A Little Robin Hood Lore

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CONTENTS

Forewords

This is a study of the English legendary outlaw, as our hero is usually taken to be, Robin Hood, how he is told in the old ballads, wherefore he is, despite that apparently daredevil mode of living he is said to have adopted, that courteous yet peremptory method of robbing, popular with the English people, or how historians and antiquaries of earlier times laboured to snatch him and his band of stalwart archers out of a land of mere old wives' tale, invest him with flesh and blood, dating him and locating him with all the details obtainable, and testify to his being a historical character.

But, apart from the question of legend or histiory, the fact remains that Robin Hood has a firm hold of both juvenile and adult curiosity and is alive in their imagination; at any rate, he still lives in a dozen of place names and proverbs, thirty-eight earliest and most important ballads, at least sixty separate versions in prose, thirty plays, seven operas and a number of motion pictures.

The number of Robin Hood ballads which have been printed and handed down to us is differently put at by different scholars, but somewhere around forty seems to be the reasonable one. Of these, the majority are said to have been written down in the present form about the middle or in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Naturally enough, not all of them are of a uniform merit, eight of them, especially those numbered in the ensuing list 4, 10, 15 and 21, being accounted of the highest.

In the 'List of Robin Hood Ballads' given below, abbreviations are as follows:

St. The number of the stanzas of which the ballad is made.

Ch. Francis J. Child: *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, edit. by Helen C. Sargent & George L. Kittredge. 1905 London

Rits. Joseph Ritson: *Robin Hood, a Collection of all the Ancient Poems, Songs and Ballads, now extant, Relative to that Celebrated English Outlaw.* 1795 London (40)

Roxb. *The Roxburghe Ballads,* re-printed for The Ballad Society. 8 vols. 1869 New York (2102, including 'songs')

Quil. Arthur Quiller-Couch: *The Oxford Book of Ballads.* 1910 Oxford (176)

H.-F. *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript,* edit. by John W. Hales & Frederick J. Furnivall, 4 vols. 1867 London. (196)

Gum. Francis B. Gummere: *Old English Ballads,* 1904 Boston(54)

Ok. *Old English Ballads,* edit. by Y. Okakura. 1923 Tokyo (35)

Per. Thomas Percy: *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.* 1861 London (181)

Refr. A ballad which has ballad refrain; marked with ○

Inn.r. A ballad which has inner (*or* middle) rhyme; marked with ＊

A-301 etc. A version, page 301 etc.

8-530 etc. Volume 8, page 530 etc.

Note: i. The figures in parentheses designate the total of ballads contained.

A List of Robin Hood Ballads

No.	Title	First Line
1.	Birth of Robin Hood, The	O Willie's large o' limb and lith
2.	Bold Pedlar and Robin Hood, The	There chanced to be a pedlar bold,
3.	Death of Robin Hood, The	When Robin Hood and Little John
4.	Gest of Robyn Hode, A	Lythe and listin, gentilmen,
5.	Jolly Pinder of Wakefield, The	In Wakefield there lives a jolly pinder, 'But hold y.. hold y..' says Robin,
6.	King's Disguise, The, and Friendship with Robin Hood	King Richard hearing of the pranks
7.	Little John a Begging	(*perished*) All you that delight to spend some time
8.	Noble Fisherman, The, or, Robin Hood's Preferment	In summer-time, when leaves grow green,
9.	Robin Hood and Allan a Dale	Come listen to me, you gallants so free,
10.	Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne	When shawes beene sheene, and shradds full fayre,
11.	Robin Hood and Little John	When Robin Hood was about twenty years old,
12.	Robin Hood and Maid Marian	A bonny fine maid of a noble degree,
13.	Robin Hood and Queen Katherine	Now list you, lithe you, gentlemen, Gold tane from the kings harbengers,
14.	Robin Hood and the Beggar, I	Come light and listen, you gentlemen all,
15.	Robin Hood and the Beggar, II	Lyth and listen, gentlemen,

Note: ii. The titles in the list are those given in Professor Child's collection, but there are certain variations in them and in other respects.

Ballad No.	Ballad Book	Title etc.
4.	Quil.	A Little Geste of Robin Hood and his Meiny
	Ok.	A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode
	Rits.	"
7.	H.-F.	Little John, the Beggar, and the three Palmers

No.	St.	Ch.	Rits.	Roxb.	Quil.	H.-F.	Gum.	Ok.	Per.	Refr.	Inn. r.
1.	18	...	...	...	465	...	...	...	...	...	...
2.	15	316	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	○	...
3.	24	...	...	...	635	...	...	...	...	○	...
4.	456	254	1	...	497	...	1	112	...	...	...
5.	13	A-301	166	8-530	...	1-32	...	...	...	...	...
	5	B-302	...	...	...	1-32	...	...	...	...	...
6.	44	356	314	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	*
7.	11	A-336	...	...	...	1-47	...	...	...	...	...
	22	B-337	280	8-497	...	1-47	...	...	...	○	*
8.	28	349	262	8-486	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
9.	27	329	197	8-492	616	...	...	...	...	...	...
10.	58	278	114	...	575	2-227	68	...	20	...	...
11.	39	302	290	8-504	...	...	...	...	...	○	*
12.	22	354	309	...	...	...	...	...	...	○	*
13.	38	A-341	...	...	...	1-37	...	...	...	...	...
	42	B-344	235	2-418	...	1-37	...	...	...	○	...
14.	31	318	274	8-515	...	1-14	...	...	...	○	*
15.	93	319	97	8-520	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Rits. Little John and the Four Beggars
Roxb. "

9. Rits. ..... Allin 'a' ....
Quil. ..... Allan a ....
Roxb. ..... Allin of ....

10. Quil. (59 sts. Certain variations in the text from Ch.)
Per. (59 sts.)
H.-F. Guye of Gisborne

13. Roxb. Renowned Robin Hood; or, Robin Hood and

A List of Robin Hood Ballads

No.	Title	First Line
16.	Robin Hood and the Bishop	Come, gentlemen all, and listen a while,
17.	Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford	Some they will talk of bold Robin Hood,
18.	Robin Hood and the Butcher	But Robin he walkes in the greene fforrest, Come, all you brave gallants, and listen a while,
19.	Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar	But how many merry monthes be in the yeere? In summer time, when leaves grow green,
20.	Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow	When as the sheriff of Nottingham
21.	Robin Hood and the Monk	In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,
22.	Robin Hood and the Pedlars	Will you heare a tale of Robin Hood,
23.	Robin Hood and the Potter	In schomer, when the leves spryng,
24.	Robin Hood and Prince of Aragon	Now Robin Hood, Will Scadlock and Little John
25.	Robin Hood and the Ranger	When Phoebus had melted the sicklles of ice,
26.	Robin Hood and the Scotchman	Then bold Robin Hood to the north he would go, Now bold Robin Hood to the north would go,
27.	Robin Hood and the Shepherd	All gentlemen and yeomen good,
28.	Robin Hood and the Tanner	In Nottingham there lives a jolly tanner,

Queen Katharine

14.	H.-F.	(Sts. 1-9, 16-26, 28 (ll. 3&4) , 29-31)
17.	Quil.	(22 sts.)
19.	Roxb.	Robin Hood and Friar Tucke
	H.-F.	"
24.	Rits.	Robin Hood and the Stranger (or, Robin Hood Newly Revived) Part the Second
	Roxb.	Robin Hood, Will Scadlock, and Little John

No.	St.	Ch.	Rits.	Roxb.	Quil.	H.-F.	Gum.	Ok.	Per.	Refr.	Inn. r.
16.	24	338	170	2-448	...	...	...	...	...	○	*
17.	21	340	298	...	612	...	...	...	...	...	...
18.	31	A-293	...	8-533	...	1-19	...	...	...	...	...
	30	B-295	175	8-535	607	...	...	...	...	○	*
19.	21	A-297	...	8-525	...	1-26	...	...	...	...	...
	41	B-298	209	8-521	600	1-27	...	...	...	...	...
20.	33	358	323	...	...	...	...	...	...	○	*
21.	90	282	370	...	585	...	77	...	...	...	...
22.	30	327	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	*
23.	83	289	81	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
24.	58	311	222	2-432	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
25.	23	315	285	...	...	...	...	...	...	○	*
26.	7	A-314	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	○	*
	7	B-314	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	*
27.	28	324	203	8-490	...	...	...	...	...	○	...
28.	37	305	181	8-502	...	...	...	...	...	○	*

29. Roxb. New Song to drive away cold Winter, Between Robin Hood and the Jovial Tinker

30. Rits. (21 sts. Lacks the last two stanzas and the Epitaph (which Ch. has) .)

31. Rits. Robin Hood and the Stranger
Roxb. Robin Hood newly revived 〔or, Robin Hood and the Stranger〕

32. H.-F. Robin Hood, A Beggar, & the Three Squires (for Ch.-A)

A List of Robin Hood Ballads

No.	Title	First Line
29.	Robin Hood and the Tinker	In summer time, when leaves grow green,
30.	Robin Hood and the Valiant Knight	When Robin Hood and his merry men all,
31.	Robin Hood newly Revived	Come, listen a while, you gentlemen all,
32.	Robin Hood rescuing Three Squires	(*perished*) There are twelve months in all the year,
33.	Robin Hood rescuing Will Stutly	When Robin Hood in the greenwood liv'd
34.	Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage	Kind gentlemen, will you be patient awhile?
35.	Robin Hood's Chase	Come you gallants all, to you I do call,
36.	Robin Hood's Death	"I will never eate nor drinke," Robin Hood said, When Robin Hood and Little John
37.	Robin Hood's Delight	There is some will talk of lords and knights,
38.	Robin Hood's Golden Prize	I have heard talk of bold Robin Hood,
39.	Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham	Robin Hood hee was and a tall young man,
40.	Robyn and Gandeleyn	I herde a carpyng of a clerk,
41.	True Tale of Robin Hood, A	Both gentlemen, and yeomen bold,

	Rits.	Robin Hood rescuing the Widow's Three Sons from the Sheriff, when going to be Executed (for Ch.-B)
	Quil.	Robin Hood and the Widow's Three Sons
34.	Roxb.	A new Ballad of Robin Hood, Shewing His Rirth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage, at Titbury Bull-running: Calculated for the Meridian of Staffordshire, but may serve for Derbyshire or Kent
36.	H.-F.	Robin Hood his Death

No.	St.	Ch.	Rits.	Roxb.	Quil.	H.-F.	Gum.	Ok.	Per.	Refr.	Inn. r.
29.	42	307	189	8-527	…	…	…	…	…	○	…
30.	23	360	330	…	…	…	…	…	…	○	*
31.	25	309	217	2-426	…	…	…	…	…	○	…
32.	18	A-332	…	…	…	1-13	…	…	…	…	…
	29	B-333	303	…	621	…	…	…	…	…	…
33.	38	334	254	…	…	…	…	…	…	○	…
34.	55	350	149	2-441	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
35.	24	346	244	8-511	…	…	…	…	…	○	*
36.	27	A-286	…	…	…	1-50	90	…	…	…	…
	19	B-288	335	…	…	…	…	220	…	○	…
37.	24	325	268	…	…	…	…	…	…	○	…
38.	24	347	249	8-508	626	…	…	…	…	○	…
39.	18	330	161	8-499	…	…	…	…	…	○	…
40.	17	244	…	…	462	…	…	…	…	…	…
41.	120	362	126	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
		39 (47)	35	22	12	13	4	2	1	23	15

Ok. Robin Hood's Death and Burial

38. Roxb. (subtitled) Shewing how he robbed two Priests of Five hundred pound.

40. (It is disputed whether Robyn of this ballad is the hero of the other ballads, but Hales says (H.-F. vol. I, p. 52), "The ballad belongs to the Robin Hood cycle……")

The three ballads about Robin Hood's death, *viz.*,

(1) Quil.: The Death of Robin Hood, (2) Ch.: Robin Hood's Death-A, and (3) Ch.: Robin Hood's Death-B compared:

(The table shows what stanzas of (2) and (3) are identical with those of (1))

Quil. st.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Ch.-A st.			1	10	2	4		13		14	15	16
Ch.-B st.	1	2					4		5			

Quil. st.	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Ch.-A st.	17											
Ch.-B st.		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

The result of the comparison shows that different stanzas of Ch.-A (27 in all) and Ch.-B (19 in all) are extracted and joined into one ballad so as to make up Quil. (24 stanzas in all), or, that the latter version is an ingenious conflation of the former two versions.

