

ББК 74.268.1+81.2Англ  
Лю93

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Лю93 Домашнє читання. Англійська мова. 7–8 клас. — Х.: ТОВ «Видавнича група “Основа”», 2007.— 144 с.

ISBN 978-966-333-539-1.

Розгорни цю книгу й опинись у славетному Шервудському лісі в середньовічній Англії. Відчуй себе одним із друзів шляхетного Робін Гуда й разом з ним поринь у світ карколомних пригод, про багато з яких ти дізнаєшся уперше.

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ISBN 978-966-333-539-1

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# CHAPTER I

## How Robin Lockesley Became an Outlaw

### BEFORE YOU READ

Answer the questions.

1. What do you know about Robin Hood?
2. When did he live?
3. Why do you think stories about Robin Hood are still very popular?

### Vocabulary practice

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Penalty	have a big meal
Royal	deep breath
Delight	favourite
Outlaw	punishment
Sigh	farmer
Peasant	prison
Beloved	special market event
Castle	fire from job
Swiftly	criminal
Whisper	very big anger
Remove	large stone building
Jail	have not enough
Fair	pleasure
Make merry	very low voice
Rage	fast
Lack	king's or queen's

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) Robin;
  - b) Robin's mother;
  - c) Robin's father;and say what you think about these people.

## 2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

In the days of good King Harry the Second there were forests in the north for the King's hunting, and no man might shoot deer there under penalty of death. These forests were guarded by the King's Foresters.

One of the greatest of royal preserves was Sherwood forest near the two towns of Nottingham and Barnesdale. Here for some years lived one Head Forester, with his good wife and son Robert. The boy had been born in Lockesley town and was often called Lockesley, or Rob of Lockesley. He was a good-looking teenager, and as soon as he was strong enough to walk, his delight was to go with his father into the forest. As soon as his right arm was strong enough he learned to use the bow and shoot an arrow. While on winter evenings his greatest joy was to hear his father tell of brave outlaws who for many summers made fun of the King's Foresters and hunted King's deer.

The fond mother sighed when she saw the boy's face light up at these woodland tales. She was of gentle birth, and had hoped to see her son famous at court or abbey. She taught him to read and to write and to answer directly and truthfully both lord and peasant. But the boy, although he took kindly to these lessons of breeding, was yet happiest when he had his beloved bow in hand and walked freely, listening to the voices of the trees.

Two playmates had Rob in these pleasant early days. One was Will Gamewell, his uncle's son; the other was Marian Fitzwalter, the only child of the Earl of Huntingdon. The castle of Huntingdon could be seen from the top of one of the tall trees in Sherwood; and on more than one bright day Rob's white signal from this tree told Marian that he was waiting for her there: because you must know that Rob did not visit her at the castle. But Rob or Marian cared little for this — they knew that the great green wood was open to them, and that the wide, wide world was full of the scent of flowers and the song of birds.

Days of youth go all too swiftly, and troubled skies come all too soon. Rob's father had two other enemies besides Fitzwalter, in the persons of the Sheriff of Nottingham and the Bishop of Hereford. These three enemies one day got possession of the King's ear and whispered there that Rob's father was removed from his post of King's Forester. He and his wife and Rob, then a youth of nineteen, were thrown out of their house during a cold winter's evening, and then the Sheriff arrested the Forester and carried him to Nottingham jail. So Rob and his mother turned for help to their only relative, Squire George of Gamewell, who sheltered them in all kindness.

But the shock, and the winter night's journey, were too much for Rob's mother. She had not been strong for some time before leaving the forest, and in less than two months she died. Rob felt as though his heart was broken at this loss. But when the first spring flowers began to blossom upon her grave, he met another crushing blow in the loss of his father. The man had died in prison.

Two years passed by. Rob's cousin Will was away at school; and Marian's father, who had learned of her friendship with Rob, had sent his daughter to the court of Queen Eleanor. So these years were lonely ones to the guy who had nobody in this world. The old Squire was kind to him, but he could do nothing to help the boy who seemed to be looking for something he had lost. The truth is that Rob missed his old life in the forest no less than his mother's gentleness, and his father's companionship. Every time he took his long bow in his hands, it told him of happy days that he could not return.

One morning as Rob came in to breakfast, his uncle greeted him with, "I have news for you, Rob, my lad!"

"What may that be, Uncle Gamewell?" asked the young man.

"Here is a chance to exercise your good long bow and win a pretty prize. The Fair is on at Nottingham, and the Sheriff proclaims an archer tournament. The best fellows are to have places with the King's Foresters, and the one who shoots best of all will win for prize a golden arrow — a thing useless enough, but just something for your lady love, eh, Rob my boy?"

Rob's eyes sparkled. "It is indeed something worth shooting for, dear uncle", he said. "I would dearly love to shoot an arrow in the contest. And a place among the Foresters is what I have long desired. Will you let me try?"

"Sure", answered his uncle. "Well I know that your good mother wanted you to become something else; but I see that the greenwood is where you will pass your days. So, here's luck to you in the contest!"

The young man thanked his uncle for his good wishes, and started making preparations for the journey.

One fine morning, a few days later, Rob was walking through Sherwood Forest to Nottingham town. His hopes were high, and he had no enemy in the wide world. But it was the very last morning in all his life when he was to lack an enemy! For, as he went his way through Sherwood, whistling a tune, he came suddenly upon a group of Foresters, making merry under the spreading branches of an oak-tree. They had a huge meat pie before them and were washing down large slices of it with brown ale.

One glance at the leader and Rob knew at once that he had found an enemy. It was the man who had taken his father's place as Head Forester, and who had roughly turned his mother out in the snow. But didn't want to say a word, and was going his way, when the man, clearing his throat, cried out: "Look here, here is a pretty little archer! Where are you going, my lad, with that twopenny bow and toy arrows? Perhaps he will shoot at Nottingham Fair! Ho! Ho!"

A roar of laughter greeted these words. Rob turned red with anger, for he was proud of his shooting.

"My bow is as good as yours", he replied, "and my arrows will go as straight and as far. So I'll not take lessons of any of you".

They laughed again loudly at this, and the leader said:

“Show us some of your skill, and if you can hit the mark, here’s twenty silver pennies for you. But if you don’t, we will beat you for your words”.

“Pick your own target”, said Rob in a rage. “I’ll lay my head against that purse that I can hit it”.

“Let it be as you say”, replied the Forester angrily.

At that time, a herd of deer came by, distant a full hundred yards. They were King’s deer, but at that distance seemed safe from any harm. The Head Forester pointed to them.

“If your young arm could speed an arrow for half that distance, I’d shoot with you”.

“Done!” cried Rob. “My head against twenty pennies — I’ll cause the young fine fellow in the lead of them to breathe his last”.

And without more words he tried the string of his long bow. A moment, and the string sang death as the arrow whistled across the glade. Another moment — and the leader of the herd fell on the ground.

The Foresters first were surprised but then growled of rage. The Head Forester was angriest of all.

“Do you know you what you have done?” he said. “You have killed a King’s deer, and by the laws of King Harry you have to lose your head. Don’t talk to me of pennies but get yourself out of here, and don’t ever show me your face again”.

Rob’s blood boiled in him, and he replied bravely. “I have looked upon your face once too often already, my fine Forester. It is you who wear my father’s shoes”.

And with this he turned upon his heels and went away.

The Forester, red with rage, seized his bow, and without a warning launched an arrow at Rob. It was good for the guy that the Forester’s foot turned at the critical moment, and the arrow came by his ear so close that he could feel the cold air on his cheek. Rob turned the Forester, now forty yards away.

“Ha!” said he. “You shoot not so straight as I, for all your words. Take this from the twopenny bow!”

His answering arrow flew straight. The Head Forester gave one cry, then fell face downward and lay still. He lost his life for the life of Rob’s father, but the son was outlawed. He ran forward through the forest into the great greenwood, before the band could gather with thoughts. The trees seemed to open their arms to the guy, and to welcome him home.

By the end of the same day, Rob stopped hungry and tired at the cottage of a poor widow who lived on the edge of the forest. This widow had often greeted him kindly in his boyhood days, giving him to eat and drink. So he fearlessly entered her door. The old lady was very glad to see him, and baked him cakes, and gave him rest, and he told her his story. Then she shook her head.

“It is an evil wind that blows through Sherwood”, she said. “The poor have nothing, and the rich ride over their bodies. My three sons have been outlawed for shooting King’s deer to keep us from starving, and now hide in the wood. And they tell me that there are forty more as good men as ever drew bow hiding with them”.

“Where are they, good mother?” cried Rob. “I want to join them”.

“No, no”, said the old woman at first. But when she saw that there was no other way, she said, “My sons will visit me tonight. Stay here and see them if you must”.

So Rob stayed to see the widow’s sons that night, and when they found that his heart was with them, they made him swear an oath, and finally one of them said:

“But the band lacks a leader — the one who can use his head as well as his hand. So we have agreed that he who has skill enough to go to Nottingham, an outlaw, and win the prize at archery, will become be our chief”.

Rob jumped to his feet. “Said in good time!” cried he, “for I was going to the same Fair, and all the Foresters, and all the Sheriff’s men cannot stand between me and the center of their target!”

And though he was so young, he stood so straight and his eye flashed with such fire that the three brothers took his hand and shouted:

“Lockesley! Lockesley! If you win the golden arrow you will be chief of outlaws in Sherwood Forest!”

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss what Robin’s appearance could be like and describe him in the class.
2. Which facts of what you have read you have already known? Which not?
3. Dramatise:
  - a) how Sheriff’s people threw the family out of their house;
  - b) Robin’s talk with the Foresters;
  - c) Robin’s talk with the outlaws in the forest.
4. What do you think will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and discuss them in the class.

# CHAPTER II

## How Robin Hood Won the Golden Arrow and Got his Name

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Disguise	make fun of
Capture	horn
Contest	mistake
Mock	change appearance
Trumpet	interesting
Mob	say 'no'
Admirer	catch
Maid	leader
Leap	competition
Error	fan
Curious	jump
Refuse	crowd
Chief	girl

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) the Sheriff;
  - b) the Sheriff's daughter;
  - c) Marian;and say what you think about these people.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

So Rob started planning how he could disguise himself to go to Nottingham; because he knew that the Sheriff of Nottingham set a reward of two hundred pounds for the capture, dead or alive, of one Robert Lockesley, outlaw. And the crowds in the streets on that busy Fair day often paused to read the notice and talk together about the death of the Head Forester.



The great event of the day came in the afternoon. It was the archer's contest for the golden arrow, and twenty men stepped to shoot. Among them was a beggar-man, a sorry looking fellow with brown scratched face and hands. Slowly he came to his place in the line, while the crowd shouted and made fun of him, but the contest was open to all comers.

Side by side with Rob — because it was him — stood a muscular fellow with one eye under a green bandage. The crowd also mocked at him, but he passed them by with indifference while he tried his bow with practiced hand.

A great crowd gathered there. In the centre there was the Sheriff, his wife, and their daughter, a young woman, who, as it was said, was hoping to receive the golden arrow from the victor and so become queen of the day.

Next to the Sheriff there the fat Bishop of Hereford; while in the other side sat a girl whose features, dark hair and dark eyes made Rob's heart leap. It was Marian! She had come up for a visit from the Queen's court at London town, and was sitting by her father the Earl of Huntingdon. If Rob had been resolved to win the arrow before, the sight of her sweet face made his wish a hundred times stronger and he felt his muscles becoming made of steel.

The herald announced the terms of the contest. It was open to all comers. The first target was at forty metres distance, and all those who hit its center were allowed to shoot at the second target, placed ten metres farther off. The third target was to be moved farther, until the winner was proved. The winner was to receive the golden arrow, and a place with the King's Foresters. It was also he who crowned the queen of the day.

The trumpet sounded, and the archers prepared to shoot. Rob looked at his string, while the crowd smiled and whispered at the strange figure. But as the first man shot, they grew silent.

The target was not so far but only twelve out of the twenty contestants reached its inner circle. Rob shot sixth in the line, hit the target and received approving grunt from the man with the green blinder, who shot seventh. He seemed careless, yet hit the target true to the bull's-eye.

The trumpet sounded again, and a new target was set up. The first three archers again shot well and received the loud applause of the spectators; because they were general favourites and expected to win. The fourth and fifth archers missed the centre. Rob put his arrow quietly and with confidence sent it toward the shining circle.

"The beggar! the beggar!" cried the crowd. In truth, his arrow was nearer the center than any of the others. But the "Blinder" as the mob had promptly named his neighbor, also placed his arrow just within the mark. Such shooting as this was not seen every day in Nottingham town.

The other archers missed one after another and went back, while the trumpet sounded for the third round, and the target was set up at fifty metres.

"I bet you shoot a good bow, young master", said Rob's strange comrade to him in the interval for rest. "Do you wish me to shoot first on this trial?"

"No", said Rob, "but you are a good fellow, and if I don't win, I hope you may keep the prize from those". And he nodded to the three other archers who were surrounded by their admirers, and were supported by the Sheriff, the Bishop, and the Earl. From them his eye moved toward Marian. She had been watching him, it seemed, for their eyes met.

"Blinder's" quick eye followed Rob. "A good maid", he said smilingly, "and more worthy the golden arrow than the Sheriff's miss".

Rob looked at him and saw nothing but kindness in his glance.

"You are a smart fellow and I like you well", was his only comment.

Now the archers prepared to shoot again, each with some little care. The target seemed hardly larger than the inner ring had looked, at the first trial. The first three shot, and though they were good archers, they could not hit the inner circle.

Rob took his stand with some worry. Some clouds made the light uncertain, and a wind was blowing across the range in a way disturbing to a bowman's nerves. His eyes moved for a moment to the seat where the dark-eyed girl sat. His heart leaped! She met his glance and smiled back at him. And at that moment he felt that she knew him in spite of his disguise and wanted him to keep the honour of old Sherwood. He took his bow and shot the arrow straight to the centre of the target.

"The beggar! the beggar!" shouted the crowd, who became now his warm friends. "Can you beat that, Blinder?"

The last archer smiled and got ready. He drew his bow with ease and grace and, without seeming to study the course, shot his arrow. It flew forward toward the target, and all eyes followed its flight. A loud cry came out when it hit the target just outside the center. The stranger made a gesture of surprise when his own eyes saw the result, but saw his error. The wind brought the arrow to one side. But for all that he was the first to congratulate the winner.

"I hope we may shoot again", said he. "In truth, I don't care for the golden thing and wished to win it because I have no love to the Sheriff. Now crown the lady of your choice". And he disappeared in the crowd, before Rob could say, that it could be a pleasure to shoot again with him.

And the herald called Rob to the Sheriff's seat to receive the prize.

"You are a curious fellow", said the Sheriff, biting his lip coldly; "but you shoot well. What name do you go by?"

Marian sat near and was listening.

"I am called Rob the Stroller, my Lord Sheriff", said the archer.

Marian smiled.

"Well, Rob the Stroller, with a little attention to your skin and clothes you are not such a bad man", said the Sheriff. "How do you like the idea of entering my service?"

“Rob the Stroller has ever been a free man, my Lord, and wishes no service”.

The Sheriff was not glad to hear that, but for his daughter and the golden arrow, he said:

“Rob the Stroller, here is the golden arrow, which is offered to the best of archers this day. You are awarded the prize. Make sure that you find how to handle it”.

At this point the herald pointed with his eyes toward the Sheriff’s daughter, who sat with a thin smile upon her lips. But Rob did not pay any attention to him. He took the arrow and went to the seat where Marian sat.

“Lady”, he said, “please accept this little thing from a poor stroller who would devote his life to serve you”.

“My thanks to you, Rob in the Hood”, replied she with a twinkle in her eye; and she placed the arrow in her hair, while the people shouted, “The Queen! the Queen!”

The Sheriff was angry with this archer who had refused his service, taken his prize without a word of thanks, and insulted his daughter. He wanted to say something, but his proud daughter stopped him. He called his guards and told them to watch the beggar. But Rob had already got lost in the crowd and went straight to the town gate.

That same evening deep in the forest a group of men dressed in green were sitting round a fire and making merry. Suddenly they sprang to their feet and took their weapons.

“I’m looking for the widow’s sons”, a clear voice said, “and I am alone”.

The three men stepped forward.

“It is Rob!” they cried; “welcome to Sherwood Forest, Rob!” And all the men came and greeted him; because they had heard his story.

Then one of the widow’s sons, Will, stepped forth and said:

“Friends, you all know that our band has sadly lacked a leader — the one of birth, breeding, and skill. It looks as if we have found that leader in this young man. And I and my brothers have told him that the band would choose that one who should bring the Sheriff to shame this day and capture his golden arrow. Is it so?”

The band agreed.

Will turned to Rob. “What news did you bring from Nottingham town?” asked he.

Rob laughed. “In truth, I brought the Sheriff to shame and won his golden arrow. But as to the prize you must take my word, for I gave it to a maid”.

And as the men stood in doubt, he continued, “But I’ll gladly join your band, and you take me, as a common archer because there are others older and more skilled than I”.

Then from the rest a tall man stepped forward, and Rob recognized him as the man with the green blinder.

“Rob in the Hood — for so the lady called you”, said he, “I can say a word for you. You shamed the Sheriff as I had hoped to do; and the golden arrow is now in such fair hands. As to your shooting and mine, we must let future days decide. But here I, Will Stutely, say that I will serve no other chief but you”.

And the people greeted Rob as their leader, by the name of Robin Hood because that was the Marian had said name.

And that is how Robin Hood became an outlaw.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss what Sheriff’s appearance could be like and describe him in the class.
2. Why do you think the Sheriff’s daughter stopped her father? In small groups write down what you believe she was thinking about and discuss it in class.
3. Dramatise:
  - a) how Robin Hood was receiving his prize;
  - b) Robin’s talk with the “Blinder”;
  - c) Robin’s talk with the outlaws in the forest.
4. Look at the title of Chapter III. What do you think will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter III see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER III

## How Robin Hood Met Little John

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Deed	narrow road
Furious	walk
Fear	that is why
Merrily	stick
Path	action
Log	melody
Pace	be afraid
Therefore	very big man
Cudgel	give the name
Tune	very angry
Boldly	happily
Giant	large piece of wood
Be quits	bravely
Content	become part of something
Join	be even
Christen	pleased

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) Little John;
  - b) the fight;
  - c) what Robin did after the fight;and say what you think about these.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

All that summer Robin Hood and his merry men spent in Sherwood Forest, and the fame of their deeds ran abroad in the land. The Sheriff of Nottingham was furious but he couldn't catch the outlaws. The poor people first feared them, but when they found that the men green brought no harm to them, they began to

have great liking for them. And there were more and more Robin Hood's men in the forest.

So, one morning in the end of the summer, Robin stood up and took his bow.

"I would like to see what the world looks like in the direction of Nottingham town. Wait for me in the forest so that you could hear my horn call".

He said so and went merrily out of the wood to the road that ran directly to the town. He knew that there was a path leading across a stream which made the way nearer and less open. When he came to the stream he saw that recent rains had turned it into a wide and fast river. There was a log across the stream, so Robin bravely set his feet on it to cross the stream. But as he just started across, he saw a tall stranger coming from the other side. So Robin quickened his pace, and the stranger did the same, each thinking to cross first. Halfway they met, and neither wanted to step back.

"Give way, fellow!" roared Robin, whose leadership of a band, I am afraid, did not mean very good manners.

The stranger smiled. He was almost a head taller than Robin.

"No", he replied, "I give way only to a better man than myself".

"Give way, I say", repeated Robin, "or I shall have to show you a better man".

His opponent laughed loudly.

"Now!" he said good-naturedly, "I would not move after hearing that speech, even if wanted to do it before; because I have been looking for this better man all my life. Therefore show him to me".

"That will I do soon", said Robin. "Stay here a little while, till I cut me a cudgel like that you have in your fingers".

Saying that, he came back to the ground, put down his long bow and arrows, and cut a good six feet in length cudgel of oak. But still it was a full foot shorter than his opponent's. Then he boldly came back.

"I would like to tell you, fellow", said he, "that archery would be an easier way with me. But there are other tunes in England besides that the arrow sings. So get ready for the tune I am going to play on your ribs. One, two, ..."

"Three!" roared the giant striking him with his cudgel.

Well was it for Robin that he was quick; for the blow could kill an ox. And he struck back — whack!

Whack! struck the stranger.

Whack! whack! whack! whack!

The fight became fast and furious. It was strength against skill. Yet each stood in his place not moving backward or forward a foot for a good half hour, nor thinking of crying "Enough!" though it seemed some chance blow could knock one or the other off the narrow log-bridge. The giant's face was getting red, and his

breath came short. He rushed forward to finish Robin with a mighty blow. Robin dodged it and in his turn unexpectedly gave the stranger such a blow on the ribs that the stranger nearly fell off the log. "By my life, you can hit hard!" he cried, giving a blow back.

This blow was a lucky one. Robin saw more stars in that one moment than all the astronomers have since discovered, and he fell off into the stream.

The cool water almost brought him to his senses, but he was still half blind and could not pull himself up on the bank. His opponent held out his long cudgel, Robin caught it and soon was brought to dry land like a fish. Then he sat up and rubbed his head.

"By all the saints!" said he, "you hit well. My head hums like a hive of bees on a summer morning".

Then he took his horn, which lay near, and blew three notes that echoed against the trees. After a moment of silence twenty or more men dressed in green with good Will Stutely and the widow's three sons at their head appeared on the bank.

"Good master", cried Will Stutely, "how is this? There is not a dry thread on your body".

"Oh", replied Robin, "this fellow did not let me pass, and when I tickled him on the ribs, he answered with a hit on my head which landed me overboard".

"Then he must taste some of his own porridge", said Will. "Take him!"

"No, let him go free", said Robin. "The fight was a fair one. I believe you also are quits?" he continued, turning to the stranger.

"I am content", said the man, "But I liked you and would be happy to know your name".

"Why", said Robin, "my men and even the Sheriff of Nottingham know me as Robin Hood, the outlaw".

"Then am I right sorry that I beat you", exclaimed the man, "because I was looking for you to join your company. But after my unmannerly use of the cudgel, I fear we are still strangers".

"Never say it!" cried Robin, "I am glad I have met you; though it was I who had to dry up after the falling!"

And the two men shook hands, and in that shake the strong friendship of a lifetime began.

"But you have not yet told us your name", said Robin.

"Where I came from, men call me John Little".

"Enter our company then, John Little; enter and welcome".

Then Will Stutely, who loved a good jest, stood up and said, "The baby in our household must be christened, and I'll be godfather. Take your new name on entering the forest. I christen you Little John".

At this the men roared long and loud.

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### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons why Robin and the stranger did not let each other pass. Could there be a way other than fighting? What do you think they should do for that?
2. Dramatise:
  - a) Robin's dialogue with the stranger on the log-bridge;
  - b) what happened after the fight;
3. In groups think about a short story about what had happened that Little John wanted to join Robin Hood and his men.
4. Look at the title of Chapter IV. What do you think will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter IV see how much you have guessed.



# CHAPTER IV

## How Robin Hood Turned Butcher

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Butcher	big and fat
Trap	meat of a cow
Glade	place where angels live
Uneasy	good deal
Spring (v)	meat of a sheep
Edge	outlook, appearance
Stout	person who sells meat
Beef	opening in the wood
Mutton	small hotel
Bargain	person who takes others' things
Heaven	habit
Air	room where food is kept
Thief	catch
Inn	hit with the elbow
Custom	give out secrets, something or somebody
Lean	jump up
Just	troubled
Nudge	thin
Betray	border
Pantry	fair

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) the butcher;
  - b) the Sheriff as a person;
  - c) why people liked to buy meat from Robin.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

The next morning the weather turned bad, and Robin Hood's band stayed close to their dry and friendly cave. The third day brought a trap of the Sheriff's men. Will Stutely killed a fine deer, and when he and others wanted to take it home, twenty Sheriff's men from Nottingham appeared at the end of the glade. Will's men hid behind the friendly trees and sent such a welcome that two of the Sheriff's men bore back wounds in their shoulders.

When they returned to town the Sheriff turned red with rage.

"What", he cried, "do my men fear to fight this Robin Hood, face to face? If I could get him within my reach, once. We should see then; we should see!"

What it was that the Sheriff would see, he did not state.

The fourth day and the one following, Little John was missing. One of his men said that he saw him talking with a beggar, but did not know where they had gone. Two more days passed. Robin grew uneasy. He feared that a band of Foresters had caught him.

At last Robin could not stay quiet. He sprang up, with bow and arrows, and a short sword at his side.

"I must go to Nottingham town, my men", he cried. "The good Sheriff has long wished to see me; and he may tell about Little John".

Others asked him to let them go with him.

"No", he said smilingly, "the Sheriff and I are too good friends to put doubt upon our meeting. But hide yourselves in the edge of the wood opposite the west gate of the town, and you may be of service tomorrow night".

Saying so he went forward to the road leading to Nottingham and stood as before looking up and down to see if the way was clear. Back in the road he heard a loud noise and soon a stout butcher appeared, with a horse that was going slowly because of the cart full of meat.

"Good morning to you, friend", said Robin. "Where do you come from and where are you going with your meat?"

"Good morning to you, too", said the butcher. "No matter where I live, I am a simple butcher, and am I going to Nottingham, to sell my meat. It is Fair week, and my beef and mutton should bring a nice penny", and he laughed loudly. "And where do you come from?"

"I am from Lockesley town. Men call me Robin Hood".

"The saints save me!" cried the butcher in terror. "I have heard of you and know how you lighten the purses of fat priests and knights. But I am just a poor butcher, selling meat to pay my taxes".

"Don't be afraid, my friend", said Robin, "I would not take a silver penny from you. But I would make a bargain with you".

Here he took from his pocket a bag with money and continued, "I would like to be a butcher this day and sell meat at Nottingham town. Could you sell me your meat, your cart and your horse?"

“Heaven bless you, good Robin”, cried the butcher joyfully, “I can do that!” And he jumped down from the cart in exchange for the purse.

“One moment more”, laughed Robin, “we must exchange clothes, too. Take mine and hurry home quickly not to get a hole from the King’s Foresters in this green”.

He put on the butcher’s blouse and apron, and, climbing into the cart, drove merrily down the road to the town.

When he came to Nottingham he went to the market-place where the butchers sold their meat.

He had no idea how to sell meat, so he put on a foolish and simple air, and when the people found what a simple butcher he was, they crowded around his cart; because he sold three times cheaper than the other butchers. The other butchers were angry when they saw what he was doing.

One said, “He has sold his father’s land, and this is his first time in trading”.

Another said, “He is a thief who has killed a butcher, and stolen his horse and meat”.

Robin heard these sayings, but only laughed merrily. His good-humor made the people laugh and crowd round his cart.

Then the butchers said to him, “Come, brother butcher, We dine at the Sheriff’s house today, and you must come with us”.

“Thank you with all me heart”, said jolly Robin, “I’ll go with you, my friends”.

When he sold all his meat, he left his horse and cart in an inn and prepared to follow the butchers to the Sheriff’s house.

It was the Sheriff’s custom on Fair days to invite tradesmen for dinner, because he had a good profit from what they paid him for the right to trade in the market-place. The Sheriff was already in the room, when Robin Hood and three or four butchers entered, and he greeted them and seated them at a large table full of food.

Now Robin got the seat by the Sheriff’s right hand, at the head of the table. It happened so because the butchers had whispered to the Sheriff, “That fellow is just mad, he sold more meat for one penny than we could sell for three”.

The Sheriff was glad to see a foolish man from whom he wanted to get some money he placed Robin by his side, and he was attentive to him and laughed at his jokes.

Then Bishop of Hereford came in, last of all, and took his seat on the other side of the Sheriff — his fat body showing a good contrast to the Sheriff’s lean bones.

Then, Robin stood up and said:

“Now, my fine fellows, be merry and drink deep”.

“You must be very rich to spend your money so freely“, said the Sheriff.

“Yes, I am”, replied Robin, his eyes twinkling, “my brothers and I have five hundred cows, and we could not sell any of them. That is why I have become a butcher. But I don’t know the trade and would gladly sell them all, if I could find a buyer”.

At this, the Sheriff’s greed began to rise.

“Five hundred cows, you say?” he asked.

“Five hundred and ten to tell the truth, and I would sell those for a just price. Yes, to the man who will pay money right now, I would sell them all for twenty pieces of gold. Is that too much to ask?”

