POPULAR MUSIC

OF THE

OLDEN TIME:

A COLLECTION OF

ANCIENT SONGS, BALLADS,

AND

DANCE TUNES,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

NATIONAL MUSIC OF ENGLAND.

WITH SHORT INTRODUCTIONS TO THE DIFFERENT REIGNS,
AND NOTICES OF THE AIRS FROM WRITERS OF THE
SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES.

ALSO

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE MINSTRELS.

BY

W. CHAPPELL, F.S.A.

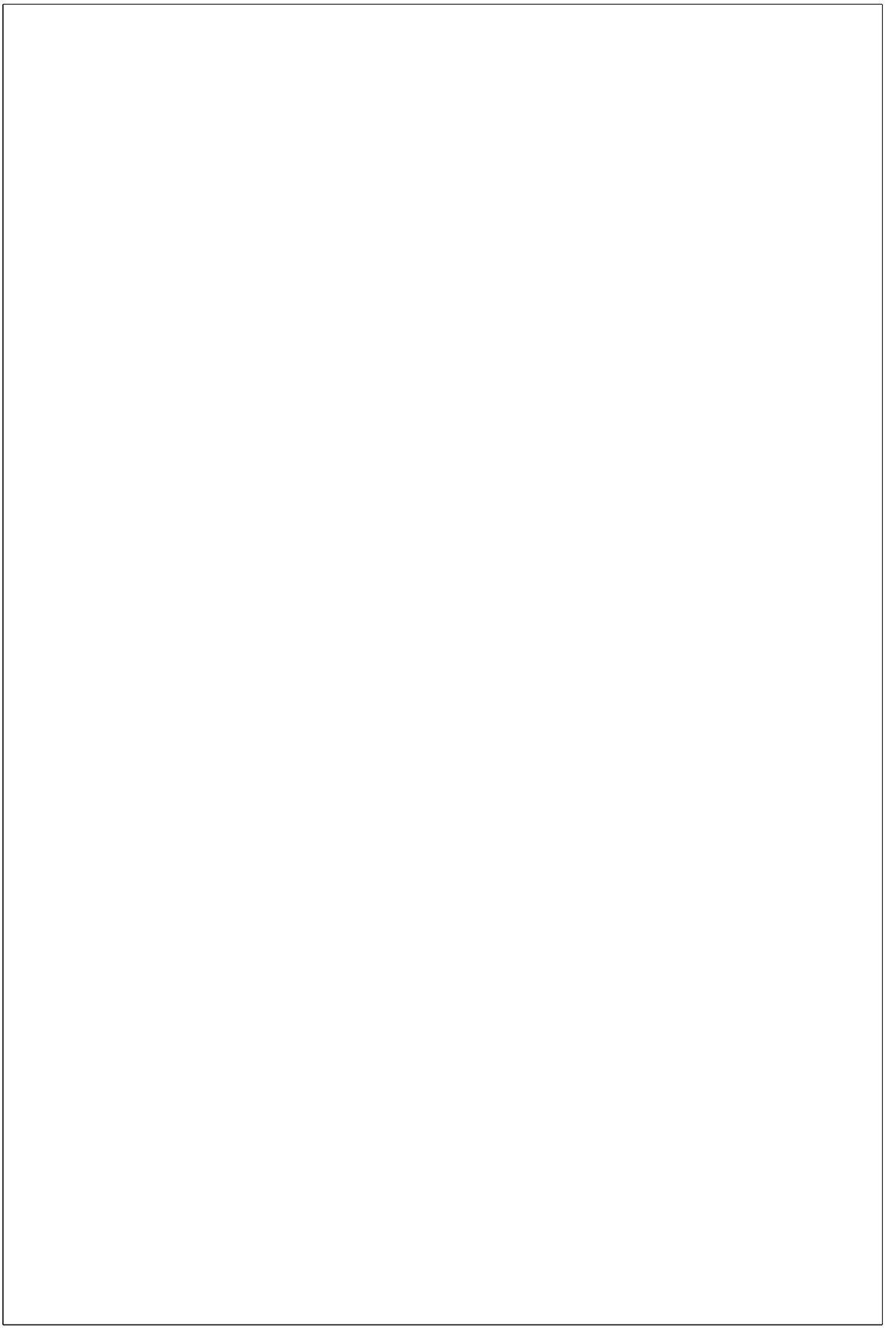
THE WHOLE OF THE AIRS HARMONIZED BY G. A. MACFARREN.

VOL. II.