1. Some Earlier Mentions of Robin Hood

The oldest mention of Robin Hood at present known occurs in the second edition —— what is called the B text —— of *Piers the Plowman*, the date of which is about 1377. In passus v. of that poem the figure of Sloth is represented as saying:

I can[1] nought parfitly my pater-noster
As the priest it syngeth,
But I can rymes of Robyn Hood
And Randolph Erl of Chestre.

[1]know (not)

He is next mentioned by Andrew of Wyntowne in his *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*, written about 1420, which, at the year 1283, has the following lines:

"Lytel Jhon and Robyne Hude
Waythmen[1] ware commendyd gude; [1]outlaws
In Yngilwode and Barnysdale
Thai oysyd[2] all this time thare trawale[3]" [2]used [3]labour

Walter Bower in his addition of Fordun's *Scotichronicon* about 1450 speaks of him, Little John and the rest of his company as 'ille famosissimus sicarius Robertus Hode et Littill Johanne cum eorum complicibus.'

Of his popularity in the latter half of the 15th and in the 16th centuries there are many signs. Just one passage must be quoted as of special importance because closely followed by R. Grafton, J. Stow and W. Camden. It is from John Mair's *Historia Majoris Britanniae tam Angliae quam Scotiae*, which appeared in 1521:

> "Circa haec tempora (Ricardi Primi), ut auguror, Robertus Hudus Anglus et Parvus Joannes latrones famatissimi in nemoribus latuerunt, solum opulentorum virorum bona deripientes. Nullum nisi eos invadentem vel resistentem pro suarum rerum tuitione occiderunt. Centum sagittarios ad pugnam aptissimos Robertus latrociniis aluit, quos 400 viri fortissimi invadere non audebant. *Rebus hujus Roberti gestis tota Britannia in cantibus utitur.* Faeminam nullam opprimi permisit nec pauperum bona surripuit, verum eos ex abbatum bonis sublatis opipare pavit. Viri rapinam improbo, sed latronum omnium humanissimus et princeps erat."

〔About the time of Richard I, Robin Hood and Little John, the most famous of robbers, were lurking in the woods and stealing only from rich men; they killed none except those who resisted them or came to attack them. Robin kept 100 archers on the proceeds of these robberies, well trained for fighting, and not even 400 brave men dared to come against them. *All England sings of the deeds of this Robin*; he would not allow any woman to be hurt, nor did he ever take the goods of the poor; indeed he kept them richly supplied with the goods he stole from the abbots. I disapprove of his thefts, but of all robbers he was the chief and the most

gentle.〕

In the Elizabethan era and afterwards mentions abound, *e.g.*, in the works of Shakespeare, Sidney, Ben Jonson, Fuller, Drayton, Warner, A. Munday, Camden, Stow, etc.

i. William Shakespeare: *As You Like It* (I. i. 119-)

Oli. Where will the old duke live?

Cha. They say he is already in the forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live *like the old Robin Hood of England.*

:*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Ⅳ. i. 34-)

Val. My youthful travel therein made me happy,
Or else I often had been miserable.

Third Out. By the bare scalp of *Robin Hood's fat friar*,
This fellow were a king for our wild faction!

(Friar Tucke, of course, is meant by 'R.H.'s fat friar.')

: *The Second Part of King Henry IV* (Ⅴ. iii. 107)

Sil. And *Robin Hood*, Scarlet, and John.

〔*Singing.*

ii. Sir Philip Sidney: *Arcadia* (1590)

iii. Ben Jonson: *The Sad Shepherd, or a Tale of Robin Hood* (pub. 1641)

iv. Thomas Fuller: *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662)

In his 'History' the author includes Robin Hood as one of the 'Worthies of Nottinghamshire.'

> "One may wonder how he escaped the hand of justice, dying in his bed, for ought is found to the contrary; but it was because he was rather a merry than a mischievous thief (complimenting passengers out of their purses), never murdering any but deer, and.....'feasting' the vicinage with his venison." (*Worthies*, p. 320)

v. Michael Drayton: *Poly-Olbion* (1612, '22)

"The merry pranks he play'd, would ask an age to tell,

And the adventures strange that Robin Hood befell,
When Mansfield many a time for Robin hath been laid,
How he hath cousen'd them, that him would have betray'd;
How often he hath come to Nottingham disguis'd,
And cunningly escap'd, being set to be surpriz'd.
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 frier, which many a sermon made
In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws, and their trade.
An hundred valiant men had this brave Robin Hood,
Still ready at his call, that bowmen were right good,
All clad in Lincoln green, with caps of red and blue,
His fellow's winded horn not one of them but knew,
When setting to their lips their little beugles shrill,
The warbling ecchos wak'd from every dale and hill.
Their bauldricks set with studs, athwart their shoulders cast,
To which under their arms their sheafs were buckled fast,
A short sword at their belt, a buckler scarce a span,
Who struck below the knee, not counted then a man:
All made of Spanish yew, their bows were wondrous strong;
They not an arrow drew, but was a cloth-yard long.
Of archery they had the very perfect craft,
With broad-arrow, or but, or prick, or roving shaft,
At marks full forty score, they us'd to prick, and rove,
Yet higher than the breast, for compass never strove;
Yet at the farthest mark a foot could hardly win:
At long-outs, short, and hoyles, each one could cleave the pin:
Their arrows finely pair'd, for timber, and for feather,
With birch and brazil piec'd to fly in any weather;
And shot they with the round, the square, or forked pile,
The loose gave such a twang, as might be heard a mile,
And of these archers brave, there was not any one,
But he could kill a deer his swiftest speed upon,
Which they did boil and roast, in many a mighty wood,

Sharp hunger the fine sauce to their more kingly food.
Then taking them to rest, his merry men and he
Slept many a summer's night under the greenwood tree.
From wealthy abbots' chests, and churls' abundant store,
What oftentimes he took, he shar'd amongst the poor:
No lordly bishop came in lusty Robin's way,
To him before he went, but for his pass must pay:
The widow in distress he graciously reliev'd,
And remedied the wrongs of many a virgin griev'd:
He from the husband's bed no married woman wan,
But to his mistress dear, his loved Marian,
Was ever constant known, which wheresoe'er she came,
Was sovereign of the woods; chief lady of the game:
Her clothes tuck'd to the knee, and dainty braided hair,
With bow and quiver arm'd, she wander'd here and there,
Amongst the forests wild; Diana never knew
Such pleasures, nor such harts as Mariana slew."

vi. William Warner: *Albion's England* (1586-1606)

"I have no tales of Robin Hood, though mal-content was he
In better daies, first Richard's daies, and liv'd in woods as we
A Tymon of the world; but not devoutly was he soe,
And therefore praise I not the man: but for from him did groe
Words worth the note, a word or twaine of him ere hence we goe.
Those daies begot some mal-contents, the principall of whome
A county was, that with a troope of yomandry did rome,
Brave archers and deliver[1] men, since nor before so good,

[1]agile, active

Those took from rich to give the poore, and manned Robin Hood.
He fed them well, and lodg'd them safe in pleasant caves and bowers,
Oft saying to his merry men, What juster life than ours?
Here use we tallents that abroad the churles abuse or hide,
Their coffers' excrements, and yeat for common wants denide.
We might have sterved for their store, & they have dyc'st our bones,
Whose tongues, driftes, harts, intice, meane, melt, assyrens, foxes, stones,

Yea even the best that betterd them heard but aloofe
our mones.
And redily the churles could prie and prate of our amis,
Forgetfull of their owne...
I did amis, not missing friends that wisht me to amend:
I did amend, but missed friends when mine amis had end:
My friends therefore shall finde me true, but I will trust no frend.
Not one I knewe that wisht me ill, nor any workt me well,
To lose, lacke, live, time, frends, in yncke, an hell, an hell!
Then happie we (quoth Robin Hood) in merry Sherwood that
dwell."

Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, p. 132. It is part of the hermit's speech to the Earl of Lancaster.

vii. Anthony Munday: *The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington* (1598)
: *The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington* (1598)

viii. William Camden: *Britannia* (1586)

ix. John Stow : *The Annales (or Chronicles) of England* (1580)

2. A Historical Person or a Creation of Imagination?

Is Robin Hood a historical person, who really lived and reigned prince of the outlaws in Sherwood forest or Barnsdale with all his merry men, robbing of the rich and giving the proceeds of his plunderings to the poor and oppressed, and feasting under the 'trystell-tree' on venison, sack and ale, as the cycle of his ballads inform us, or is he a mere creation of popular imagination, 'airy nothing' given a local habitation and a name by the pen of the poet 'people?'

As to the actual existence of a person of that name, theories seem to have divided into three kinds——pro, con and intermediate between them. Of those who cherish the first theory, some represent him to have been simply a famous robber chieftain, a prince of outlaws. Mair is one, and he speaks of 'latronum omnium humanissimus et princeps,' and Camden

another, with his words 'praedonum mitissimus.' Later in age, Ritson is, as we shall presently see, far more favourable in his estimation of his hero, and better 'grounded,' as it seems, in his claims. So is Sir Walter Scott in *Ivanhoe*, representing him as 'Locksley' or 'Dicon-Bend-the-Bow.' Others insist that he was a great political leader, carrying on a perpetual guerilla warfare against his enemies, who were the rich and privileged and the clergy at large, and finding refuge on occasion in the tangled labyrinth of the forests. The second theory simply denies him existence. According to it he is a mere creation of the Teutonic mind—— a flesh-and-blood-less fancy. Thus Professor F. J. Child of Harvard University dismisses as 'ludicrous' the elaborate and ingenious inferences of the Rev. Joseph Hunter, who associated Robin Hood with the rebel earl of Lancaster of Edward Ⅱ.'s time.