“Has there ever been such an idiot?” thought the Sheriff; and he nudged the Bishop in his fat ribs.

“No, good fellow”, he said laughing, “I am always ready to help anyone. If you cannot find a buyer for your cows at this just price, I will buy them myself”.

Robin looked quite happy and started praising the Sheriff to the skies, and telling him that he would never forget the kindness.

“Quiet, quiet”, said the Sheriff, “bring in your cows tomorrow to the market-place and you will have the money”.

“I’m afraid I can’t do that easily”, said Robin, “because they are all out in the fields. But they are not more than a mile from here. Will you come and choose what you want tomorrow?”

“All right, I will”, said the Sheriff, “Stay in my place over night, and I will go with you in the morning”.

Robin didn’t like the idea of staying over night at the Sheriff’s house but he didn’t want to raise doubt. He looked around. By this time the butchers were deep in their cups. Nobody heard what the Sheriff and Robin were talking about, and the Bishop was almost asleep.

“Agreed”, said Robin, and as he said the words the door opened and a serving-man came in with bottles of wine in his hands. When Robin saw the guy’s face, his eyes opened wide in surprise. The serving-man also saw him, stood still a moment, and as if he forgot something turned about and left the hall.

It was Little John.

A dozen questions flashed in Robin’s mind, and he couldn’t find answers for them. What was Little John doing in the Sheriff’s house? Why had he not told the band? Was he true to them? Would he betray him?

But these questions left Robin’s open mind as soon as they had entered. He knew that Little John was faithful and true.

By that time the Sheriff and his guests were already merry with wine.

“A song!” one of them shouted, and the cry came round the table. The guests started singing in chorus and when everybody was singing, Little John came in again, with other servants, and brought more wine. He came up to Robin and, as if asking him if he would like more wine, said, “Meet me in the pantry tonight”.

Robin nodded, and sang loudly. The day was already spent, and the company broke up.

When the guests left, the Sheriff told a servant to show Robin to his room, and promised to see him at breakfast the next day.

Robin kept his word and met Little John that night, and the sheriff next day; but Little John had been doing so much in the meantime that he must be allowed a chapter to himself.

So now we come to another story and find out how Little John entered the Sheriff's service.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons why the butcher did not betray Robin Hood.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) Robin's dialogue with the butcher;
  - b) Robin's dialogue with the Sheriff at the table;
4. Look at the title of Chapter V. What had happened? What will happen next? In small groups write 4—5 sentences and after reading Chapter V see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER V

## How Little John Entered the Sheriff's Service

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Goods	smile
Quarter-staff	glass
Knock down	uneasily
Grin	take the cover off
Within reach	big meal, feast
Villain	divide
Rags	things
Lend	without clothes or footwear
Clumsily	stick, cudgel
Rush	beat down
Pane	close enough
Peel	old, dirty clothes
Split	very long knife
Bare	soldier
Confess	clap, tap
Banquet	evil man
Sword	but for
Except for	give something to somebody for some time
Warrior	tell the truth
Pat	hurry

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) Eric of Lincoln;
  - b) Little John;
  - c) the cook;and say what you think about these people.

## 2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

Another Fair day came around at Nottingham town, and people crowded there by all the gates. There were goods of many kinds, and at every cross-street there was a free show. Here and there, people came to play at quarter-staff, a highly popular sport.

There was a fellow, named Eric of Lincoln, who was thought to be the best man in the sport for miles around. He also was a great boaster, and now he was walking like a peacock on one of these show places and boasting of his strength, and offering to win anyone for a shilling. Several had tried their skill with Eric, but he soon knocked them down in no gentle manner, among the laughter of the onlookers.

A beggar-man was sitting over against Eric and grinning all the time. He looked strange, dirty and unshaven. Eric caught sight of his face at one of his boasts because no man else wanted to come within reach of Eric's blows. Eric noticed the beggar-man and turned toward him sharply.

"Hey you, dirty villain!" cried he, "watch your manners, or I'll dust your rags for you".

The beggar-man still grinned. "I am always ready to watch my manners", said he, "but I am afraid you cannot teach me any better than you can dust my jacket".

"Come up! Come up!" roared Eric, getting his quarter-staff.

"With joy", said the beggar, getting up slowly and with difficulty. "It will be my greatest pleasure to take a boaster down, if some good man can lend me a good quarter-staff".

At this a dozen sticks were to his choice — from those who were ready enough to see another man's head cracked, even if they wished to save their own, and he took the longest and heaviest of all. He made a sorry enough figure as he was coming to his opponent, but when he came he appeared half a head above Eric. Yet, he held his stick so clumsily that the crowd laughed again.

Now each man took his place and looked the other up and down. Only a moment they stood like this, then Eric, wishing to teach this beggar a lesson and sweep him off the stage, rushed forward and gave the beggar a blow on the shoulder. The beggar danced about, and looked as if he would drop his stick from pain. The crowd roared and Eric raised his stick for another blow. But just then the clumsy beggar came to life. Like a flash, he gave Eric a blow, of which the boaster went down to the floor, and the people laughed because it was a new sight to see Eric of Lincoln eating dust.

But Eric was up again soon, and ready to fight. He understood that he had no easy opponent, and this time he decided to be careful.

And now those who stood around saw the merriest game of quarter-staff that was ever played inside the walls of Nottingham town. Both men fought with great

skill. Eric attacked again and again and the beggar was just beating off the attacks. But soon Eric got tired and at last he began to send down very strong and fast blows but he could not break the beggar's guard.

At last the beggar saw his chance and with one blow he sent Eric's stick through the air. With another he hit Eric on the head; and, with a third he swept him clear off the stage like a fly off the window pane.

Now the people danced and shouted so much that everyone came to see what was happening. The victory of the beggar made him popular at once. Nobody liked Eric — a boastful bully, so the stranger found everywhere money and food and drink, and he enjoyed himself till the afternoon.

Then the beggar went with some of his new friends to watch a bow contest. It was the same arena where Robin Hood got his name, again with the Sheriff and lords, and ladies, and the crowding people.

The herald told the rules of the game: each man should shoot three times, and the best shooter got the prize of two fat cows. A dozen archers were there, and among them some of the best fellows in the Forester's and Sheriff's companies. Down at the end of the line stood the tall beggar.

The Sheriff noted his figure and asked, "Who is that ragged fellow?"

"It is he that has beaten Eric of Lincoln", was the reply.

The shooting began, and last of all came the beggar's turn.

He said loudly, "I'd like to shoot with any other man here at a mark of my own". And he went down the arena with a peeled little young tree which he stuck in the ground. "There", said he, "is a right good mark. Will any man try it?"

But no archer wanted to risk his reputation on so small a target.

Then the beggar shot his arrow with seeming carelessness and split the tree in two.

"Long live the beggar!" shouted the people.

The Sheriff, "This man is the best archer that I have ever seen". And he called the beggar and asked him, "Now, my good fellow, what is your name, and in what country were you born?"

"In Holderness I was born", the man replied; "men call me Reynold Greenleaf".

"You are a nice fellow, Reynold Greenleaf, and deserve better clothes than those you wear at present. Will you enter my service? I will give you twenty golden pieces a year, above your living, and three good suits of clothes."

"Three good suits, you say? Then I will gladly enter your service, for my back has been bare for many long days".

Have you guessed who this Reynold Greenleaf really was? Of course, he was none other than Little John. And he went to the Sheriff's house, and entered his service. But it was a sad day for the Sheriff when he got his new man. Because Little John said to himself, "I shall be the worst servant to him that he has ever had!"



Two days passed by. Little John, we must confess, did not make a good servant. He wanted to eat the Sheriff's best bread and drink his best wine, so that the steward became furious. But the Sheriff praised his new man, and made great talk of taking him along on the next hunting trip.

It was now the day of the banquet to the butchers. The banquet hall, you must know, was not in the main house, but connected with it by a corridor. All the servants were busy making preparations for the party, except only Little John, who was in bed the greater part of the day. But he came at last, when the dinner was half over; and went into the hall with the other servants to pass the wine and to see the guests. First, however, I am afraid that some of the wine passed his own lips while he went down the corridor. When he entered the hall, the first man he saw was Robin Hood himself. We can imagine the surprise of each of these brave fellows to see each other in such a strange company. But they kept their secrets, as we have seen, and agreed to meet each other that same night. And the proud Sheriff couldn't even imagine that he had the two chief outlaws of the whole country under his roof.

After the party was over, Little John felt hungry and remembered that he had eaten nothing all that day. He went back to the pantry to get something to eat. But there stood the fat steward.

"Good Sir Steward", said Little John, "give me my dinner, because it is long for Greenleaf to eat nothing".

The steward looked at him and rattled the keys.

"It is late in the day to be talking of eating", said he. "If you have waited so long to be hungry, you can take your appetite back to bed again".

"I cannot do that to my appetite", cried Little John. "Your own fat would be enough for any bear to sleep on through the winter. But my stomach needs food, and it will have food!"

Saying this he went past the steward and tried to open the door, but it was locked; and the fat steward laughed and rattled his keys again.

Then Little John brought down his huge fist on the door-panel and made an opening big enough for his hand. He was looking through the hole to see what food lay close enough, when crack — the steward's keys came upon his head. At this he turned upon the steward and gave him such a blow that the fat fellow went over rolling on the floor.

"Lie there", said Little John, "till you find strength to go to bed. And I must have my dinner". And he kicked the door open without ceremony and brought to light as much food and drink as a hungry man needed and ate and drank as much as he would.

In his kitchen the Sheriff had a cook, a big and brave man, who heard the noise and came in to see what the matter was. There he saw Little John eating, while the fat steward was rolling under the table.

“So this is how you behave in the house and ask for food”, said the cook, and he drew a long sword that was at his side.

“You are a brave man to come like this between me and my meat”, said Little John. “So defend yourself and see that you prove the better man”. And he drew his own sword and the two swords crossed.

“You are the best swordsman that I have ever seen”, cried Little John, “What do you say resting a little and eating and drinking with me? Then we may again start with the swords”.

“Agreed!” said the cook, who loved good food as well as a good fight; and they both sat down by their swords and fell to the food until it was over. Then the warriors rested and patted their stomachs, and smiled across at each other like close friends; because a man when he has dined looks out pleasantly on the world.

“And now good Reynold Greenleaf”, said the cook, “we may as well finish this brave fight we have started”.

“A true saying”, replied Little John, “but first tell me, friend — because I want to call you my friend from now on — what is the problem we have to settle?”

“Nothing but who can handle the sword best”, said the cook. “To tell the truth, I had a thought to carve you like a chicken before now”.

“And I had a thought to shave your ears”, replied Little John. “We can settle this contest another good time. But just now I and my master have need of you, and you can turn your nice sword to better service than that of the Sheriff”.

“Whose service would that be?” asked the cook.

“Mine”, answered a man in butcher's clothes entering the room, “and I am Robin Hood”.

## **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons why Little John entered the Sheriff's service.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) Little John's dialogue with Eric of Lincoln;
  - b) Little John's dialogue with the Sheriff;
  - c) Little John's dialogue with the cook.
4. Look at the title of Chapter VI. What do you think will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter VI see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER VI

## How the Sheriff Lost Three Good Servants and Found them Again

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Amazement	some, a few
Courage	group of animals
Strict	rub with fingers
Occasion	money you have to pay for some goods or services
Sack	surprise
Silly	mercy
Scratch	garland
Herd	owner
Delicious	bag
Worthy	purse
Honour	salary
Several	something done for fun
Wreath	severe
Charity	stupid
Receive	bravery
Landlord	very taste
Wage	rightly respectful
Bill	regard
Wallet	respect
Entertainment	get

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) the banquet table in the forest;
  - b) Robin Hood men's skills.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

The cook was in amazement. Robin Hood in the Sheriff's house!

"Frankly speaking, you are a brave fellow", he said. "I have heard great tales of your courage, and I can say I haven't heard the half. But who is this tall fighter?"

"Men call me Little John, good fellow".

"Then Little John, or Reynold Greenleaf, I like you, and you too, brave Robin Hood. If you take me, I will gladly enter your service".

"Well said", said Robin, taking him by the hand. "But I must be back to my own bed. It is good for you two that there was so much wine in the house today — it is good that the noise of your fight brought here Robin Hood and not somebody else. Now if you are going to run away from here tonight, I will join you in the greenwood tomorrow".

"But, good master", said the cook, "you must not stay here over night! Come with us. The Sheriff has set strict watch on all the gates, but I know how to leave the town safely". "No, I will not leave", laughed Robin, "because I shall leave with no less escort than the Sheriff himself. Now you, Little John, and you, friend, hurry up. In the wood you will find my merry men. Tell them to kill two fine deer for tomorrow, because we shall have a great company and a nice sport".

And Robin went back to his room.

"Friend", said Little John then, "if we go, it will seem a true pity not to take some of the Sheriff's silver — this will make us remember him, and will also be useful on special occasions".

"Well said", said the cook.

So they got a great sack and put there silver dishes from the shelves, and they went away, out of the house, out of the town, and into the friendly green of Sherwood Forest.

Robin Hood met the Sheriff at breakfast, and the Sheriff could speak only of buying so many cows at such a low price. And Robin again seemed such a silly fellow that the Sheriff said that he was ready to start at once.

So they went, Robin in his little butcher's cart, and the Sheriff on a horse. Out of Nottingham town, through wide gates, and on the road leading through Sherwood Forest. And as they went deeper among the trees, Robin merrily whistled and sang funny songs.

"Why are you so merry, fellow?" said the Sheriff, because the silence of the woods was making him uneasy.

"I am whistling to keep my courage up", replied Robin.

"What do you fear when you have the Sheriff of Nottingham near?" said the Sheriff.

Robin scratched his head.

"People say that Robin Hood and his men don't care much for the Sheriff", he said.

"Pooh!" said the Sheriff. "If only I could once get them in my hands".

“But Robin Hood himself was on this road when I was going to town”, said Robin.

The Sheriff looked around.

“Did you see him?” he asked.

“Oh yes, I did! He wanted to use this horse and this cart to go to Nottingham. He wanted to look like a butcher. But see!”

As he was speaking, he came to a turn in the road, and there stood a herd of the King’s deer. Robin pointed to them and said:

“This is my herd, good Master Sheriff! How do you like them?”

The Sheriff looked afraid. “Now fellow”, said he, “I would like to be out of this forest, because I do not want to see such herds as this, or such faces as yours. Go your own way and let me go mine”.

“Oh no”, laughed Robin, taking the Sheriff’s horse, “It has taken me so much to get you in my company to let it go away so easily. What is more I would like you to meet some of my friends and have dinner with me — because yesterday your dinner was delicious”.

Saying so he brought a horn to his lips and produced three merry notes. The deer ran away; and from behind the trees came men dressed in green, with bows in their hands. They ran to Robin Hood and greeted him with respect, and the Sheriff sat still in amazement.

“Welcome to the greenwood!” said one of the leaders to the Sheriff.

The Sheriff looked at the man. It was Little John.

“You, Reynold Greenleaf”, he said, “you have betrayed me!”

“To tell the truth”, said Little John, “you are to blame, master. I didn’t get dinner, when I was at your house. But you will get a feast that we hope you will enjoy”.

“Well said, Little John”, said Robin Hood. “Let us honour the guest who has come to have dinner with us”.

And the whole company moved into the heart of the forest.

At last they came to a nice open space with oak-trees on all sides. Under the largest tree a pleasant fire was burning, and near it there were two deer ready for cooking. Around the fire there were more men in green who greeted Robin Hood with all their hearts.

“Come on, good fellows!” cried Robin Hood; “our new cook, whom I see with us, is preparing the food worthy of our high guest, let us have a few games to honour him!”

Then Robin Hood asked the Sheriff to sit under the largest oak and sat down near him himself.

First, several pairs of men with the quarter-staff stepped forward, and the game was so good that the Sheriff, who loved a good game as well as any man, forgot where he was and clapped his hands, and shouted, “Well done! Well done! I have never seen such blows at all the Fairs of Nottingham!”

Then the best archers put up a small wreath at 80 steps and began to shoot; and there was the man who shot through the wreath without disturbing its leaves. And the loudest greetings came from the Sheriff's own throat, because the spirit of the greenwood came on him.

But soon his mood got worse. The company sat down to meat, and the cook came forward to serve the food, when the Sheriff saw that it was his own servant, the man who the Sheriff thought was at the moment in his house in Nottingham.

The cook grinned answering to the Sheriff's surprise, and served the plates, and placed them before the party. Then the Sheriff nearly died of rage — he saw his own silver dishes from his house in Nottingham!

"You villains!" he cried. "Was it not enough to get three of my servants, that you also must take my best silver dishes? Never in my life will I touch your food!"

But Robin Hood made him pause.

"Stop!" said he, "servants and service come and go in merry England. The dishes are used to honour you. Now sit you down again and have a good time, Sheriff, for charity! And because I love Little John I grant you your life!"

And they ate and drank until the sunset started touching the leaves on the trees.

Then the Sheriff got up and said: "I thank you, Robin Hood, once butcher, and you, Little John, once beggar, and you, once cook, and all you good men who have received me in Sherwood so well. I make no promises as to how I shall pay you back when you come to Nottingham, because I am in the King's service. But the shadows grow long and I must leave, if you will be so kind as to show me the way me to the road".

Then Robin Hood and all his men arose and drank the Sheriff's health, and Robin said: "If you must go at once we will not hold you — but you have forgotten two things".

"What may they be?" asked the Sheriff, and his heart became very uneasy.

"You forget that you came with me today to buy a herd of cows; and also that those who dine at the Greenwood Inn must pay the landlord".

The Sheriff felt like a small boy who has forgotten his lesson.

"Oh, I have only a small sum with me", he began.

"What is that sum?" asked Little John, "because my own wage should also come out of it!"

"And mine!" said the cook.

"And mine!" smiled Robin.

The Sheriff caught his breath. "Good Lord, are all these silver dishes worth anything?"

The outlaws laughed heartily at this.

"I'll tell you", said Robin, "we three servants will excuse our wages for those dishes. And we will keep the herd of deer free for our own use — and

the King's. But this little tavern bill should be settled! Now, what sum have you got with you?"

"I have only those twenty pieces of gold, and twenty others", said the Sheriff. Robin said, "Count it, Little John".

Little John counted the money in the Sheriff's wallet. "It is true enough", he said.

"Then you will pay no more than twenty pieces for your entertainment", said Robin. "Is it fair, men of greenwood?"

"Yes!" cried the others.

"The Sheriff should give us a word that he will not hunt us", said Will Stutely.

"So be it, then", cried Little John, approaching the sheriff.

"I will give you my word", said the Sheriff, "that I will never hunt the outlaws in Sherwood".

"But let me catch any of you out of Sherwood!" he thought to himself.

Then the twenty pieces of gold were paid, and the Sheriff prepared to leave.

"We have never had such a guest before", said Robin; "and I myself will go with you for part of the way. It was I who brought you into the wood".

And he took the Sheriff's horse, and walked with him until the main road.

"Farewell now, good Sheriff", he said, "and remember the butcher, the servant and the cook".

Saying so, he let the Sheriff go on the road to Nottingham.

And that is how the Sheriff lost three good servants and found them again.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons why the Sheriff's got into Robin Hood's trap.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) Robin Hood's dialogue with the Sheriff on the way to the forest;
  - b) the foresters' dialogue with the Sheriff at the table.
4. Look at the title of Chapter VII. What do you think will happen next? In small groups write 4—5 sentences and after reading Chapter VII see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER VII

## How Robin Hood Met Will Scarlet

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Suddenly	remember
Elbow	person whose job is to collect money
Scarlet	what we say when something goes wrong
Feather	have in itself
Yard	calm
Tax-collector	when nobody expects
Just	measure (about 0.9 metre)
Alas	not very tall fence
Shrug	do to somebody as you feel toward him / her
Contain	bright red
Aside	fair
Cool	birds' "clothes"
Nerve	part of an arm
Hedge	confidence
Recall	out of the way
Treat	move shoulders up and down

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) the stranger;
  - b) the fight;
  - c) how Robin and the stranger recognised each other; and say what you think of the stranger.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

One fine morning Robin Hood and Little John were walking through the wood. It was not far from the place where they first met; and they decided to go there to drink some water and to have a rest in the cool bushes. The morning promised a hot day. The road was dusty. So they were very pleased to come to the cooling stream.



Suddenly they heard someone coming up the road whistling merrily, as though he owned the whole world.

“What a merry bird!” said Robin, raising up on his elbow. “Let us lie still, and then we’ll see if his purse is as light as his heart”.

So in a minute they saw a smart stranger dressed in scarlet and silk and wearing a nice hat with a cock feather in it. His whole costume was of scarlet. A good sword hung at his side. His hair was long and yellow and lay on his shoulders, and he looked very elegant.

At this sight Little John said to Robin, “A gay bird?” then added. “But he looks not so bad at all. Look, his legs are strong and straight, and the arms and the shoulders seem strong enough to use the sword not only as a decoration”.

“No, no”, replied Robin, “he is nothing but a ladies’ man from court. My long-bow against a shilling that he will run at sight of a quarter-staff. Stay behind this bush and I will soon get some sport out of him. It looks like his silk purse may contain more pennies than the law allows to one man in Sherwood”.

Saying so, Robin Hood stepped from the bushes in the way of the scarlet stranger. The stranger was walking so slowly that he was still some yards from their resting-place; and now seeing Robin he kept going his way, looking to the right and to the left but never at Robin, with the finest air in the world.

“Stop!” said the outlaw.

“Why should I hold, good fellow?” said the stranger in a soft voice looking at Robin for the first time.

“Because I told you to”, replied Robin.

“And who may you be?” asked the stranger as softly as before.

“My name does not matter”, said Robin; “but know that I am a public tax-collector. If your purse has more than a just number of shillings or pence, I must somewhat make it lighter; because there are many good people who have less than the just amount. This is why, sweet gentleman, I ask you to give me your purse so that I may inspect its weight”.

The stranger smiled as sweetly as if he heard a compliment.

“You are a funny fellow”, he said calmly. “Your speech is amusing. But please continue, if you have not finished yet, because I am in no hurry this morning”.

“I have said all that is needed”, replied Robin, beginning to grow red. “I also have other arguments which may not be so pleasant to your skin. Please, do what I say. I promise to deal fairly with the purse”.

“Alas!” said the stranger with a little shrug of his shoulders; “I am deeply sorry that I cannot show my purse to every clown that asks to see it. What is more, I need it myself with every penny it contains. This is why, please stand aside”.

“No, that I will not do! And it will go harder with you if you do not do what I said”.

“Good fellow”, said the stranger gently, “have I not heard all your speech with patience? That is all I promised to do. And I must go on my way”. And he moved forward.

“Stop, I say!” said Robin; because he knew how Little John must be laughing at this from behind the bushes. “Stop or I shall have to make your golden hair red with blood!”

“Alas!” said the stranger shaking his head. “What a pity! Now I shall have to run this fellow through with my sword! And I hoped to be a peaceful man from now on!” And he got his shining sword.

“Put by your sword”, said Robin. “It is too nice to get broken with an oak cudgel; and that is what will happen on the first attack. Get a stick like mine, and we will fight fairly, man to man”.

The stranger thought a moment, and looked at Robin from head to foot. Then he put his sword aside, and found a little tree, pulled it easily out of the ground and walked back as quietly as if pulling up trees was the easiest thing in the world.

Little John saw everything and gave a long whistle. “By Heavens!” he said to himself, “I would not like to be in Master Robin’s shoes!”

There was a surprise for the three people that day. The stranger and Robin and Little John in the bushes all found a fight that they had not expected. The stranger with all his strength and cool nerve found an opponent who met his blows with great skill. Robin found the stranger was as hard to hit as if he was inside an oak hedge. And Little John rolled over and over in silent joy.

Robin and the scarlet stranger fought bravely kicking up a cloud of dust. Robin hit the scarlet man three times with such blows that a less strong fellow must have rolled over. The scarlet man got Robin two times, but the second blow was like to finish him. Robin fell down into the dust of the road like an empty bottle. He jumped up again to continue, when Little John came out of the bushes.

“Stop!” said he, taking the stranger’s stick. “Hold, I say!”

“No”, said the stranger quietly, “I was not going to hit him while he was down. But even if is a whole nest of you here, call the other chicks and I’ll fight them all”.

“Not for all the deer in Sherwood!” cried Robin. “You are a good fellow and a gentleman. I’ll fight no more with you, because I really hurt all over my body. And none of my men will do you harm”.

All this time the stranger was looking at Robin attentively and listening to his voice as if trying to recall it.

“If I’m not mistaken”, he said slowly at last, “you are that famous outlaw, Robin Hood”.

“You say right”, replied Robin; “but my fame rolled in the dust today”.

“Now why did I not know you at once?” continued the stranger. “I came here to find you today, and thought I remembered your face and speech. Don’t you know me, Rob, my boy? Have you ever been to Gamewell Lodge?”

“Ha! Will Gamewell! My dear old friend, Will Gamewell!” shouted Robin. “How stupid of me it was not to recall you! But it has been years since we saw each other last time, and your gentle schooling has polished you greatly. But why are you looking for me? You know I am an outlaw and a dangerous company. How is my uncle? And have you heard of Marian?”

“Your last question first”, answered Will, laughing, “because I think that it lies nearest to your heart. I saw Marian after the great shooting at Nottingham, when you won her the golden arrow. It has made her an enemy in the Sheriff’s daughter. Marian asked me to tell you, if I ever saw you, that she must return to Queen’s court, but she could never forget the happy days in the greenwood. As for your uncle, he is the same as before and is secretly proud of your skill at the bow and of the way you treat the Sheriff, whom he does not like. And I am now an outlaw like you. So I decided to look for you in Sherwood. And is this Little John the Great? Shake hands with me and promise me to cross a cudgel with me in friendly fight some day in the forest!”

“With pleasure!” said Little John heartily. “Here’s my hand. What do you say your name is?”

“This has to be changed”, said Robin; “let me think myself. Ah! I have it! In scarlet he came to us, and that will be his name. Welcome to the greenwood, Will Scarlet!”

“Yes, welcome, Will Scarlet!” said Little John; and they all swore to be true to each other and to Robin Hood’s men in Sherwood Forest.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons why Will Scarlet was looking for Robin Hood.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) Robin Hood’s dialogue with Will before the fight;
  - b) Robin Hood’s dialogue with Will after the fight..
4. Look at the title of Chapter VIII. What do you think will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter VIII see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER VIII

## How Robin Hood Met Friar Tuck

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Friar	promise
Combat	a kind of clothes
Match	contrary
Pudding	pride
Stout	special protection for head
Cloak	clever, cute
Knight	of god's nature
Helmet	part of a skeleton
Skull	fight
Cunning	person who lives away from other people
Dignity	place to cross a river or a stream
Holy	give up
Flesh	be equal to somebody or something
Bone	a sort of dessert
Swear	flash
Ford	soul
Cheese-cloth	big and fat
Gleam	body
Spirit	escape
Rib	noble warrior
Advantage	monk
Opposite	where brains are
Dodge	benefit over somebody or something
Hermit	what protects heart and lungs from damage
Yield	thin cloth, gauze

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) the friar;
  - b) the fight.

## 2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

In summer time when leaves grow green, and flowers are fresh, Robin Hood and his merry men were all ready to play. Some practised jumping and some ran, and some were shooting their bows, and some practised with the quarter-staff and with the good sword.

Robin Hood had a custom to pick out the best men in all the countryside. When he heard of a man more than usually skilled in combat he looked for the man and tested him in a personal fight — which did not always end happily for Robin. And when found a man to he liked, he offered him service with the brave fellows of Sherwood Forest.

So it came about that one day after a practice at shooting, in which Little John shot the target at five hundred feet distance, Robin Hood said:

“I would travel a hundred miles to find a man who could match you!”

At this Will Scarlet laughed.

“There lives a friar in Fountain’s Abbey — Tuck, by name — who can beat both him and you”, he said.

“By Lord”, Robin said, “I’ll neither eat nor drink till I see this friar”.

And with this he at once began arming himself for the adventure. On his head he put a cap of steel. Under his green he put on a coat of chain metal. Then he took a sword and of course his bow and arrows.

And he went his way with easy heart — it was a day when the whole face of the earth seemed glad. He went on till he came to a stream running in and out among the willows. Robin did not want to get his feet wet, so he paused on the bank.