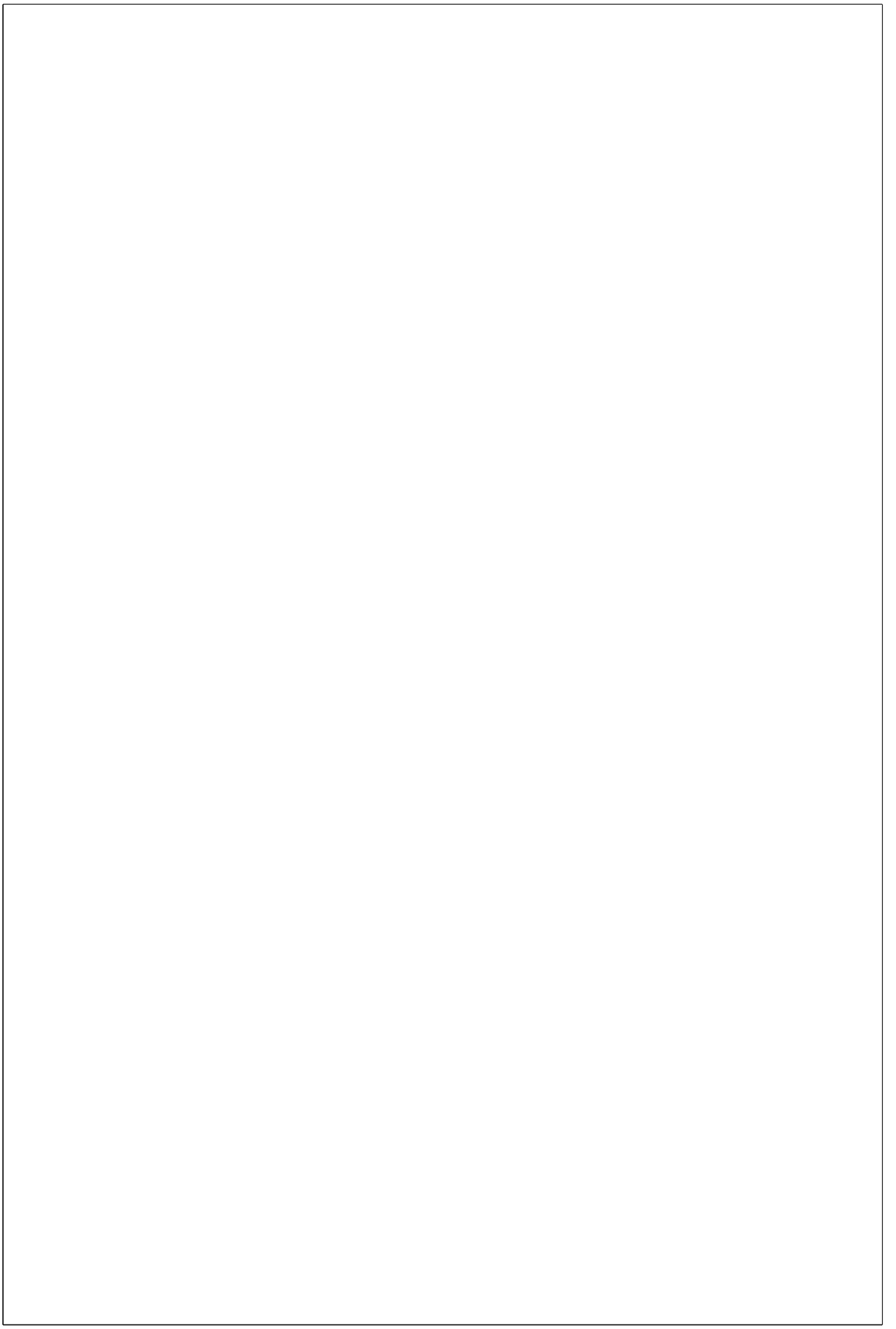
"Prout sunt illi Anglicani concentus suavissimi quidem, ac elegantes."
Thesaurus Harmonicus Laurencini, *Romani*, 1603.

1855 Edition LONDON:
Cramer, Beale & Chappell, 201 Regent Street

2021 Edition MILTON KEYNES
Catrah Press



CONTENTS OF VOL. II.



POPULAR MUSIC
OF THE OLDEN TIME.

ROBIN HOOD.