Again, we find adherents of the third theory, an intermediate and, so to speak, milder and more reasonable one —— a theory which, though not approving of the first unquestioningly, yet agrees with it with a degree of modification. Thus J. W. H. and F. J. S., joint writers of the entry 'Robin Hood' in the Encyclopaedia Britannica say, 'For our part, we are not disinclined to believe that Robin Hood story has some historical basis, however fanciful and romantic the superstructure. We parallel it with the Arthurian story, and hold that, just as there was probably a real Arthur, however different from the hero of the trouvères, so there was a real Hood, however now enlarged and disguised by the accretions of legend. That Charlemagne and Richard I. of England became the subjects of romances does not prevent our believing in their existence; nor need Hood's mythical life deprive him of his natural one.'

A real person or an unreal, it is a 'fact' that Robin Hood has continued to be loved by the English people as their favourite, 'open-handed, brave, merciful, given to archery and venery, good-humoured, jocular, loyal, woman-protecting, priestcraft-hating, Mary-

loving, God-fearing, somewhat rough withal, caring little for the refinements of life, and fond of a fight above all things,'——a lineaments of the portrait handed down to them.

Moreover, who, indeed, shall decide when doctors disagree, especially now that seven hundred years more or less have fled, with not a stone left unturned in the interim in the quest of his 'historical' reality, since the time of Richard Coeur de Lion or Henry Ⅲ., in whose days he is said to have lived?

Such being the case, the question we have hitherto concerned ourselves about may well be made one of rather little concern to us, or not of great concern at best. Is a product of nature of more account than that of the mind, or of the heart, of man, that 'piece of work infinite in faculty?' Do we draw less pleasure from the latter than from the former? If not, then let the question stand as it is, open for ever, and let us be at our ease and tranquility; but, I must make it beyond all doubt, it is not making a virtue of necessity.

3. Robin Hood's Birthplace, Period, Extraction, Title, etc.

On the subjects given above, so much has been said by different historians, antiquaries and ballad-lovers that, however little interest I have in them, I feel I ought to make at least some reference to them and, when available, quote by way of illustration a line or two from the ballads themselves.

i. Birthplace

'Robin Hood was borne at Lockesley in Yorkshyre, or after others in Nottinghamshire.' (MS. in the British Museum:Bib. Sloane. 715)

'Robert Hood, (if not by birth) by his chief abode this countryman.' (T. Fuller: *Worthies of England*, 1662, p. 320: 'Memorable Persons' of Nottinghamshire)

In Locksly town, in merry Nottinghamshire,

In merry sweet Locksly town,
There bold Robin Hood he was born and was bred,
Bold Robin of famous renown. (34-2) [1]

[1]Ballad No. 34 (of the List), Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, etc. st. 2

ii. Period

About the period of Robin Hood, Ritson says (*R. H.* p. ii), ' (Robin Hood was born) in the reign of King Henry the Second, and about the year of Christ 1160,' following, no doubt, the Sloane MS., which states, 'Robin Hood was born.... in the dayes of Henry the 2nd, about the yeare 1160.'

See also [3] 'circa haec tempora (*scil.* Ricardi I.), ut auguror,' etc. (Mair: *Historia*), cited on page 11.

Warner, also, in his *Albion's England* (1602, p. 132) refers his existence to 'better daies, first Richard's daies.'

In the ballads, the king in whose reign Robin Hood 'flourished' is either Henry (three instances out of eight) or Richard (three instances), or again Edward (one instance), and in one instance he is not specified but merely referred to as 'King.'

(1) Henry

..... of my guard,'
Thus can[2] King Henry say, [2]did
'And those that wilbe of Queene Katerines side,
They are welcome to me this day.' (13-A-21)

Come you gallants all, to you I do call,
With a hey down down a down down
That now is within this place,
For a song I will sing of Henry the king,
How he did Robin Hood chase. (35-1)

'Why, who are you,' cry'd bold Robin,
'That speaks so boldly here?'
'We three belong to King Henry,

And are keepers of his deer.' (37-6)

(2) Richard

'Nay, more than that,' said Robin Hood,
'For good king Richard's sake,
If you had as much gold as ever I told,
I would not one penny take.' (6-16)

So unto London-road he past,
His losses to unfold
To King Richard, who did regard
The tale that he had told. (20-2)

King Richad, of that name the first,
Sirnamed Cuer de Lyon,
Went to defeate the Pagans curst,
Who kept the coasts of Syon. (41-55)

(3) Edward

'Thou shalt with me to grenë wode,
Without ony leasynge[1], [1]falsehood
Tyll that I haue gete vs grace
Of Edwarde, our comly kynge.' (4-353)

Then cries the king, and queen likewise,
Both weeping as they speak,
Lo! we have brought our daughter dear,
Whom we are forcd to forsake. (24-33)

Moreover, whether it is Henry Ⅱ. or Ⅲ., Edward Ⅰ., Ⅱ., Ⅲ., or even Ⅳ. that is meant, is not easy to ascertain, for here, too, doctors deplorably disagree, nor ballads speak anything about it, excepting the single instance of Richard, of whom all seem to agree as to his being the first, (see 41-55 above, and also Tennyson's play *The Foresters* (1881), in which the Richard as one of the dramatis personae is *Coeur de Lion*), and in this respect I am not going into particulars of their erudition any further than that, as to Edward,

Ritson says (*Robin Hood*, 1885. p. xvii. footnote) : 'King Edward, it is true, is introduced in the *Lytell Geste, &c.*, but the author has unquestionably meant the *first* of that name.'

(The Reader's Encyclopedia) : 'Notwithstanding this epitaph, other traditions assert that Robin Hood lived into the reign of Edward Ⅲ, and died in 1325. One of the ballads relates how Robin Hood took service under Edward Ⅱ.'

(If the writer of this means *Lytell Geste* by 'one of the ballads,' it indeed tells how Robin Hood took service under Edward, but does not specify that the Edward is the *second.* By the 'epitaph' is meant the one given below.)

Hear underneath this latil stean,
Laiz Robert earl of Huntington;
Nea arcir ver az hie sae geud,
An pipl kauld him Robin Heud.
Sich utlaz az he an hiz men
Vil England nivr si agen.

Obit. 24, *Kalend Dikembris*, 1247.

Carola Oman : 'I have set my story of Robin Hood in the days of Edward Ⅱ.' (*Robin Hood*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons. 1939. p. xii.)

P.V. Harris: '.....so that we are driven to accept of King Edward the Second, to whom perhaps it will be allowed that the epithet 'comely' so often, and no other, applied to him, is more appropriate than it would be to his father or to his son.' (*The Truth about Robin Hood.* Linneys of Mansfield. n. d., p. 62)

Lastly, G. M. Trevelyan says in his *History of England* (London: Longmans. 1926, 1964. p. 187) : 'The King with whom the early ballads connected him (Robin Hood) was not Richard I, but an Edward, probably the First.'

iii. Extraction

"His extraction was noble, and his true name Robert Fitzooth, which vulgar pronunciation easily corrupted into 'Robin Hood.' In 'an olde and auncient pamphlet,' which Grafton the chronicler had seen, it was written that 'This man discended of a noble parentage.' The Sloane MS. says 'He was of..... parentage;' and though the material word is illegible, the sense evidently requires noble." (Ritson: *Robin Hood.* p.xviii)

iv. Title

"He is frequently styled, and commonly reputed to have been, Earl of Huntingdon; a title to which, in the latter part of his life, at least he actually appears to have had some sort of pretention. In Grafton's 'olde and auncient pamphlet,' though the author had, as already noticed, said 'this man discended of a noble parentage,' he adds, 'or rather beyng of a base stocke and linage, was for his manhood and chivalry advaunced to the noble dignitie of an erle.'" (*ibid.* pp. xix-xx)

To further enforce reliability of his assertion, Ritson reproduces in his work the 'Pedigree of Robin Hood Earl of Huntington' from William Stukeley's *Palaeographia Britannica* No. Ⅱ, which traces our hero's ancestors back to his great-great-grandfather! and Anthony Munday entitles one of his plays *The Downfall of Robert earle of Huntington* (1598), and the other *The Death of Robert earle of Huntington* (1598).

They are all gone to London court,
Robin Hood, with all his train;
He once was there a noble peer,
And now he's there again. (6-43)

4. Why he was Outlawed and Where he took Refuge

To these topics, following observations are to be referred:

(1) The Reason

'In his youth he is reported to have been of a wild and extravagant

disposition; insomuch that, his inheritance being consumed or forfeited by his excesses, and his person outlawed for debt, either from necessity or choice, he sought an asylum in the woods and forests, with which immense tracts, especially in the northern parts of the kingdom, were at the time covered.' (Ritson: *Robin Hool.* pp. ii-iii)

"Grafton's pamphlet, after supposing him to have been 'advaunced to the noble dignitie of an erle,' continued thus: 'But afterwardes he so prodigally exceeded in charges and expences, that he fell into great debt, by reason whereof, so many actions and sutes were commenced against him whereunto he answered not, that by order of lawe he was outlawed.'" (*ibid.* pp. xxii-xxiii)

"The Sloane MS. says he was 'so ryotous that he lost or sould his patrimony & for debt became an outlawe.'" (*ibid.* p. xxiii)

"The Harleian note mentions his 'having wasted his estate in riotous courses.'" (*ibid.* p. xxiii)

'His wildness nam'd him Robin Hood.' (30-23Robin Hood's Epitaph)

(2) His Favourite Haunts

'Of these (woods and forests), he chiefly affected Barnsdale, in Yorkshire, Sherwood, in Nottinghamshire, and, according to some, Plompton Park, in Cumberland.' (Ritson: *Robin Hood*, p. iii)

'Along on the lift hond, a iii. miles of betwixt Milburne and Feribridge I saw the woddi and famose forrest of Barnesdale, wher thay say that Robyn Hudde lyvid like an outlaw.' (John Leland: *The Itinerary*, v. 101)

'They haunted about Barnsdale forrest, Compton (*r.* Plompton) parke, and such other places.' (Sloane MS.)

'His principal residence was in Shirewood forrest in this county (Notts.), though he had another haunt (he is no fox that hath but one hole) near the sea in the North Riding in Yorkshire, where Robin Hood's

Bay still retaineth his name: not that he was any pirat, but a land-thief, who retreated to those unsuspected parts for his security.' (Thomas Fuller: *Worthies of England*, p. 320)

Robin Hood he would and[1] to fair Nottingham, [1] (redundant)
With the general for to dine;
There was he ware[2] of fifteen forresters, [2]aware
And a drinking bear, ale, and wine. (39-2)

They Yorkshire woods frequented much,
And Lancashire also,
Wherein their practises were such
That they wrought mickle woe. (41-13)

Robyn stode in Bernesdale,
And leynd hym to a tre;
And bi hym stode Litell Johnn,
A gode yeman was he. (4-3)

He bare a launsgay[3] in his honde, [3]a kind of lance, javelin
And a man ledde his male[4], [4]male horse, pack-horse
And reden[5] with a lyght songe [5] (they) rode
Vnto Bernysdale. (4-134)

'O woe is me,' said Simon then,
'This day that ever I came here!
I wish I were in Plomton Parke,
In chasing of the fallow deere. (8-13)

(Here 'Simon (over the Lee)' is an assumed name of Robin Hood as a fisherman.)

Here is an exquisite poem of Alfred Noyes, whose wistful longing for the hero and his company of outlaws make them visualized before his eyes on one fresh June dawning.

SHERWOOD

Sherwood in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake?
Gray and ghostly shadows are gliding through the brake,
Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the morn,
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy horn.

