

stout arm of George Bemont, a handsome brown fellow, evidently very well content just now.

"Pretty,—isn't it?" said Kate.

"Very,—quite pastoral," sniffed I.

We were sitting round the open door an hour after, listening to a whippoorwill, and watching the slow moon rise over a hilly range just east of Centreville, when that elvish little "week! week!" piped out of the wood that lay behind the house.

"That is hopeful," said Kate; "I think Melindy and George must have tracked the turkeys to their haunt, and scared them homeward."

"George—who?" said Peggy.

"George Bemont; it seems he is—what is your Connecticut phrase?—sparkin' Melindy."

"I'm very glad; he is a clever fellow," said Peter.

"And she is such a very pretty girl,"

continued Peggy,—“so intelligent and graceful; don't you think so, Sam?”

"Aw, yes, well enough for a rustic," said I, languidly. "I never could endure red hair, though!"

Kate stopped on the door-sill; she had risen to go up stairs.

"Gobble! gobble! gobble!" mocked she. I had heard that once before! Peter and Peggy roared;—they knew it all;—I was sold!

"Cure me of Kate Stevens?" Of course it did. I never saw her again without wanting to fight shy, I was so sure of an allusion to turkeys. No, I took the first down train. There are more pretty girls in New York, twice over, than there are in Centreville, I console myself; but, by George! Polder, Kate Stevens was charming!—Look out there! don't meddle with the skipper's coils of rope! can't you sleep on deck without a pillow?



## ROBIN HOOD.

THERE is no one of the royal heroes of England that enjoys a more enviable reputation than the bold outlaw of Barnsdale and Sherwood. His chance for a substantial immortality is at least as good as that of stout Lion-Heart, wild Prince Hal, or merry Charles. His fame began with the yeomanry full five hundred years ago, was constantly increasing for two or three centuries, has extended to all classes of society, and, with some changes of aspect, is as great as ever. Bishops, sheriffs, and game-keepers, the only enemies he ever had, have relinquished their ancient grudges, and Englishmen would be almost as loath to surrender his exploits as any part of the national glory. His free life in the woods, his unerring eye and strong arm, his open hand and love of fair play, his never forgotten courtesy, his respect for women and devotion to

Mary, form a picture eminently healthful and agreeable to the imagination, and commend him to the hearty favor of all genial minds.

But securely established as Robin Hood is in popular esteem, his historical position is by no means well ascertained, and his actual existence has been a subject of shrewd doubt and discussion. "A tale of Robin Hood" is an old proverb for the idlest of stories; yet all the materials at our command for making up an opinion on these questions are precisely of this description. They consist, that is to say, of a few ballads of unknown antiquity. These ballads, or others like them, are clearly the authority upon which the statements of the earlier chroniclers who take notice of Robin Hood are founded. They are also, to all appearance, the original source of the numerous and wide-spread

traditions concerning him; which, unless the contrary can be shown, must be regarded, according to the almost universal rule in such cases, as having been suggested by the very legends to which, in the vulgar belief, they afford an irresistible confirmation.

Various periods, ranging from the time of Richard the First to near the end of the reign of Edward the Second, have been selected by different writers as the age of Robin Hood; but (excepting always the most ancient ballads, which may possibly be placed within these limits) no mention whatever is made of him in literature before the latter half of the reign of Edward the Third. "Rhymes of Robin Hood" are then spoken of by the author of "Piers Ploughman" (assigned to about 1362) as better known to idle fellows than pious songs, and from the manner of the allusion it is a just inference that such rhymes were at that time no novelties. The next notice is in Wyntown's Scottish Chronicle, written about 1420, where the following lines occur—without any connection, and in the form of an entry—under the year 1283:—

"Lytil Jhon and Robyne Hude  
Wayth-men ware commendyd gude:  
In Yngil-wode and Barnysdale  
Thai oysyd all this tyme thare trawale."\*

At last we encounter Robin Hood in what may be called history; first of all in a passage of the "Scotichronicon," often quoted, and highly curious as containing the earliest theory upon this subject. The "Scotichronicon" was written partly by Fordun, canon of Aberdeen, between

\* A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (July, 1847, p. 134) has cited an allusion to Robin Hood, of a date intermediate between the passages from Wyntown and the one about to be cited from Bower. In the year 1439, a petition was presented to Parliament against one Piers Venables of Aston, in Derbyshire, "who having no lifode, ne sufficeante of goodes, gadered and assembled unto him many misdoers, beyng of his clothynge, and, in manere of insurrection, wente into the wodes in that countrie, like as it hadde be *Robyn Hode* and his meyné."—*Rot. Parl.* v. 16.