As he sat down quietly under the shade of a willow he heard a sound of two men’s voices arguing. One was talking in favour of pudding and the other stood out for meat pie.

Robin was surprised with the speech, because the voices were curiously alike.

Then the willows parted on the other bank, and Robin saw the explanation for his mystery. It was not two men who were talking but one — and that one was a stout friar who wore a long cloak. On his head he had a knight’s helmet, and in his hand he had a huge pie, with which he sat down by the water. His argument was finished. The meat pie had won.

But first the friar took off his helmet, and there came a funny picture. His head was as round as an apple, and also as smooth and shiny as an egg. Some curling black hair grew round the base of his skull. His cheeks also were smooth and red and shiny; and his little gray eyes looked about with the funniest air. Good humour and fat living stood out all over him; yet for all that he looked strong enough and able to take care of himself with any man. His short neck was thick; his shoulders were broad, and his arms looked like two oak cudgels. As he sat down, the cloak opened and showed a sword as big as Robin’s.

But Robin was not afraid seeing the sword. Instead, his heart fell within him when he saw the meat pie which was now going to disappear just before his eyes; because the friar lost no time he put one hand deep into the pie, while he crossed himself with the other.

So Robin took his bow and arrow.

“Hey, friar!” he cried out, “carry me over the water, or else I cannot answer for your safety”.

The friar’s hand caught the sword. Then he looked up and saw Robin’s arrow pointing at him.

“Put down your bow, fellow”, he shouted back, “and I will bring you over the stream. It is our duty in life to help each other, and your arrow shows me that you are a man worthy of some attention”. So the friar-knight got up heavily, though his eyes twinkled with a cunning light, put aside his pie and his cloak and his sword went across the stream with dignity. Then he took Robin Hood on his back and didn’t say a word till he came to the other side.

Robin jumped off his back, and said, “I am much thankful to you, good father”.

“Thankful, you say!” replied the friar taking his sword; “then by my faith you will even repay your score. My own affairs, which are of a spiritual kind and much more important than yours, lie on the other side of this stream. I see that you are a good man and, moreover, the one who will not refuse to serve the church. I must therefore ask you that whatever I have done to you, you will do the same to me. In short, my son, you must carry me back again”.

The friar had taken his sword so suddenly that Robin had no time to get his bow from his back, “No, good father, but I shall get my feet wet”, he started.

“Are your feet any better than mine?” asked the friar. “I am afraid that I have already wetted myself so badly as to get rheumatism all over”.

“I am not as strong as you”, continued Robin; “that helmet and sword would not help me to cross the stream, to say nothing of your holy flesh and bones”.

“Then I will lighten up”, replied the friar calmly. “Promise to carry me across and I will put aside my sword and helmet”.

“Agreed”, said Robin; bent his back and took the friar up as he had promised.

The stones at the bottom of the stream were round and slippery, and the water ran fast. The friar was much heavier than Robin, and, what’s more, Robin didn’t know the ford. So he went and the sweat ran down him. But at last he managed to get out on the other bank.

As soon as the friar was down on the ground, Robin got his own sword.

“Now, holy friar”, said he wiping the sweat from his face, “Don’t get tired of doing good to others. You must carry me back again or I swear that I will make a cheese-cloth out of your jacket!”

The friar's gray eyes once more twinkled with a cunning gleam that promised no good to Robin; but his voice was as calm as ever.

"My son", he said; "I see that the waters of the stream have not put out your spirit. Once more will I bend my back to the oppressor".

So Robin got on the friar's back again and carried his sword in his hand. But suddenly he felt himself falling from the friar's broad back. He could not get a hold on the friar because he was too round, so he went down into the middle of the stream with a loud splash and it took him some time to get out on the ground.

"You bloody villain!" shouted he to the friar, "Come to taste my sword, and, friar or no friar, I'll shave the rest of hair on your head!"

"Hard words are cheap", said the friar; "if you would like a fight with swords, meet me halfway in the stream".

And the battle began. Up and down, in and out, back and forth they fought. The swords flashed in the sun and then met. Each received many blows and their ribs ached. So they paused breathed heavily, and looked hard each at the other; because both of them had never had such a brave opponent before.

Finally in one of the attacks Robin's foot stepped on a rolling stone, and he went down on his knees. But the friar did not take this advantage: he paused until Robin could get on his feet.

"By Heaven!" cried the outlaw, "you are the best swordsman that I have met in many long days. Can I ask you of something?"

"What is it?" said the friar.

"Let me take my horn and blow three times".

"That I will do", said the friar, "blow till your breath fails, if it pleases you".

Then Robin Hood took his horn and blew three times; and half a hundred men in green appeared on the bank with bows in hands.

"Whose men are these", said the friar, "that come so quickly?"

"These men are mine", said Robin Hood, feeling that it was his time to laugh at last.

The friar said in his turn, "May I also ask you for something? Can I put my hand to my mouth and whistle three times?"

"That I will do", said Robin, "or else it would be unfair".

The friar put his hand to his mouth and put the horn to shame by the whistles he blew; and half a hundred great dogs came running and jumping so swiftly that they had come to the friar's bank as soon as Robin Hood's men had come to his side.

Then there followed a foolish conflict. The outlaws began sending their arrows to the opposite bank; but the dogs, taught of the friar, dodged the arrows cleverly and ran and brought them back again, just as the dogs of today catch sticks.

"I have never seen anything like this in my days!" cried Little John.

“Take off your dogs, Friar Tuck!” shouted Will Scarlet, who had joined the men in green, and who now stood laughing at the scene.

“Friar Tuck!” exclaimed Robin. “Are you Friar Tuck? Then am I your friend, because you are the person I came to look for”.

“I am nothing but a poor hermit”, said the friar, whistling to his dogs, “by name Friar Tuck of Fountain’s Dale. For seven years I have lived here, done my service — and fought, too, if there was a need; and if it does not look too much of boasting, I have not yet met a man that I would yield before. But your sword is a good one. I would like to know you”.

“It is Robin Hood, the outlaw”, said Will Scarlet looking at the two opponents. And at this everyone burst with laughter, in which Robin and Friar Tuck joined.

“Robin Hood!” cried the good friar, “are you indeed that famous man? Then I like you well; and I am sorry I haven’t shared my pie with you”.

“To tell the truth”, replied Robin, “it was that same pie that led me to be rude. Now, let us go to the greenwood. We need you — I was looking for you today to tell this. We will get you a place to live in Sherwood Forest, and you will keep us from evil. Will you join us?”

“With pleasure!” cried Friar Tuck happily. “I will cross this stream once more, and go with you to the good greenwood!”

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons why Friar Tuck was glad to join Robin Hood.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) Robin Hood’s dialogue with Friar Tuck before the fight;
  - b) Robin Hood’s dialogue with Friar Tuck after the fight..
4. Look at the title of Chapter IX. Who can Alan-a-Dale be? Why does he need help? What do you think will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter IX see how much you have guessed.



# CHAPTER IX

## How Robin Hood Helped Allan-a-Dale

### Part I

#### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Impress	the Bible
Herbs	deep breath
Gossip	here: a nobleman
Minstrel	creature that sucks blood
Harp	move head forward and back to show agreement
Disturb	string musical instrument
Torn	in front
Sigh	kind of plants
Title	good friend
Leech	walking musician
Nod	trouble
A good book	make a strong influence on somebody
Ahead	ragged

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

#### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) why Tuck and the cook became good friends;
  - b) why Robin let the stranger go his way;
  - c) what problem the stranger had.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

Friar Tuck and the cook soon became good friends over the dinner they prepared together for the merry men that evening. Tuck was greatly pleased when he found a man in the forest who could make pies and who had cooked for the High Sheriff himself, and the cook was impressed with the friar's knowledge of herbs and woodland things. So they talked together like two old gossips and, made such a tasty dinner that Robin Hood and his men would like never to stop eating.

So Robin walked into the wood that evening with his stomach full and his heart in great love for other men. He did not stop the first passer-by, as he often did. Instead, he stepped behind a tree, when he heard a man singing a song, and waited to see the singer. Perhaps he remembered, also, the merry Will Scarlet, and how he had tried to stop him a few days before.

Like Will, this fellow was in scarlet, though he did not look such a gentleman. Yet, he had an honest face and a voice much sweeter than Will's. He seemed to be a minstrel, because he had a harp in his hand.

Robin let the singer pass.

"I should not disturb a light-hearted lover this night", he said to himself, and a memory of Marian came back to him.

So Robin went back to his camp, where he told of the minstrel.

"If any of you see him after this", said he, "bring him to me, because I would like to talk with him".

The next day his wish came true. Little John and the cook were out together when they saw the same young man; at least, he was dressed in scarlet and had a harp in his hand. But now he looked sad; his scarlet dress was all dirty and torn; and at every step he sighed.

Then Little John and the cook stepped forward.

"Hey! Do not wet the earth with your tears", said Little John, "or we shall all have rheumatism".

When the young man saw them he took his bow and aimed an arrow at the strangers.

"Stand off! Stand off!" he said; "what do you want from me?"

"Put down your bow", said the cook, "we will not harm you. But you must come before our master under a young greenwood tree".

So the minstrel put down his bow and let the men bring him to Robin Hood.

"How come!" cried Robin, when he saw the man, "are you not he whom I heard yesterday night singing so merrily about a girl in the town?"

"The same in body, good sir", replied the man sadly; "but my spirit is absolutely different".

"Tell me your story", said Robin. "Maybe I can help you".

"No man on earth can, I fear", said the stranger; "but, I'll tell you the tale. Yesterday I thought I could soon marry the girl I love. But she has been taken from me and is to become an old knight's bride this very day; and as for me, I don't care of my life without her".

"But how did it happen that the old knight got such a favour?" said Robin.

"The knights are much stronger, and are in such great favour that nobody may say 'no' to them. This old knight wanted the land where my lady lives. It is not large, but all in her own right; and her brother says she must marry a title, and he and the old knight have fixed it up for today".

“No, but surely —” began Robin.

“Please, listen”, said the stranger. “Do you think I did not try to make fight of this. But it is not that easy to get the old knight. I fought three of his servants but I couldn’t get to the knight at all”.

“It’s a pity!” said Little John. He was attentively listening to this tale of sorrow. “What do you think, Friar Tuck, doesn’t a little fighting ease a man’s mind?”

“Doctors even recommend leeches”, replied Tuck.

“Does the maid love you?” asked Robin Hood.

“By God, she loves me right well”, said the minstrel. “I have a little ring of hers with me, which I have kept for seven long years”.

“What is your name?” then said Robin Hood.

“My name is Allan-a-Dale”, replied the young man.

“What will you give me, Allan-a-Dale”, said Robin Hood, “to help your true love, and bring her back to you?”

“I have no money, only five shillings”, said Allan; “but — are you not Robin Hood?”

Robin nodded.

“Then only you can help me!” said Allan-a-Dale. “And if you give me back my love, I swear that I will be your true servant forever”.

“Where and when must this wedding take place?” asked Robin.

“At Plympton Church, about five miles from here; and at three in the afternoon”.

“Then to Plympton we will go!” cried Robin getting on his feet; and he gave out orders like a general: “Will Stutely, you should have twenty-four good men near Plympton Church before three in the afternoon. Cook, good fellow, get some porridge for this youth, because he must have a full stomach, — ah, and better clothes! Will Scarlet, make sure Alan gets dressed in fine clothes. And Friar Tuck, be ready with a good book in hand, at the church. You should better go ahead of us all”.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons :
  - a) why Robin Hood decided to help Alan-a-Dale;
  - b) what hardships they could have on their way.
2. Dramatise the outlaws’ dialogue with Alan-a-Dale.
4. What do you think will happen next? If you were Robin Hood, what plan would you have? In small groups write 4–5 sentences about it and after reading Part II see how much you have guessed.

## Part II

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Reverence	kind of monk's or priest's clothes
Bride	three times
Groom	person under arrest
Lean on	stamp
Cane	this is how a priest is addressed
Prisoner	wish all the best in the name of God
Best man	fall or move on knees
Proceed	move or stand with the support of
Frock	woman about to get married
Thrice	walking stick
Seal	groom's friend at a wedding ceremony
Bless	continue
Kneel	man about to get married
2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) how Robin Hood came to the ceremony;
  - b) the old knight and the girl;
  - c) how the ceremony took place.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

The fat Bishop of Hereford was full of importance that day at Plympton Church. He was to celebrate the marriage of an old knight and a young woman; and all the neighbours were to come to the ceremony. The church itself was full of flowers for the ceremony, and out in the church-yard brown ale was free for everybody.

The guests were beginning to gather, when the Bishop saw that a minstrel dressed in green walked up to the door. It was Robin Hood, who had borrowed Allan's harp for the time.

"Now who are you, fellow?" asked the Bishop, "and what are you doing here at the church-door with your harp?"

"May it please your Reverence", said Robin bowing, "I am just a minstrel, but people call the best in the whole North Country. And I had hope that my music could add to the wedding today".

“What tune can you play?” demanded the Bishop.

“I can play a tune so merry that a lover who lost his love will forget it”, said Robin. “I can play another tune that will make a bride leave her husband at the altar. I can play another tune that will bring loving souls together though they were five good miles away from each other”.

“Then welcome, good minstrel”, said the Bishop, “music pleases me, and if you can play well, it will indeed make our ceremony bright. Now show us how well you can play”.

“No, I must not put finger to string until the bride and groom have come”.

“Let it be as you say”, said the Bishop, “but here comes the party now”.

Then to the church came the old knight with ten archers dressed in scarlet and gold. The archers looked brave, but their master walked slowly leaning on a cane and shaking all over.

And after them came a sweet maid leaning on her brother’s arm. Her hair was shining like gold, and her eyes were like blue violets. But her cheeks were pale, and her face showed recent tears. But she was walking proudly, as if she was saying that the world could not crush her spirit. She had only two maids with her — one held up the bride’s gown from the ground; the other carried.

“Now by all the wedding bells that ever rang!” said Robin bravely, “this is the worst matched pair that my eyes have ever seen!”

“Silence!” said a man who stood near.

The Bishop stood ready to meet the couple.

But Robin paid no attention to him. He let the knight and his ten archers pass by, then he came up to the bride on the other side from her brother.

“Courage, lady!” he whispered, “there is another minstrel near, who may play more to your liking”.

The lady looked at him with fear, but read such honesty and kindness in his eyes that she gave him a thankful look.

“Stand aside, fool!” cried her brother.

“But I will bring good fortune to the bride by going with her through the church-doors”, said Robin laughing.

And so he was allowed to walk by her side.

“Now start up your music, fellow!” ordered the Bishop.

“Gladly”, said Robin, “if you let me choose my instrument. You see, sometimes I like the harp, and other times I think the horn makes the merriest music in all the world”.

And he got his horn from underneath his green clothes and blew three notes.

“Take him!” cried the Bishop; “These are the tricks of Robin Hood!”

The ten archers ran forward from the back of the church, where they stood, but were blocked by the people who now rose from their seats. At the same time Robin quickly got to the altar.

“Stand where you are!” he shouted, getting his bow, “the first man to move will die. And all you who have come to the wedding stay in your seats. We shall still have wedding, as we have come into the church. But the bride will choose her husband herself!”

Then twenty-four good bowmen appeared at the door with Will Stutely at their head. And they took prisoners the ten knight’s archers and the bride’s brother and the other men on guard.

Then in came Allan-a-Dale, dressed nicely, with Will Scarlet as best man. And they walked and came to the altar.

“Before a maid gets married she has the right to choose”, said Robin. “Now, girl, before this wedding continues, whom will you like to have as husband?”

The maid answered not in words, but smiled with a light in her eyes, and walked over to Allan and put her arms about his neck.

“That is her true love”, said Robin. “Young Allan instead of the old knight. And the true lovers must be married right now before we leave. Now my lord Bishop, proceed with the ceremony!”

“No, that will not be”, protested the Bishop; “their names must be cried three times in the church. Such is the law of our land”.

“Come here, Little John”, called Robin; and took off the Bishop’s frock put it on Little John.

The Bishop was short and fat, and Little John was tall and thin. The frock hung over Little John’s shoulders and came only to his waist. He looked very funny, and the people began to laugh at him.

“By all Heaves”, said Robin, “this cloth makes you a man. You’re the finest Bishop that I ever saw in my life. Now cry the names”.

So Little John got into his place and cried the marriage of the maid and Allan-a-Dale once, twice, and thrice.

“That’s not enough”, said Robin; “your frock is so short that you must talk longer”.

So Little John cried again in the church four, five, six, and seven times.

“Good enough!” said Robin. “Now I think I can see a worthy friar in the back of this church who can say a better service than my lord Bishop of Hereford. My lord Bishop will seal the papers, but will you, good friar, bless this pair?”

So Friar Tuck came forward; and Allan and his maid kneeled before him, and the friar began with the ceremony.

When he asked, “Who gives this woman?” Robin stepped forward and answered in a clear voice:

“I do! I, Robin Hood of Sherwood!”

So the two became husband and wife; and each man in green beginning with Robin Hood kissed the bride.

**AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why we cannot say that the Bishop was a very clever person;
  - b) why nobody wanted to stop the wedding ceremony.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) Robin's dialogue with the Bishop;
  - b) the wedding ceremony.
4. Have you ever been in the situation when your friend was in danger? What did you do? Tell the class.
5. Look at the title of Chapter X. What happened to the widow's sons? What is the danger? What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter IX see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER X

## How the Widow's Three Sons Were Rescued

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Rescue	blaze
Order	hurt
Climb	person who travels to Holy places
Lucky	address to God, request
Terror	bind
Wound	money spent for mercy
Tie	successful
Jail	tell, command
Tinker	save
Trust	get up
Prayer	wooden construction for hanging people
Pilgrim	take a confession
Charity	horror
Flash	two lines across each other
Gallows	dignity
Pride	prison
Cross	anathema
Shrive	tinman
Curse	believe

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) how the widow's sons got into the hands of the Sheriff;
  - b) how Robin Hood saved the widow's sons.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

The wedding-party that left Plympton Church was a merry one, but not so merry were the ones left behind. Lord Bishop of Hereford was sitting near the organ without his cloak and angry like hell. The bride's brother was free, but the outlaws



ordered him not to return to the church that day or hurt his sister again. And the old knight had to climb a high tree, where he was sitting among the branches.

The night was coming, but nobody was brave enough to save them that night because of Robin Hood's men. The Bishop and the old knight went straight to Nottingham and gathered the Sheriff's army. The Sheriff himself did not want very much to meet again with Robin in the open. But the others said that if he did not help them, they would go straight to the King, and he had to agree.

One hundred men from the Royal Foresters and soldiers came together and went straight into the greenwood. There they were lucky to find about twenty of outlaws hunting and attacked them at once. But they could not catch the outlaws who felt at home in the wood and shot their arrows at the soldiers. One arrow carried off the Sheriff's hat and put him in terror, and five other arrows hit the Foresters' arms.

But the attacking party still was successful. One outlaw fell; when two others stopped and helped to put him on his feet again. They were the widow's three sons, Stout Will, and Lester, and John. That was unlucky for them because Sheriff's men got around them, but before the soldiers took the brothers, they had killed two and wounded three more.

The attackers almost cut the outlaws to pieces, when the Sheriff cried:

"Stop! Tie the villains! We will follow the law in this and take them to the town jail. But I promise you the biggest public hanging for many changes of the moon!"

So they tied the widow's three sons and took them back to Nottingham.

Robin Hood was not near the fight or with his men; so for some time he knew nothing of what had happened.

But that evening when he was going back to the camp, the widow herself met him crying along the way.

"What news, what news, good woman?" said Robin politely because he liked her.

"God save you, Master Robin!" said the woman. "God keep you from the fate that has met my three sons! The Sheriff has taken them in his hands and now they will die".

"Holy spirits! That cuts my heart! Stout Will, and Lester, and merry John! The earliest friends I had here! It must not be! When is this hanging?"

"Middle the tinker tells me that it is for tomorrow noon", replied the woman.

"By the truth of my soul", said Robin, "you could not tell me in better time. Trust me, good woman!"

The old widow fell on the ground and took his knees.

"It is danger I am asking you to face", she said with tears; "and yet I know your brave true heart will answer me. Heaven help you, good Master Robin, to answer a poor widow's prayers!"

Then Robin Hood went straight to the camp where he heard the details.

"We must save them, my men!" said Robin.

And they went to work out a plan.

Robin walked alone a little — because he was troubled — when he met but an old pilgrim, one of those who made pilgrimages and went from place to place, and lived on charity.

This old fellow walked up to Robin and asked for charity of him because Robin had a habit of helping pilgrims.

"What news, what news, you foolish old man?" said Robin, "what news, I am asking?"

"Three fellows in Nottingham town", said the pilgrim, "must die".

Then the idea that Robin needed came to him like a flash.

"Come, exchange your clothes with me, old man", he said, "and I'll give you forty shillings in silver to buy beer or wine".

"O, your clothes are good", protested the pilgrim, "The holy church teaches that you should never laugh at an old man".

"I am serious, I say. Come, exchange your clothes with me. Here are twenty pieces of good gold".

So the pilgrim agreed; and Robin put on the old man's hat and his old cloak; and his shoes, old and dirty. And as he was making the change in dress he made so many funny comments about a man's pride and the dress that makes a man, that the pilgrim was like to die with laughter.

I tell you, the two were comical sights when they went their ways that day. Robin's own mother could not know him, if she was alive.

The next morning the whole town of Nottingham awoke early, and as soon as the gates were open country people began to come because three hangings were something special, and the crowd was as large as a Fair day.

Robin Hood in his pilgrim's clothes was one of the first who came through the gates, and he went up and down and around the town as if he had never been there before in all his life. Then he came to the market-place, and saw there three standing gallows.

"Who are these for, my son?" he asked a soldier standing by.

"For three of Robin Hood's men", answered the man. "Be it Robin himself, it would be three times as high, I tell you. But Robin is too smart to get in the Sheriff's hands again".

The pilgrim crossed himself.

"They say that he is a brave fellow", he said.

"Ha!" said the soldier, "he may be brave enough out there in the forest, but the open market-place is another thing".

"Who must hang these three poor fellows?" asked the pilgrim.

"The Sheriff has not decided. But here he comes now to answer his own questions". And the soldier stood still as the Sheriff and his bodyguard walked up to inspect the gallows.

"O, Heaven save you, good Sheriff!" said the pilgrim. "Heaven save you! What will you give a silly old man today to be your hangman?"

"Who are you, fellow?" asked the Sheriff.

"Nothing but a poor old pilgrim. But I can shrive their souls and hang their bodies very well".

"Very good", replied the Sheriff. "The pay is thirteen pence today; and I will give you some clothes".

"God bless you!" said the pilgrim. And he went with the soldier to the jail to prepare his three men for hanging.

Just before the noon the doors of the jail opened and the procession came out. They walked to the market-place, the pilgrim in front, and the widow's three sons going between soldiers.

At the gallows they stopped. The pilgrim said something to them in low voice, as if saying some last words; and the three men, with arms behind their backs, went up to the gallows, and the pilgrim went after them.

Then Robin stepped forward, and the crowd stood still as death because they wished to hear the last words said to the outlaws.

"Listen you, proud Sheriff!" he cried. "I have never been a hangman in all my life, and now I do not want to begin the trade. A curse on whom who first started hanging! I have only three more words to say. Listen to them!"

And from his clothes he took his horn and blew three times. Then his hunting-knife came forward and Stout Will, Lester, and merry John were free men, they jumped forward and took the swords from the nearest soldiers.

"Take them! It is Robin Hood!" shouted the Sheriff, "a hundred pounds if you catch them, dead or alive!"

"I give two hundred!" cried the fat Bishop.

But their voices died in the noise that came after Robin blew his horn. He himself got his sword and ran away with his three men. The soldiers tried to catch them, but Will Stutely's on one side of them, and Little John's on the other; and eighty men in green that came running attacked the guard from every side at once.

"Catch them! In the King's name!" shouted the Sheriff. "Close the gates!"

But Will Scarlet and Allan-a-Dale had already taken the control of the gates. So the gates stood wide open, and band of outlaws moved toward them.

And so they came through the gate, and on the long road leading up the hill, and at last came into the friendly greenwood. The soldiers were afraid to enter the forest. And the widow's three sons had a more pleasant supper that night than ever before in their whole lives.

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**AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why we cannot say that the Sheriff was a very brave person;
  - b) if there could be another way to save the widow's sons.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) Robin's dialogue with the widow;
  - b) the hanging.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XI. What happened to the widow's sons? What is the danger? What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XI see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XI

## How a Beggar Surprised Robin and his Men

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Direction	take for use for some time
Rhythm	seeing nothing
Pike-staff	reach
Belt	where people make flour
Lend	magician
Tavern	in place
Earn	feeling sorry and wrong
Violence	stripe used for tying up clothes
Pepper	one of the things people do when they catch cold
Instead	stick
Blindly	something that repeats in equal intervals of time
Mill	where you move
Ashamed	force
Sneeze	inn, snack bar
Wizard	spice

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) why Robin Hood found the beggar strange;
  - b) how the beggar fought Robin Hood;
  - c) how the beggar fought the outlaws.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

One bright morning Robin was going alone down the road to see if there had been the Sheriff's men. But all was peaceful. No one was in sight but a beggar who was going in Robin's direction. The beggar saw Robin at the same moment as he came from the trees, but didn't show it. He was going forward merrily, whistling, and beating the rhythm in the dusty road with the pike-staff in his hand.

The strange look of the fellow caught Robin's attention, and he decided to stop and talk with him. The fellow wore a long shirt with a belt. Around his neck there was a big bag.

The fellow looked so fat and hearty, and his bag seemed so full that Robin thought to himself:

"Ha! This is a lucky beggar for me! If any of them has money, this is the guy, and he should share it with us".

So he went and stood in the traveller's way.

"Stop, fellow!" said he, "why are you going away so fast? Wait, because I would like to have a talk with you!"

The beggar made as if he didn't hear him, and went on.

"Wait, I say, fellow!" said Robin again, "because there's a way to make people hear!"

"It is not so", answered the beggar, speaking for the first time, "I care for no man in all England, not even the King himself. So let me go on my way, it is growing late, and I still have to go far before I can have something to eat".

"Now, by all saints", said Robin, once more getting in front of the beggar, "I see well by your fat face, that you do not lack good food, while I go hungry. This is why you must lend me some of your money till we meet again, so that I can go to the nearest tavern".

"I have no money to lend", said the beggar angrily. "I think you are as young a man as I, and you as well can earn a supper. So go your way, and I'll go mine. If you don't eat till you get something out of me, you'll go hungry for the next twelve months".

"Not while I have a stick to beat your bones!" cried Robin. "Do what I say, or I'll dust your shirt for you; and if that does not teach you manners, then we'll see what a sharp arrow can do with a beggar's skin!"

The beggar smiled, and answered, "Come on with your stick, fellow! I care no more for it than for a walking stick. And as for your pretty bow —"

And with surprising quickness, he took his pike-staff and knocked Robin's bow out of his hand, so that his fingers hurt with pain. Robin danced and tried to bring his own stick into action; but the beggar never gave him a chance. Biff! Whack! — came the pike-staff, beating him down.

There were only two things to do; to stand there and get a good beating, or run away. Robin chose the second and ran back to the wood, blowing his horn.

"Where are you going, man!" laughed the beggar after him. "We have just begun. Stay and take your money, or you will never be able to pay your bill at the tavern!"

But Robin didn't say a word. He went up the hill till he met three of his men who were running up to answer his call.

"What is wrong?" they asked.

"It is a beggar", said Robin, catching his breath. "He is back there on the road with the hardest stick I've met in many good days. He gave me no chance!"

The men — Much, the cook and two of the widow's sons — could not even hide their surprise at the thought of Robin Hood running from a beggar. Yet, they put on serious faces, and asked their leader if he was hurt.

"No", he replied, "but I shall feel much better if you bring me that beggar and let me have a fair fight with him".

So the three men ran and came out on the road and went after the beggar, who was going along his way again, as if at peace with all the world.

"The easiest way to get this beggar", said Much, "is to surprise him. Let us go through the wood and come on him before he understands what's going on".

The others agreed, and soon the three were close on the fellow.

"Now!" said Much; and the other two jumped quickly on the beggar's back and took his pike-staff from his hand. At the same moment Much got his knife and put it to the fellow's neck.