Robin Hood is here again; all his merry thieves
Hear a ghostly bugle note shivering through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Merry, Merry England has kissed the lips of June;
All the wings of fairyland were here beneath the moon,
Like a flight of rose leaves fluttering in a mist
Of opal and ruby and pearl and amethyst.

Merry, Merry England is waking as of old,
With eyes of blither hazel and hair of brighter gold;
For Robin Hood is here again beneath the bursting spray
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Love is in the greenwood building him a house
Of wild rose and hawthorn and honeysuckle boughs.
Love is in the greenwood; dawn is in the skies;
And Marian is waiting with a glory in her eyes.

Hark! The dazzled laverock[1] climbs the golden steep! [1]lark
Marian is waiting: is Robin Hood asleep?
Round the fairy grass rings frolic elf and fay,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Oberon, Oberon, rake away the gold,
Rake away the red leaves, roll away the mold,
Rake away the gold leaves, roll away the red,
And wake Will Scarlett from his leafy forest bed.

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down together
With quarterstaff and drinking can and gray goose feather.
The dead are coming back again; the years are rolled away

In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows.
All the heart of England hid in every rose
Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper leap,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter gold,
Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep:
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men——
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the may
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day——

Calls them and they answer; from aisles of oak and ash
Rings the *Follow*! *Follow*! and the boughs begin to crash;
The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin to fly;
And through the crimson dawning the robber band goes by.

Robin! *Robin*! *Robin*! All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle note shivers through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

(Alfred Noyes: *Collected Poems* vol. I)

5. Robin Hood as a Master of Archery

One of the inducements, and that a very powerful one, which rendered Robin Hood so dear to the English people was his amazing skill in bowmanship. In shooting the long bow and shaft, which our hero and his cohort practised, 'they excelled all the men of the land; though, as occasion required, they had also other weapons.' (Sloane MS.)

Grafton also speaks of our hero's 'excellyng principally in archery or shooting, his manly courage agreeyng thereunto.' (*Chronicles of England*)

"Their archery, indeed, was unparalleled, as both Robin Hood and Little John have frequently shot an arrow a measured mile, or 1760 yards, which it is supposed no one, either before or since, was ever able to do.. .... Dr. Meredith Hanmer, in his *Chronicle of Ireland* (p.179) , speaking of Little John, says, 'There are memorable acts reported of him, which I hold not for truth, that he would shoot an arrow a mile off and a great deale more; but them,' adds he, 'I leave among the lyes of the land.'" (Ritson: *Robin Hood*, p.xxxiii)

'From the little eminence called after Robin Hood near Ludlow the hero is said to have shot an arrow into the roof of Ludlow Church, a distance of a mile and a half;and an arrow which still decorates a gable of the Fletchers' chancel of the church is said to be the one shot by Robin Hood.' (The Dictionary of National Biography, *sub* Hood, Robin)

In those shooting practices, the mark was, besides an ordinary target with the golden bull's-eye in the centre, a willow wand or a twig cut in the wood and peeled, a temporary garland made of twigs, deer, men, or other things, as occasions called; the distance of the mark varied, as told in the ballads, from five hundred feet to a mile (or a mile and a half, as the above quotation tells) ; when it was a shooting contest, the prize or wager (or 'hold') was 'an arrow with a golden head and shaft of silver white' (Bal. 20-7) , or 'three hundred tun of Renish wine, three hundred tun of beer' (Bal. 14-B-19)

They shewd such brave archery,
  By cleaving sticks and wands,
That the king did say, Such men as they
  Live not in my lands. (6-26)

He that shoteth allther[1] best, [1] (best) of all
  Furthest fayre and lowe,
At a payre of fynly[2] buttes, [2]goodly
  Under the grenë-wode shawe, (4-284)

All made of Spanish yew, their bows were wondrous strong;
They not an arrow drew, but was a cloth-yard long.
With broad-arrow, or but, or prick, or roving shaft,
At marks full forty score, they us'd to prick[1], and rove,
[1]shoot at a 'prick, or target

The loose gave such a twang, as might be heard a mile,
And of these archers brave, there was not any one,
But he could kill a deer his swiftest speed upon,
(Drayton: *Poly-Olbion*)

They cutt them downe the summer shroggs[2] [2]rods, wands
Which grew both vnder a bryar,
And sett them three score rood[3] in twinn[4], [3]rod(=5.5yards)s [4]apart
To shoote the prickes full neare. (10-28)

With that bespake one Clifton then,
Full quickly and full soon;
'Measure no mark for us, most soveraign leige,
Wee'l shoot at sun and moon[5].' [5]they wish to have no mark measured, are ready to take any distance.

'Full fifteen score your mark shall be,
Full fifteen score shall stand;'
'I'le lay my bow,' said Clifton then,
'I'le cleave the willow wand.' (13-B-21,22)

'Which of you can kill a buck?
Or who can kill a do?
Or who can kill a hart of greece[6], [6]grease
Five hundred foot him fro?' (19-B-3)

Now the stranger he made no mickle adoe,
But he bends and[7] a right good bow, [7] (redundant)
And the best buck in the herd he slew,
Forty good yards him full froe. (31-6)

Robin Hood he bent up a noble bow,
And a broad[8] arrow he let flye, [8]barbed or forked

He hit the mark a hundred rod,
And he caused a hart to dy. (39-7)

Thryës[1] Robyn shot about, [1]Thrice
And alway he slist[2] the wand, [2]sliced, split
And so dyde[3] good Gylberte [3]did
Wyth the whytë hande.

Lytell Johan and good Scatheloke
Were archers good and fre;
Lytell Much and good Reynolde,
The worste wolde they not be.

Whan they had shot aboute,
These archours fayre and good,
Euermore was the best,
For soth[4], Robyn Hode. [4]sooth

Hym was delyuered the good arowe,
For best worthy was he;
He toke the yeft[5] curteysly, [5]gift
To grenë wode wolde he. (4-292-5)

Then Robin Hood hee bent his noble bow,
And his broad arrows he let flye,
Till fourteen of these fifteen forresters
Upon the ground did lye. (39-12)

"I always add my hollo," said the yeoman[6], "when I see [6](*i.e.* Locksley) a good shot, or a gallant blow."

"Sayst thou?" answered the Prince[7]; "then thou canst hit [7] (*i.e.* John) the white thyself, I'll warrant."

"A woodman's mark, and at woodman's distance, I can hit," answered the yeoman.

"And Wat Tyrrel's mark, at a hundred yards," said a voice behind, but by whom uttered could not be discerned. (*Ivanhoe*, p. 89)

6. Robin Hood's Followers and their Number

After being outlawed, Grafton tells us, 'for a lewde shift, as his last refuge, (he) gathered together a companye of roysters and cutters[1], and practised robberyes and spoyling of the kinges subjects, and occupied and frequented the forestes or wild countries.' Here he either found, or was afterward joined by, a number of persons in similar circumstances, who appear to have considered and obeyed him as their chief or leader.

[1]cutthroats, highway-robbers

All they kneled on theyr kne,
Full fayre before Robyn:
The kynge sayd hym selfe vntyll[2], [2]to (himself)
And swore by Saynt Austyn,

'Here is a wonder semely syght;
Me thynketh, by Goddës pyne[3], [3]pine, passion
His men are more at his byddynge
Then my men be at myn.' (4-390, 391)

And when they came bold Robin before,
Each man did bend his knee;
'O,' thought the king, 'it is a gallant thing,
And a seemly sight to see.'

Within himself the king did say,
These men of Robin Hood's
More humble be than mine to me;
So the court may learn of the woods. (6-18, 19)

'Six arrows placed on the string were pointed towards the quarter from which the travellers approached when their guide (*i.e.*, Locksley), being recognised, was welcomed with every token of respect and attachment,...' (*Ivanhoe*, p. 190)

'The Black Knight (*i.e.*, Charles I in disguise) was not a little surprised to find that men, in a state so lawless, were nevertheless among

themselves so regularly and equitably governed, and all that he observed added to his opinion of the justice and judgment of their leader.'

(*ibid.* p. 314)

Of them his principal favourites, or those in whose courage and fidelity he most confided, were Little John, William Scadlock (Scathelock *or* Scarlet), George-a-Green, pinder (*or* pound-keeper) of Wakefield, Much (*or* Midge), a miller's son, Friar Tuck, Allan (Allen *or* Allin)-a-Dale, William Stutely (*or* Will Stutly), and Maid Marian, the only female of the company. Of these, the pre-eminence is incontestably due to Little John, whose name is almost constantly coupled with that of his gallant leader.

'His company, in process of time, consisted of a hundred archers; men,' says Major, 'most skilful in battle, whom four times that number of the boldest fellows durst not attack,' and according to the writer of the Sloane MS., 'his company encreast to an hundred and a halfe.' In the ballads, however, the alleged number fluctuates between threescore-and-nine and three hundred.

There's no one shall wrong thee, friend, be not afraid;
These bowmen upon me do wait;
There's threescore and nine; if thou wilt be mine,
Thou shalt have my livery strait. (11-26)

He put the little end to his mouth,
And a loud blast did he blow,
Till threescore and ten of bold Robin's men
Came running all on a row; (17-12)

When Robin Hood came into merry Sherwood,
He winded his bugle so clear,
And twice five and twenty good yeomen and bold
Before Robin Hood did appear.

'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. (34-25, 26)

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. (16-16)

Then Robin Hood setting his horn to his mouth,
A blast he merrily blows;
His yeomen did hear, and strait did appear,
A hundred, with trusty long bows. (25-16)

One hundred men in all he got,
With whom, the story sayes,
Three hundred common men durst not
Hold combate any wayes.

Of more than full a hundred men
But forty tarryed still,
Who were resolvd to sticke to him,
Let fortune worke her will. (41-12, 85)

With that he took the bugle-horn,
Full well he could it blow;
Streight from the woods came marching down
One hundred tall fellows and mo. (24-4)

Then Robin set his horn to his mouth,
And a loud blast he did blow,
Till a hundred and ten of Robin Hood's men
Came marching all of a row. (6-17)

'Let blowe a horne,' sayd Robyn,
'That felaushyp may vs knowe;'
Seuen score of wyght yemen
Came pryckynge on a rowe. (4-229)

Robyn toke a full grete horne,
And loude he gan[1] blowe; [1]did

Seuen score of wyght yonge men
Came redy on a rowe. (4-389)

And gadred[1] them togyder, [1]gathered
In a lytel throwe[2]. [2]space of time
Seuen score of wyght yonge men
Came redy on a rowe, (4-448)

'They'd have me surrender,' quoth bold Robin Hood,
'And lie at their mercy then;
But tell them from me, that never shall be,
While I have full seven-score men.' (30-13)

Sone[3] there were gode bowës bent, [3]soon, at once
Mo than seuen score;
Hedge ne[4] dyche spared they none [4](n)or
That was them before. (4-342)

I wyll come to your courte,
Your seruyse for to se,
And brynge with me of my men
Seuen score and thre. (4-416)

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. (32-B-26)

〔Then Robin set his〕 horne to his mowth,
A loud blast cold[5] h 〔e〕 blow; [5]did
Ffull three hundred bold yeomen [6]advancing
Came rakinge[6] on a row[7]. [7]in a line
(32-A-11)

7. His Manner of Recruiting

His manner of recruiting was somewhat singular, for, to quote the words of an old writer,

'Wheresoever he hard of any that were of unusual strength and hardines

he would desgyse himselfe, and, rather then fayle, go lyke a begger to become acquaynted with them; and, after he had tryed them wih fyghting, never give them over tyl he had used means to drawe (them) to lyve after his fashion. After such maner he procured the pynner of Wakfeyld to become one of his company, and a freyr called Muchel (*r.* Tuck) .....'

