

# Children's Stories That Never Grow Old.

## ROBIN HOOD



**I**N England, many years ago, there lived a very good man, called Earl of Huntingdon, who had a son named Robert. He was always called Robin, and was a favorite with everybody.

Robin was tall, strong and handsome and full of fun. He was brave and fearless, too, and there was no better archer in all the country.

One day while Robin was hunting in the forest he met a most beautiful lady. She was dressed all in green velvet, and looked like a queen.

Robin had never seen any one in all his life half so lovely. She was the daughter of a noble earl, and her name was Marian.

Marian and Robert met each other very often, and they often hunted together in the forest. They grew to love each other very deeply, and when Robin asked Marian to marry him, and she said "yes," Robin thought he was the happiest man in the world.



**A**LL plans were made for a fine wedding. But just at this time enemies of the earl, Robin's father, came one day with many soldiers, and, after a fierce and terrible fight, slew the earl and took all his lands. The earl's house was burned to the ground and all his money stolen.

Robin alone was spared, for no soldier dared go near him, because he was such a splendid archer. He fought bravely until the last, but his father dead, and his home in flames, he had no heart to fight any longer. So, taking his bow and arrows, he fled to the great forest of Sherwood. His fury was great for the cruel men who robbed him of his father, his home, servants, cattle, lands, money, and even his name. All were gone.

Robin loved the forest, and felt as if it were a tender mother who opened her arms to him. Here his bitterness and anger left him, though still he was sad.

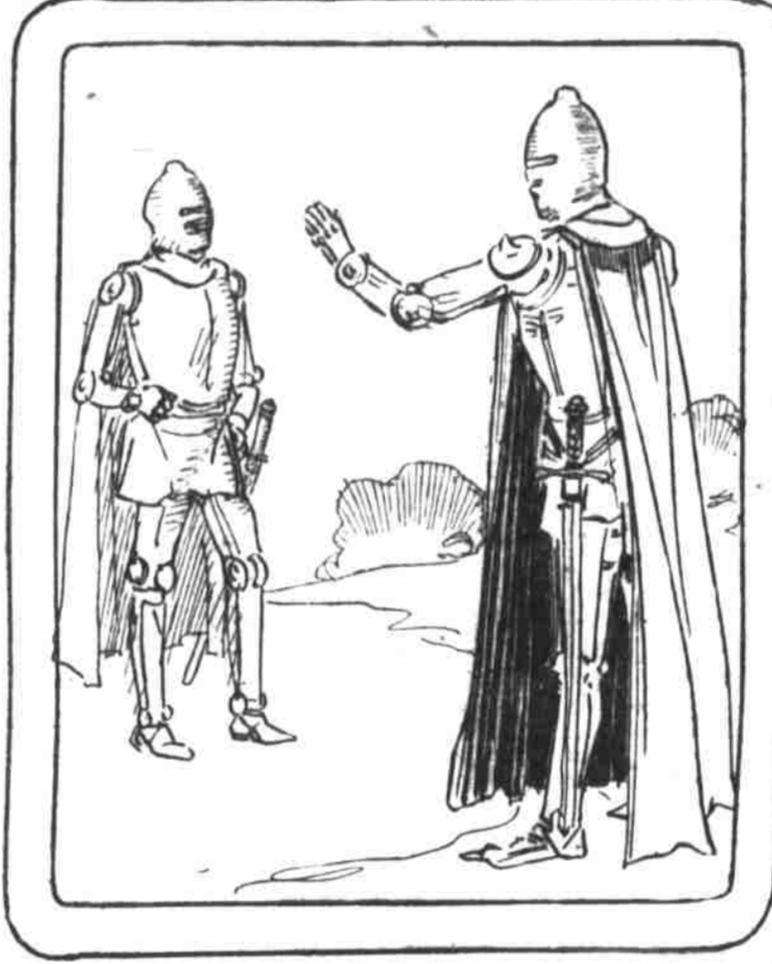


**R**OBIN, in the dim evening light, knelt, bare-headed, on the green grass and prayed. Then, he stood up and swore an oath. "I swear to honor God and my king. To help the weak and fight the strong. To take from the rich and give to the poor. So God will help me with His power."

He no longer was called Robert of Huntingdon, but Robin of Sherwood Forest. He became captain of a band of merry men. Next in command was Little John, called so because he was so tall. Robin loved Little John best of all his friends.

In sadness, Robin said to himself: "I cannot ask a gentle lady to come and live this rough life with me in the greenwood; I must say good-bye to Marian forever."

So he wrote a sad letter, telling her all the terrible misfortunes that had befallen him. "I shall love you always," he wrote, "but a lady could not live this severe life. I shall never see you again, my dear. Good-bye."



**M**ARIAN was very sad when she read Robin's letter, and all the world seemed dark and dreary. At last she could bear it no longer.

"I must go into the greenwood and search for Robin," she said. It was a long way to Sherwood Forest, and Marian knew that it was not safe for a beautiful lady to travel so far alone. So she put on the shining armor of a knight, and thus, dressed as a man, she thought to safely reach the forest.

One day Robin, in the armor of a Norman knight, and his visor over his face, went out into the Sherwood Forest. He had not gone far when he met another knight in shining armor, with a crest of white.