"Give up you, my man!" cried he; "because our friend is waiting for you in the wood, to teach you how to fight fairly".

"Give me a fair chance", said the beggar, "and I'll fight you all at once".

But they did not listen to him. Instead, they turned him about and took him to the forest. Seeing that he could not fight, the beggar began to talk.

"Good my masters", said he, "why this violence? I will go with you quietly, if you want me, but if you set me free I'll pay for it. I have a hundred pounds in my bag here. Let me go my way, and you will have all that's in the bag".

The three outlaws discussed this together.

"What do you say?" asked Much the others. "Our master will be happier to see this beggar's money than his sorry face".

The other two agreed, and the little party stopped.

"Count your gold, friend", said Much.

"I will do that, fellows", said he. "One of you lend me your cloak and we will put it on the ground and put the gold on it".

Soon the cloak was, and he put his bag on it as if it was really very heavy. The outlaws bent over and watched the process to make sure he should not hide some of the money on his body. He put his hands into the bag. From it he got — not shining gold — but handfuls of pepper which he threw into the faces of the men around him. The wind helped him in this, and soon there was a cloud which got into the eyes, noses, and mouths of the three outlaws till they could not see or breathe.

While they were trying to come to themselves and catch the beggar, he finished the job by taking up the cloak by its corners and shaking it in the faces of the outlaws. Then he took a stick which was near and began to rain blows on their heads, shoulders, and sides, all the time dancing first on one leg, then on the other, and crying:

"Villains! Here are the hundred pounds I promised. How do you like them?"

Whack! whack! whack! whack! went the stick, with each word. Even cries of pain could not come from the outlaws because they had too much pepper in their mouths. Their one thought was to run, and they went off blindly down the road, and the beggar was going after them to give them a few more blows.

“See you well, my masters”, he said finally turning the other way, “and when I next come along the road, I hope you will be able to tell gold from pepper!”

With this he left and went again whistling on his way, while the three outlaws were coming to their senses.

When they could look around them clearly, they saw Robin Hood standing near a tree and watching them smilingly.

“God save you, fellows!” he said, “have you gone the wrong way and been to the mill?”

Then when they looked ashamed and never answered a word, he went on, in a soft voice:

“Did you see that beggar I sent you for?”

“To tell the truth”, said Much, “we heard more of him than we saw him”.

And he sneezed.

“How was that?” asked Robin.

“When we took the beggar as you ordered, he offered to pay for his freedom out of the bag he had on his back”.

“The same that I wanted”, said Robin as if to himself.

“So we agreed to this”, went on Much, “and put a cloak down, and he opened his bag and shook it, and there came a great cloud of pepper — we could not see or breathe; and in this cloud he disappeared like a wizard”.

“But not before he left some black and blue spots, for you to remember him, I see”, commented Robin.

“He is a Satan’s friend”, said one of the widow’s sons.

Then Robin laughed, and sat down on a fallen tree.

“Four brave outlaws beaten by a beggar!” cried he. “I can laugh at you, my men, because I am in the same boat with you. But this tale should not get around — even in the greenwood! Let us laugh at ourselves together”.

The others agreed and felt better. And none of the four ever told of the adventure.

But not the beggar. He boasted of it at the next tavern. And the tale got around, and people made a ballad of it, which, I tell you, the four outlaws did not like to hear.

## **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons: why the beggar felt so calm and confident of himself.



2. Dramatise:
  - a) Robin's dialogue with the beggar;
  - b) Robin's dialogue with the three outlaws after the fight;
  - c) the beggar's dialogue with the inn-keeper.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XII. Who is Guy of Gisborne? Why should Robin Hood fight him? What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XII see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XII

## How Robin Hood Fought Guy of Gisborne

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Increase	part of a plant in the ground
Part	flash in the sky during a rainstorm
Fist	grumble
Give up	short and thin branch of a tree
Lightning	say good-bye
Mane	make more
Demand	tree that grows near water
I'd rather	wreath
Willow	fingers put together to fight
Wand	yield
Garland	hair on a horse's head
Root	ask for
Complain	I'd prefer

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) how Little John was arrested;
  - b) what was unusual about the stranger;
  - c) how Robin Hood fought the knight;
  - d) how Robin Hood helped little John.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

Some weeks passed; the weeks that the Sheriff spent trying to catch Robin Hood and his men. Robin's name and actions had come to the King's ears, in London town, and he sent word to the Sheriff to catch the outlaw or lose his position. So the Sheriff tried everything to find Robin Hood in the forest, but always without success. And he increased the price for Robin's head, in the hope that the best men of the kingdom could come and try their skill catching the brave outlaw.

There was a man named Guy of Gisborne, a knight of the King's army, who heard of Robin and of the price for his head. Sir Guy was one of the best men at the bow and the sword in all the King's army. But his heart was black. The King let him go to find the forester; and with the King's order he came before the Sheriff at Nottingham.

"I have come to catch Robin Hood", said he, "dead or alive".

"I would gladly help you", answered the Sheriff, "even if you didn't have the King's order. How many men do you need?"

"None", replied Sir Guy, "I am sure that many men can never find the outlaw. I must go alone. But have your men ready, and when you hear this silver horn, come quickly, because then I shall have Robin in my hands".

"Very good", said the Sheriff. "I will do this". And he gave the orders, and Guy of Gisborne left changing his appearance.

That day Will Scarlet and Little John went to Barnesdale. But just outside the town they parted, and Will went into the gates, and John stayed on the hill outside.

In a moment he saw Will flying madly from the gates, and the Sheriff and sixty men after him.

Little John could not help laughing at this, though he knew that it would be no laughter if Will should fall over. And one man was really coming very close him. It was William-a-Trent, the best runner among the Sheriff's men. He was at twenty feet of Scarlet when John rose up quickly and shot one of his arrows, and William-a-Trent's race was over.

The others stopped for a moment when the arrow came down from the hill; but looking up they saw only Little John, and with a cry of joy they turned on him. At that time Will Scarlet was already on the other side of the hill.

"I'll just send one more little message to the Sheriff", said Little John to himself, "before I join Will".

But he could not do this because his good bow broke at that moment.

Little John stood up ready to sell his life dearly because the soldiers were now so close him that he could not turn, and he laid out the first ten of them right and left with huge blows of his fist.

But if five men can do more than three, twenty can do more than one.

A group of archers stood at a safe distance and covered Little John with their arrows.

"Now give up!" shouted the Sheriff. "Give up you, Little John, or Reynold Greenleaf, or what name you have this day! Give up, or some of these arrows will hit your heart!"

"Man, your words have touched my heart now", said Little John; "and I give up".

So the Sheriff's men took Little John and tied him up, so afraid they were. And the Sheriff laughed and remembered his stolen silver plates, and decided what to do with the outlaw.

"By the Saints!" he said, "I will hang you high on a hill in Barnesdale this day".

"It may not happen, be Heaven's will for it", said the prisoner.

The company quickly went back down the hill. All were merry, because the Sheriff had promised them a lot of wine, and what else — they had to hang the bravest outlaw in England, next to Robin Hood himself. The gallows was ready in a few minutes.

"Now get him up!" commanded the Sheriff, "and let us see if your greenwood tricks will help you tomorrow".

"I wish that I had Robin's horn", said poor John to himself, "it seems it is all over with me".

To tell the truth, the time was passing so quickly. There already was a rope around the prisoner's neck ...

"Are you ready?" called the Sheriff. "One — two — "

But before the "three" left his lips a sound of a silver horn came over the hill.

"By my God, that is Sir Guy of Gisborne's horn", said the Sheriff, "and he asked me to be as fast as a lightning. He has caught Robin Hood".

"Pardon, my lord", said one of his men; "but if he has caught Robin Hood, this is really a merry day. And let us save this fellow and build another gallows and hang them both together".

"That's a good idea!" said the Sheriff. "Take him down and tie him to the tree until our return".

And the Sheriff and all his men went out to get Robin Hood and bring him in for hanging.

Let us leave talking of Little John and the Sheriff, and see what has become of Robin Hood.

In the first place, he and Little John had almost quarrelled that morning because both had seen a strangely looking man, and each wanted to fight him alone. But Robin did not give way to Little John, and that is why John went with Will to Barnesdale.

And Robin came up to the stranger. He seemed to be three-legged at first sight, but on coming nearer you could see that it was really a poorly dressed man, who had covered his clothes with a skin of a horse, with head, tail, and mane. The head made a helmet; and the tail gave the strange three-legged appearance.

"Good morning, good fellow", said Robin, "by the bow in your hand I see that you must be a good archer".

"Good", said the stranger; "but it is not archery that I am thinking of this morning because I have lost my way and want to find it again".

“By my faith, I thought it was your brains that you had lost!” thought Robin smiling. Then aloud: “I’ll show you the way through the wood”, said he, “if you tell me your business. Your speech is much better than your clothes”.

“Who are you to ask me my business?” asked the stranger.

“I am one of the King’s Rangers”, replied Robin, “I am here to guard his deer against strangely looking men”.

“I may be strangely looking”, replied the other, “but never mind. If you are a Ranger, I must then demand your service. I am on the King’s business looking for an outlaw. Men call him Robin Hood. Are you one of his men?”

“No, good God!” said Robin; “but what do you want with him?”

“That is another tale. But I’d rather meet with that proud outlaw than get forty good pounds of the King’s money”.

Robin now saw what the matter was.

“Come with me, good man”, said he, “and maybe a little later in the day, I can show you where Robin stays when he is at home. Now let us have some fun under the greenwood tree. Let us first try the mastery at shooting arrows”.

The stranger agreed, and they cut down two willow wands and put them up at a distance of sixty yards.

“Go on, good fellow”, said Robin. “The first shot to you”.

“No, no”, said the other, “after you, my friend”.

So Robin stepped forward and sent his arrow toward the wand but missed by an inch. The stranger was more careful but his arrow was a good three-fingers away. On the second round, the stranger started and got in the small garland at the top of the wand; but Robin shot much better and hit the wand itself, right at the middle.

“A blessing on your heart!” shouted the stranger; “I have never seen such shooting as that! Maybe you are better than Robin Hood himself. But you have not told me your name yet”.

“No”, said Robin, “I must keep it secret till you tell me your own”.

“I am not afraid to tell it”, said the other. “I promised to take brave Robin, and this I would tell him to his face. I am Guy of Gisborne”.

This he said with a great pride.

Robin looked at him quietly. “I think I have heard of you somewhere. Do you not bring men to the gallows?”

“Yes, but only outlaws such as Robin Hood”.

“But what harm has Robin Hood done you?”

“He is an outlaw”, said Sir Guy, not answering the question.

“Has he ever taken from the rich what he did not give again to the poor? Does he not protect the women and children and weak and helpless? Isn’t his greatest crime the shooting of a few King’s deer?”

“Done with it”, said Sir Guy. “I am more than ever sure that you are one of Robin’s men”.

"I have told you I am not", said Robin. "But if I must help you catch him, what is your plan?"

"Do you see this silver horn?" said Sir Guy. "I blow it and the Sheriff and all his men come when I have Robin near. And if you show him to me, I'll give you the half of the forty pounds".

"I would not help to hang a man for ten times forty pounds", said the outlaw. "Yet I will point out Robin to you for the reward I find at my sword's point. I myself am Robin Hood of Sherwood".

"Then have it!" cried the knight. His sword came out from under the horse skin as a lightning before Robin could come to guard. Robin escaped the attack and took his own sword.

"A dirty trick!" said he, "to attack a man unprepared".

Then they spoke no more for two full hours when their swords worked hard. The fighters looked at each other with the fires of hatred burning in their eyes. One was fighting for his life; the other for a reward and the King's favour.

They went on fighting until Robin, in an unlucky moment, stumbled over the root of a tree; and Sir Guy did not give him the chance to recover himself, as any knight must do, but struck quickly at the falling man and wounded him in the left side.

"Ah, dear Lady in Heaven", said Robin. And he came up again, and attacked Sir Guy when the knight had raised his sword high to give a final blow. One move, and Sir Guy of Gisborne fell down with Robin's sword through his throat.

"You brought it on yourself", said he.

He looked to his own wound. It was not serious, and he soon took the dead man into the bushes, took off the horse skin and put it on himself. He put his own cloak on Sir Guy, so that no one could tell for sure who was dead. Robin's figure and face were not unlike the knight's.

Then Robin took the silver horn and blew once. It saved the life of Little John because you and I remember how it made the Sheriff stop the hanging, and go into the wood with his men looking for Robin Hood.

In twenty-five minutes the Sheriff's twenty best archers came up running.

"Did you signal us, lord?" they asked.

"Yes", said he, going to meet the Sheriff.

"What news, what news, Sir Guy?" said the Sheriff.

"Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne had a fight; and he who has Robin's cloak on lies under the tree".

"The best news I have heard in all my life!" shouted the Sheriff. "I wanted to save him for the hanging — though I cannot now complain".

"The hanging?" asked Robin.

"Yes. This is our lucky day. After you left me we missed running one of the fellows — I believe it was Will Scarlet; and another who came to help him we were just about to hang, when your horn blew".

“Who was the other?” asked the outlaw.

“Who do you think?” laughed the Sheriff. “The best man in the greenwood, next to Robin Hood himself — Little John, Reynold Greenleaf!” Because the Sheriff could not forget the name Little John had under his own roof at Nottingham.

“Little John!” thought Robin. That really was a lucky blow of the horn!

“But I see you have got a scratch”, continued the Sheriff, becoming very talkative. “Here, one of my men! Give Sir Guy of Gisborne your horse, and let us hurry back and finish hanging the other”.

So they got on their horses, and as they were riding Robin forced himself to talk merrily, while all the time he was planning the best way to save Little John.

“A favour, Sheriff”, he said as they came to the gates of the town.

“What is it, dear sir?”

“I do not want any of your gold because I have had a good fight. But now that I have killed the master, let me put an end to the other; so that people could say that Guy of Gisborne killed the two greatest outlaws of England in one day”.

“Have it as you will”, said the Sheriff.

Then Robin came to Little John, who was still at the gallows-tree; and said to the Sheriff’s men, “Now stand back here”. And he quickly cut Little John’s bonds, and put into his hands Sir Guy’s bow and arrows, which he had cared to take.

“It is I, Robin!” he said. But in truth, Little John already understood it, and decided there was to be no hanging that day.

Then Robin blew three times in his own horn, and took his own bow; and before the surprised Sheriff and his men could organise, they had to run from whistling arrows.

And at the same time through the gates and over the walls there came more arrows — Will Scarlet and Will Stutely had come to help their friend. The Sheriff and his men had nothing to do but turn and ran.

Then Robin, and John, and the others hurried back to the good greenwood and there rested. They had got enough sport for one day.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why Sir Guy was not as clever as he thought of himself;
  - b) why we can say that Little John was a brave man;
  - c) why we can say that Robin Hood was a clever person and a good friend.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) Sir Guy’s dialogue with the Sheriff;

- b) Robin's dialogue with the stranger;
  - c) what happened at the gallows.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XIII. Why did Marian come to Sherwood forest? Why did Robin Hood go to see the Queen? What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XIII see how much you have guessed.



# CHAPTER XIII

## How Marian Came Back to Sherwood Forest and How Robin Hood Came before Queen Eleanor

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Handsome	maybe
Page	gladly
Dare	impolite
Honest	place on arm where people wear bracelets
Defend	boy-servant
Fencing	good-looking, nice
Wrist	have courage to do something
Perhaps	wager
Willingly	trip
Rude	lovely
Invite	protect
Baritone	truthful
Journey	looking badly, dirty
Untidy	ask somebody to come
Bet	art of fighting a sword
Charming	kind of man's voice

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) the fight;
  - b) how Marian spent her time in the outlaws' camp;
  - c) Queen Eleanor and her reaction to the outlaws;
  - d) how the outlaws spent their time at the Queen's place.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

One day not long after that, Robin decided to try his skill at hunting. And not knowing whom he could meet on his way, he dirtied his face and put on a sorry-looking jacket and a long cloak before leaving. As he walked, the peacefulness of the morning came upon him, and brought back to his memory the early days so long ago when he had walked these same places with Marian. How sweet they seemed to him now, and how far away! Marian, will he ever see her again? He had thought of her very often each time wishing to hear her clear voice and musical laugh, and see her bright eyes.

Perhaps the happiness of Allan-a-Dale and his lady had made Robin's heart beat; perhaps the coming of Will Scarlet. But, really, Robin was anything but a hunter this bright morning as he walked along thinking of his love.

Suddenly a deer ran in front of him, and at once the man of action awoke in him. His bow was ready, and he nearly made a shot when the deer fell suddenly with an arrow in his heart.

Then a handsome little page came out of his hiding place and ran toward the animal.

Robin came to the deer from the other side.

"How dare you shoot the King's deer, fellow?" he asked.

"I have as much right to shoot them as the King himself", answered the page bravely. "How dare you question me?"

The voice made Robin fall into his memories of the old days. He looked at the page, and the boy looked back, straight and honest.

"Who are you, my boy?" Robin said more pleasantly.

"No boy of yours, and my name's my own", replied the page.

"Softly! Fair and softly, sweet page, or we in the forest will have to teach you manners!" said Robin.

"Not if you stand for the forest!" cried the page, taking out his sword. "Come, defend yourself!"

He had a sword in his hand aimed at Robin; and Robin saw nothing for it but to do the same. The page attacked him with strength, and Robin found that the boy knew many pretty little tricks at fencing.

Yet, Robin only defended himself because he did not want to attack the boy with all his strength. The fight went on for a quarter of an hour, at the end of which the page was tired to death, and his cheeks grew red in a most charming manner.

The outlaw saw this, and to end the fight he let the boy cut himself a little on the wrist.

"Are you satisfied, fellow?" asked the page, a little afraid at the sight of the blood.

"Oh, yes, honestly", replied Robin, "and now perhaps you will give me the honour of knowing whom I must thank for this scratch?"

“I am Richard Partington, page to Her Majesty, Queen Eleanor”, answered the boy; and again the sound of his voice troubled Robin.

“Why have you come to the greenwood alone, Master Partington?”

The page was thinking what to answer cleaning his sword with a small handkerchief. The action brought some memory to Robin. The boy finally looked him again in the eye.

“Forester, if you are or if you are not a King’s man, know that I am looking for Robin Hood, an outlaw, to whom I bring amnesty from the Queen. Can you tell me where I can find him?” And waiting for his answer, he put the handkerchief in his shirt. As he did so, Robin saw a shine of gold.

He came forward with a happy cry.

“Ah! I know you now! By the sight of the golden arrow which I won at the Sheriff’s tourney. You are the girl to whom I gave it, and none other than Marian!”

“You — are —?” said Marian, because it was she; “not Robin!”

“Robin’s self!” said he merrily; and he brought the little page close to his heart, and she agreed willingly.

“But Robin!” she said, “I did not know it was you, and was rude, and cut you!”

“It was nothing”, he replied laughing, “as long as it brought you to me”.

But she paid so much attention to his wrist that Robin had never got for all his hurts before put together. And Robin never felt better in all his life. The whole woods seemed brighter since Marian had come again.

But she, also happy, was very uneasy; and Robin at last saw that it was because of her boy’s clothes. He thought that there was nothing to feel shame for, but smilingly gave her his long cloak, which she thankfully put on.

Then they began to talk of each other’s lives, and of the many things which had parted them; and they found so much to tell that it was late in the afternoon before they understood how the hours went by.

“I am a bad host!” cried Robin, jumping to his feet. “I have not even invited you to my wild home”.

“And I am a bad page”, replied Marian; “because I had forgotten that I was Richard Partington, and really brought you a message from Queen Eleanor!”

“Tell it on our way home, and there Mistress Dale will take care of you. And the first of my men we meet I will send back for your deer”.

So she told him, as they walked back through the forest, that his fame had come to Queen Eleanor’s ears, in London town. And the Queen said, “I would like to see this brave man, and his skill at the bow”. And the Queen had promised him amnesty if he and four of his archers could come to London for the tournament the following week, to shoot against King Henry’s men. All this Marian told in detail, and said:

“When I heard Her Majesty say she wanted to see you, I asked to let me go and look for you, saying I had known you before. And the Queen was glad, and let me go, and sent this gold ring to you from her finger”.

Then Robin took the ring and kissed it. “By this I will go to London town”, said he, “and if I break my word, may this hand be cut off at the wrist!” By this time they had come to the cave, and Robin presented Marian to the band. Will Scarlet was especially glad to greet again his old time friend, and Allan-a-Dale and his good wife did their best to make her welcome in their cottage.

That evening Allan sang sweet songs to the guest, and she sat by Robin’s side, the golden arrow shining in her dark hair. The others sang in the chorus, from Will Scarlet’s baritone to Friar Tuck’s bass. Even Little John tried to sing.

Then Robin asked Marian to repeat her message from the Queen.

“You have heard”, said Robin standing up, “that Her Majesty wishes four men to go with me. This is why I choose Little John and Will Stutely, Will Scarlet, and Allan-a-Dale. Mistress Dale, also, can go with her husband and be company for the Queen’s page. We will leave early in the morning. So see that not only your clothes are nice, but also your swords bright and your bows and arrows good. We must be a credit to the Queen and the good greenwood”.

The next morning was as fine a summer’s day as ever you want to see, and the green leaves of the forest made a pleasing background for the merry picture of Robin and his men.

The whole band went with the party of seven to the end of the wood and wished them good luck.

The journey to London town was nice and easy. The party went bravely along the King’s road, and the Queen’s order and ring could answer for Robin and his men, as it really happened at the gates of London. So they came to the palace and waited for the audience with the Queen.

The King that day was at Finsbury Field, where the tourney was soon to take place. He had so much boasted of his men, that the Queen decided to win a bet of him. She heard of Robin Hood and his men, as Marian had said; and Marian on her part was really pleased to add a word in their favour.

The Queen was sitting in her private audience-room talking pleasantly with her ladies, when Marian came in.

“Look here!” said the Queen smiling, “is this my lady Marian, or the page, Richard Partington?”

“Both, if it pleases Your Majesty. Richard found the man, and Marian brought him to you”.

“Where is he?” asked Queen Eleanor with interest.

“Waiting for your audience — he and four of his men and a lady whose wedding story I can tell you another time”.

“Let them in”.

So Robin Hood and his little party entered the room.

The Queen thought the men to be rude and untidy because of their wild life in the forest; but she saw a brave company, and in all the court you could not find more gallant men.

Robin remembered what his mother taught him, and he looked a real gentleman. We have seen how good-looking Will Scarlet was; and Allan-a-Dale was as good to look at. And Little John and Will Stutely looked so strong that it was enough. Mistress Dale, on her part, looked even more charming, if possible, than on the day when she went to Plympton Church to marry one man and found another.

The people of the greenwood came before Queen Eleanor, and Robin came forward and stood on his knee before her, and said:

“Here I am, Robin Hood — I and my men! At Your Majesty’s will I have come, with the ring of amnesty which I will protect — as I would protect Your Majesty’s honour — with my life!”

“You art welcome, Lockesley”, said the Queen smiling. “You have come in good time, you and your brave men”.

Then Robin presented each of his men, and each fell on his knee, and the Queen greeted him with kind words. And the Queen kissed Mistress Dale on the cheek, and asked her to remain in the palace with her ladies while she was in the city. And she asked all the party to rest themselves after their long journey. They ate and drank, and the Queen told them about the tourney at Finsbury Field, and how she wanted them to wear her colours and shoot for her.

Robin and his men agreed to do all this with all their heart. Then the Queen asked, and they told her and her ladies some of their merry adventures; and the listeners laughed heartily. Then Marian told the story of the wedding at Plympton Church, and the tears from laughter came in the Queen’s eyes.

“My lord Bishop of Hereford!” she said, “It was really a comical business for him! So this is our minstrel?” she said turning to Allan-a-Dale. “I think I have already heard of him. Will he play for us today?”

Allan took a harp which he brought with him, and sang the sweet songs of Sherwood. And the Queen and all her ladies listened in silence till all the songs were ended.

## **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why Marian did not recognise Robin;
  - b) why the Queen wanted to see Robin and his men;
  - c) why Robin Hood agreed to come;
  - d) how Robin and his men impressed the Queen.

2. Dramatise:
  - a) Robin's dialogue with the page;
  - b) the stories Robin and his men told the Queen.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XIV. What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XIV see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XIV

## How the Outlaws Shot in King Harry's Tourney

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Box	discussion
Tent	costly
Velvet	number of points in a contest
Satin	big barrel
Jewel	for somebody
Expensive	sum
Gem	earn
Row	house made of cloth
Tun	thing made of gold or silver
Dozen	covered seat for King and Queen
Stake	precious stone
Pale	dry grass
Score	expensive gleaming material for clothes
In favour of	joy after victory
Argument	the same
So far	duke's title with lands
Total	soft material for making clothes
Triumph	series
Straw	white (of skin)
Deserve	money you put in a bet
Dukedom	twelve
Equal	until now

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) the arena;
  - b) how the shooting took place before Robin Hood came;

- c) the King's noble character;
- d) the shooting round between the King's archers and the outlaws.

2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

The morning of the great archery contest was fair and bright. And all the country around was early awake, too, and made their way to Finsbury Field, a fine broad piece of practice ground. Around three sides of the Field there were seats for common people with the royal boxes in the centre. Along one end there were brightly coloured tents for ten different bands of King's archers.

Each band had a captain, and his flag was of its own colour. First there was Tepus whom the King believed the best archer in all the land. Then there were Clifton and Gilbert of the White Hand; and Elwyn the Welshman; and Robert of Cloudesdale; and, after them, five other captains of bands. As the Queen had said before, the King was very proud of his archers, and organised this tourney to show their skill and, maybe, to get new men.

The crowd was happy to cry the colours of their favourite archers.

Suddenly the gates at the far end opened wide, and a courier in scarlet and gold, on a white horse, came in blowing his horn; and after him there came six men carrying royal flags. The people rose shouting. King Harry entered the arena. He was on a fine white horse and was in a dark suit of velvet with satin and gold. By his side there was Queen Eleanor, looking very charming; and behind them there were Prince Richard and Prince John. After them came lords and ladies; and finally, there were ten companies of archers.

The King and Queen got into the royal box, and sat down on two thrones. At each side the members of the Court took their places. It was a great sight with flashing of jewels, bright colours and expensive gems!

The two hundred archers stood in two long rows, and their captains, as a special favour, stood near the royal box.

"What is the prize?" asked the Queen.

"For the first prize we have a purse with forty golden pounds; for the second, a purse with forty silver pennies; and for the third a silver horn", answered the King. "What's more, if the King's companies keep these prizes, the winning companies will have, first, two tuns of wine; second, two tuns of beer; and, third, five of the fattest deer. I think that is a pretty good", added King Harry laughing.

"Get a line of good length, Tepus, and set up the targets at two hundred steps", said the King.

Tepus bowed and set up ten targets, each for a different company, while the people listened to the rules. The tourney was open to all comers. Each man had to shoot three arrows at the target with the colours of his band, until the best bowman in each band could be chosen. These ten archers then had to start a contest for an



open target — three shots each — and here any other bowman could try his skill. The result at the open targets decided the winner.

The shooting began, on all the targets at once. There is no space to tell about all the fine shooting that morning. At the end of a round the targets looked like big hairbrushes. And the King looked very proud of his skilled bowmen.

At last the company targets were decided, and Tepus, was the first with six centres. Gilbert of the White Hand had five, and Clifton had four.

The winners saluted the King and Queen, and left before the finest contest of all; and a new target — the open one — stood at a hundred and twenty steps. At the King's command the herald said that the open target decided the title of the best archer in all England; and any man could try it. Only a dozen men came forward to give in their names.

"By God!" said the King, "these men must be hard to put themselves against my archers!"

"Do you think that your ten fellows are the best bowmen in all England?" asked the Queen.

"Yes, and in all the world, too", answered the King, "and on this I would stake five hundred pounds".

"I am going to take your bet", said the Queen, "and will do so if you let me a wish".

"What is it?" asked the King.

"If I get five archers better than your ten, will they get your amnesty?"

"Absolutely!" said the King in good humour. "Yet, I tell you now, you lose the bet because there never were such bowmen as Tepus and Clifton, and Gilbert!"

"Hum!" said the Queen looking lost in thought. "I must see if there are people to help me in my bet. Boy, call here Sir Richard of the Lea and my lord Bishop of Hereford!"