(Sloane MS.)

There are only too many variations of the adventure in which Robin Hood unexpectedly meets his match in a hand-to-hand fight, in which he seldom fails to receive a sound beating, now with a pinder, then with a tanner, tinker, shepherd, beggar, etc. His adversaries, after proving their mettle, are sometimes invited and induced to join his company.

(1) Pinder

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.

'Hold thy hand, hold thy hand,' said Robin Hood,
'And my merry men euery one;
For this is one of the best pinders
That ever I try'd with sword.

'And wilt thou forsake thy pinder his craft,
And live in (the) green wood with me?' (5-A-6, 7, 8)

(2) Tanner

And knock for knock they lustily dealt,
Which held for two hours and more;
That all the wood rang at every bang,
They ply'd their work so sore.

'Hold thy hand, hold thy hand,' said Robin Hood,
'And let our quarrel fall;
For here we may thresh our bones into mesh,
And get no coyn at all.

'But if thou'lt forsake thy tanners trade,
And live in green wood with me,
My name's Robin Hood, I swear by the rood
I will give thee both gold and fee.' (28-20, 21, 26)

(3) Tinker The Tinker had a crab-tree staff,
Which was both good and strong;
Robin hee had a good strong blade,
So they went both along.

With that they had a bout again,
They ply'd their weapons fast;
The Tinker threshed his bones so sore
He made him yeeld at last.

So the Tinker was content
With them to go along,
And with them a part to take,
And so I end my song. (29-15, 33, 42)

(4) Shepherd So they fell to it, full hardy and sore;
It was on a summers day;
From ten till four in the afternoon
The Shepherd held him play.

Many a sturdy blow the Shepherd gave,
And that bold Robin found,
Till the blood ran trickling from his head;
Then he fell to the ground.

Thus have you heard of Robin Hood,
Also of Little John,
How a shepherd-swain did conquer them;
The like did never known. (27-11, 13, 28)

(5) Beggar For every blow that Robin did give,
The beggar gave buffets three.

'O hold thy hand,' said Robin Hood then,

'And thou and I will agree;'

And away they went into the merry green wood,
And sung with a merry glee,
And Robin took these brethren good
To be of his yeomandrie. (14-13, 15, 31)

(6) Pedlar

Then Robin Hood he drew his sword,
And the pedlar by his pack did stand;
They fought till the blood in streams did flow,
Till he cried, Pedlar, pray hold your hand!

They sheathed their swords with friendly words,
So merrilie they did agree;
They went to a tavern, and there they dined,
And bottles cracked most merrilie. (2-10, 15)

(7) Little John

O then into fury the stranger he grew,
And gave him a damnable look,
And with it a blow thət ləid him full low,
And tumbld him into the brook.

'I prithee, good fellow, O where art thow now?'
The stranger, in laughter, he cry'd;
Quoth bold Robin Hood, Good faith, in the flood,
And floating along with the tide.

And so ever after, as long as he lived,
Altho he was proper and tall,
Yet nevertheless, the truth to express,
Still Little John they did him call. (11-19, 20, 39)

(8) Curtal Friar

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 oth' clock that day,
Till four ith' afternoon;
Then Robin Hood came to his knees,

Of the frier to beg a boon.

This curtal frier had kept Fountains Dale
Seven long years or more;
There was neither knight, lord, nor earl
Could make him yield before. (19-23, 24, 41)

(9) Ranger

Bold Robin he gave him very hard blows,
The other returnd them as fast;
At every stroke their jackets did smoke,
Three hours the combat did last.

At length in a rage the bold forester grew,
And cudgeld bold Robin so sore
That he could not stand; so shaking his hand,
He said, Let us freely give oer. (25-12, 13)

(10) Scotchman

Thus saying, the contest did quickly begin,
Which lasted two hours and more;
The blows Sawney gave bold Robin so brave
The battle soon made him give oer.

'Have mercy, thou Scotchman,' bold Robin Hood cry'd,
'Full dearly this boon have I bought;
We will both agree, and my man you shall be,
For a stouter I never have fought.'

Then Sawny consented with Robin to go,
To be of his bowmen so gay;
Thus ended the fight, and with mickle delight
To Sherwood they hasted away. (26-B-5, 6, 7)

There are besides those quoted above several descriptions of like encounters in which —— with the single exception of that with Guy of Gisborne (Bal. 10) when, after a most deadly fight of 'two hours of a summers day, with 'blades both browne and bright,' Robin Hood, just on the point of being overpowered by his yeoman adversary, prays Our Lady, and with an 'awkwarde' (that is, back-handed) stroke puts an end

to 'Good Sir Guy'—— our hero is fairly driven to bay and cries, 'O hold, O hold!' (37-16) or is laid on with a pike-staff until he 'falls in a swoon' (15-26) and lies 'still as a stane, his cheeks white as any clay and his eyne closed' (15-29) . Thus, much alike was the outcome of the 'bouts' between him and the three Pedlars (Bal. 22) , the Potter (Bal. 23), the Valiant Knight (Bal. 30) , the three Keepers (Bal. 37) , and the 'deft young man' Young Gamwell (Bal. 31) , who was on his way to seek his 'uncle Robin Hood' when he fell to blows with the latter, and after the fight was given the name of Scarlet——because 'His stockings like scarlet shone' (31-4) ?——, received into the company of merry men, and placed next in importance to Little John, and Robin Hood rejoiced and said, 'And wee'l be three of the bravest outlaws / That is in the North Country.' (31-25)

Observing the process of acquiring the members of his band of outlaws, especially the 'paladins' among them, we cannot but be impressed with the gift of persuation in him as eminent as his prowess and his skill of archery and of wielding the quarter-staff, for his merit seems to lie more in his qualifications as leader, tact of politician, than in his power as fighter, which has given birth to the phrase 'with the downcome of Robin Hood' (*Gude Wallace* st. 30) , which Professor Child takes in the sense of 'knocked down in Robin Hood's fashion' (F. J. Child: *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Glossary, *sub* 'downcome') .

8. Popularity; Friends and Foes

As a great sportsman, an incomparable archer, a lover of greenwood and of a free life, brave, adventurous,_____ as regards Robin Hood's epithets, 'bold' is pre-eminently of the highest frequency (60 in all R. H. ballads) , then 'jolly' (7), 'brave' (4), 'good' (3), 'gentle' and 'stout' (1); incidentally, 'brave'Little John (1) and 'brave' Stutly (1)_____chivalrous, jocular, open-handed, a protector of women, an able leader, Robin Hood's

popularity with the general public was such that he was in his time, that is, about the close of the middle ages, the people's ideal as Arthur was that of the upper classes. He was the ideal yeoman as Arthur was the ideal knight. He readjusted the distribution of property: he robbed the rich and endowed the poor, defied the oppressive forest laws, and thus attracted popular sympathy. The people, groaning and travailing, rejoiced to picture in him their great friend and succour. This hero of the people is a man after the people's own heart. He reflects the popular character, and in this way most interesting and important.

'It shall be so, as I have said;
And, with this gold, for the opprest
An habitation I will build,
Where they shall live in peace and rest.' (8-28)

'For I never yet hurt any man
That honest is and true;
But those that give their minds to live
Upon other men's due.

'I never hurt the husbandman,
That use to till the ground;
Nor spill their blood that range the wood
To follow hawk or hound. (6-10, 11)

But, to speake true of Robbin Hood,
And wrong him not a iot,
He never would shed any mans blood
That him invaded not.

Nor would he iniure husbandmen,
That toyld at cart and plough;
For well he knew, were't not for them,
To live no man knew how. (41-73, 74)

His enemies were the propertied and entrenched individuals who defended injustice and made money from it, in particular the shriff of

Nottinghamshire and the abbots of rich monasteries.

'These bisshoppes and these archebishoppes,
Ye shall them bete and bynde;
The hyë sherif of Notyingham,
Hym holde ye in your mynde.' (4-15)

was an injunction carefully impressed upon his followers. The Abbot of Saint Mary's, in York, from some unknown cause, though Martin Parker, the author of Ballad No. 41, thinks it was a pecuniary one, appears to have been distinguished by particular animosity; and the Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, mentioned just above, who may have been too active and officious in his endeavours to apprehend him, was the unremitted object of his vengeance.

He took the king's horse by the head,
'Abbot,' says he, 'abide;
I am bound to rue[1] such knaves as you, [1]cause to rue
That live in pomp and pride.'

'My chiefest spite to clergy is,
Who in these days bear a great sway;
With fryars and monks, with their fine sprunks[2], [2]fine, showily dressed women?
I make my chiefest prey.' (6-6, 12)

To the king, however, he was loyal, although he and his band stole the king's deer; and his veneration of the Virgin Mary was such that he would protect all women for her sake, or lent, on no other security than the Virgin a large sum to an impoverished knight who was in debt to an avaricious abbot.

A gode maner than had Robyn;
In londe where that he were,
Euery day or[1] he wold dyne [1]before
Thre messis wolde he here[2]. [2]hear

The one in the worship of the Fader,
And another of the Holy Gost,
The thirde of Our derë Lady,
That he loued allther[1] moste. [1]of all

Robyn loued Oure derë Lady;
For dout[2] of dydly synne, [2]fear
Wolde he neuer do compani harme
That any woman was in. (4-8, 9, 10)

'I haue none other,' sayde the knyght,
'The sothe[3] for to say, [3]sooth, truth
But yf[4] yt be Our derë Lady; [4]unless
She fayled me neuer or thys day.'

'By dere worthy God,' sayde Robyn,
'To seche all Englonde thorowe.
Yet fonde I neuer to my pay
A moch better borowe[5]. [5]security

'Come nowe furth, Litell Johnn,
And go to my tresourë,
And bringe me foure hundered pound,
And loke well tolde it be.' (4-65, 66, 67)

'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[6]. [6]satisfaction

'But I haue grete meruayle,' sayd Robyn,
'Of all this longë day;
I drede Our Lady be wroth with me,
She sent me not my pay.' (4-206, 235)

The widow in distress he graciously relieved,
And remedied the wrongs of many a virgin grieved. (Drayton)

'I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor men in woman's company.'

'I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at mine end shall it be;' (36-B-15, 16)

The widow and the fatherlesse
He would send meanes unto,
And those whom famine did oppresse
Found him a friendly foe.

Nor would he doe a woman wrong,
But see her safe conveid;
He would protect with power strong
All those who crav'd his ayde. (41-21, 22)

'That I reade[1] not,' said Robin Hoode then, [1]advise
'Litle John, for it may not be;
If I shold do any widow hurt, at my latter end,
God,' he said, 'wold blame me;' (36-A-25)

9. *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode*

The first published collection of ballads about the hero was the *Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde (William Caxton's chief assistant) about 1490 (*or* 1495, *or*, according to A. W. Pollard, 1510). It is the most important of the R. H. cycle of ballads, a near epic of 456 stanzas, and is evidently founded on older ballads; we read in *The Seconde Fytte*, st. 126_____

'He wente hym forthe full mery syngynge,
As men have told in tale.'