Of all the sources from which the fertile muse of the English ballad-maker has derived its subjects, no one has proved more inexhaustible, or more universally acceptable to the hearers, than the life and adventures of Robin Hood; and it is indeed singular that an outlaw of so early a time "should continue traditionally popular, be chanted in ballads, have given rise to numerous proverbs, and still be 'familiar in our mouth as household words,' in the nineteenth century."—

> "In this our spacious isle, I think there is not one
> But he hath heard some talk of him and Little John;
> And, to the end of time, the tales shall ne'er be done
> Of Scarlock, George a Green, and Much, the miller's son;
> Of Tuck, the merry friar, which many a sermon made
> In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws, and their trade."
>
> Drayton's *Polyolbion*, Song 26.

The theories, relative to the time in which he lived, vary greatly. According to Ritson, he was born in the reign of Henry II., about the year 1160, and his true name was Robert Fitzooth, "which vulgar pronunciation easily corrupted into Robin Hood." M. Thierry looks upon him as the chief of a band of Saxons resisting their Norman oppressors. Mr. Wright considers him as a mere creature of the imagination—a Robin Goodfellow[a] —"one amongst the personages of the early mythology of the Teutonic people."[b] A writer in *The Westminster Review*[c] believes him to have been one of the *Exheredati*, adherents of Simon de Montfort, who were reduced to the greatest extremities after the battle of Evesham. The Rev. Joseph Hunter,[d] the last writer on the subject, adopts the account given of him in the earliest ballads, and has brought forward much curious historical evidence to confirm that account. In his view, Robin Hood lived in the reign of Edward II., and was in all probability one of the "Contrariantes," supporters of the Earl of Lancaster, who was defeated at the battle of Borough-bridge, in the month of March, 1321-2.

a. The idea that Robin Hood is only a corruption of Robin *o'th'wood* was started by a correspondent of The *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1793.

b. *Essays on the Literature, &c., of the Middle Ages.* By Thomas Wright, 2 vols., 8vo., 1850.

c. March, 1840.

d. *Critical and Historical Tracts*, No. 4,"The Ballad-Hero, Robin Hood." By the Rev. Joseph Hunter, Vice Pres. Soc. Ants., 8vo., 1852.

Neither Mr. Wright nor Mr. Hunter place any reliance upon the passage so often quoted from the *Scoti-Chronicon*, concerning Robin Hood. They regard it as part of the addition made to the genuine Fordun in the fifteenth century. The earliest notice, therefore, in our literature is contained in Longland's poem, *The Vision of Pierce Ploughman*, where one of the characters, representing Sloth, says:—

> "I kan not perfitly my paternoster as the Preist it singeth,
> But I kan rymes of Robyn Hode, and Randolf, Earl of Chester."

The date of this poem is between 1355 and 1365, and proves the popularity of the ballads among the common people, in the reign of Edward III. "It seems also to prove," says Mr. Hunter, "that, in that reign, the outlaw was regarded as an actual person, who had a veritable existence, just as Randolph, Earl of Chester, was a real person."

Three of the ballads of Robin Hood are contained in manuscripts which cannot be of later date than the fourteenth century. They are *The Tale of Robin Hood and the Monk*; *Robin Hood and the Potter*; and *Robin Hood and Gandeleyn*. But, "far above these in importance, is the poem—for it can hardly he called a ballad—which was printed by Winkyn de Worde in or about 1495. It is entitled *The Lytel Geste of Robyn Hood*; and is a kind of life of him, or rather a small collection of the ballads strung together, so as to give a continuity to the story, and with a few stanzas here and there, which appear to be the work of the person who, in this manner, dealt with such of the ballads as were known to him." The language of the ballads thus incorporated is the same as of the three ballads above cited, that is, of the fourteenth century. Mr. Hunter takes *The Lytel Geste* as a guide, and, comparing it with historical evidence, worked out by his own researches, has produced an account so probable and so confirmatory, as to leave scarcely a doubt as to its general accuracy.

Many writers, like Grafton, Stow, and Camden, have referred to, or quoted, Major's account of Robin Hood, in his history, which was first published in Paris, in 1521; but, when Major assigns him to the reign of Richard the First, he writes only from conjecture. His words are, "Circa hæc tempora, *ut auguror*, Robertas Hudus Anglus et Parvus Joannes, latrones famatissimi, in nemoribus latuerunt," &c. (*Historia Majoris Britanniæ, per Joannem Majorem*, 1521, fol. lv., v°.)

We may therefore revert to the history of Robin Hood, as it was published in 1495 from materials of the preceding century; and, although derived from ballads, Bayle has truly said, that "a collection of ballads is not an unprofitable companion to an historian;" while Selden has gone so far as to say that they are often truer than history.