In a deep and terrible voice, he called out: "Stop, sir; no one passes through this forest without my leave! What is your name, and where are you going?"

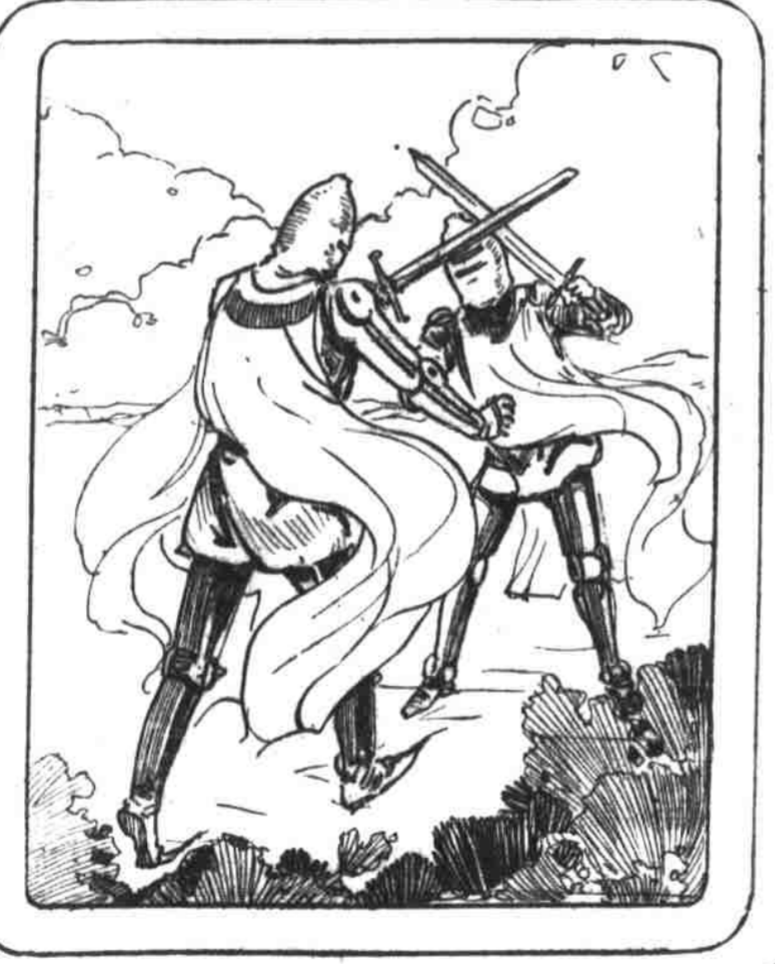
**M**ARIAN, for of course it was she, was very frightened; Robin's voice sounded so gruff that she did not know him, as his face was hidden by the visor.

"Ah," said Robin, "you refuse to answer. Fight, then, false knight!"

He drew his sword, and a fight began. Though Robin was taller and stronger than Marian, she used her sword so cleverly that he found it hard to get the better of her.

"It is wonderful that a knight so young and slender should have such strength and quickness," he said to himself.

They fought for more than an hour. Marian was wounded in the arm, and Robin's cheek was cut. Marian, however, was growing tired, and Robin, forgetting for a moment that he was pretending to be a rough Norman knight, spoke in his own voice. When Marian heard his voice, she dropped her sword with a cry of delight. "Robin! Robin!" was all that she could say.



**"M**ARIAN!" he cried. "Can it be you? I greatly fear I have hurt you."

When Marian took off her helmet, they laughed and cried together, and kissed each other again and again. Marian told Robin how sad she had been, and that she had come to him and would stay and live in the greenwood with him.

At last Robin consented to let her stay, and as they were walking along under the trees they met Little John. Great was his surprise to see his master with a strange young knight, walking arm in arm.

"Ho, Little John!" called Robin, as soon as he saw him: "come, help me. This fair knight has pierced my heart so that I fear I shall never recover."

Little John turned pale. "Master, are you, indeed, wounded?"

"Friend," he said, "I do but jest. This knight is my love, Maid Marian."



**L**ITTLE JOHN knelt on one knee, and, taking Marian's hand, kissed it as if she had been a queen.

"Now, master," said Little John, "we must have a feast. This shall be a great day in the greenwood." He took his bow and arrows and went into the forest to kill a deer in preparation for the feast.

Robin and Marian stopped under the trysting tree, and Robin blew his horn, at which all his men came forth, marching in a row. As they passed Robin, every man bowed. Then each one knelt in honor to Marian, who stood, blushing and smiling, as they passed. Then the merry feast began, and they all drank a health to Maid Marian, queen of the greenwood.

It was a fine sight to see all his men as they answered their master's horn. They looked very handsome and tall in their coats of Lincoln green as they waved their hats and cheered for Maid Marian.



**"H**ERE'S to fair Maid Marian and bold Robin Hood!" they cried. "Long may they live! and happy may they be!" And the forest rang with their cheers.

Then came a fat and jolly friar, carrying his big book. A hush fell upon every one, while Robin and Marian knelt together under the green waving branches and were married. They lived together in the greenwood ever after, and were very happy.

"In solid content together they lived  
With all their yeomen gay,  
They lived by their hands,  
Without any lands,  
And so they did many a day."