In fact, it does for the R. H. cycle what a few years before (1485) Sir Thomas Malory had done for the Arthurian romances. According to the *Geste*, which first supplies details of his story, R. H.'s home was in Barnsdale, a woodland region in the West Riding of Yorkshire, south of Pontefract and north of Doncaster. He protects a knight, Sir Richard-at-the-Lee, from the extortions of the abbot of St. Mary's, York; kills his sworn foe the sheriff of Nottinghamshire, who attempts to arrest him; is

visited by 'King Edward' in disguise, who, delighted with his archery and courtesy, takes him into his household; finally returns to the greenwood; and, going to the prioress of Kirklees (between Wakefield and Halifax) to be let blood, is there treacherously bled to death at the suggestion of a knight, Sir Roger of Doncaster. Although many places mentioned in the *Geste* can be identified in the West Riding and its neighbourhood, the topography is vague throughout. In many later ballads R. H. is located in Sherwood Forest, and more rarely in Plumpton Park, Cumberland, and there are signs that the compiler of the *Geste* had carelessly combined extracts from ballads which are no longer extant, connecting the hero with Sherwood and Plumpton.

The *Geste* is composed of eight 'Fyttes,' or cantos, in each of which is told a different story connected with the hero's exploits; briefly, they are as follows——

The First Fytte, 81 stanzas (sts. 1-81), tells

How R. H. befriended a poor Knight, Sir Richard-at-the-Lee.

1 LYTHE[1] and listin, gentilmen, [1]hearken
That be of frebore blode[2]; [2]freeborn blood
I shall you tel of a gode yeman,
His name was Robyn Hode.

2 Robyn was a prude[3] outlaw, [3]proud
〔Whyles he walked on grounde;
So curteyse[4] an outlawe〕 as he was one [4]courteous
Was never non founde.

8 A gode maner than had Robyn;
In londe where that he were,
Euery day or[5] he wold dyne [5]before
Thre messis wolde he here.

9 The one in the worship of the Fader,
And another of the Holy Gost,

The thirde of Our derë Lady,
That he loued allther moste.

Robyn loued Oure derë Lady;
For dout of dydly synne,
Wolde he neuer do compani harme
That any woman was in.

'Therof no force[1],' than sayde Robyn;
'We shall do well inowe;
But loke ye do no husbonde harme,
That tilleth with his ploughe.

'No more ye shall no gode yeman
That walketh by grenë-wode shawe[2];
Ne no knyght ne no squyer
That wol be a gode felawe.

'These bisshoppes and these archebishoppes,
Ye shall them bete and bynde;
The hyë sherif of Notyingham,
Hym holde ye in your mynde.'

His hode hanged in his iyn[3] two;
He rode in symple aray;
A soriar man than he was one
Rode neuer in somer day.

'Hast thou any frende,' sayde Robyn,
'Thy borowe[4] that woldë be?'
'I haue none,' than sayde the knyght,
'But God that dyed on tree.'

'I haue none other,' sayde the knyght,
'The sothe for to say,
But yf yt be Our derë Lady;
She fayled me neuer or thys day.'

[1]no matter,
[2]wood
[3]eyes
[4]security

The Second Fytte, 62 stanzas (sts. 82-143), tells
How the Knight paid his Creditors against their will.

84 Then spake that gentyll knyght,
To Lytel Johan gan[1] he saye, [1]did
To-morrowe I must to Yorke toune,
To Saynt Mary abbay.

85 And to the abbot of that place
Foure hondred pounde I must pay;
And but[2] I be there vpon this nyght [2]unless
My londe is lost for ay.

120 He stert[3] hy*m* to a borde anone, [3]started, rushed
Tyll[4] a table rounde, [4]to
And there he shoke oute of a bagge
Eue*n* four hundred pou*n*d.

121 'Haue here thi golde, sir abbot,' saide the knight,
'Which th*a*t thou le*n*test me;
Had thou ben curtes at my comynge,
Rewarded shuldest thou haue be[5].' [5]been

The Third Fytte, 61 stanzas (sts. 144-204), tells

How Little John robbed the Sheriff of Nottingham and delivered him into R. H.'s hands.

201 'Lat me go,' tha*n* sayde the sherif,
'For sayntë charitë,
And I woll be the best 〔ë〕 frende
That euer yet had ye.'

202 'Thou shalt swere me an othe,' sayde Robyn,
'On my bright bronde[6]; [6]brand, sword
Shalt thou neuer awayte me scathe[7], [7]lie in wait to do
By water ne by lande. me hørm

203 'And if thou fynde any of my men,
By nyght or 〔by〕 day,
Vpon thyn othë thou shalt swere
To helpe them tha 〔t〕 thou may.'

The Fourth Fytte, 76 stanzas (sts. 205-280) , tells

How R. H. was repaid his loan.

256 'How moch is in yonder other corser[1]?' [1]forser, coffer
sayd Robyn,
'The soth must we see:'
'By Our Lady,' than sayd the monke,
'That were no curteysye,

257 'To bydde a man to dyner,
And syth[2] hym bete and bynde.' [2]then
'It is our oldë maner,' sayd Robyn,
'To leue[3] but lytell behynde.' [3]leave

270 'Haue here foure hondred pounde,' than sayd the knyght,
'The whiche ye lent to me;
And here is also twenty marke
For your curteysy.'

271 'Nay, for God,' than sayd Robyn,
'Thou broke[4] it well for ay; [4]enjoy
For Our Lady, by her [hyë] selerer[5], [5]cellarer
Hath sent to me my pay.

The Fifth Fytte, 36 stanzas (sts. 281-316) , tells

How at archery in Nottingham R. H. was treacherously attacked, but escaped into Sir Richard's Castle.

305 'But take out thy brownë swerde,
And smyte all of[6] my hede[7], [6]off [7]head
And gyue me woundës depe and wyde;
No lyfe on me be lefte.'

306 'I wolde not that,' sayd Robyn,
'Johan, that thou were slawe[8], [8]slain
For all the golde in mery Englonde,
Though it lay now on a rawe[9].' [9]in a row

The Sixth Fytte, 37 stanzas (sts. 317-353), tells

How Sir Richard was cast by the Sheriff into prison, and rescued by R. H.

340 Vp than sterte gode Robyn,
As man that had ben wode[1]: [1]mad
'Buske[2] you, my mery men, [2]make ready
For hym that dyed on rode[3]. [3]the rood

341 'And he that this sorowe forsaketh,
By hym that dyed on tre,
Shall he neuer in grenë wode
No lenger dwel with me.'

347 Robyn bent a full goode bowe,
An arrowe he drowe at wyll;
He hit so the proudë sherife
Vpon the grounde he lay full still.

348 And or he myght vp aryse,
On his fete to stonde,
He smote of the sherifs hede
With his bright [ë] bronde.

The Seventh Fytte, 64 stanzas (sts. 354-417), tells

How the King rode out to punish R. H., and how he was entertained.

389 Robyn toke a full grete horne,
And loude he gan blowe;
Seuen score of wyght[4] yonge men [4]strong
Came redy on a rowe.

390 All they kneled on theyr kne,
Full fayre before Robyn:
The kynge sayd hym selfe vntyll[5], [5]unto
And swore by Saynt Austyn,

391 'Here is a wonder semely syght;
Me thynketh, by Goddës pyne[6], [6]suffering, passion

His men are more at his byddynge
Then my men be at myn.'

The Eighth Fytte, 39 stanzas (sts. 418-456), tells

How R. H. lived a while at the King's Court, but returned to the Green-wood, to be betrayed later to death by the Prioress of Kirksley and Sir Roger of Doncaster.

425 And many a buffet our kynge wan[1] [1]won
Of Robyn Hode that day,
And nothynge spared good Robyn
Our kynge in his pay.

438 'Alas!' then sayd good Robyn,
'Alas and well a woo!
Yf I dwele lenger with the kynge,
Sorowe wyll me sloo[2].' [2]slay

450 Robyn dwelled in grenë wode
Twenty yere and two;
For all drede of Edwarde our kynge.
Agayne wolde he not goo.

454 Than bespake good Robyn,
In place where as he stode,
'To morow I muste to Kyrke[s]ly,
Craftely to be leten blode.'

455 Syr Roger of Donkestere,
By the pryoresse he lay,
And there they betrayed good Robyn Hode
Through theyr falsë playe.

456 Cryst haue mercy on his soule,
That dyed on the rode!
For he was a good outlawe,
And dyde pore men moch god.

10. Robin Hood's Death and Burial; the Epitaph

After a long series of years of independent sovereignty in the 'North Country' and the 'West Country,' during which time he was exposed to countless perils of his own life and the lives of his trusty meiny, it must be one of many instances of the inscrutable ways of heaven that he was eventually brought low, not by the keen steel or arrow of a stalwart foeman but by the blood-irons held in the lily-white hand of a betraying nun.

Thus dyed he by trechery,
That could not dye by force. (41-94)

Here are descriptions by divers writers of the circumstances of his death.

'At length, the infirmities of old age increasing upon him, and desirous to be relieved, in a fit of sickness, by being let blood, he applied for that purpose to the Prioress of Kirkleys nunnery in Yorkshire, his relation (women, and particularly religious women, being, in those times, somewhat better skilled in surgery than the sex is at present), by whom he was treacherously suffered to bleed to death. This event happened on the 18th of November 1247, being the 31st year of King Henry Ⅲ. and (if the date assigned to his birth be correct) about the 87th of his age. He was interred under some trees, at a short distance from the house; a stone being placed over his grave, with an inscription to his memory.' (Ritson: *Robin Hood.* pp. x-xi)

'〔Being〕 dystempered with could and age, he had great payne in his lymmes, his bloud being corrupted, therefore to be eased of his payne by letting bloud, he repayred to the priores of Kyrkesly, which some say was his aunt, a woman very skylful in physique & surgery; who, perseyving him to be Robyn Hood, & waying howe fel an enimy he

was to religious persons, toke reveng of him for her owne howse and all others by letting bleed to death. It is also sayd that one Roger of Doncaster, bearing grudge to Robyn for some injury, incyted the priores, with whome he was very familiar, in such a manner to dispatch him.' (Sloane MS.)

'At which time it happened he fell sick at a nunnery in Yorkshire called Birkleys [*r.* Kirkleys]; & desiring there to be let blood, hee was betrayed & made bleed to death.' (Harleian MS.)

As for his death being caused by the treachery of the nun, all mentions, with the single exception of the last quotation, seem to agree, but as to whether or not it came out of her individual judgment, they do not (cf. the Sloane MS. above).

She laid the blood-irons to Robin's vein,
  Alack, the more pitye!
And pierc'd the vein, and let out the blood
  That full red was to see.

And first it bled the thick, thick blood,
  And afterwards the thin,
And well then wist good Robin Hood
  Treason there was within.

And there she blooded bold Robin Hood
  While one drop of blood wou'd run;
There did he bleed the live-long day,
  Unitil the next at noon. (3-12-14)

Yet he was begyled, i-wys,
  Through a wycked woman,
The pryoress of Kyrkësly,
  That nye[1] was of hys kynne: [1]nigh

For the loue of a knyght,
  Syr Roger of Donkesly,

That was her ownë speciall[1];
Full euyll motë[2] they the[3]!