Without entering far into detail, I may mention a few of the points adduced by Mr. Hunter, in corroboration, of the ballad account, and refer the reader, for the life of Robin Hood, to his excellent little book.

The Lytel Geste lays the scene in the reign of one of the Edwards, who is distinguished throughout by no other epithet than that of "Edward our *comely*

king," and who makes a progress in Lancashire. Edward I. was never in Lancashire after he became king, nor Edward III. in the early years of his reign, (to which only could the ballads refer), and probably never at all. But Edward II., to whom the term "our comely king," so often applied, would certainly be more appropriate than either to his father or his son, made one progress in Lancashire, and only one; this was in the autumn of the seventeenth year of his reign, A.D. 1323.

The ballad represents the king at this time as especially intent on the state of his forests, which were greatly wasted by the depredations of such men as Robin Hood; and we have historical evidence of Edward having then visited several of his forests, and of his endeavour to reform the existing abuses.

In the ballad we are told that the king pardons Robin Hood, and takes him into his service; that he remains at court a year and three months; at which time, his money being nearly exhausted, and his men having left him, except Little John and Scathelock, he becomes moody and melancholy, and resolves to leave the court. He obtains permission from the king for a short time, under the plea of making a pilgrimage to a chapel he had dedicated to Mary Magdalene in Barnsdale; he returns to the forest and there passes the remainder of his life.

The date of the king's progress to Lancashire being the autumn of 1323, would fix the period of Robin's reception into his service a little before the Christmas of that year; and in the "Jornal de la Chambre," from the 16th April to the 7th of July, 1324, Mr. Hunter finds, for the first time, the name of "Robyn Hode" in the list of persons who received wages as "vadlets" or porters of the chamber. The entry is a payment to nineteen persons, whose names are specified, from the 24th of March, at the rate of 3d. per day. In the account which immediately precedes this, the names of those receiving payment are not specified, and that of Robin Hood has not been observed *in any document bearing an earlier date*, and the *last* payment to him is on the 22nd of November, in the following year.

Further, the Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield, of the ninth year of Edward II., shew that, *before* the Earl of Lancaster's rebellion, there was a *Robertus* Hood (familiarly *Robin* Hood), a person of some consideration, living at or near Wakefield, which is at no great distance from Barnsdale, and some of the family continued there till 1407.

The three principal reasons for the excessive popularity of Robin Hood were, firstly, his free, manly, warm-hearted, and merry character—his protection of the oppressed, and hatred of all oppressors, whether clerical or lay; secondly, the encouragement given to archery, which kept his name alive among the people; and, thirdly, the incorporation of characters representing Robin Hood and his companions with the May-day games of the people.

On the first point Grafton says, "And one thing was much commended in him, that he would suffer no woman to be oppressed or otherwise abused. The poorer sort of people he favoured, and would in no wise suffer their goods to

be touched or spoiled, but relieved and aided them with such goods as he gat from the rich, which he spared not, namely, the rich priests, fat abbots, and the houses of rich carles: and although his theft and rapine was to be contemned, yet the aforesaid author [Major] praiseth him and saith, that among the number of thieves he was worthy the name of the most gentle thief." (*Chronicle*, p. 84.) As to the zeal with which Robin Hood's day was kept, Bishop Latimer complains, in his sixth sermon before King Edward VI., that having sent overnight to a town, that he would preach there in the morning, when he arrived he found the church door locked, and after waiting half an hour and more for the keys, one of the parish came to him, and said, "Sir, this a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day:" and he was obliged to give place to Robin Hood.

Although there are so many songs about Robin Hood, I have found but few tunes peculiarly appropriated to them. Many of the ballads were sung to one air; and some to airs which have already been printed in this collection under other names.

Dr. Rimbault, in his Musical Illustrations of Robin Hood, appended to Mr. Gutch's edition of the ballads, has printed the air of *The Bailiff's Daughter* (ante p. 203), as one of the tunes to which "Robin Hood and the Pinder of Wakefield" was sung. His "Robin Hood and Queen Katherine" is the tune of *The Three Ravens* (ante p. 59). "Robin Hood rescuing the Widow's Son" is another version of *Lord Thomas and Fair Ellinor* (ante p. 145). "Robin Hood and Allan-a-Dale" is the first half of *Drive the cold winter away* (ante p. 193). "Robin Hood and the Duke of Lancaster" (a satire upon Sir Robert Walpole) is to the tune of *The Abbot of Canterbury* (p. 350).