The two men came forward.

"Sir Richard", said she, "you are a good knight. Will you advise me to meet a bet of the King that I can get other archers as good as Tepus and Gilbert and Clifton?"

"No, Your Majesty", he said. "There is no one present that is as good as them. But", — he added in a low voice — "I have heard of some who hide in Sherwood Forest who could show them strange targets".

The Queen smiled and let him go.

"Come here, my lord Bishop of Hereford", said she, "would you make a stake to support my bet against the King?"

"No, Your Majesty", said the fat Bishop, "if you pardon me, I would not put a penny on such a bet. By my gold cross, the King's archers are the best".

"But if I find men whom you know as masters of archery", she said, "would you make your stake on them? I have heard that there are men round Nottingham who can do wonders with their bows and arrows!"

The Bishop looked nervously around, as if seeing Robin Hood's men standing near; then turned and saw the Queen looking at him.

"My goodness! My story have come before me!" he thought. And he said aloud, "Your Majesty, such tales are nothing but tales. If you pardon me, I will put my stake to the King's bet".

"As you please", replied the Queen. "How much?"

"Here is my purse", said the Bishop uneasily. "It has about a hundred pounds".

"I'll take it as a hundred", she said, "and Your Majesty" — turning to the King — "I take your bet of five hundred pounds".

"Very good", said the King, laughing. "But why are you so interested in the sport?"

"It is as I have said. I know five men whom I will put against any you may bring".

"Then we will try their skill now", said the King. "What do you say, if first we decide this open target and then get the five best against your unknown champions?"

"Agreed", said the Queen. Then she called Marian and said something in her ear. Marian bowed and left.

Now the ten archers from the King's bands came forward again and with them there were twelve men from the open lists. Slowly but skilfully each man shot, and as his arrow hit in the centre a deep breath broke from the crowd like the sound of the wind on the seashore. And now Gilbert of the White Hand was the leader, Tepus went after him, Elwyn, the Welshman, took the third place; one of the free archers, named Geoffrey, was fourth; and Clifton had to please himself with the fifth.

The herald then came forward again, and, shouted the final contest. Now all these five had to shoot again against five other of the Queen's choice — men who had not shot on that day.

The whole arena was in surprise. "Who are these men of the Queen's choice?" was on every lip. In the middle of it all, the gate at the far end of the field opened and five men entered the arena and came to the royal box. No one seemed to know the faces of these five. Four were in green, and the fifth, who seemed to be the leader, was dressed in a scarlet suit. Each man had on a black cap with a white feather. They all had simply a bow, new arrows, and a short hunting-knife.

When the little party came before the King and Queen, the men took off their caps and helped Marian to get off her horse.

"Your Majesty", she said to the Queen, "these are the men for whom you sent me, and who are now come to put on your colours in the tourney".

The Queen gave them each a scarf of green and gold.

"Lockesley", she said in a clear voice, "I thank you and your men for this service. Know that I have made a bet with the King that you can beat the best five whom he has found in all his bowmen". The five men pressed the scarves to their lips.

The King turned to the Queen with a question.

“Who are these men you have brought before us?” asked he.

The Bishop of Hereford came up, growing red and pale in turns.

“Your pardon, my lord!” cried he, “but I must tell you these fellows are outlaws. The young man in scarlet is none other than Robin Hood himself. The others are Little John and Will Stutely and Will Scarlet and Allan-a-Dale — all famous in Nottingham”.

“As my lord Bishop personally knows!” added the Queen.

The King’s face grew dark. He knew very well the name of Robin Hood.

“Is this true?” he asked.

“Yes, my lord”, replied the Queen. “But, remember — I have your royal promise of amnesty”.

“That I will keep”, said the King. “But, look! Only forty days! When this time is over, let these outlaws think of their safety!”

Then turning to his five archers, who had come near, he said, “You have heard, my men that I have a bet with the Queen on your skill. Here are the men of her choice — free bows of Sherwood. Look well to it, Gilbert and Tepus and Geoffrey and Elwyn and Clifton! If you beat these fellows, I will fill your caps with silver pennies — and the man who stands first will become a knight. But if you lose, I will give the prizes, for which you have just fought, to Robin Hood and his men, as to my royal word”.

“Robin Hood and his men!” the words flew round the arena with the speed of light, and every person moved to see the famous fellows who were so brave to come before the King’s anger, because of the Queen.

Another target was now at the same distance as the last, and the ten archers should shoot three arrows in turn. Clifton was to shoot first.

His arrow hit the black bull’s-eye, but not in the centre. He shot again, and again he hit the black. The third arrow went down and came outside the bull’s eye. Everyone cried in joy, because this was the best Clifton’s shooting that day.

Will Scarlet was to follow him.

“Careful, my friend!” said Robin in a low voice, but Will’s first arrow went outside the bull’s eye.

Will relaxed, and his next two arrows went as freely as along a Sherwood glade. Each got in the bull’s-eye, and one even nearer the centre than his opponent’s. But the total score was in favour of Clifton. At this Will Scarlet said no word, and the crowd shouted and for joy that the King’s man had beaten the outlaw. They also knew that this demonstration pleased the King.

The target was now clear for the next two — Geoffrey and Allan-a-Dale. Many ladies in the Queen’s side had Allan’s colors in their hands.

“To tell the truth”, said more than one lady to Mistress Dale, “if your husband can shoot the bow as well as the harp, his opponent has no chance to win!”

The saying was true. Geoffrey had shot many good shots that day, but now each of his three shots, went outside the bull's-eye. Allan's shooting was so good, that the crowd greeted him with shouts.

You must know that there had long been a friendly argument in Robin Hood's band as to who was the best archer, next after Robin himself. Robin's skill was now so great as to put the leader at the head of all good bowmen in the forest. But the second place lay between Little John and Will Stutely, and both wished to be better than the other. So today they looked at their leader to see who should shoot third. Robin read their faces, and laughing merrily, broke two straws and put them out.

"The long straw goes next!" he decided; and it fell to Stutely.

Elwyn the Welshman was to shoot before him; and his shooting was no better than Geoffrey's. But Stutely could not make his best of it. He had always been too quick and careless. So his first two arrows flew one after the other outside the Welshman's.

"Man! man!" cried Robin. "You forget the honour of the Queen, and the credit of Sherwood!"

"I ask your pardon, master!" said Will shooting his last arrow. It whistled down and hit the very centre of the bull's eye — the best shot made so far.

Now some shouted for Stutely and some shouted for Elwyn; but Elwyn's total was better. The King turned to the Queen. "What will you say now?" said he in triumph. "Two out of the three first rounds have gone to my men. Your outlaws will have to shoot better than that in order to save your bet!"

The Queen smiled gently.

"Yes, my lord", she said. "But the two left are able to do the shooting. You forget that I still have Little John and Robin Hood".

"And you forget, my lady, that I still have Tepus and Gilbert".

Tepus was to go next and he made the same mistake as Will Scarlet. Both his first and second arrows went badly, but one of them, came inside the black, and he followed it up by placing his third in the full centre, just as Stutely had done with his last. These two were the best shots that day. But that shouting was as nothing to Little John's shooting. That good-natured giant wanted to beat Tepus in each shot; and for his third arrow Little John did the old trick of the forest: he shot his own arrow so that it came on Tepus's final centre arrow from above and drove the Tepus's out leaving the outlaw's in its place.

The King could not believe his eyes. "By all saints!" said he. "That fellow deserves a dukedom or a hanging! He must be with Satan himself! I have never seen such shooting".

"The score is equal, my lord", said the Queen; "we have still to see Gilbert and Robin Hood".

Gilbert now took his place and slowly shot his arrows, one after another, into the bull's-eye. It was the best shooting he had done, but there was still a small space left at the very centre.

“Well done, Gilbert!” spoke up Robin Hood. “You are an opponent it is a pleasure to shoot against”. He took his own place as he spoke. “Now if one of your shafts came there”, — sending one of his own — “and another there”, — the second went out — “and another there”, — the third went on — “maybe the King could say you are the best bowman in all England!”

But nobody could hear the last part of his merry speech — the arena burst out with shouts of wonder. His first two arrows had come into the small space left at the bull’s-eye; and his third came down between them, taking half of each, and making all three seem from a distance as one big arrow.

The King rose in surprise and anger.

“Gilbert is not yet beaten!” he cried. “Did he not shoot in the bull’s eye three times? And in all the rules of archery that is the best”.

Robin bowed low.

“As it pleases Your Majesty!” said he. “But may I put the target for the second shooting?”

The King waved his hand. For this Robin prepared another old trick of the greenwood, and showed him a light, peeled willow wand which he put in the ground in place of the target.

“There, friend Gilbert”, called he merrily, “perhaps you can hit that!”

“I almost can’t see it from here”, said Gilbert, “much less hit it. Yet, for the King’s honour, I will try”.

But this final shot was not good, and his arrow flew by the thin white wand. Then Robin came to his place again, and in a breathless pause he let the arrow fly. It came out singing a note of triumph as it went and split the willow wand in two, as if by a hunter’s knife.

“Good heavens, I think your bow is magic!” cried Gilbert. “I cannot believe such shooting”.

“You should come to see our merry fellows in the greenwood”, replied Robin. “Willow wands do not grow on the stones of London town”.

At that time the King in great anger stood up to leave, telling the judges to give the prizes. He never said a word, good or bad, to the Queen, but got on his horse and, with his sons and knights, went off the field. The archers got on one knee as he was going by, but he gave them a single look and was gone.

Then the Queen told the outlaws to come, and they did so and knelt at her feet.

“You have served me right well”, she said, “and I am sorry that the King’s anger grew because of it. But don’t fear. He keeps his word. As to the prizes you have won, I add others of my own — the bet I have won from His Majesty the King and from the lord Bishop of Hereford. Buy with some of this money the best swords you can find in London, for all your band, and call them the swords of the Queen. And promise to protect with them all the poor and the helpless and the women who come your way.”

“We swear”, said the five men.

Then the Queen gave each of them her hand to kiss, and stood up and left with all her ladies. And after they left, the King's archers came around Robin and his men to have a look at the fellows about whom they had heard so much.

The judges came up, and gave each man his prize, as to the King's command. Robin got the purse with forty golden pounds; Little John — forty silver pennies; and Allan-a-Dale — the fine bugle, which he liked very much, because in playing the horn he was as good as in playing the harp. And about the wine and beer and deer Robin said:

“No, why do we need wine or beer, so far from the greenwood? And it would be like bringing coal to Newcastle, to take those deer to Sherwood! The meat and drink must go to Gilbert and Tepus and their men”.

“It is right”, replied Gilbert taking his hand. “You all are good men, and we will drink to every one of you in memory of the greatest day at archery that England has ever seen, or ever will see!”

That was the end of King Harry's tourney, the story of which has gone down from father to son until the present day.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why the Queen was ready to bet the King;
  - b) why the King did not arrest Robin Hood though he could;
  - c) Robin Hood's reaction when he got the Queen's present.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between the King and Queen;
  - b) the dialogue between the Queen and Robin after the tourney.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XV. What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XV see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XV

## How the Tinker Was Looking for Robin Hood

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Delay	order
Hatred	stamp
Nightmare	in the direction of
Stroll	desire to drink
Honest	client
Twice as much	take something from other people by force
Warrant	bandit
Toward	character
Customer	honour
Successful	opposite of “find”
Rob	strong negative feeling
Seal	walk
Thirst	waiting
Lose	truthful
Temper	horrible dream
Thief	losing something
Respect	fortunate
Loss	two times more

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) the Sheriff's daughter;
  - b) Middle, the tinker.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

King Henry was as good as his word. Robin Hood and his party left London — which brought sorrow to Marian — and for forty days no hand rose

against them. But at the end of that time, the royal word came to the Sheriff at Nottingham that he must catch the outlaws without delay, if he wanted to keep his position.

Really, what Robin and his band had done, ending with the great tourney in Finsbury Field, made them known through all England, and there were many people who laughed boldly at the Nottingham Sheriff.

So the Sheriff planned three new expeditions into the greenwood, and was even brave enough to go with them because he had three hundred men with him. But he never saw even the shadow of an outlaw, because Robin's men were hiding, and the Sheriff's men did not know how to find their hiding-place.

Also, the Sheriff's daughter hated Robin Hood with all her heart since the day he did not give her the golden arrow and shamed her before all the company. His tricks on her father only made her hatred stronger, and so she was thinking about how to help the Sheriff in catching the forester.

"There is no need to go against this man with the army", she said. "We must meet his tricks with other tricks of our own".

"What can we do?" cried the Sheriff. "The fellow is becoming a nightmare to me".

"Let me plan a little", she replied. "Maybe I can cook something to help you".

"Agreed", said the Sheriff, "and if your planning works, I will give you a hundred silver pennies for a new dress, and two hundred to the man who catches the outlaws".

Now on that same day, when the Sheriff's daughter was thinking of a plan, a strolling tinker named Middle, a great boaster, came to the Sheriff's house. And as he was busy working on some pots and pans, he talked loudly about what he could do, if he met that Robin Hood.

"It could be that this simple fellow can do something just because he is so simple", thought the Sheriff's daughter who heard the talk. "It will do no harm to try his service, while I think of some better plan".

And she called him to her, and looked him over — a big fellow, with an honest look, and a face so open that when he smiled his mouth seemed the only country on the map.

"I want to try your skill at catching outlaws", she said, "and will give twice as much money as the Sheriff had promised if you do that. Do you wish to show that you can do more than just boast?"

The tinker smiled broadly.

"Yes, my lady", he said.

"Then here is a warrant. The Sheriff himself made it out this morning. Keep it safely and use it well".

And she let him go.



Middle left the house pleased and proud with himself. Fired with the thoughts of his own bravery, he left the town and went toward Sherwood. The day was hot and dusty, and at noon he stopped at an inn for some rest.

The host of the inn stood by, discussing Robin Hood with another customer.

“People say that the Sheriff has sent here more men and horses, and that he’ll soon move these fellows from the forest”.

“Of whom are you speaking?” asked the tinker.

“Of Robin Hood and his men”, said the host; “but don’t mind — you will never get the money!”

“And why not?” asked the tinker.

“Where our Sheriff has failed, and Guy of Gisborne, and many more with them, it is not a mere tinker who can be successful”.

The tinker put his heavy hand on the host’s fat shoulder.

“Mind your table business, man. I must go on my way, because I have more important business than to stand here talking with you. But don’t be surprised, if, the next time you see me, I will have with me Robin Hood himself!”

And he went out of the door and walked up the hot white road.

He had gone a quarter of a mile when he met a young man with curling brown hair and merry eyes. The young man had only a light sword at his side. The stranger looked at the tinker in a friendly way.

“Good day to you!” said he.

“Good day to you!” said the tinker; “and not so hot a morning”.

“Yes”, laughed the stranger. “Where are you coming from? And do you know any news?”

“What is the news?” said the tinker, “I am a tinker by trade, Middle by name, and come from Banbury”.

“Why as for the news”, laughed the stranger, “I hear that two tinkers got in prison for drinking too much ale”.

“If that is all your news”, replied Middle, “I can beat you easily”.

“What news have you got? You go from town to town, I see you know more news than a simple village fellow”.

“All I can”, said the other, “is that I am on a special mission” — he was proud of these words — “to look for the brave outlaw they call Robin Hood”.

“So?” said the stranger raising his brows. “What is a ‘special mission’?”

“I have a warrant from the Sheriff, with the King’s own seal, to take Robin Hood where I can; and if you can tell me where he is, I will make a man of you”.

“Let me see the warrant”, said the stranger, “and I will do the best I can to bring him to you”.

“That I will not do”, replied the tinker; “I will give it to nobody. And if you do not help me I must then catch him by myself”.

The stranger smiled at the tinker's simplicity, and said:

"The middle of the road on a hot July day is not a good place to talk about things. Now if you're the man for me and I'm the man for you, let's go back to the inn and cool our heads for thinking".

"This is good!" said the tinker. "That I will! Because though I've just come from there, my thirst rises at the sound of your voice".

So he turned back with the stranger and went to the inn.

The host raised his eyebrows when he saw them come in, but served them with no word.

The tinker asked for wine, and Robin for ale. The wine was not the most cooling drink and it did not make the head clear. But the tinker asked for it because it was expensive and it was the stranger man who had invited him to drink. So they thought over their cups, Master Middle drinking one after another and talking about the best plans for finding and catching Robin Hood.

In the end the tinker fell asleep, and the stranger took the tinker's warrant, read it, and put it in his own pocket. Calling the host to him, he smiled and said that the tinker promised to pay the whole bill. But the stranger seemed to be in no great hurry. He decided to stay and see what the tinker should do when he awoke. So he stood behind a window on the outside, and waited for the events.

The tinker came to himself wanted another drink at once.

"So what were we saying, friend, about the best plan for catching this fellow? — Hello! — where's the man?"

He had around and saw no one with him at the table.

"Host! host!" he shouted, "where is that fellow who had to pay my bill?"

"I don't know", answered the host. "Maybe he left the money in your purse".

"No he didn't!" roared Middle, looking there. "Help! Help! He robbed me! Look, host, I am here on the King's business, as I told you. And yet while I was resting in your inn, thinking that you were an honest man, somebody opened my purse and took important papers from it".

"Stop your shouting!" said the host. "What did you lose?"

"Oh, many important things, I tell you. I had with me a warrant of my lord Sheriff of Nottingham with the King's own seal, to catch and arrest an outlaw named Robin Hood. Then some bread. Then, six keys. Then, twelve silver pennies. Then ..."

"Finished?" asked the host. "And I am greatly surprised to hear that you speak in such way of your friend, Robin Hood. For was it not he with whom you were sitting and drinking here?"

"Wh-a-at? That Robin Hood?" asked Middle with a silly face. "Why did you not tell me?"

“Did you not tell me the first time you were here today, that I need not be surprised if you came back with no less person than Robin Hood himself?”

“Good God!” cried the tinker. “I see it all now. He took me to drinking, and then took my warrant, and my pennies, and my bread...”

“Yes, yes”, said the host. “I know all about that. But pay me the bill for both of you”.

“But I have no money. Let me go after that bag-of-bones, and I’ll soon get it out of him”.

“Not so”, replied the other. “If I wait for you to get money from Robin Hood, I will soon have to close up my inn”.

“What is the bill?” asked Middle.

“Ten shillings”.

“Then take my working-bag and my good hammer too; and if find that villain, I will soon come back after them”.

“Give me your coat, too”, said mine host; “the hammer and bag of tools are as nothing to me”.

“Thank you!” cried Master Middle, losing his temper. “It seems that I have escaped one thief only to fall into the hands of another”.

“You are wasting your breath and my time”, said the host. “Give me your things, and go after your man”.

Middle thought this was good advice; so he went out in a black mood.

When he had gone half a mile, he saw Robin Hood walking among the trees in front of him.

“Hey there, you villain!” roared the tinker. “Stay where you are! I need you badly this day!”

Robin turned about with a surprised face.

“Who is this?” he asked gently, “who comes shouting after me?”

“An honest — man — who want to have — that warrant — and the money for drink!”

“Why, it is our honest tinker who was looking for Robin Hood! Did you find him, fellow?”

“Oh, yes, that did I! And I’m now going to pay him my respect!”

And he ran at Robin with his cudgel.

When Robin got his sword, the tinker had already hit him three times. Then with his shining sword Robin made the tinker move back again.

The greenwood rang with the noise of the fight. It was steel against wood, and they made a terrible noise when they came together. Robin thought at first that he could hack the cudgel to pieces, for his blade was one of Toledo — finely tempered steel which the Queen had given him. But the crab-tree-staff had been fired and hardened and seasoned by the tinker’s arts until it was like a bar of iron — no pleasant neighbor for one’s ribs.

Robin found out to his sorrow that he could not cut the tinker's cudgel in pieces because it was as hard as iron. The long stick got to him when he could not touch his opponent. So his sides began to hurt soon.

"Hold your hand, tinker", he said. "I want to say a word to you".

"Before I do it", said the tinker, "I'll hang you on this tree".

But when he spoke, Robin found the moment; took his horn and blew the three well-known notes of the greenwood.

"Hell with you!" shouted the tinker. "Up to your old tricks again? Well, I'll have time to finish my job, if I hurry".

But at that moment Little John and Will Scarlet and twenty Robin's men came from the forest. They took Middle without ceremony, while Robin sat down to breathe. "What is the matter" said Little John, "that you are sitting so tired on the highway side?"

"That tinker has paid his bill well on my skin", answered Robin.

"That tinker, then", said Little John, "must be looking for more work. I would like to if he can do as much for me".

"Or me", said Will Scarlet, who like Little John was always ready to play a cudgel.

"No", laughed Robin. "I think I could do better, if I had time to get my own cudgel. But I didn't want to spoil the Queen's sword on his stick. He had a warrant for my arrest which I took from him".

"Also, twelve silver pennies", said the tinker, "and bread, and six keys, and ..."

"Yes, I know", said the merry Robin, "I stood outside the inn window and heard your losses. Here they are again; and the silver pennies turned by magic into gold. Here also, if you will, is my hand".

"I take it heartily!" cried Middle. "By my coat and tools, which I will take out of that host, I say that I never met a man I liked as much as you! If you and your men here take me, I promise I'll serve you honestly. Do you want a tinker? Who else can repair your swords and fight, too, when needed? And your pots! and your pa-a-ans!"

By this time the whole band was laughing at the tinker's talk.

"What do you say, fellows?" asked Robin. "Will we take this good tinker with us?"

"For sure!" answered Will Scarlet, clapping the new man on the back.

So the outlaws shook Middle's hand, and he went with them, and thought no more of the Sheriff's daughter.

## **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why Middle wanted to catch Robin Hood;

- b) why Robin Hood did what he did with Middle;
  - c) why Robin Hood was glad to see the tinker in his band, and why the tinker was glad to join it.
2. Dramatise:
- a) the dialogue between the Sheriff and his daughter;
  - b) the dialogue between Robin Hood and Middle.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XVI. What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XVI see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XVI

## How the Tanner Tanned Robin Hood

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Conclusion	learn
Wrestling	person who has something
Cloth	joy
Start off	profession
Law	wonderful
Owner	secret agent
Spy	opposite of "heaven"
Find out	person who looks after something
Crack	document that gives the right to watch the show
Keeper	result
Hell	fight (sport)
Exciting	sound when something breaks
Trade	rules
Delight	begin the travel
Ticket	material for making clothes

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe the tanner and say what you think of him as a person.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

The Sheriff's daughter waited for some days in hope that she could hear news of the tinker. But she never heard a word, and she came to the conclusion that her messenger ran to the outlaws but she cared little for that.

Then she remembered about another good man named Arthur-a-Bland, a tanner who lived in Nottingham town and was famous in the tourneys all over. He knew some tricks at archery, but was strongest at wrestling and the quarter-staff. For three years he had sent all comers to the earth in wrestling until the famous

Eric of Lincoln broke his rib in a fight. But at quarter-staff he had never met a man worth him.

"This is just the man for me!" thought the Sheriff's daughter to herself; and she sent for him and asked him to find Robin Hood.

This was what Arthur liked, because he was happiest when he was in the forest looking at the King's deer; and now he understood that he could look at them freely and not just in the light of the moon. He could say to any King's Forester who stopped him: "I am here on the King's business!"

"Thanks a lot!" said he with joy. "I shall see what the free air of heaven tastes like, when it comes through the open wood".

So the tanner left joyfully, much more interested in the deer of the forest than in any two-legged outlaws. This is why the Foresters kept an eye on him because his tannery seemed to have more meat in it than the law allowed. As for the outlaws, Arthur didn't wish them bad; deep in his heart he liked their free life; but he was not afraid to meet any two men who could come against him. Yet, the Sheriff's daughter did not choose a very good messenger.

The tanner went away with a piece of bread and some wine, a good bow and arrows across his shoulder, a quarter-staff in his hand. He lost no time in getting out of the hot sun and into the shade of the forest.

It happened so that this morning Robin Hood sent Little John to a village to buy some green cloth for new suits. So Little John started off, and for sweet company Robin went with him a part of the way until they came to the inn where Robin had played his trick on Middle the tinker. Here they drank a glass of ale for good luck; and Little John went on.

So Robin entered the wood when he saw but Arthur-a-Bland walking after a young deer. "By Saint George!" said Robin to himself. "I believe this fellow has come after the meat of our own and the King's!"

You must know that Robin and his men had hunted in the royal woods so long that they had come to believe themselves owners to every animal there.

"No!" he added, "I must look into this! That could be a Sheriff's spy!"

And he moved from tree to tree, watching our friend Arthur as busily as Arthur was watching the deer.

This went on for some time, until the tanner began to come closer to the deer and to prepare for shooting. But just at this moment Robin stepped on a branch which cracked and made the tanner turn.

Robin saw that, so he decided to go forward.

"Stop!" he cried. "Stop your hand! Who are you, fellow, to go here? You look like a guy that has come to kill the King's deer".

"What is your business how I look like!" replied Arthur-a-Bland. "Who are you to speak so bravely?"

“You will soon find out who I am!” said Robin, deciding to have some sport. “I am a keeper of this forest. The King knows that I am looking after his deer for him; and so we must stop you”.

“Have you got any assistants, friend?” asked the tanner calmly. “It is not one man alone who can stop me”.

“No”, replied Robin. “I have a good bow and a sharp sword at my side. But I need no better assistant than a good cudgel like you have. Give me a minute, and it will be my pleasure to crack your head for your manners!”

“Easy, my man! Big words never killed so much as a mouse. So choose your own playthings. I don’t care for your sword and your bow or for all your arrows”.

“Now by heaven! Will you listen to that?” cried Robin. “Good God, I’ll teach you to be more polite!”

So he put his bow on the ground and cut down a young tree that was growing near by.

“Now come, fellow!” said Arthur-a-Bland. “And if I do not tan your skin, may the Hell take me!”

The two men took their cudgels and began slowly circling round each other.

Now it happened so that Little John had already done his job and was going back home when he heard the sound of angry voices, one of which was his captain’s.

“Good Heaven”, said he, “Robin Hood has got into the hands of King’s men! I must take a look at this fight”.

So he made his way from tree to tree till he came to the open space where Robin and Arthur were circling about each other with angry looks like two dogs.

“Ha! This looks interesting!” said Little John to himself, because he loved a good quarter-staff fight above anything else in the world, and was the best man at it in all the greenwood. And he went quietly under a friendly bush and prepared to watch the fight.

It was indeed both exciting and funny. The blows fell fast but not many found the target. Round and round they fought, round and round, up and down, in and out, their arms working like machines for a full hour, each becoming more surprised every minute that the other was such a good fellow. And Little John from his place was taken by joy.

Finally Robin saw his chance and gave a blow on the Arthur’s head with a force that could kill a bull. Arthur stepped back, seeing this Robin stopped his hand — to his own sorrow because the tanner sent back a blow which lifted Robin off his feet and sent him on the grass.

“Hold your hand!” roared Robin. “Hold, I say, and I will give you the freedom of the greenwood”.



“Why, Good God”, said Arthur, “I may thank my cudgel for that — not you”.

“Well, well, let it be as it may. But please tell me your name and trade. I like to know fellows who can give a blow like that”.

“I am a tanner”, replied Arthur-a-Bland. “I have long worked in Nottingham. And if you come to me I give my word — I’ll tan for you for nothing”.

“My Lord!” said Robin. “I am tanned enough for the present. But there are others in this wood, if you leave your tan-pots and come with me, as sure as my name is Robin Hood, you won’t want gold”.

“By the breath of my body!” said Arthur, “that I will do!” and he took Robin by the hand. “But I remembered what brought me to Sherwood. Some under the Sheriff’s roof sent to catch you”.

“Also it was a certain tinker, now in our service”, said Robin smilingly.

“It is really a new way to get new people!” said the tanner laughing loudly. “But tell me, good Robin Hood, where is Little John? I would like to see him because he is my relative on my mother’s side”.

“Here I am, good Arthur-a-Bland!” said a voice; and Little John came out from under the bush. His eyes were full of tears from much laughter.

“O, man, man!” said Little John. “Never in all my days have I seen such a fight. You knocked him over like a bottle!”

“And you enjoy seeing me hit on the ribs?” asked Robin.