[1]a male sweetheart or lover
[2]may [3]thrive, prosper

They toke togyder theyr counsell
Robyn Hode to sle[4],
And how they myght best do that dede,
His banis[5] for to be.

[4]slay
[5]bane, destruction

Than bespake good Robyn,
In place where as he stode,
'To morrow I muste to Kyrkesly,
Craftely to be leten blode.'

Syr Roger of Donkestere,
By the pryoresse he lay,
And there they betrayed good Robyn Hode,
Through theyr falsë playe.

Cryst haue mercy on his soule,
That dyed on the rode[6]!
For he was a good outlawe,
And dyde pore men moch god[7].

[6]rood, cross
[7]good (4-451-456)

'And, going to the prioress of Kirklees (between Wakefield and Halifax) to be let blood, is there treacherously bled to death at the suggestion of a knight, Sir Roger of Doncaster. (Dictionary of National Biography)

A faithlesse fryer did pretend
In love to let him blood;
But he by falsehood wrought the end
Of famous Robin Hood.

A treacherous leech this fryer was,
To let him bleed to death;
And Robbin was, me thinkes, an asse,
To trust him with his breath.

His corpes the priores of the place,

The next day that he dy'd,
Caused to be buried, in mean case,
Close by the high-way side. (41-92, 96, 97)

But of all the descriptions of Robin Hood's death, perhaps the most heroic and intensely lyrical is the closing stanzas of 'Robin Hood's Death' (Bal. No. 36-B) , which run thus:

'What is that boon,' said Robin Hood,
'Little John, [thou] begs of me?'
'It is to burn fair Kirkly-hall,
And all their nunnery.'

'Now nay, now nay,' quoth Robin Hood,
'That boon I'll not grant thee;
I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor men in woman's company.

'I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at mine end shall it be;
But give me my bent bow in my hand,
And a broad arrow I'll let flee;
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digged be.

'Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet;
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.

'Let me have length and breadth enough,
With a green sod under my head;
That they may say, when I am dead,
Here lies bold Robin Hood.'

These words they readily granted him,

Which did bold Robin please:
And there they buried bold Robin Hood,
Within the fair Kirkleys. (36-B-14-19)

Their Stoic heroism will remind one of the opening lines of R. L. Stevenson's *Requiem*:

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.

Lastly, of the spelling of 'Kirkly' there are found a number of variations, *e.g.*,

Kirkes Lay (41-120), Kirklees (Dict. Nat. Biogr. *sub* Hood, Robin), Kirkleys, Kirkly (36-B-3 *et al.*), Kirksley (Quil. 4-451 *et al.*), Kyrkësly (Ch. 4-451), Churchlees (36-A-1 *et al.*) Birkslay (32-23), Kirkleghes, Kuthale.

Of Robin Hood's burial, following references are made by Ritson:
"In the second volume of Dr. Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiosum* is an engraving of 'the prospect of Kirkley's abby (reproduced in Garnett and Gosse's *English Literature.* vol. I. p. 305 —— by the present writer), where Robin Hood dyed, from the footway leading to Heartishead church, at a quarter of a mile distance.'"

'.....letting him bleed to death, buryed him under a great stone by the hywayessyde.' (Sloane MS.)

'.....the prioresse of the same place caused him to be buried by the highwayside.' (Grafton: *Chronicles of England*)

'Near unto Kirklees the noted Robin Hood lies buried under a grave-stone that yet remains near the park, but the inscription scarce legible.' (Thoresby: *Ducatus Leodiensis*)

Of his epitaph, again, there have been more than one produced by

Ritson from different sources.

(1) Thoresby, in the Appendix to his above cited work says, 'Amongst the papers of the learned Dr. Gale, late dean of Yorke, was found this epitaph of Robin Hood:

Hear underneath dis latil stean
laiz robert earl of Huntingtun
nea arcir ver az hie sa geud
an pipl kauld im robin heud.
sic utlawz as hi an iz men
vil england nivr si agen.

obiit 24 kal dekenbris, 1247.

(2) The old epitaph is, by some anonymous hand, in a work entitled *Sepulchrorum inscriptiones*; or a curious collection of 900 of the most remarkable epitaphs, Westminster, 1727 (vol. ii. p. 73), thus not inelegantly paraphrased:

Here, underneath this little stone,
Thro' Death's assaults, now lieth one,
Known by the name of Robin Hood,
Who was a thief, and archer good;
Full thirteen years, and something more,
He robb'd the rich to feed the poor:
Therefore, his grave bedew with tears,
And offer for his soul your prayers.

(3) In *The Travels of Tom Thumb over England and Wales* (by Mr. Robert Dodsley), p. 106, is another though inferior version:

Here, under this memorial stone,
Lies Robert earl of Huntingdon;
As he, no archer e'er was good,
And people call'd him Robin Hood:

Such outlaws as his men and he
Again may England never see.

(4) In ballads, his epitaphs are found appended in two different places (Bls. 30 and 41), but as they are nearly identical, either of them will suffice as an example.

Robin Hood's Epitaph
Set on his tomb
By the Prioress of Birklay Monastery,
in Yorkshire.
Robin, Earl of Huntington,
Lies under this little stone.
No archer was like him so good;
His wildness nam'd him Robin Hood.
Full thirteen years, and something more,
These northern parts he vexed sore.
Such outlaws as he and his men
May England never know again! (30)

11. Robin Hood in Place Names, Proverbs, etc.

In Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and other counties there are a host of place names which testify to the popularity of Robin Hood legend, such as:

Robin Hood's Bay (a seaside resort, North Riding, Yorkshire)
Robin Hood's Chair (a rock in Hope Dale, Derbyshire)
Robin Hood's Chase
Robin Hood's Cup (any of numerous wells in Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire)
Robin Hood's Hills (in Derbyshire)
Robin Hood's Pricks (*or* Butts) (barrows near Whitby in Yorkshire

and Ludlow in Shropshire)

Robin Hood's Stable (a cave in Nottinghamshire)

He also has given rise to divers proverbs and proverbial expressions, such as:

1. 'Good even, good Rabin Hood.'

The allusion is to civility extorted by fear.

2. 'Many men talk of Robin Hood that never shot in his bow.'

That is, many discourse (or prate rather) of matters wherein they have no skill or experience.

3. 'To overshoot Robin Hood.'

cf. 'And lastly and chiefly, they cry out with open mouth as if they had overshot Robin Hood, that Plato banished them [*i. e.* poets] out of his commonwealth' (Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie*).

4. 'Tales of Robin Hood are good (enough) for fools.'

'Tales of Robin Hood' was used as a synonym for fabulous stories. This proverb is inserted in Camden's *Remains*.

5. 'To sell Robin Hood's pennyworths.'

To sell things at half their value. As Robin Hood stole his wares, he sold them under their intrinsic value, for just what he could get on the nonce.

6. 'Come, turn about, Robin Hood.'

Implying that to challenge or defy our hero must have been the *ne plus ultra* of courage. It occurs in *Wit and Drollery*, 1661.

7. 'As crook'd as Robin Hood's bow.'

That is, we are to conceive, when bent by himself.

8. 'To go round by Robin Hood's barn.'

This saying is used to imply the going of a short distance by a circuitous way, or the farthest way about, arriving at the right conclusion by very roundabout methods.

9. 'A Robin Hood wind.'

In Lancashire a searching south-east wind is known by that name. A cold thaw-wind. Tradition runs that Robin Hood used to say he could bear any cold except that which a thaw-wind brought with it.

12. Opening Lines of Robin Hood Ballads

In many of Robin Hood ballads we find one of two formal types of opening lines, or incipits, one of which is a reference to the season of the year, such as 'In somer, when the shawes be sheyne, / And leves be large and long,' and the other an address to the audience or reader, such as 'Lithe and listin, gentilmen, / That be of frebore blode.' Both of these forms will be taken as admirably fitted to prepare the mind of those who listen to the piece sung or read to them or who read it, for the event, usually a fight, just about to take place.

As shown in the above list of ballads, twenty-one out of forty-nine ballads (different versions included) have either the one or the other of these forms of beggining, which comes to more than forty per cent of the entire cycle of Robin Hood ballads.

Typte 1. In summer time, when leaves grow green,
When they doe grow both green and long, (8-1)

When shawes[1] beene sheene, and shradds[2] full fayre,
[1]woods, thickets [2]coppices
And leeues both large and longe, (10-1)

In summer time, when leaves grow green,
And flowers are fresh and gay, (19-B-1)

In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,
And leves be large and long, (21-1)

In schomer, when the leves spryng,
The bloschoms on euery bowe,

So merey doyt[1] the berdys syng [1]doth (*pl.*)
Yn wodys merey now. (23-1)

When Phoebus had melted the sickles of ice[2], [2]icicles
With a hey down, &c.
And likewise the mountains of snow, (25-1)

In summer time, when leaves grow green,
Down a down a down
And birds sing on every tree,
Hey down a down a down (29-1)

Type 2. Lythe and listin, gentilmen,
That be of frebore blode; (4-1)

All you that delight to spend some time
With a hey down down a down down
A merry song for to sing, (7-B-1)

Come listen to me, you gallants so free,
All you that loves mirth for to hear, (9-1)

Now list you, lithe you, gentlemen,
A while for a litle space, (13-A-1)

Come light[3] and listen, you gentlemen all, [3]corruption of
Hey down, down, and a down lith, listen
That mirth do love for to hear, (14-1)

Lyth and listen, gentlemen,
That's come of high born blood; (15-1)

Come, gentlemen all, and listen a while,
Hey down down an a down
And a story I'le to you unfold; (16-1)

Come, all you brave gallants, and listen a while,
With hey down, down, an a down
That are in the bowers within; (18-B-1)

Will you heare a tale of Robin Hood,
Will Scarlett, and Little John?
Now listen awhile, it will make you smile,
As before it hath many done. (22-1)

All gentlemen and yeomen good,
Down a down a down a down
I wish you to draw near; (27-1)

Come, listen a while, you gentlemen all,
With a hey down down a down down
That are in this bower within, (31-1)

Kind gentlemen, will you be patient awhile?
Ay, and then you shall hear anon
A very good ballad of bold Robin Hood,
And of his man, brave Little John. (34-1)

Come you gallants all, to you I do call,
With a hey down down a down down
That now is within this place, (35-1)

Both gentlemen, and yeomen bold,
Or whatsoever you are,
To have a stately story tould,
Attention now prepare. (41-1)

13. Prosodical Observations

i. Ballad metre (*or* measure)

Ballads are mostly made up of quatrains, or four-line stanzas, in which eight-syllable and six-syllable lines occur alternately, and the rhyme scheme is *a b c b*. There is, besides this pattern of stanzas, one of two-line stanzas (no instances among R. H. ballads), and occasionally six-line stanzas are intermingled in the basic four-line stanzas (among R. H. ballads, bal. nos. 5, 10, 21, 23 and 36-B). A frequent characteristic is the

light final accentuation of words, a relic of archaic accent (fforrèst, countrìe) , often spreading to native words of initial accent (ladìe).

When shawes beene sheene, and shradds full fayre,
  And leeues both large and *longe*,
Itt's merry, walking in the fayre fforrèst,
  To heare the small birds *songe*.

