 103, and makes no sense. The Wood version is heavily cut hereabouts, and the action quite lacks the lucid flow found in Forresters.
- 164 In Wood's version Robin finds twelve thousand pounds in gold, an improbably large sum.
- 173 Robin shares the spoils in the person of an outlaw leader. The Wood version shows him making this statement, but then has the ship's "master" say this "shall not be," but he must own it all himself. Robin seems to agree and merely says he will build "for the opprest . . . An habitation" — presumably an alms-house.
- But whereas Forresters allows *Robin Hood and Queen Catherin* to end in a somewhat argumentative mode, as Little John disagrees with the king and, it seems, Robin, the context here is much less strained than the Wood text.
- 184 The manuscript reads *not* with a correcting point under the *r*.

The Death of Robin Hood

Introduction

This ballad is not recorded until the Percy folio, a badly damaged copy, in the mid-seventeenth century; the first full text is from the late eighteenth-century garland *The English Archer* of 1786, though, as Child notes, it itself "is in the fine old strain" (III, 103). Child prints the ballad early in his collection, as no. 120. This early placement can be justified: the author of the *Gest* knew the tradition of Robin's death. It is presumably one of the "tragedies" which Bower mentions in the 1440s; Grafton in 1569 refers in some detail to the story, and the Sloane *Life* concludes with it. The details of these stories vary, though there is general agreement that a Prioress of Kirkley or Kirklees in Yorkshire, who may be related to Robin, is the main agent of his death, though Martin Parker blames a hostile friar, and both the *Gest* and Percy's version involve an enemy called Roger in the hero's death. In Munday's account, Robin is poisoned by his male clerical enemies, with no Prioress involved.

The text printed here combines the two earliest texts, using the structure of the garland to fill out the Percy version where the pages have been torn (see note to line 1 for details). The story opens with a variant of Robin going off alone against his comrades' advice. He wishes to be bled at Churchlees: in *Robin Hood and the Monk* he wanted to visit church and in *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* he merely wanted to encounter Guy alone. Here it is Will who advises Robin to take men with him. He does take John, but in one version they appear to fall out.

A new motif is the old woman they meet who was banning Robin Hood (line 40). This has been taken to mean "curse" and the sequence has seemed mysterious, but it means "lament," and this woman is, like the washer at the ford, predicting the hero's death — a moment of some mythic force and antiquity. The Prioress overdoes the process of bleeding, and Robin has a somewhat obscure fight with Red Roger, in which the hero kills his opponent. In Percy's version John has been with Robin at Churchlees all the time, and Robin forbids him to take vengeance; in the garland version John arrives in response to his master's last call on his horn, but the effect is the same.

The motif in which Robin fires an arrow to locate his grave is not in the Percy version and is not mentioned in the earliest references, but it has become so potent it seems a proper part of the final frame, taken from the garland version. Both texts

The Death of Robin Hood

stress the natural burial place and the philosophical ending of the hero.

The Death of Robin Hood appears to be a fairly old ballad which develops the hero's end out of the familiar materials of the tradition and with some distinctly ancient and potent elements. There would seem to have been a ballad in existence by the mid-fifteenth century, and the Percy version may well have been in its present form before Grafton wrote. The text assumes a Catholic context, and the language and style are very much like that of *Robin Hood and Gay of Gisborne*, though the narrator's emotive interjections at lines 69-70 and 72 seem unlike the tone of the earliest texts.

It is curious that so important and well-remembered a part of the tradition should not have been preserved in earlier form, and especially surprising that no broadside or early garland version apparently appeared, even though the garlands are constructed partly on a biographical basis. Dobson and Taylor feel that the garland version was only produced in the mid-eighteenth century (1976, p. 134), but as it is substantially the same as the earlier text this seems improbable. It may be that, unlike the more somber patterns of high art, the busy commerce of the ballad market place did not place so high a value on tragedy as on tricksterish triumphs.

This ballad combines many of the central value-laden elements of the early tradition: the protective power of the band, the special bond with John, the treachery of the regular church, a rogue knight as a fearsome enemy, the closeness of Robin to the natural world, his determined retention of high values even in — or especially in — a crisis. To these it adds a special sense of the mysterious potential of the hero, and the appropriate nature of his final moments as he merges into both the forest and myth.