“No, not that, master!” said Little John. “But it is the second time I have had special tickets to a show from the bushes, and I cannot hold my delight. But do not shame yourself because this Arthur-a-Bland is the best man at the quarter-staff in all Nottingham. It normally takes two or three men to hold him”.

“If it is not Eric of Lincoln”, said Arthur, “but I know well how you paid him out at the Fair”.

“No more words!” said Robin getting to his feet; “I know well that I have done good business this day. Your hand again, good Arthur-a-Bland! Come and join us!”

“Gladly!” said Arthur. “I’ll follow you two in the sweet open air to the very ends of earth!”

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why the tanner agreed to catch Robin Hood;
  - b) why the tanner was glad to be among Robin’s men.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between the Sheriff’s daughter and the tanner;

- b) the dialogue between Robin Hood and the tanner;
  - c) the dialogue between Robin Hood, Little John and the tanner.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XVII. What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XVII see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XVII

## How Robin Hood Met Sir Richard of the Lea

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Cobbler	honestly
To deal with	identify
Plenty of	propose
Doe	weapons
Recognize	correct
Meal	take
Offer	by chance
Frankly	many
Armour	having food
Accidentally	she-deer
Borrow	have common affairs
Proper	person who repairs shoes

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) what changed after King Harry's death;
  - b) how Robin Hood saved Marian's life;
  - c) Sir Richard.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

Some months passed by. The winter came to Sherwood Forest, and Robin Hood and his merry men had their fun in front of the big fires before their cave. Friar Tuck had built him a little hermitage not far away, where he lived comfortably with his dogs.

The winter at last came to its end, and the spring came and went. Another summer passed, and still nobody: King or Sheriff, or Bishop could catch the outlaws. The band had been increased from time to time by picked More men such as

Arthur-a-Bland and David of Doncaster — who was the merriest cobbler for miles around — joined the band until there were one hundred and forty men in seven companies; each had its lieutenant under Robin Hood. And they took the purses of the rich, and helped the poor, and ate King's deer until they made the Sheriff of Nottingham mad.

At that time good King Harry died and Richard the Lion Heart became King of England.

Then Robin and his men, after hard debate, decided to bring themselves and ask him to make them Royal Foresters. So Will Scarlet and Will Stutely and Little John went to London with this message, which they first wanted to give to Maid Marian. But they soon returned with bad news. The new King had gone with his army to the Holy Land, and Prince John, his brother, was too bad a person to deal with. He was trying to get in his hands everything around him; among other lands there were the lands of the Earl of Huntingdon, Robin's old enemy and Marian's father, who had died.

Marian herself was in trouble. She not only had lost all her lands and the protection of the Queen, but also Prince John started to pay too much attention to her.

No word of this came to Robin's ears. He knew about the Huntingdon lands. But he was always thinking of Marian, and his heart cried out for her strongly.

One morning in early autumn when the leaves were beginning to turn gold, Robin was walking busy with his thoughts. The peace of the woods was on him, and he paid no attention to a group of does moving among the trees.

But suddenly this quiet picture changed for him. A wild deer ran out from the wood, scaring the does. The animal saw the green-and-gold Robin's clothes, and ran at the man. The attack was so sudden that Robin had no time to take his bow and had to hide behind a tree.

A moment later the deer looked at the bushes to the left of Robin, and he saw a small figure of a page. It was Marian who has come back to the greenwood!

She was coming close and did not see the deer, and Robin was afraid to shoot because Marian and the deer were on one line. Her own bow was across her shoulder, and her small sword made no use against the wild animal. But then she saw the deer ...

"For the love of God, dear lady!" cried Robin; and then the words died in his mouth.

The deer quickly attacked this new target — it ran so fast that Marian had no chance. She jumped to the side, but a strong blow made her fall on the ground. The deer stopped, turned, and prepared for a final blow.

Marian, white of face was trying to rise and get her sword. A moment more and... But there came a voice of Robin.

"Down, Marian!" he cried, and the girl fell on the ground again, just when Robin's arrow close above her head and hit the deer.

The animal stopped in its attack and fell dead, across the body of the maid.

Robin was quickly by her side, picked her up in his strong arms and took to one of the many streams that ran in the forest.

“Where am I? What is it?” said Marian.

“You are in Sherwood, dear lady”.

She opened her eyes and sat up. “It seems you have saved me from danger, sir”, she said.

Then she saw who it was, and a smile came over her face.

“Oh, Robin, it is you!” she said.

“Yes, it’s me. Thank heaven, I was at hand to do you service!” Robin’s voice was deep and full of feeling. “I swear, dear Marian, that I will not let you from my care any more”.

“We can now go our way”, she said.

“Why should we hurry?” he protested, “First tell me of the news in London town, and of yourself”.

So she told him how the Prince had taken her father’s lands.

“That is all, Robin”, she ended simply, “and that is why I put on my page’s costume again and came to you in the greenwood”.

Robin’s face grew black at Marian’s story; and he put his hand on his sword. “By this sword which Queen Eleanor gave me!” he said. “And which must serve women, I give you my word that Prince John and all his armies will not hurt you!”

So that is how Maid Marian came back to the greenwood, where the whole band welcomed her gladly and the sweet lady of Allan-a-Dale made her feel at home.

But this was a day of actions in Sherwood Forest, and we began to tell you another story.

While Robin and Marian were fighting the wild deer, Little John, Much the cook, and Will Scarlet went to watch the road waiting for some knight or fat churchman with a thick purse.

They were watching the road when they saw a knight going by in a very easy and careless manner.

Little John came up to the knight and made him stay; because who can tell how rich a man is by his appearance? The outlaw talked very politely and asked him:

“My master is waiting for you to have dinner with him today”, said he.

“Who is your master?” asked the knight.

“No other than Robin Hood”, replied Little John.

Seeing the other two outlaws coming, the knight shrugged his shoulders, and replied quietly:

“It is clear that your invitation is too polite to think of saying ‘no’”, said he, “and I will go with you gladly, my friends. I wanted to have dinner today at Doncaster; but it doesn’t really matter”.

So in the same quiet manner the knight and his horse went to the greenwood.

Marian did not have time to change her page's clothes, when the knight and the outlaws came. She recognized the knight as Sir Richard of the Lea, whom she had often seen at court. She didn't want him to recognize her and decided to leave, but Robin asked her, with a twinkle, if she would like again to play page, and she agreed to do so.

"Welcome, Sir Knight", said Robin politely. "You have come in good time, because we were just preparing to sit down to dinner".

"God save and thank you, good master Robin", said the knight, "and all your company. It is a great pleasure for me to have a meal with you".

So the knight sat down with Robin and all his men, and they had plenty of food and drink. And Marian stood behind Robin and gave wine to him and the guest.

After eating the knight thanked Robin saying that he had not enjoyed such a good dinner for about three weeks. He also said that if ever Robin and his fellows should come to his lands, he would do his best to give them as good a dinner.

But this was not the sort of payment which Robin waited for. He thanked the knight, but told him that a man like himself could not offer such a dinner to a knight as a gift of charity.

"I have no money, Master Robin", answered the knight frankly. "I have so little of the world's goods, that I should be ashamed to offer you it all".

"Money, even little, always jingles merrily in our pockets", said Robin, smiling. "Please, tell me what you mean a little sum".

"I have ten silver pennies of my own", said the knight. "Here they are, and I am sorry I can't give you ten times as many".

And he gave Little John his purse.

"It is true enough", said the big fellow.

"Drink to me, Sir Knight!" cried the merry outlaw, "for these sorry times. I see that your armour is old and that your clothes are torn. Yet, I think I saw you at court once, and you looked much better then. Tell me now, how did it happen that you turned like this? You may tell the truth — we know how to keep secrets".

"I am a Saxon knight; and I have always lived a quiet life", the guest replied. "It is true you have seen me at court, because I was happy to see your shooting before King Harry — God rest his bones! My name is Sir Richard of the Lea, and I live in a castle, not far from one of the gates of Nottingham. This castle belonged to my father, and his father, and his father's father before him. Two or three years ago four hundred pounds was nothing to me. But now I have only these ten pennies of silver, and my wife and son".

"How have you lost your riches?" asked Robin.

"Through my kindness", said the knight. "I went with King Richard and I have just returned to find my son — a good youth — grown up. He was not even twenty,

but he had a good training. But about this time he accidentally killed a knight. To save the boy, I had to sell my lands and in the end I had to borrow money from the Bishop of Hereford”.

“A wonderful Bishop”, said Robin. “What is the sum?”

“Four hundred pounds”, said Sir Richard, “and the Bishop says he will take my castle if I do not pay at once”.

“Have you got any friends who would say a word for you?”

“Not one. If I could see good King Richard, the story could be different”.

Robin turned to say a word in Marian’s ear. She went aside with Little John and Will Scarlet and talked with them, in a low voice.

“Dear Robin”, said Sir Richard, “I hope I may pay you in a better way the next time I go by”.

Will Scarlet and Little John liked Marian’s idea and they talked to other outlaws, who also agreed. This is why Little John and Will Scarlet went into the cave and soon came back with a bag of gold. And they counted it before the surprised knight; and there were four hundred gold pieces in it.

“Take this from us, Sir Knight, and pay to the Bishop”, then said Robin. “No, no thanks; you are just exchanging creditors. Maybe we shall not be so hard with you as the Bishop; yet, we may be harder. Who can tell?”

There were real tears in Sir Richard’s eyes, as he wanted to thank the foresters. But at this moment, Much, the cook, came from the cave with some clothes. “The knight should have a proper suit — don’t you think so?”

“Give him a good horse, too”, said Marian to Robin’s ear. “This gift will come back four times, because this is a good man. I know him well”.

So the knight also got the horse, and Robin told Arthur-a-Bland to go with the knight to his castle.

The knight could not find the words to thank the outlaws. And the next morning he got on his new horse a different man.

“God save you, friends, and keep you all!” he said with deep feeling.

“We shall wait for you twelve months from today, here in this place”, said Robin, shaking his hand, “and then you will repay us, if you have money”.

“I will return it to you during the year, it is my word, Sir Richard of the Lea’s. And for all time, please think of me as your true friend”.

Saying so the knight and Arthur-a-Bland went down the road till Robin’s eyes lost them.

## AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) what you feel about Sir Richard of the Lea;
  - b) why Robin Hood decided to help the knight.

2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between Robin Hood and Marian;
  - b) the dialogue between Robin Hood and the knight.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XVIII. What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XVIII see how much you have guessed.



# CHAPTER XVIII

## How the Bishop Had Dinner with Robin Hood

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Shepherd	several
Wool	meat of a sheep
Straight	trouble
Mutton	have a debt
Stubborn	jump
Flock	custom
Bother	person who takes care of sheep
Owe	person who doesn't want to hear others
Habit	sadistic
Tremble	fleece
A few	shake
Cruel	group of sheep
Hop	direct
2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) how the outlaws trapped the Bishop;
  - b) the dinner;
  - c) how the Bishop had to pay for the dinner.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

Soon after Sir Richard of the Lea came to Sherwood Forest, a word came to Robin Hood's ears that the Bishop of Hereford would go that way in the morning, and Robin's face brightened as he heard it.

"Now, by our Lady!" said he, "I have dreamed to greet my lord in the greenwood, and this is too good a chance to miss it. Come, my men, get some nice food — the Bishop of Hereford will have dinner with me today, and he will pay well for it".

"Shall we lay the table here, as usual?" asked Much, the cook.

"No, we will play a trick on the churchman. We will do it by the road, and you watch for the Bishop to make sure he should go some other way".

So Robin gave his orders, and the his men went to watch other roads, with Will Stutely and Little John; and Robin Hood himself took six of his men, with Will Scarlet, and Much, and went to watch the main road. This little company was funny enough because they looked like shepherds. Robin put on an old wool cap, and his hair stood up through a hole in the top. And there was so much dirt on his face that nobody could understand who he was. The others were no less dirty and bad-looking, even gentle Will Scarlet.

They killed a deer for dinner and prepared to cook it over a small fire, when they saw dust over the highway, and soon there came the fat Bishop with ten soldiers. As soon as he saw the shepherds he hurried up his horse, and came straight to them.

"Who are you, fellows, that make so free with the King's deer?" he asked.

"We are shepherds", answered Robin Hood scratching his head.

"Heaven be with us! Who let you stop eating mutton?"

"It is one of our feast days, my lord, and we can be merry this day, and make free with a deer — out here there are so many of them".

"God save us, the King will hear of this. Who killed the deer?"

"Give me first your name, my lord, so that I may address you", replied Robin stubbornly.

"It is lord Bishop of Hereford, idiot!" said one of the soldiers. "See that you mind what you're saying".

"If it is a churchman", said Will Scarlet, "he should better mind his own flocks rather than bother himself with ours".

"We will see", cried the Bishop, "if your heads will pay for your manners. Leave the deer and go with me to stand before the Sheriff of Nottingham".

"Pardon, my lord!" said Robin, falling on his knees. "Pardon, I pray you. It is not good of a churchman to take so many lives away".

"Sure, I'll pardon you!" said the Bishop. "I'll pardon you, when I see you hanged! Take them, my men!"

But Robin had already jumped away and stood with his back against a tree. He drew his horn and blew three notes to call the band.

When the Bishop saw this, he understood who the man was, and that it was a trap. Being a real coward, he backed his horse and wanted to get off down the road; but his own men blocked his way. At almost the same moment the bushes around seemed to become alive with outlaws. Little John's men came from one side and Will Stutely's from the other. In less time than it takes to tell it, the Bishop found himself a prisoner and began to ask for mercy from the men he was ready to hang a minute ago.

“I owe you no pardon”, said Robin, “but I will treat you better than you wanted to treat me. Come with me. I have already planned that you will have dinner with me this day”.

So they took the Bishop away till they came to an open space in the forest.

Here they rested, and Robin very politely invited the Bishop to have a seat. Much, the cook, cooked the deer. The wonderful smell of the food came to the Bishop and he felt very hungry. The morning adventure and the forest air awoke his appetite, and he was very glad that Robin had made him come to dinner. Robin gave him the best place at his side, and the Bishop prepared to take a seat.

“No, my lord, I beg your pardon, but we have a habit to have a prayer before meat”, said Robin. “And as our own churchman is not with us today, will you be good enough to say it for us?”

The Bishop got red, but said the prayer in Latin very quickly, and then sat himself to the table. There were red wines and ale, and each man was having a good time eating and drinking.

Laughter went among the people, and the Bishop caught himself smiling. Stutely added and added wine into the Bishop’s glass, and the Bishop got more and more joyful as it was getting dark. Then he remembered about his position.

“I wish, my dear host”, he said to Robin, who had drunk only one cup of ale, “that we should finish our dinner. It is late, and I’m afraid the cost of it may be too big for my poor purse”.

Saying this he remembered about the poor experience of his friend — Sheriff.

“Really, my lord”, said Robin, scratching his head, “I have enjoyed your company so much, that I just don’t know how much to take for it”.

“Give me your purse, my lord”, said Little John, “and I’ll count everything for you”. The Bishop trembled. Only that morning he took money from Sir Richard to take it home.

“I have only a few silver pennies of my own”, he said; “and all the gold in my bags is for the church. You surely will not tax the church, good friends”.

But Little John already went to the bags, and returned with four hundred gold pieces. It was the same money which Sir Richard got from Robin a short time before!

“Ah!” said Robin, as if he just had an idea. “The church always wants to help in charity. And seeing this money makes me remember that I have a friend who owes this much money to a churchman. So we shall take nothing from you personally; but let us use this in helping my good friend”.

“No, no”, began the Bishop, “this does not make any good. After all, was it not the King’s meat, that we were eating? And, what’s more, I am a poor man”.

“Poor words!” answered Robin. “You are the Bishop of Hereford, and the whole countryside knows of your oppression. Who doesn’t know how cruel you are to poor people — you who must use your great power to help them? I will say noth-

ing of myself and how you have hunted me, and nothing of what you have done to my father. But I take this money for these poor people, and make sure — I will make it more useful for people than you. God be with me in this! This is how we finish, if only you don't want to sing or dance for us. Come, here with your harp, Allan!"

"That I will not do", shouted the Bishop.

"All right, then we must help you", said Little John; and he and Arthur-a-Bland took the fat churchman and started to hop up and down. The Bishop who was much shorter had to use all his strength to lift his fat body, and the whole company rolled over the ground laughing at this funny picture. At last the breathless Bishop fell on the ground.

Little John picked him up like a piece of wood, tied him to his horse facing the animal's tail; and started the animal with the Bishop, more dead than alive, toward Nottingham.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) how brave the Bishop was;
  - b) why Robin Hood did not kill the man but had dinner with him.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between the outlaws and the Bishop in the forest;
  - b) the dialogue between Robin Hood and the Bishop at dinner.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XIX. What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XIX see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XIX

## How the Bishop Went Outlaw-hunting

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Hurt	without hair on the head
Swallow	woman with magic abilities
Escape	modest
Cheat	at the same time
Witch	fulfil
Meanwhile	thief
Carry out	deceive
Robber	eat, gulp
Humble	run away
Bald	wound
2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) how Robin escaped the Bishop's soldiers meeting them in the wood;
  - b) how Robin cheated the Bishop.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

The easy success, with which they had got the good Bishop led Robin to be a little careless. He thought that his guest was too great a coward to come back into the greenwood for many long days; and so after staying in Sherwood for one day, the outlaw decided to go on the highway the next morning. But he had gone only half a mile when, turning in the road, he met the Bishop himself.

The Bishop's pride hurt, so he lost no time in gathering a large group of the Sheriff's men and offered to double the reward for Robin Hood's head. This company was now with him, and after the first shock of surprise, the Bishop gave the order and moved on the outlaw.

It was too late for Robin to leave by the way he had come, but quick as a flash he ran to one side of the road, under some bushes, and disappeared so suddenly that the soldiers thought he had been swallowed up by magic.

"After him!" shouted the Bishop. "Some of you look in the woods around him, and the rest of us will keep on the main road!"

To tell the truth, the Bishop did not want to move his fat body away from the road.

About a mile away, on the other side the road where Robin had been trapped, there was a little cottage. It was where the widow lived. Robin remembered the cottage and saw his one chance to escape.

Running in and out among the bushes like a hare, he soon came out of the wood in the back of the cottage, and put his head through a small window.

The widow saw the stranger and rose up with a cry of fear.

"Quiet, good mother! It is I, Robin Hood. Where are your three sons?"

"They should be with you, Robin. You know that well. Do they not owe their lives to you?"

"If so, I come for the payment", said Robin. "The Bishop is hunting me with many of his men".

"I'll cheat the Bishop!" cried the woman quickly. "Here, Robin, change your clothes with me, and we will see if the Bishop knows an old woman when he sees her".

"Good!" said Robin.

So Robin changed clothes with the old woman.

After some time came the Bishop and his men, and, seeing the cottage and the old woman, they stopped. She was walking slowly and with difficulty, leaning heavily on a stick. She wanted to go by the Bishop's company, but the Bishop ordered one of his men to question her. The soldier put his hand on her shoulder.

"Mind your business", said the woman, "or I'll curse you!"

"Come, come, my good woman", said the soldier, who was afraid of her curses. "I'll not hurt you. But my lord Bishop of Hereford wants to know if you have seen the outlaw Robin Hood?"

"And why shouldn't I see him?" she asked. "How can the King or law make good Robin not come to see me and bring me food and clothes? That's more than my lord Bishop will do, I tell you!"

"Peace, woman!" said the Bishop. "We don't want your opinions. But we'll take you to Nottingham and burn you as a witch if you do not tell us when you last saw Robin Hood".

"Mercy, my good lord!" cried the woman, falling on her knees.

"Robin is there in my cottage now, but you'll never take him alive".

"We'll see that", cried the Bishop in joy. "Enter the cottage, my men. Fire it, if necessary. But I'll give a purse of gold pieces to the man who takes the outlaw alive".

The old woman, now free, went slowly on her way. But as she came nearer to the wood, she went faster and faster, and when she came under green trees, she started to run like a young deer.

“Good heavens!” shouted Little John who saw her. “Who is coming here? I never saw a witch or woman running so fast. I think, I’ll send an arrow close over her head to see which it is”.

“O, hold your hand! Hold your hand!” cried the woman. “It is I, Robin Hood. Gather the men and come with me. We have to settle something more with my lord Bishop of Hereford”.

When Little John could catch his breath from laughing, he blew his horn.

“Now, mistress Robin”, said he, grinning. “Lead us! We’ll be close to you”.

Meanwhile, at the widow’s cottage the Bishop was growing more furious every moment. He was not brave enough to fire the house as he promised, and his men could not break the door to get in.

“Break it down! Break it down!” he shouted, “and let me soon see who will get out that villain, Robin Hood!”

At last the door crashed, but no one wanted to come in first — they knew about Robin’s good hand and sharp arrows.

“Here he is!” cried one fellow, looking in. “I see him in the corner by the cupboard. Shall we kill him?”

“No”, said the Bishop, “take him alive if you can. We’ll make the biggest public hanging that the country has ever seen”.

But the Bishop’s joy was short. Down the road came the figure of the old woman who had helped him; and she looked very angry when she saw that the cottage door had been broken.

“Stand by, you villains!” she shouted to the soldiers. “May all the devils catch you for breaking an old woman’s home. Stand by, I say!”

“Hold your tongue!” ordered the Bishop. “These are my men carrying out my orders”.

“Good God!” cried the lady. “It is a good thing when you treat with our homes like prisons. Is this that all your men couldn’t catch one poor forester without this? Leave now, you and your robbers, or I’ll curse every mother’s son of you, eating and drinking and sleeping!”

“Take the witch!” shouted the Bishop, as soon as he could get in a word. “We’ll see about her curses. She will go back to town, next to Robin Hood”.

“Not so fast, my lord!” she said, clapping her hands.

And at the signal an army of greenwood men came from all sides of the cottage, with bows ready to shoot. The Bishop saw that his men were trapped again. They were afraid to make a move but the Bishop decided to make a fight.

“If one of you moves an inch toward me”, he cried, “it will be the death of your master, Robin Hood! My men have him here, and I shall command them to kill him without mercy”.

“Dear sir, I would like to see the Robin you have caught”, said a clear voice; and the outlaw chief came forward smiling. “I am here, my lord, so let us see whom you have watched so well”.

The old woman who, dressed like Robin Hood, was lying quiet in the cottage came to the doorway and bowed to the Bishop.

“God bless you, my lord Bishop”, she said in a sweet voice, “and may I ask what your Grace does at my humble door? Do you come to bless me and give me charity?”

“Yes, that is it”, answered Robin. “We shall see if his money-bags have enough to pay you for that broken door”.

“Now by all the saints —” began the Bishop.

“Take care; they are all watching you”, said Robin, “so don’t say their names with your dirty lips. You better give me that purse of gold you had saved to pay for my head”.

“I’ll see you hanged first!” shouted the Bishop. “Take them, my men, and kill them all!”

“Stop!” said Robin. “See how we have you at our mercy”. And he shot his arrow so close to the Bishop’s head that it carried away his hat leaving him quite bald.

The Bishop turned as white as his shiny head because he thought himself almost dead.

“Help! Murder!” he cried. “Do not shoot again! Here’s your purse of gold!”

And without waiting for any more discussion he ran down the road.

His men had nothing to do but go after him watched by the bows of the foresters. This is how the Bishop of Hereford’s great outlaw-hunt came to its end in the forest.

## **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why the widow helped Robin;
  - b) why the Bishop did not recognise Robin Hood;
  - c) how the outlaws trapped the Bishop.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between Robin Hood and the widow;
  - b) the dialogue between Robin Hood and the Bishop at the widow’s house.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XX. Why did the Sheriff decide to organise a shooting match? What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XX see how much you have guessed.



# CHAPTER XX

## How the Sheriff Held Another Shooting Match

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Scorn	pardon
Proclaim	go back
Retreat	declare
Mercy	contempt
2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) why and how the Sheriff came to the idea of the match;
  - b) what the outlaws decided to do to take part in the match.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

Now the Sheriff was in such a great trouble in heart over the growing power of Robin Hood, that he did a very foolish thing. He went to London town to tell his troubles before the King and get more soldiers to fight the outlaws. King Richard was not back from the Holy Land yet, but Prince John heard him with scorn.

“Pooh!” said he. “What do I have to do with all this? Are you not sheriff for me? Go away, and by yourself think of some trick to trap the outlaws; and never let me see your face again until you have a better tale to tell”.

So the Sheriff went away more sorrowful than ever, and on the way home was looking for some plan of action.

His daughter met him and saw at once that he had been on a poor mission. She was very angry when she learned what he had told the Prince. But the words of the Prince made her think.

“I have it!” she said after some time. “Why shouldn’t we hold another shooting-match? It is Fair soon, you know, and people will wait for another tourney. Now we will proclaim a general amnesty, as King Harry himself did, and say that the field is open to all comers. Robin Hood’s men will come, and then —”

“And then”, said the Sheriff jumping up, “we shall see on which side of the gate they stop over-night!”

So the Sheriff lost no time. The tourney was to be that autumn at the Fair. It was open to all comers. An arrow with a golden head was a prize for the winner. Also, many rich prizes were ready to other good archers.

These news came to Robin Hood, under the greenwood tree, and fired his spirit.

“Come and prepare, my merry men”, said he, “and we’ll go to the Fair and take some part in this sport”.

At these words, the merry cobbler, David of Doncaster stepped forward.

“Master”, said he, “listen to me and do not come out of the greenwood. To tell the truth, I’m well informed yon match is nothing but a trap. I know the Sheriff has a plan about us, Sherwood archers”.

“That is the word of the coward”, replied Robin, “and it does not please me. Let come what will, I’ll try my skill at that contest”.

Then Little John and said, “Come, listen to me how it will be that they will not discover us. We’ll change our green clothes and dress in any other colour — and nobody will find who we are”.

The adventurous fellows liked these words, and they lost no time in putting them into practice. Maid Marian and Mistress Dale, with the help of Friar Tuck, prepared some costumes, and before the Fair day they had one hundred and forty men who looked just like other than villagers going on the holiday.

And they went from the greenwood, with hearts ready to meet the Sheriff’s men and have a merry contest. Along the way they met many other brave fellows from the countryside, going with their maids to the wide-open gates of Nottingham.

So the whole gay company came in through the gates, Robin’s men laughing and talking as noisily as the rest; while the Sheriff’s men stood round and looked to find the man who looked like a forester.

The herald cried out the rules of the contest, and the shooting began. Robin had chosen five of his men to shoot with him, and the rest had to be in the crowd and also watch the gates. These five were Little John, Will Scarlet, Will Stutely, Much, and Allan-a-Dale.

The other archers made a good shooting in the first round, especially Gilbert of the White Hand. In the first round, when so many well known archers hit the targets, the Sheriff didn’t know if to feel glad or sorry. He was glad to see such skill, but sorry that the outlaws were not in it.

“Well”, said the Sheriff, and scratched his head, “I thought he would be here, but he is too afraid to appear”.

The shooting was going on, and Robin’s men were doing so well that the air was filled with shouts.

“Blue jacket!”, “Brown!”, “Yellow!”, “Young man in red!”

The man in red was Robin Hood himself. He got the prize at every shot.

So went the second round of the shooting, and the third, and the last, till even Gilbert of the White Hand was beaten. During all this shooting, Robin didn't say a word with his men, they looked strangers. But such great shooting could not go without understanding who the best archers were.

The Sheriff was sure that in the winner of the golden arrow he found the person of Robin Hood. So he told his men to close round the group. But Robin's men also understood that plan.

The Sheriff asked the crowd to stand in a circle; and after as much delay as possible he presented the arrow. The delay gave enough time for the soldiers to close in. Robin received his prize, bowed and turned away, but the Sheriff caught him about the neck and called on his men to arrest the outlaw.

But at the moment the Sheriff touched Robin, he received such a blow on his head that he fell back. Turning to see who had struck him, he saw Little John.

"Ah, Greenleaf, I have you now!" he shouted running at him. Just then he met a new check.

"This is from another of your devoted servants!" said a voice which he knew to be that of Much the cook; and "Thwack!" his open hand went on the Sheriff's cheek sending him rolling over and over on the ground.

By this time the conflict had become general, but the Sheriff's men could not understand who was an outlaw, and who was not, and at the same time the outlaws who were in the crowd, attacked the soldiers from the back.