The woodweele[1] sang, and wold not cease,
  Amongst the leaues a *lyne*[2]:
And it is by two wight[3] yeomèn,
  By deare God, that I *meane*[4]. (10-1, 2)

[1]wood-pecker, or thrush
[2]of lime
[3]strong
[4]moan, lament

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. (5-A-6)

ii. Alliteration

Seeing that one long string of tradition of alliteration runs through the periods of English poetry, from Beowulf handed on to *Piers Plowman*, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and downwards, it is only natural that this 'artful aid' should be liberally employed in the old English ballads, a genre of poetry 'of the people, by the people and for the people.' From its nature as an artistic and literary device to enhance euphonic effects, it cannot have anything vulgar in it, and yet it will please the general taste, and on account of its simple, familiar acoustic merits may be called an ingenious device also well suited to practical purposes such as the making of proverbs and mottos.

In an investigation I formerly made as to what sounds are more preferred in alliteration (in old ballads at large), I found that, of one hundred instances I picked out *en masse* from my collection, the order of frequency of different initial letters used was as follows:

s (22) f (11) m (9) b, w (8) d, l, h (6) g, t (5) ch [tʃ] (4)

p, r (3) a [a:, ə] (2) c [k], th [θ] (1)

Of the 22 s's, the order was st-(13), s-(8), sp-(1).

As for the type of combination of the words that make alliteration, the order was as shown below:

(1) ..... and ..... (*m*uir and *m*oss, *l*ist and *l*ithe, etc.) (13)

(2) (Without conj.) (*b*lows his *b*last so *b*old, *f*air of *f*ace, etc.) (11)

(3) (Juxtaposed) (*p*roud *p*orter, *g*ood *g*reenwood, etc.) (9)

(4) ..... or ..... (*h*awk or *h*ound, *l*aird or *l*oon, etc.) (5)

(5) ..... nor ..... (noe longer *cr*oche nor *cr*eepe) (1)

(6) neither .... nor... (neither *l*ee (=lie) nor *l*en (=conceal) (1)

'*N*oe rest we *n*eede, on our roade we speede,
Till to Nottingham we get:'
'Thou tellst a *l*ewde[1] *l*ye,' said Robin, 'for I [1]base, vile
Can see that ye *sw*inke[2] and *sw*et.' [2]labour (22-8)

And Scarlett a ffoote flyinge was,
Ouer *st*ockes and *st*one,
For the sheriffe with *s*even *s*core men
Fast after him is gone. (10-13)

iii. Inner rhyme

Frequently, too, instances of inner (*or* internal, *or* middle) rhyme, evidently a vestige of Old English poetry, are met with. In the ballad marked with * in the list, inner rhyme is found either in all, or nearly all, the stanzas of it. The place where it occurs is regularly the third line,

but very rarely it is the first line instead of the third, or both the first and the third together. As shown in the list, fifteen pieces out of forty-nine, or more than thirty per cent are inner-rhymed ballads.

When as the sheriff of Nottingham
  Was come, with mickle grief,
He talked no *good* of Robin *Hood*,
  That strong and sturdy thief.
    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.

'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. (20-1, 2, 3)

iv. Ballad refrain

The refrain, though often present in ballads, is not essential but belongs more fundamentally to pure dance songs, movement songs, game songs, than to ballads, but still its presence is a decisive evidence of the original vocal intention of the balladry. The refrain of English ballads are sometimes germane, sometimes meaningless, sometimes imported from other songs. They are more common in later than in earlier texts. The type of refrain we find in Robin Hood ballads is one variety of combination or other of such sounds as 'hey,' 'down,' 'a down,' 'derry,' 'fal,' lal,' etc., and is inserted after the first line of the stanza, after the fourth, or occasionally after the first line and again after the fourth.

There chanced to be a pedlar bold,
A pedlar bold he chanced to be;
He rolled his pack all on his back,
And he came tripping oer the lee.
Down a down a down a down,
Down a down a down. (2-1)

When Robin Hood in the green-wood livd,
Derry derry down
Vnder the green-wood tree,
Tidings there came to him with speed,
Tidings for certainty,
Hey down derry derry down (33-1)

A bonny fine maid of a noble degree,
With a hey down down a down down
Maid Marian calld by name,
Did live in the North, of excellent worth,
For she was a gallant dame. (12-1)

v. Distribution of Rhyming Sounds in the *'Geste'*

Any one who reads old English ballads will be struck by the high frequency of the sound 〔i:〕 in their rhyming words. May it be that, of all the words in the English language, those ending in 〔i:〕 or 〔i〕 sound, either monosyllabic, disyllabic or polysyllabic, are so great in number that they are most handy, most readily thought of? Be the reason what it may, that undisputed precedence in frequency is due to the sound 〔i:〕 or 〔i〕 is made manifest in the following classified table of sounds used in rhyming words. Only, as it is a table on quite a small scale, the basis of calculation being 456 pairs of words, it will have very scanty, if at all, reliability, but it is hoped that it may serve as an index to the general trend in the matter we have in hand.

A Table showing Frequency of Rhyming Sounds
in *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode*

Order of frequency	Rhyming vowel		Example	Total	
1	[i:]	[i:]	tree he; penny thee; courtesy gree[1]	147	[1]prize, superiority
		[i:n]	clean teene[2]; green bedene[3]; been teene	6	[2]injury
		[i:t]	shete[4] meet; street meet	4	[3]in company, together
		[i:d]	speed meed; speed need; lede[5] weed	3	[4]shoot
		[i:l]	seal meal; kneel weel[6]	2	[5]leading, conduct
		[i:v]	leave grieve; leave sleeve	2	[6]well, advantage
		[i:s]	release peace	1	
				165	
2	[ei]	[ei]	way day; say pay; day abbèy	44	
		[eim]	shame blame; dame hame[7]; blame hame	4	[7]home
		[eil]	tale mail; tale Uttersdale; mail Barnèsdale	3	
		[ein]	twain fain; again fain; twain gane[8]	3	[8]gone, given
		[eiv(z)]	save crave; knaves staves	2	
		[eis]	face place	1	
		[eit]	disgrate[9] state	1	[9]unfortunate
				58	
3	[ai]	[ait]	knight dight[10]; right light; plight night	14	[10]prepared
		[aid]	pride beside; ride abide; glide side	5	
		[ain]	fine wine; pine mine; line tine[11]	4	[11]lose
		[aind]	behind bind; bind mind	3	
		[aiv]	drive blive[12]; thrive alive; five blive	3	[12]quickly
		[aif]	strife life	1	
		[ail]	mile while	1	
		[aiə]	nigher friar	1	
				32	

4	〔iə〕	〔iə〕	lere[1] dinnère[2]; near deer; cheer leer[3]	17	[1]learn
5	〔i〕	〔iŋ〕	tiding King; morning singing; lording King	7	[2]dinner
		〔in〕	sin therein; begin thin; Robin Austin	5	[3]cheek
		〔il〕	will still; will hill	2	
		〔iŋk〕	drink think; wink drink	2	
				16	
6	〔e〕	〔end〕	kenn'd spend; wend hend[4]; end amend	5	[4]noble
		〔est〕	lest guest; rest trest[5]; forèst guest	3	[5]trusty
		〔ed〕	stead red	1	
		〔eld〕	beheld felde[6]	1	[6]field
		〔en〕	ren[7] fen	1	[7]run
		〔ent〕	bent shent[8]	1	[8]hurt(*p. p.*)
		〔es〕	richess kindèness	1	
		〔et〕	get forget	1	
				14	
7	〔æ〕	〔ænd〕	land shand[9]; hand stand; band fastand[10]	11	[9]shame
		〔æn〕	can man	1	[10]fasting
		〔æŋ〕	gang lang	1	
				13	
7	〔u〕	〔ud〕	Hood good; stood Hood; hood good	13	
9	〔au〕	〔aun〕	crown town; brown venisoun; down renown	4	
		〔aund〕	ground y-found; pound ground; round pound	4	
		〔au〕	enow plough	1	
		〔aut〕	rout[11] about	1	[11]blow
				10	
9	〔ou〕	〔ou〕	go therefro; blow know; throw row	6	

		〔ould〕	bold sold; bold hold	3	
		〔oust〕	Ghost most	1	
				10	
11	〔ɔ〕	〔ɔn〕	gone anon; gone John	5	
		〔ɔŋ〕	strong song; strong along; strong long	4	
				9	
11	〔ɔ:〕	〔ɔ:〕	shaw[1] law; raw saw; slawe[2] rawe[3]	4	[1]wood [2]slay
		〔ɔ:l〕	hall small; hall call; hall all	3	[3]row
		〔ɔ:n〕	horn beforn[4]	1	[4]before
		〔ɔ:t〕	bought wrought	1	
				9	
13	〔ɛə〕	〔ɛə〕	heir fair; care there; bare[5] sare[6]	8	[5]bore [6]sore
14	〔ɔə〕	〔ɔə〕	before score; floor door; more wore	5	
14	〔u:〕	〔u:〕	new true; yew true	3	
		〔u:l〕	fool Yule	1	
		〔u:n〕	soon doon[7]	1	[7]do
				5	
16	〔*a*:〕	〔*a*:t〕	smart hart	1	
16	〔ə:〕	〔ə:t〕	shirt smerte[8]	1	[8]smart(*v.*)
				386	
Eye rhyme			gone one; spread lead; low enow	23	
Miscel-laneous			undertake gate;foot good; tale all	47	
				456	

Among those pairs grouped *en masse* under 'miscellaneous' are what belong to the kind 'assonance' (white like; hind dine; name wane; strong londe; head left, etc.) or 'consonance' (done noon; wile will; white eat; haste cast; one horn, etc.) or again those which make neither rhyme nor reason at all (wrestèling behind; gone home; more hour, cheer ere; rowe sawe, etc.)

Afterwords

Here ends my 'Little Robin Hood Lore,' though perhaps not with a proper ending, for, according to my original scheme, I would have said something about such topics as 'Robin Hood's Disguise,' 'Robin Hood symbolizes Natural Phenomena or Supernatural Beings?' 'Robin Hood and Locksley in *Ivanhoe*,' _____ that historical novel I have read with some care, _____and a few others. But both time and space forbid: I must, if I am to write what I have in mind to say, rely on some favourable opportunity in future, but then future is elusive and delusive, it is full of deceptions and disappointments. So I will let this small article of mine, however incoherent in the general structure, suffice for the present, for, though an ill-favoured thing, it is my own.

One thing, however, there is which I cannot well omit to mention before I end this part of my treatise; it is this _____ in the course of writing things about our hero, my initial unconcern for his historical reality seemed to fade out by imperceptible degrees, and in its stead a kind of concern, a certain sentiment not unlike a wish for it seemed to grow within me. Consequently, now I am not sure that, if I go on with my present study of him, I may not come in time to believe in his real existence, as did the author of the Sloane MS., the Rev. Joseph Hunter, Joseph Ritson or P. V. Harris, and say, *sotto voce*, 'Robin Hood lived!'

For so many invaluable benefits which I have drawn in composing my article, I express my greatest thanks to Professor Child's *English and*

Scottish Popular Ballads with its learned glossary and Ritson's *Robin Hood* with its devoted and extensive researches into every thing connected with Robin Hood.

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