When Ophelia sings the line, "For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy," she probably quotes from a ballad of Robin Hood, now lost; because the tune in one part of William Ballet's Lute Book is entitled *Robin Hood is to the greenwood gone*, and in another part, *Bonny sweet Robin*. This has already been printed among Ophelia's songs (ante p. 233.)

The ballad of *The Friar in the Well*, of which I have found the tune, but not the original words (ante p. 273), was, in all probability, a tale of Robin Hood's fat friar. Anthony Munday, in his play, *The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington*, refers to it as one of the merry jests that had formed the subject of some previous play about Robin Hood. At the end of act iv., where Little John expresses his doubts as to the king's approval, because the play contains no "jests of Robin Hood; no merry morrices of Friar Tuck," &c., the friar, personating the author, answers—

"I promised him a play of Robin Hood,
His honourable life in merry Sherwood.
His majesty himself survey'd the plot,
And bade me boldly write it, it was good.
For merry jests they have been shewn before,
As how the friar fell into the well,
For love of Jenny, that fair bonny belle;
How Greenleaf robb'd the shrieve of Nottingham,
And other mirthful matter full of game.
Our play expresses noble Robert's wrong."

"How Greenleaf robb'd the sheriff of Nottingham," is told in the *Lytel Geste of Robin Hood*, where Little John assumes the name.

Robin Hood And Arthur-A-Bland.

Although a greater number of the Robin Hood ballads were probably sung to this tune than to any other, I have not found earlier authority for it than the ballad-operas which were published from 1728 to 1750. It does not appear in *The Dancing Master*, being unfitted for dancing by its peculiar metre.

In *The Jovial Crew*, 1731, the following song is adapted to the tune:—

"In Nottinghamshire
Let them boast of their beer
With a hey down, down, and a down,
I'll sing in the praise of good sack;
Old sack and old sherry
Will make your heart merry
Without e'er a rag to your back.
Then cast away care,
Bid adieu to despair,
With a down, down, down, and a down,
Like fools, our own sorrows we make,
In spite of dull thinking,
While sack we are drinking,
Our hearts are too easy to ache."

From the burden, the tune is sometimes entitled *Hey down, a down*; it is also referred to under the names of *Arthur-a-Bland*, *Robin Hood*, *Robin Hood revived*, *Robin Hood and the Stranger*, &c.

Among the Robin Hood ballads sung to it, besides those which the above names indicate, are "Robin Hood and the Beggar," "Robin Hood and the four Beggars," "Robin Hood and the Bishop" (not the Bishop of *Hereford*), "Robin Hood's Chase," "Robin Hood and Little John," "Robin Hood and the Butcher," "Robin Hood and the Ranger," and "Robin Hood and Maid Marian."

Among the King's Pamphlets (Brit. Mus., vol. xv., fol.) is one to this air, dated Jan. 17, 1659, "To the tune of *Robin Hood*" It is entitled "The Gang: or the nine worthies and champions, Lambert," &c., and is a political ballad on the nine leading members of the Committee of Safety, who were deprived of their commissions and ordered away from London by the Rump Parliament, after the depression of Lambert's party, and their own return to power. (Reprinted in *Political Ballads*, edited by Mr. Wright, for the Percy Society, p. 188.) It commences thus:—

"It was at the hirth of a winter's morn,
With a hey down, down, a-down, down,
Before the crow had hist,
That nine, heroes in scorn,
Of a Parliament forlorn,
Walk'd out with sword in fist.
Johnnie Lambert was first, a dapper squire,
With a hey down, &c.,
A mickler man of might
Was ne'er in Yorkshire,
And he did conspire
With Vane Sir Harry, a knight," &c.

Pepys says in his Diary, on the 9th of January, 1659, "I heard Sir H. Vane was this day voted out of the House, and to sit no more there," &c.

The black-letter copy of the ballad of "Robin Hood and Arthur-a-Bland," in the Collection of Anthony à Wood, is entitled "Robin Hood and the Tanner; or, Robin Hood met with his match: A merry and pleasant song, relating the gallant and fierce combat fought between Arthur Bland, a tanner of Nottingham, and Robin Hood, the greatest and most noblest archer in England. Tune is *Robin Hood and the Stranger*." As it consists of thirty-seven stanzas, it is too long to reprint. I therefore refer the reader to Ritson's *Robin Hood*, ii. 31; to Evans' Old Ballads, ii. 113; or any other collection of songs of this celebrated outlaw.