The soldiers were in confusion, and at that moment Robin's horn ordered a retreat. The soldiers at the nearest gate tried to stop the outlaws, but the foresters in good order went out through the gate. But the fight was not to go easily this day, because the soldiers who remembered about their bad luck at the widow's house, fought well.

Then Little John, who was fighting by Robin's side, suddenly fell forward. An arrow hit his leg. Robin took the big fellow with almost superhuman strength.

But Little John grew weaker and closed his eyes; at last he fell to the ground, and asked Robin to let him stay. "Master Robin", said he, "have I not served you well, ever since we met on the bridge?"

"A man never had a better servant", answered Robin.

"Then for that service, take your bright sword and cut off my head; don't let me fall alive into the hands of the Sheriff of Nottingham".

"For all the gold in England I would not do that".

"Good God!" cried Arthur-a-Bland, running to help them. And they took Little John, and soon brought him to the forest.

That evening Robin looked if all the men were in Sherwood, and he found that Will Stutely was missing, and also nobody saw Maid Marian. Robin was in horror. He knew that Marian was at the Fair, and he was afraid that it had something to

do with missing Will Stutely. The Sheriff would hang him without mercy, if he got Will his hands.

That evening, when the Sheriff and his wife and daughter were having dinner, the Sheriff boasted that Stutely had fallen into his hands.

“I will hang him”, he said in a loud voice, “and nobody will even move a finger. Now Robin Hood’s men are on the run, and we shall soon see who is master in this country. I am only sorry that we gave them the golden arrow”.

When he said that an arrow flew through a window and fell on his plate, frightening the Sheriff greatly.

It was the golden arrow, and on it there was a little note which read:

“This is from the man who will take no gifts from liars; and who from now on will show no mercy. Look well to yourself. R. H.”.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why the widow helped Robin;
  - b) why the Bishop did not recognise Robin Hood;
  - c) how the outlaws trapped the Bishop.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between Robin Hood and the widow;
  - b) the dialogue between Robin Hood and the Bishop at the widow’s house.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XXI. What happened to Will Stutely? What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XXI see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XXI

## How Will Stutely Was Rescued

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Mantle	address to God
Shrive	cloth around the wound
Holy Virgin	physical damage of a body
Prayer	snare
Expect	black eye and the like
Ivy	quickly take something
Unbound	sort of arms with a long handle
Coward	get better
Treason	person who is afraid of everything
Snatch	betrayal
Recover	wait
Bruise	sort of coat
Trap	with free hands
Wound	sort of plant that can climb walls
Bandage	mother of Jesus Christ
Pike	confess

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) how Robin Hood got the news about Will Stutely;
  - b) what the outlaws did to get to the town;
  - c) who and how helped the outlaws.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

The next day was bright and sunny. The whole face of nature seemed joyful as if despite the tragedy which was soon to take place in the walls of Nottingham town. The gates were not opened on this day, for the Sheriff decided to hang Will Stutely. No man, therefore, was allowed to enter the town all that morning and until after the fatal hour of noon, when Will's soul was to go to the skies.

Early in the day Robin brought his men to a point, as near as he could, in the wood where he could watch the road leading to the East gate. He himself was in a bright scarlet dress, while his men wore their suits of green. They had swords, and each man carried his bow and a new arrows, sharpened by Middle, the tinker. Over their greenwood dress, each man had put a mantle, making him look like a friar.

"I think, friends", then said Robin Hood, "we'll wait here and send someone to get the news. It will work no good to march on the gates if they are closed".

"Look, master", said one of the widow's sons. "There comes a pilgrim along the road from the town. Maybe he can tell us how the things go, and if Stutely is really in danger. Shall I go out and talk to him?"

"Go", answered Robin.

So Stout Will went out while the others waited. When he came close to the pilgrim, who seemed a thin, young-looking man, he took off his hat politely and said:

"I beg your pardon, holy man, but can you tell me news of Nottingham town? Do they intend to put an outlaw to death this day?"

"Yes", answered the pilgrim sadly. "It is true enough, sorry to say. I have passed the place where the gallows is going up. It is out on the road near the Sheriff's castle. One, Will Stutely, must be hung there at noon, and I could not see the sight, so I came away".

The pilgrim spoke in a low voice; and his hood was well over his head, so Stout Will could not see what kind of man he was. Over his shoulder he carried a long stick, with a little cross at one end; and he had sandals on his feet like any monk. Stout Will noticed that the feet were very small and white but did not pay attention to it.

"Who will shrive the poor guy, if you have come away from him?" he asked.

The question seemed to put a new idea into the pilgrim's head. He turned so quickly that he almost dropped his hood.

"Do you think that I should take this holy job?"

"By Saint Peter and the Holy Virgin, I do indeed! Who else will do it? The Bishop and all his clerks may be there, but not one would say a prayer for his soul".

"But I am only a poor pilgrim", the other began.

"But your prayers are as good as any and better than some", replied Will.

"I would go right gladly", then said the pilgrim; "but I'm afraid I cannot get into the city. You may know that the gates are locked for this morning to all who would come in, although they let any who want pass out".

"Come with me", said Stout Will, "and my master will see that you pass through the gates".

So the pilgrim pulled his hood still closer came before Robin Hood, to whom he told all he knew of the situation. He ended with:

“If I may say, I would not try to enter the city from this gate, as it is guarded well since yesterday. But on the far side, they do not expect any attack”.

“My thanks, good pilgrim”, said Robin, “you say good things, and we will move to the gate on the far side”.

So the men went silently but quickly until they were near the western gate. Then Arthur-a-Bland went as a scout, and found ivy which grew out from a window. He went through that window and in a moment more attacked the guard from behind. A minute later the guard lay tied on the floor; and Arthur-a-Bland put on his uniform and got his keys.

It was the work of a few moments more to open the gates, put down the bridge, and let the rest of the band in; and they came inside the town so quietly that no one knew that they had come. At this moment the prison doors opened, and every person in the market-place went there to see Will Stutely.

He came out and looked to the right and to the left, but saw none of the band.

Will’s hands were tied behind his back. He went between soldiers, and the Sheriff and the Bishop on horses were behind the procession. The Sheriff knew that the gates were closed; and he believed that the outlaws would not risk again to get within the walls, even with the open gates. And as he looked around at the hundred archers and soldiers on the way to the gallows, he smiled with satisfaction.

Seeing that no help was near, the prisoner stopped at the scaffold and spoke to the Sheriff.

“My lord Sheriff”, said he, “since I must die, I have one wish; because my noble master has never yet had a man that was hanged on a tree:

Give me a sword all in my hand,  
And let me be unbound,  
And with you and your men will I fight  
Till I lie dead on the ground”.

But the Sheriff didn’t even want to listen to this but cried that he should die a shameful death.

“You coward!” Stutely cried. “If my master ever meets you, you’ll have to pay for this!”

This brave speech did not please the Sheriff. “To the gallows with him!” he roared to the hangman.

But at this moment a boyish-looking pilgrim stepped in and said:

“Your Excellency, let me at least shrive this poor man’s soul before he dies”.

“No!” shouted the Sheriff, “let him die a dog’s death!”

“Then his curse will fall on you”, said the monk. “You, my lord Bishop, cannot stand by and see this”.

The Bishop felt uncertain. Like the Sheriff, he wanted to finish with it right now; but the crowd began to move about uneasily. He said a few words to the Sheriff, and the Sheriff had to agree.

“Do your duty, Sir Priest”, said he, “and be quick about it!” Then he turned to his soldiers. “Watch this pilgrim”, he commanded. “He may be one of those outlaws”.

But the pilgrim paid no attention to his last words. He began to tell his prayers quickly, and to speak in a low voice to Will.

Then another man came through the crowd near the scaffold.

“Please, Will, before you die, say good-bye to all your friends!” cried out the well-known voice of Much, the cook.

At the word the pilgrim stepped back and looked to one side. The Sheriff also knew the speaker.

“Take him!” he shouted. “It is another of the band. We’ll make a double hanging today!”

“Not so fast, good master Sheriff”, said Much. “First catch your man and then hang him. But now I would like to borrow my friend from you for a while”.

And with one move of his hunting knife he cut the ropes on Will’s arms, and Stutely was free.

“Treason!” screamed the Sheriff, getting black with anger. “Catch them!”

Saying so he sent his horse forward, and put down his sword at Much’s head. But the cook went under the Sheriff’s horse and came up on the other side.

“No, Sir Sheriff!” he cried, “I must even borrow your sword for the friend I have borrowed”.

And he snatched the sword from the Sheriff’s hand.

“Here, Stutely!” said he, “the Sheriff has lent you his own sword. Back to back with me, man, and we’ll teach these guys a trick or two!”

The soldiers had recovered from their surprise and attacked the two outlaws. At this moment there came a horn-note which the soldiers had learned to fear. It was the note of the greenwood men.

Arrows began to whistle through the air, and Robin and his men came forward crying:

“Lockesley! Lockesley!”

A terrible scene of hand to hand fighting came after that. The Sheriff’s men, though taken by surprise again, were full of wish to kill the outlaws. They got round Will, Much and the pilgrim, and cuts and bruises were exchanged freely; and lucky was the man who had only these. Many of the crowd, who hated the Sheriff and felt sympathy for Robin’s men, also joined the conflict and so helped the foresters.

At last Robin made his way to the scaffold itself, and at that moment two men with swords attacked the pilgrim and Will Stutely. A mighty blow from Robin sent one sword flying in the air, and a well-directed arrow stopped the other fellow.

“God save you, master!” cried Will Stutely joyfully. “I began to fear that I would never see your face again”.



But it was not a victory yet. The Sheriff's soldiers wanted to keep the attackers within the city walls. But again they made a mistake because the outlaws did not go out by the nearest gate. They made a move in that direction, to trick the soldiers, then turned and ran for the West gate, with Arthur-a-Bland still guarding them.

The Sheriff's men thought they had the outlaws in a trap, but the outlaws soon got through the gate and over the bridge which Arthur-a-Bland put down for them.

The soldiers were very close — so close, that Arthur had no time to close the gate again or raise the bridge. So he threw away the key and joined the outlaws, who now were going up the long hill to the woods.

On this side the town, the road leading to the forest was long and open. The greenwood men were in some trouble, because the Sheriff's archers shot at them from the walls, and the soldiers were very close. But the outlaws from time to time turned to stop the soldiers by their good arrows. Stutely was fighting with the energy of two; and the little pilgrim was also there keeping close to Robin side and saying silent words as if in prayer.

Robin put his horn to his lips, when a flying arrow from the enemy hit his hand. The pilgrim gave a little cry and ran forward. The Sheriff, who was close with his men, also saw that and gave a cry of joy.

"Ha! You will shoot no more some time, master outlaw!" he shouted.

"You lie!" answered Robin, taking out the arrow from his hand. "I have saved one shot for you. Here take it!"

And he put the same arrow on the string of his bow and let it fly at the Sheriff's head. The Sheriff fell forward on his horse in terror, but not so quickly. The sharp arrow made a deep wound in his head.

The fall of the Sheriff took the attention from the outlaws, and Robin's men took this chance to speed on up the hill. The pilgrim took out a small white handkerchief and tried to bandage Robin's wound. At sight of the pilgrim's hand, Robin turned, and pushed back the pilgrim's hood.

"Marian!" he said. "It's you!"

It was really Maid Marian, who had helped to save Will. Now she hung her head as if Robin caught in something wrong.

"I had to come, Robin", she said simply, "and I knew you would not let me come, else".

Will Scarlet's words stopped their talk.

"By the saints, we are trapped!" he said, and pointed to the top of the hill, where they were going.

There from a gray castle came men with pikes and axes, they shouted and came running down on them. At the same moment, the Sheriff's men also started a new attack.

"Alas!" cried poor Marian. "We are lost! There is no way!"

“Courage, dear heart!” said Robin, bringing her close to him. But his own spirit died as he looked about for some way out.

Then — oh, joyful sight! — he recognized among those coming from the castle the once sorrowful knight, Sir Richard of the Lea. He was smiling now and looked excited.

“Robin Hood! Robin Hood!” he cried. There had never been more pleasant sights and sounds than these. The outlaws ran up the hill to meet their new friends; and soon they were in safety behind the walls of the castle. Bang! — went the bridge shutting out the Sheriff and his men, his face covered with blood but red with rage.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why Robin decided to rescue Will Stutely;
  - b) how brave the pilgrim was.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between Robin Hood and the pilgrim;
  - b) the dialogue between Will Stutely and the Sheriff;
  - c) the dialogue between the outlaws and the Sheriff at the gallows.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XXII. What debt did Sir Richard of the Lea have? What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XXII see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XXII

## How Sir Richard of the Lea Paid His Debt

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Debt	ignore
Trespassing	two weeks
Warrant	room where weapons are stored
Mend	prohibit, not to allow
Firm	treason
Armory	thankfulness
Sheaf	profit
Gratitude	order
Defy	enter against the law
Forbid	bundle
Treachery	repair
Fortnight	something you have to pay
Interest	strong

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) why the Sheriff could not get into Sir Richard's castle;
  - b) how the knight and his family received the outlaws;
  - c) why the King decided to see Robin Hood.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

"Open the gate!" shouted the Sheriff upon the walls. "Open, I say, in the king's name!"

"Who are you to come like this on my land?" asked a voice, and Sir Richard himself came out.

"You know me well, knight!" said the Sheriff. "Now give up into my hands the enemy of the King whom you have kept against the laws and right".

"Fair and softly, sir", said the knight calmly. "I agree that I have done certain actions this day. But I have done them on my own land, which you now are tres-

passing upon; and I shall answer only to the King — whom God preserve! — for my actions”.

“You soft-spoken villain!” said the Sheriff, still in anger. “I, also, serve the King; and if these outlaws are not given up to me at once, I shall burn the castle with fire”.

“First show me your warrant”, said Sir Richard.

“My word is enough! Am I not Sheriff of Nottingham?”

“If you are”, replied the knight, “you should know that you have no authority on my lands if only you don’t have the King’s order. And now, go mend your manners”.

And Sir Richard disappeared from the walls. The Sheriff, after waiting a few moments longer in hope of further debate, had to leave, red with anger.

“The King’s order!” said he. “That I shall have without delay, as well as this knight’s lands; because King Richard is back, I hear, from the Holy Land”.

At the same time the knight went back to Robin Hood, and the two men greeted each other gladly. “Well met, brave Robin!” cried he, taking him in his arms. “Well met, indeed! It was the Lord’s will that I went this day to ride and repay my debt to you”.

“And so you have”, answered Robin.

“No, it was nothing — this small service!” said the knight. “I meant the money coming to you”.

“It is all repaid”, said Robin, “my lord of Hereford himself gave them to me”.

“The exact sum?” asked the knight.

“The exact sum”, answered Robin.

Sir Richard smiled, but said no more at the time. Robin rested until dinner. At dinner Sir Richard presented Robin to his wife and son. The lady was pretty and gracious. The young boy was a nice-looking youth who promised to make as good a knight as his father.

The dinner was a joyous event. There were two long tables, and two hundred men sat down at them, and ate and drank and sang songs. A hundred and forty of these men wore green and called Robin Hood their chief. Never, I say, had there been a more pleasant company at table in Lea Castle!

That night the foresters waited inside the friendly walls, and the next day left; though Sir Richard wanted them to stay longer. And he took Robin to his room and again wanted him to take the four hundred golden pounds. But his guest was firm.

“Keep the money, for it is your own”, said Robin, “I have made the Bishop return what he got in unfair way”.

Sir Richard thanked him in a few words, and asked him and all his men to visit the armory before they departed. And there they saw a hundred and forty good

bows, with fine silk strings; and a hundred and forty sheaves of arrows. And Sir Richard's wife came forward and with her own hands gave each man a bow and a sheaf.

"To tell the truth, these are poor presents we have made you, good Robin Hood", said Sir Richard, "but they carry with them a thousand times their weight in gratitude".

The Sheriff made good his promise to inform the King. He went to London town the following week. This time he did not look for Prince John, but asked audience with King Richard the Lion Heart himself. His Majesty had just returned to England and was looking into what was going on in his kingdom. So the Sheriff found ready audience.

The Sheriff spoke much about Robin Hood; how it happened that for many months the outlaws had defied the King, and killed the King's deer; how Robin had gathered about him the best archers in all the countryside; and, finally, how the knight Sir Richard of the Lea had saved the band and refused to bring them to justice.

The King heard him through with attention and said:

"I think I have heard of this Robin Hood, and his men, and also seen something of their bravery. Did these outlaws shoot in a royal Tourney at Finsbury field?"

"They did, Your Majesty, under a royal amnesty".

In this speech the Sheriff made a mistake, because the King asked quickly:

"How did they last come to the Fair at Nottingham — secretly?"

"Yes, Your Majesty".

"Did you forbid them to come?"

"No, Your Majesty. That is — ..."

"Speak out!"

"For the good of Nottingham", began the uncertain Sheriff again, "we did proclaim an amnesty; but it was because these men had become a danger — ..."

"Now by Heaven!" cried the King, while his eyes grew black. "Such treachery would be unknown in the camp of the Saracen; and yet we call ourselves Christian people!"

The Sheriff kept silence because of fear and shame; then the King began speech again:

"Well, my lord Sheriff, we promise to look into this matter. Those outlaws must be taught that there is only one King in England, and that he stands for the law".

So the Sheriff was free, and with very uneasy feelings he went his way home to Nottingham town. A fortnight later the King began to make good his word, by riding with a small party of knights to Lea Castle. Sir Richard knew of them coming and quickly understood who the tall knight was. He hurried to open wide his castle gates and went to meet the King and fell on one knee and kissed his hand. Because

Sir Richard, also, had been with the King to the Holy Land, and they had gone on many adventurous raids together.

The King made him rise, and greeted him as a brother in arms; and arm-in-arm they went into the castle.

After the King had rested and had supper, he turned to the knight and with grave face asked:

“What is this that I hear about your castle as a nest for outlaws?”

Sir Richard told the whole story of all he knew; how the outlaws made friends with him in need — as they had become friends to others — and how he had given them only a knight’s protection in return.

The King liked the story, because his own soul belonged to knights. And he asked other questions about Robin Hood, and heard of what had been done to his father, and of Robin’s own enemies, and of his way of living.

“Good Heaven”, cried King Richard, getting up, “I must see this brave fellow myself! If you could entertain my little company, and be ready to go on the second day looking for me, I would even go alone into the greenwood to look for an adventure with him”.

But of this adventure you will learn in the next tale; because I have already shown you how Sir Richard of the Lea repaid his debt, with interest.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why Sir Richard did not let the Sheriff in;
  - b) why Robin did not take the money from Sir Richard;
  - c) why the King was not happy with the Sheriff’s story.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between the Sheriff and Sir Richard;
  - b) the dialogue between Robin Hood and Sir Richard;
  - c) the dialogue between Sir Richard and the King.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XXIII. What did the King do to come to the forest? What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XXIII see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XXIII

## How King Richard Came to Sherwood Forest

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Growl	churchmen
Torch	vassal
Beg	responsible
Crusade	contradict
In charge	submission
Monk	grumble
Deny	light
Obedience	ask
Subject	minister
Clergy	war of European knights for the Holy Land
2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) what the King looked like;
  - b) the King as a clever man;
  - c) the King as a good man;
  - d) how the outlaws met the King.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

Friar Tuck worked over Little John's wounded knee so skilfully that it was now fine again.

Under this treatment Little John was told to lie quiet until the friar gave him leave to get up. At last he had this leave, and he and the friar went to join the rest of the band, who were right glad to see them, you may be sure. They sat around a big fire, because it was a chilly evening, and they had a nice dinner together.

A cold rain started later, but the friar went on his way back, to his little hermit-age. There he changed his wet clothes, and sat down, with a sigh of satisfaction,

before some hot wine and a pie, when suddenly a loud voice demanding to let him in came from the outside. The friar's dogs started to bark at once, proving the fact of a stranger's presence.

"Now by Saint Peter!" growled the friar. "Who comes here at this hour? Does he take this for an inn? Move on, friend, or my wine will get cold!"

Saying so he put the wine to his lips, when a thundering blow came on the door, and Tuck almost dropped his wine; and the angry voice shouted, "Ho! In there! Open, I say!"

"Go your way in peace!" roared back the friar. "I can do nothing for you. It is just a few miles to Gamewell, if you know the road".

"But I do not know the road, and even if I did I could not move my feet. So open, without more debate!"

"God will punish you for disturbing a holy man!" answered Tuck. Yet, he had to open the door in order to keep it safe from other blows. Then lighting a torch at his fire and whistling for one of his dogs, he came out to see who his visitor was.

The figure of a tall knight in black stood before him. By his side stood his horse.

"Have you got supper, brother?" asked the Black Knight. "I must beg of you a bed and a roof for this night, and something to refresh my body before sleep".

"I have no room that even your horse would like to accept, Sir Knight, and nothing to eat but a crust of bread and some water".

"I can smell something better than that, brother, and must even force my company on you, though I shall compensate it with gold in the name of the church. As for my horse, just cover him and put on the other side of the house".

And without more words the knight bravely went past Tuck and his dog and entered the hermitage. Something about his manners pleased Tuck, in spite of the way he got what he wanted.

"Sit down, Sir Knight", said he, "and I will take care of your horse and find him something to eat. Also, half of my bed and supper is yours this night; but we shall see later who is the better man to give the orders!"

"With all my soul!" said the knight, laughing. "I can pay my keeping in gold or blows as you prefer".

The friar returned and brought a small table near the fire.

"Now, Sir Knight", said he, "put off your sword and other war things as it pleases you, and help me lay this table, for I am getting hungry".

The knight did as he was told, and Tuck could see his face. It was a sunburn man with a beard and blue eyes, lordly but handsome.

Then once again the friar sat down to his pie and wine. He was surprised to hear that his guest said his prayer in the good Latin. Then they attacked the wine and the pie, and the Black Knight showed that he was telling the truth speaking of refreshment. Tuck looked sadly at the food that was disappearing fast, but said no



word because of the stories which his guest was telling at the meal. The wine and warmth of the room cheered them both, and they were soon laughing as the best friends in the world. The Black Knight, it seemed, had traveled everywhere. He had been on crusades, had been in prison, and often in danger. But now he spoke of it lightly, and laughed at it, and made himself so friendly that Friar Tuck was full of fun and joy. So the time passed till late; and the two fell asleep together, one on each side of the table.

In the morning Friar Tuck woke on the wrong side, but the sight of the Black Knight, who had already risen, washed his face and hands, and was now making hot porridge over the fire changed Tuck's mood for the better.

"By my God, I make a bad host!" cried Tuck jumping to his feet. And later as they sat at breakfast, he added, "I do not want your gold, of which you spoke last night; but instead I will do what I can to help you on your way when you wish to leave".

"Then tell me", said the knight, "how I can find Robin Hood the outlaw; because I have a message to him from the King. All day yesterday I looked for him, but found nothing".

Friar Tuck raised up his hands in holy horror. "I am a lover of peace, Sir Knight, and do not keep company with Robin's fellows".

"I think no harm to Master Hood", said the knight, "but I wish very much to see him in my own eyes".

"If that is all, maybe I can help you", said Tuck, who saw in this knight a possible gold-bag for Robin. "To tell the truth, I could not live well in these woods without hearing something of the outlaws; but religion is my joy and occupation".

"I will go with you, brother", said the Black Knight.

So they went their way into the forest, the knight on his horse, and Tuck walking along by his side.

The day was clear and bright, and there was a sweet autumn smell in the air.

The knight seemed to smell the fresh air in delight.

"By Heaven!" said he. "But the good greenwood is the best place to live in, after all! What court or capital can equal this for real men?"

"None on this earth", replied Tuck with a smile, and once more his heart warmed toward the stranger.

They had not gone more than three or four miles along the way, when suddenly a man with curling brown hair stepped into the road from the bushes.

It was Robin Hood. He had seen Friar Tuck, a little way back, and understood his plan. And Tuck, in his turn, seemed not to know him at all.

"Stop!" cried Robin. "I am in charge of the highway this day".

"Who are you to make me stop?" asked the knight quietly. "I am not in the habit of yielding to one man".

“Then here are others to keep the company”, said Robin clapping his hands. And in a moment ten other strong fellows came out of the bushes and stood beside him.

“We are free men of the forest, Sir Knight”, continued Robin, “and live under the greenwood tree. We have no means of support thanks to our lords — other than what fat churchmen and knights like you can give. And as you look to have plenty of gold, we ask you for Saint Charity to give us some of what you have”.

“I am just a poor monk, good sir!” said Friar Tuck with fear in his voice, “and I am on my way to the church of Saint Dunstan”.

“Wait a little with us”, answered Robin, hiding a smile, “and we will speed you on your way”.

The Black Knight spoke again. “But we are messengers of the King”, said he, “His Majesty himself is near here and would like to talk to Robin Hood”.

“God save the King!” said Robin, taking off his cap, “and all that wish him well! I am Robin Hood, but I say cursed be the man who denies our King’s sovereignty!”

“Mind what you’re saying!” said the knight, “or you will curse yourself!”

“No, not so”, replied Robin, “the King has no more devoted subject than I. I have never taken anything of what is his except, maybe, a few deer for my hunger. My war is against the clergy and barons of the land who oppress the poor. But I am glad”, he continued, “that I have met you here; and before we end you will be my friend and taste our greenwood cheer”.

“But what is the price?” asked the knight. “I heard that some of your dinners are very expensive”.

“No”, said Robin waving his hands, “you are from the King. Well, how much money is in your purse?”

“I have no more than forty gold pieces”, replied the knight.

Robin took the forty pounds and counted them. One half he gave to his men and told them to drink the King’s health with it. The other half he gave back to the knight.

“Sir”, said he politely, “have this for your spending. If you come close with kings and lords, you may need it”.

“Thanks a lot!” replied the knight smiling. “And now lead me to your greenwood inn”.

So Robin went on the knight’s one side, and Friar Tuck on the other, and the men went before and behind till they came to the open glade. Then Robin took his horn and blew signal. Soon there came a company of men with its leader, and another, and a third, and a fourth, till there were about a hundred and fifty men in sight. All were dressed in green, and carried bows in their hands and short swords at their belts. And every man bent his knee to Robin Hood before taking his place at the table.

A handsome dark-haired page stood at Robin's right hand and poured wine to him and the knight; and the knight was surprised much with all he saw, and said to himself:

"These Robin Hood's men give him more obedience than my fellows give to me".

At the signal from Robin the dinner began. Robin lifted high his ale.

"Let us now begin", said he, "in honour of our guest who comes with a royal word, here's a health to the King!"

The guest was glad to hear this toast, and it went round about the table for King Richard!

After the dinner was over, Robin turned to his guest and said, "Now you can see what our life is like, so that you may give a true report, for good or bad, to the King".

So at a signal from him, the men rose up and bent their bows for practice, and the knight was greatly surprised how small their targets were. Who missed, was to get a heavy blow from the hand of Friar Tuck.

"Ho, ho!" cried the knight, as his travelling companion rose up and prepared his arm for service, "so you, my friend, are Friar Tuck!"

"I have not said I am not", replied Tuck displeased of betraying himself. "But punishment is a rule of the church, and I am looking for the good in these stray sheep".

The knight said no more word, but his eyes twinkled, and soon the shooting began.

Three fellows shot straight into the target, until Middle the tinker stepped up. He made a good shot for a townsman, the arrow didn't come within the target.

"Come here, fellow", said Little John kindly. "The priest will bless you with his open hand".

Then because Middle made a face, as if he had already received the punishment, Arthur-a-Bland and Will Stutely took him by the arms and put him before the friar. Tuck's big arm flashed through the air — "whoof!" and stopped suddenly against the tinker's ear; and Middle himself went rolling over and over on the grass. He was stopped by a small bush, and he sat up, rubbing his ear and blinking up at the sky as if the stars had fallen and struck him. The men roared with fun, and as for the knight, he laughed till the tears came out of his blue eyes and rolled down his face.

At last came Robin's turn. He shot carefully, but the arrow was ill-feathered and missed the target by full three fingers. Then a great roar went up from the whole company, because it was not often that they saw their leader miss. Robin threw his bow on the ground.

"Damn it!" cried he. "The arrow had poor wings. I felt the poor feather as it left my fingers!"

Then suddenly taking his bow again, he sent three arrows as fast as he could send them, and every one went right into the centre of the target.

"By Saint George!" said the knight to himself. "Never before have I seen such shooting in all Christian world!"

The band greeted heartily these last shots; but Will Scarlet came up to Robin.

"Pretty shooting, master!" said he, "but it will not save you from paying for the bad arrow. So walk up and take your medicine!"

"No, that may not be!" protested Robin. "The good friar belongs to my company and has no right to raise hands against me. But you, Sir Knight, stand as if you were the King. I ask you, serve out my blow".

"Not so!" said Friar Tuck. "My son, you forget I stand for the church, which is greater even than the King".

"Not in merry England", said the knight in a deep voice. Then rising to his feet, he added, "I stand ready to serve you, Master Hood".

"Now!" cried Friar Tuck. "I told you last night that we should see who the better man was! So we will prove it now, and by this settle who is to pay Robin Hood".

"Good!" said Robin, "because I don't want to start a dispute between church and state".

"Good!" also said the knight. "It is an easy way to end talking. Come, friar, strike your hardest. I will give you the first blow".

"You have the advantage of an iron pot on your head and gloves on your hands", said the friar; "but let it be! Down you will go".

Once more the priest's arm flashed through the air, and struck with a "whoof!" But to the surprise of all, the knight did not move. A loud shout came from the men at this, because the friar's hand was known, and few of those present had not felt the force of it before.

"Now 'tis my turn", said the knight coolly, putting aside his glove. And with one blow of his hand the knight sent the friar to the ground.

If there had been shouting before, it was as nothing to the noise which now broke. Every fellow held his sides or rolled on the ground from laughter; every fellow, except one, and that was Robin Hood.

"Out of the frying-pan into the fire!" thought he.

Robin's words, indeed, seemed sorry ones, before the steel muscles of the stranger. But he was saved from the mighty hand. A horn played in the glade, and a party of knights came over.

"To your arms!" cried Robin, taking his sword and bow.

"It is Sir Richard of the Lea!" cried another, as the knights came nearer.

And so it was. Sir Richard came to the camp while the outlaws stood in attention. When came near the place where the Black Knight stood, he got off his horse and knelt before him.

“I believe Your Majesty has not needed us before”, he said.

“It is the King!” cried Will Scarlet, falling on his knees.

“The King!” echoed Robin Hood; and he and all his men bent on their knees, as one man.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why the King decided to disguise himself;
  - b) why the King decided not to use force to find Robin Hood;
  - c) why the outlaws obeyed the King.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between the Black Knight and Friar Tuck;
  - b) the dialogue between Robin Hood and the Black Knight.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XXIV. What will happen next? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XXIV see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XXIV

## How Robin Hood and Maid Marian Got Married

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Sire	organise the ceremony
Bounty	fulfil the orders
Strain	this is how a King is addressed
Obey	jealousy
Willingly	royal gift
Officiate	with pleasure
Envy	stress
2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) the King's decisions;
  - b) how the King behaved in the forest.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

"Your pardon, sire!" exclaimed Robin Hood. "Pardon, from your royal bounty, for these my men stand ready to serve you all your days!"

Richard the Lion Heart looked grimly over the kneeling band.

"Is it as your leader says?" he asked.

"Yes, my lord King!" came more than a hundred voices at once.

"We are not outlaws from our choice", continued Robin, "but came to it through oppression. Give us your royal protection, and we will leave the green-wood and follow the King".

Richard's eyes sparkled as he looked from one to another of this band, and he thought to himself that here, indeed, was a royal bodyguard worth much.

"Swear!" he said in his full rich voice. "Swear that you, Robin Hood, and all your men from this day on will serve the King!"

"We swear!" came once more the answering shout.

“Arise, then”, said King Richard. “I give you my pardon, and will put your service to the test right now. I love such archers as you have shown yourselves to be, and it was a pity to put such men to death. England could not produce archers like you again for many days. But, to tell the truth, I cannot let you to be in the forest and shoot my deer; and to take the law of the land into your own hands. This is why, I now make you to be Royal Archers and my own special bodyguard. There are some civil matters to settle with certain Norman barons, in which I need your help. This is why, the half of you will come back to these woodlands as Royal Foresters. Maybe you will show as much skill in protecting my preserves as you have shown in hunting them. Where, now, is that outlaw known as Little John? Come here!”

“Here I am, sire”, said the giant, taking off his cap.

“Good master Little John”, said the King, looking him over. “Could your weak flesh and bones stand the strain of an office? If so, you are from this day Sheriff of Nottingham; and I trust you will make a better official than the man you replace”.

“I shall do my best, sire”, said Little John, with great surprise and gladness in his heart.

“Master Scarlet, step forward”, said the King, “I have heard of your story”, said he, “and that your father was the friend of my father. Now get the royal pardon and your family lands; because your father must be growing old. And come to London next Court day and we shall see if there will be a vacant knighthood”.

The King also called for Will Stutely and made him Chief of the Royal Archers. Then he asked Friar Tuck to come near.

“I beg my King’s pardon”, said the friar, humbly, “because who am I to raise my hand against the Lord’s anointed?”

“No, the Lord sent the striker to you without delay”, returned Richard smiling, “and it is not for me to continue a quarrel between church and state. So what can I do for you in payment of last night’s hospitality? Can I find you some living where the work is easy and comfortable?”

“Not so, my lord”, replied Tuck. “I wish only peace in this life. My nature is simple and I do not care not for the court life. Give me a good meal and a cup of good ale, enough for the day, and I ask no more”.

Richard sighed, “You ask the greatest thing in the world, brother — satisfaction. It is not mine to give or to deny. But ask your God for it for yourself, then ask it also in favour of your King”. He looked around at the foresters once more. “Which one of you is Allan-a-Dale?” he asked, and Allan came forward. “So”, said the King with a serious face, “you are that minstrel who stole a bride at Plympton. I heard something of this. Now what excuse do you have to make?”

“Only that I loved her, sire, and she loved me”, said Allan, simply, “and the Norman lord wanted to marry her by force, because of her lands”.

"Which have since been taken by the Bishop of Hereford", added Richard. "But my lord Bishop must give them back; and from tomorrow you and Mistress Dale may return to them and live in peace. And if I ever need your harp at Court, be ready to come to me, and also bring the lady. Speaking of ladies", he continued, turning to Robin Hood, who stood silent, thinking if the King had a special punishment reserved for him, "did you not have a sweetheart who was once at Court — Maid Marian? What has become of her that you have forgotten her?"

"No, Your Majesty", said the black-eyed page coming forward, "Robin has not forgotten me!"

"So!" said the King, bending to kiss her small hand. "I have already thought to myself that this Master Hood is better served than the King in his palace! But are you not the only child of the Earl of Huntingdon?"

"I am, sire, though there are some who say that Robin Hood's father was the rightful Earl of Huntingdon. Well, the lands are confiscated, and this is true both for me and for him".

"Then they must be returned at once!" cried the King. "And not to let you two start again the ancient quarrel over them, I give them to you both. Come forward, Robin Hood".

Robin came and knelt before his king. Richard took his sword and touched him on the shoulder.

"Rise, Robin, Earl of Huntingdon!" he said, and a mighty roar came from the band into the air of the forest. "The first command I give you, my lord Earl", continued the King when the silence was back, "is to marry Maid Marian right now".

"May I obey all Your Majesty's commands as willingly!" cried the new Earl of Huntingdon, bringing the old Earl's daughter close to him. "The ceremony will take place tomorrow, if this maid is not against".

"She makes little protest", said the King.

Then the King talked with other foresters, and made himself as one of them for the evening, showing that he liked that freedom of the woods. And the cook, and Arthur-a-Bland, and Middle, and Stutely, and Scarlet, and Little John, and others played at the quarter-staff, giving and getting many blows. Then in the shades of night the whole company — knights and foresters — ate and drank around a fire, and Allen sang sweetly and played his harp, and the others sang in the chorus.

It was a happy night — this last one together under the greenwood tree. Robin could not help feeling some sadness that it was the last. But he knew it was better so, and that the new life with Marian and in the service of his King could bring its own joys.

Then the company lay down to rest. The King, by his own wish, spent the night in the open air.



In the morning the company got up early and went on their way to Nottingham. It was a good sight. First came King Richard the Lion Heart, with his tall figure in the black armor. Then came Sir Richard of the Lea with eighty knights and soldiers. And after them came Robin Hood and Maid Marian. Allan-a-Dale also escorted Mistress Dale on horseback, because she was to be matron-of-honour at the wedding. After them went more than a hundred archers in their bravest green, and with their new bows.

At the gates of Nottingham town they were stopped.

“Who comes here?” asked the guard.

“Open to the King of England!” came the clear answer, and the gates opened without delay.

The news spread through the town like a fire.

“The King is here! The King is here, and Robin Hood with him!”

From every corner people came to see the company; and they greeted the King, who rode bare head smilingly through the market-place.

At the far end of it, he was met by the Sheriff who came up his hurry to do the King honour. He turned green with rage when he saw Sir Richard of the Lea and Robin Hood in the royal company.

“Sir Sheriff”, said the King, “I have come to free the country of outlaws, as I promised. There are none left, because all have now taken service with their King. And to make sure there will be no more misunderstanding, I have decided to put in charge of this place a man who fears no other man in it. Master Little John is from now on the Sheriff of Nottingham”.

The Sheriff bowed, but could not say a word. Then the King turned to the Bishop of Hereford, who had also come up to pay his respect.

“My dear Bishop”, said he, “the smell of your evil actions has reached our nostrils. We shall demand account for the lands and acts of oppression. But of this later. This afternoon you must officiate at the wedding of two of our company, in Nottingham Church. So make yourself ready”.

The Bishop also bowed and left, glad to stay alive for the time.

The company then rode on to the Sheriff’s house, and the whole town made a holiday.

In the afternoon the way from the Sheriff’s house to Nottingham Church was lined with people. The people looked at famous bowmen as though they were wild animals but still greeted them. Robin whom the people had long liked secretly, was now even more popular because he had the King’s favour.

The only hearts that were not glad that day were the hearts of the old Sheriff, and of his proud daughter, who was looking out of her window and was like to eat out her heart from envy and hatred.

At last the party came to the church, where the King helped the bride to get down from her horse; while Will Scarlet, the best man, assisted Mistress Dale. In the church they found the Bishop and by his side Friar Tuck.

The service was in Latin, and the organ played softly. The King gave away the bride, and later got the first kiss for that. Then the happy party let Robin and Marian pass out, husband and wife.

They went out through the cheering streets, and the greenwood men ran ahead and threw gold pennies right and left in their joy, and told the people to drink the health of the young couple and the King. Then the whole party took horses at Will Scarlet's wish, and went down to Gamewell Lodge, where the old George cried for joy at seeing his son and the King and the wedding party. That night they spent there, and had a nice party.

This is how it happened that Robin Hood, the new Earl of Huntingdon, and his love Maid Marian began their married life.

### **AFTER YOU HAVE READ**

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why the King decided to give amnesty to the outlaws;
  - b) what the King missed in his life;
  - c) why the King decided to organise the wedding.
2. Dramatise the dialogue between the outlaws and the King.
3. Look at the title of Chapter XXV. How did Robin die? In small groups write 4–5 sentences and after reading Chapter XXV see how much you have guessed.

# CHAPTER XXV

## How Robin Hood Met his Death

### BEFORE YOU READ

1. Match the words from the text with their synonyms or definitions (you may need to consult a dictionary).

Seek	wish
Grave	what is left
Preserve	grief
Long for	very high temperature of a body
Plague	hopelessness
Grief	attempt
Gloomy	look for
Remainder	strong
Embrace	tomb
Fever	depressing, dark
Woe	hug
Mighty	sorrow
Despair	black death
Effort	place for King's hunting

2. Find in the text the sentences with the words in the left column and say them using the words in the right column.

### WHEN YOU ARE READING

1. Find in the text the words, phrases or sentences, which describe:
  - a) Robin's despair;
  - b) how Robin got fever;
  - c) how Robin's grave was found.
2. Read the story and do the tasks after it.

Now by good rights this story should end with the wedding of Robin Hood and Maid Marian; because many pleasant tales end with a wedding and the saying, "and they lived happy ever after".

But this is a true story, and so we must learn how Robin, after living many years longer, at last came to seek his grave.

Robin Hood and his men, now the Royal Archers, went with King Richard the Lion Heart through England settling disputes among the barons while the King

went to the Holy Land. Then the King returned to the palace at London, and Robin, the new Earl of Huntingdon, brought his wife there, where she became one of the finest ladies of the Court.

The Royal Archers were now divided into two bands, one-half of them were in London, while the other half returned to Sherwood, to guard the King's preserves there.

Several months passed by, and Robin got tired of city life. He longed for the fresh pure air of the greenwood, and the merry company of his men. One day, seeing some guys at archery practice, he could not help saying, "I fear my hand is losing its old time at the bow!"

Finally he became so upset that he asked to travel in foreign lands, and took Maid Marian with him, and together they went through many strange countries. Finally in an Eastern land a great grief came upon Robin. Marian fell ill with plague and died. They had been married for only five years, and Robin felt as if all the light had gone out of his life.

He travelled about the world for a few months longer, trying to forget his grief, then came back to London, and looked for some active service. But unluckily, Richard was gone again on his adventures, and Prince John, who acted as Regent, had never been fond of Robin. He received him with a sarcastic smile.

"Go back into the greenwood", said he, coldly, "and kill some more of the King's deer. Maybe then, on his return the King will make you Prime Minister".

The words fired Robin's blood. He had been in a gloomy mood, since his dear wife's death. He answered Prince John hotly, and the Prince ordered his guards to arrest him and lock him into the Tower.

After he had spent a few weeks there, the faithful Stutely and what was left of the Royal Archers released him, and all together they left the city and made their way to the greenwood. There Robin blew the old call, which all knew and loved so well. The remainder of the band who were Royal Foresters came running, and when they saw their old master fell on their knees and kissed his hands, and cried for joy that he had come again to them. And one and all refused to serve Prince John, and lived quietly with Robin in the greenwood, doing harm to none and only waiting for the time when King Richard should come again.

But King Richard did not come again, and would never more need his Royal Guard. News came of how he had met his death in a foreign land, and how John became King of England. The news came true soon after, when Robin and his men once saw the big, familiar form of Little John coming through the glade.

"Are you here to arrest us?" called out Robin, as he ran forward and embraced his old comrade.

"No, I am not here as the Sheriff of Nottingham", answered Little John. "The new King has fired me, and it is greatly to my liking, because I have long desired to join you here again in the greenwood".

The rest of the band were right glad at this news.

The new King started a war on the outlaws, soon after this, and sent so many soldiers into Sherwood that Robin and his men left the wood for a time. And soon King John found so many troubles of his own, that he stopped troubling the outlaws.

But in one of the last fights Robin was wounded. The cut did not seem serious but it left a fever. Day after day Robin's strength was leaving him, until he was ill all over.

One day as he was riding on horseback, near Kirklees Abbey, he felt so bad that almost fell from his horse. He got down weakly and knocked at the Abbey gate. A woman in black opened the gate.

"Who are you that knock here? We allow no man within these walls", she said.

"Open, for the love of Heaven!" he begged. "I am Robin Hood, ill of a fever".

At the name of Robin Hood the woman stepped back, but then let him in. Helping him get into a front room, she washed his face until he was feeling a little better. Then she said in a low voice:

"Your fever will leave you, if a little blood is let out of you. I will open your veins, and you lie quiet".

So she cut his veins open, and he fell into a nightmare which lasted nearly all that day, so that he awoke weak from loss of blood.

Now there is a dispute as to who the woman was. Some say that she did it in all kindness of heart; others — that she was none other than the Sheriff's daughter.

Anyway, when Robin awoke his eyes swam from weakness.

He called for help, but there was no response. He looked through the window at the green of the forest; but he was too weak to get to the ground.

He then remembered of his horn, and weakly blew out three times.

Little John was in the forest near by. At the sound of the horn he sprang to his feet.

"Woe! woe!" he cried, "I fear my master is almost dead, he blows so weakly!"

So he came running up to the door of the abbey, and knocked loudly. Nobody answered, so he burst in the door with his mighty blows, and soon came running up to the room where Robin lay. "Alas, dear master!" cried Little John in despair; "I fear you have met with treachery! Let me burn Kirklees Abbey with fire".

"No, good friend", answered Robin Hood gently, "I cannot let you do so. Christ taught us to forgive all our enemies. Moreover, you know I have never hurt a woman in all my life".

He closed his eyes and fell back, so that his friend thought he was dying. The great tears fell from the giant's eyes on his master's hand. Robin slowly opened his eyes and took his friend's arm.

“Lift me up, good Little John”, he said, “I want to smell the air from the good greenwood once again. Give me my good bow and fix a good arrow on the string. Out there — among the oaks — where this arrow will fall — dig my grave”.

And with one last effort he shot an arrow out of the open window as in the days of old, and it hit the largest oak and dropped in the shadow of the trees. Then he fell back on the arms of his friend.

“It is the last!” he said. “Tell the brave hearts to lay me there. And let them lay my bent bow at my side, because it has made such sweet music in my ears”.

He rested a moment, and Little John didn’t know if he was alive. But suddenly Robin’s eyes brightened, and he seemed to think himself back once more with the band in the green forest. He wanted to rise.

“Ha! It is a fine deer, Will! And Allan, you never played the harp more sweetly. How the light shines! And Marian! — it is my Marian — we are together at last!”

So died the body of Robin Hood; but his spirit lives on through the centuries in the ballads which of him, and in the hearts of men who love freedom.

They buried him where his last arrow had fallen, and they set a stone to mark the spot. And on the stone they wrote these words:

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

## AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. In pairs or small groups discuss and give reasons:
  - a) why Robin Hood did not feel happy;
  - b) why the woman in black cut Robin’s veins;
  - c) why Robin did not allow to burn the Abbey.
2. Dramatise:
  - a) the dialogue between Robin Hood and King John;
  - b) Robin Hood and the woman in black;
  - c) Robin Hood and Little John.
3. Would you like to join Robin Hood or the Sheriff of Nottingham? Write a letter to the leader of your choice asking him to take you into his company and explain why you will be a good part of it.

# VOCABULARY

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
A few	декілька
A Good Book	Добра Книга (Біблія)
Accidentally	випадково
Admirer	прихильник
Advantage	перевага
Ahead	попереду, уперед
Air	зовнішній вигляд
Alas	на жаль
Amazement	здивування
Argument	суперечка, аргумент
Armory	зброярня
Armour	озброєння
Ashamed	присоромлений
Aside	убік, остеронь
Bald	лисий
Bandage	перев'язка
Banquet	банкет
Bare	оголений
Bargain	вигідна угода
Baritone	баритон
Be quits	поквитатися
Beef	яловичина
Beg	благати
Beloved	коханий, любий
Belt	пояс, ремінь
Best man	свідок (на весіллі)
Bet	заклад, парі
Betray	зраджувати
Bill	рахунок (на сплату)

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Bless	благословляти
Blindly	сліпо
Boldly	відважно
Bone	кістка
Borrow	позичати
Bother	турбувати
Bounty	щедрість
Box	ложа
Bride	наречена
Bruise	синець
Butcher	м'ясник
Cane	палиця
Capture	захоплювати
Carry out	виконувати
Castle	замок
Charity	добродійність, милосердя
Charming	чарівний
Cheat	обдурювати
Cheese-cloth	марля
Chief	голова
Christen	охрестити
Clergy	духівництво
Climb	лізти угору
Cloak	плащ
Cloth	тканина, сукно
Clumsily	незграбно
Cobbler	той, хто лагодить взуття
Combat	бій

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Complain	скаржитися
Conclusion	закінчення, висновок, результат
Confess	зізнаватися, сповідати(ся)
Contain	містити в собі
Content	задоволений
Contest	змагання
Cool	холоднокровний, прохолодний
Courage	мужність
Coward	боягуз
Crack	тріщати, тріск
Cross	хрест, перехрещувати
Cruel	жорстокий
Crusade	Хрестовий похід
Cudgel	дубина
Cunning	хитрість, хитрий
Curious	цікавий, допитливий
Curse	прокльон, лайка
Custom	звичка
Customer	клієнт, покупець
Dare	сміти, наважуватися
Debt	борг
Deed	дія, вчинок
Defend	захищати
Defy	ігнорувати, не піддаватися
Delay	затримка
Delicious	чудовий (на смак)
Delight	захоплення
Demand	вимагати
Deny	заперечувати, відкидати

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Deserve	заслужувати
Despair	відчай
Dignity	гідність
Direction	напрямок
Disguise	маскування, маскуватись
Disturb	непокоїти
Dodge	ухилитися, викручуватися
Doe	самиця оленя
Dozen	дюжина
Dukedom	герцогство
Earn	заробляти
Edge	край
Effort	зусилля
Elbow	лікоть
Embrace	обійняти
Entertainment	розвага
Envy	заздрити, заздрість
Equal	рівний
Error	помилка
Escape	утекти, урятуватися, порятунк
Except for	окрім
Exciting	захоплюючий
Expect	очікувати
Expensive	дорогий
Fair	ярмарок
Fear	страх
Feather	перо
Fencing	фехтування
Fever	лихоманка
Find out	з'ясувати
Firm	міцний
Fist	кулак
Flash	спалах, спалахувати



Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Flesh	плоть, м'ясо
Flock	отара
Forbid	забороняти
Ford	брід
Fortnight	два тижні
Frankly	широ, відверто
Friar	чернець
Frock	ряса
Furious	оскаженілий
Gallows	шибениця
Garland	гірлянда, вінок
Gem	самоцвіт, коштовний камінь
Giant	гігант
Give up	відступитися, здатися
Glade	прогалина, галявина
Gleam	відблиск, спалах
Gloomy	похмурий
Goods	товари
Gossip	старий друг
Gratitude	вдячність
Grave	могила
Grief	горе, сум
Grin	посмішка, оскал
Groom	наречений
Growl	ричати, бурчати
Habit	звичка
Handsome	вродливий
Harp	арфа
Hatred	ненависть
Heaven	небеса
Hedge	живопліт, огорожа
Hell	пекло
Helmet	шолом

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Herbs	трави, рослини
Herd	стадо, череда
Hermit	пустельник, самітник
Holy	святий
Holy Virgin	Свята Діва
Honest	чесний
Honour	честь
Hop	стрибати, скакати
Humble	скромний
Hurt	заподіяти шкоду
I'd rather	я б радше
Impress	справляти враження
In charge	відповідальний
In favour of	на користь
Increase	підвищувати
Inn	готель, заїжджий двір
Instead	замість
Interest	відсотки, прибуток
Invite	запрошувати
Ivy	плющ
Jail	в'язниця
Jewel	коштовність
Join	приєднуватись
Journey	подорож
Just	справедливий
Keeper	доглядач
Kneel	схиляти коліна, стояти навколішки
Knight	лицар
Knock down	збивати з ніг
Lack	нестача, брак
Landlord	домовласник, землевласник

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Law	закон, право
Lean	худий
Lean on	спиратися на
Leap	стрибати
Leech	п'явка
Lend	позичати
Lightning	блискавка
Log	колода
Long for	прагнути
Lose	губити, втрачати
Loss	втрата
Lucky	щасливий, вдалий
Maid	дівчина
Make merry	пирувати
Mane	грива
Mantle	мантія
Match	підходити (до чогось або когось)
Meal	їжа, прийняття їжі
Meanwhile	тим часом
Mend	лагодити
Mercy	милосердя, милість
Merrily	весело, жваво
Mighty	могутній
Mill	млин
Minstrel	поет, співець
Mob	натовп
Mock	глузувати, насміхатися
Monk	монах
Mutton	баранина
Nerve	самовладання
Nightmare	кошмар, страхіття
Nod	кивати головою
Nudge	штовхати ліктем
Obedience	слухняність

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Obeey	слухатись, підкорятись
Occasion	подія, випадок
Offer	пропонувати
Officiate	правити службу, організовувати
Opposite	протилежний
Order	наказ
Outlaw	вигнанець, розбійник
Owe	бути винним, заборгувати
Owner	власник
Pace	хода, крок
Page	паж
Pale	блідий
Pane	віконне скло
Pantry	буфетна
Part	розлучатися
Pat	поплескувати
Path	стежка
Peasant	селянин
Peel	очищати, лущити
Penalty	покарання
Pepper	перець
Perhaps	можливо
Pike	спис, піка
Pike-staff	ратище, ціпок
Pilgrim	пілігрим
Plague	чума
Prayer	молитва
Preserve	заповідник
Pride	гордість
Prisoner	бранець
Proceed	продовжувати
Proclaim	проголошувати

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Proper	вірний
Pudding	пудинг
Quarter-staff	дрючок
Rage	лють
Rags	лахміття
Recall	згадувати
Receive	одержувати
Recognize	упізнавати
Recover	оклигувати
Refuse	відмовляти
Remainder	залишок
Remove	усувати
Rescue	рятувати, порятун- нок
Respect	повага
Retreat	відходити, відступа- ти, відступ
Reverence	шанування
Rhythm	ритм
Rib	ребро
Rob	грабувати
Robber	грабіжник
Root	корінь
Row	ряд
Royal	королівський
Rude	брутальний
Rush	кидатися, мчати
Sack	мішок
Satin	атлас (тканина)
Scarlet	яскраво-червоний
Score	рахунок
Scorn	презирство
Scratch	чухати, дряпати, подряпина
Seal	печатка
Seek	шукати

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Several	декілька
Sheaf	пачка, в'язка
Shepherd	пастух
Shrive	сповідувати
Shrug	знизувати плечима
Sigh	зітхати
Silly	дурний
Sire	Ваша Величність, сір
Skull	череп
Snatch	вихопити, виврати
Sneeze	чхати
So far	досі
Spirit	дух
Split	розколювати
Spring (v)	підскакувати
Spy	шпигун
Stake	заклад (у парі)
Start off	вирушати (в дорогу)
Stout	огрядний
Straight	прямо, прямий
Strain	напруження
Straw	соломинка
Strict	суворий
Stroll	бродити, мандру- вати
Stubborn	упертий
Subject	підданий
Successful	успішний
Suddenly	раптом
Swallow	ковтати
Swear	присягатися, кля- стися
Swiftly	швидко
Sword	меч
Tavern	таверна, закусочна

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Tax-collector	збирач податків
Temper	вдача, характер
Tent	намет
Terror	жах
Therefore	тому
Thief	зłodий
Thirst	спрага
Thrice	тричі
Ticket	квиток
Tie	в'язати
Tinker	лудильник
Title	звання, титул
To deal with	мати справу з
Torch	факел, смолоскип
Torn	драний
Total	ціле, сума
Toward	у напрямі
Trade	професія
Trap	пастка
Treachery	зрада, віроломство
Treason	зрада
Treat	поводитися, ставитися
Tremble	тремтіти
Trespassing	порушення прав володіння
Triumph	тріумф
Trumpet	сурма
Trust	довіряти, довіра
Tun	велика бочка
Tune	мелодія, пісня

Лексичні одиниці	Переклад
Twice as much	удвічі більше
Unbound	вільний
Uneasy	незручний, неспо- кійний
Untidy	неохайний
Velvet	оксамит
Villain	зłodий, негідник
Violence	насильство
Wage	заробітна платня
Wallet	гаманець
Wand	паличка
Warrant	підстава, наказ
Warrior	воїн
Whisper	шепотіти, шепіт
Willingly	охоче
Willow	верба
Witch	відьма
Within reach	у межах досягнення
Wizard	чарівник
Woe	горе, скорбота, не- щастя
Wool	вовна
Worthy	гідний
Wound	поранити, пора- нення
Wreath	вінок
Wrestling	боротьба
Wrist	зап'ястя
Yard	ярд
Yield	здаватися, посту- патися



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## **ДОМАШНЄ ЧИТАННЯ**

**Англійська мова**

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Головний редактор *О. С. Любченко*

Редактор *А. Л. Мирошніченко*

Технічний редактор *О. В. Лебедева*

Коректор *О. М. Журенко*

Підписано до друку 03.05.2007. Формат 60х90 / 16.

Папір офсетний. Гарнітура шкільна. Друк офсетний.

Ум. друк. арк. 9,0. Замовлення № 7-05/14-05.

Надруковано в друкарні «Тріада+»

м. Харків, вул. Киргизька, 19. Тел. (057) 757-98-16, 757-98-15.

ТОВ «Видавнича група «Основа»».

Свідоцтво КВ № 7434 від 12.06.2003.

61001, м. Харків, вул. Плеханівська, 66

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