1377 and 1384, and partly by his pupil Bower, abbot of St. Columba, about 1450. Fordun has the character of a man of judgment and research, and any statement or opinion delivered by him would be entitled to respect. Of Bower not so much can be said. He largely interpolated the work of his master, and sometimes with the absurdest fictions.\* Among his interpolations, and forming, it is important to observe, no part of the original text, is a passage translated as follows. It is inserted immediately after Fordun's account of the defeat of Simon de Montfort, and the punishments inflicted on his adherents.

"At this time, [sc. 1266,] from the number of those who had been deprived of their estates arose the celebrated bandit Robert Hood, (with Little John and their accomplices,) whose achievements the foolish vulgar delight to celebrate in comedies and tragedies, while the ballads upon his adventures sung by the jesters and minstrels are preferred to all others.

"Some things to his honor are also related, as appears from this. Once on a time, when, having incurred the anger of the king and the prince, he could hear mass nowhere but in Barnsdale, while he was devoutly occupied with the service, (for this was his wont, nor would he ever suffer it to be interrupted for the most pressing occasion,) he was surprised by a certain sheriff and officers of the king, who had often troubled him before, in the secret place in the woods where he was engaged in worship as aforesaid. Some of his men, who had taken the alarm, came to him and begged him to fly with all speed. This, out of reverence for the host, which he was then most devoutly adoring, he positively refused to do. But while the rest of his followers were trembling for their lives, Robert, confiding in Him whom he worshipped, fell on his enemies with a few who chanced to

\* "Legendis non raro incredibilibus aliisque plusquam anilibus neniis."—Hearn, *Scotichronicon*, p. xxix.



be with him, and easily got the better of them; and having enriched himself with their plunder and ransom, he was led from that time forth to hold ministers of the church and masses in greater veneration than ever, mindful of the common saying, that

“God hears the man who often hears the mass.”

In another place Bower writes to the same effect: “In this year [1266] the dispossessed barons of England and the royalists were engaged in fierce hostilities. Among the former, Roger Mortimer occupied the Welsh marches, and John Daynil the Isle of Ely. Robert Hood was now living in outlawry among the woodland copses and thickets.”

Mair, a Scottish writer of the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the next historian who takes cognizance of our hero, and the only other that requires any attention, has a passage which may be considered in connection with the foregoing. In his “*Historia Majoris Britanniae*” he remarks, under the reign of Richard the First: “About this time [1189–99], as I conjecture, the notorious robbers, Robert Hood of England and Little John, lurked in the woods, spoiling the goods only of rich men. They slew nobody but those who attacked them, or offered resistance in defence of their property. Robert maintained by his plunder a hundred archers, so skilful in fight that four hundred brave men feared to attack them. He suffered no woman to be maltreated, and never robbed the poor, but assisted them abundantly with the wealth which he took from abbots.”

It appears, then, that contemporaneous history is absolutely silent concerning Robin Hood; that, excepting the casual allusion in “*Piers Ploughman*,” he is first mentioned by a rhyming chronicler who wrote one hundred years after the latest date at which he can possibly be supposed to have lived, and then by two prose chroniclers who wrote about one hundred and twenty-five years and two hundred years respectively after that

date; and it is further manifest that all three of these chroniclers had no other authority for their statements than traditional tales similar to those which have come down to our day. When, therefore, Thierry, relying upon these chronicles and kindred popular legends, unhesitatingly adopts the conjecture of Mair, and describes Robin Hood as the hero of the Saxon serfs, the chief of a troop of Saxon banditti, that continued, even to the reign of Cœur de Lion, a determined resistance against the Norman invaders,\*—and when another able and plausible writer accepts and maintains, with equal confidence, the hypothesis of Bower, and exhibits the renowned outlaw as an adherent of Simon de Montfort, who, after the fatal battle of Evesham, kept up a vigorous guerilla warfare against the officers of the tyrant Henry the Third, and of his successor,† we must regard these representations, which were conjectural three or four centuries ago, as conjectures still, and even as arbitrary conjectures, unless one or the other can be proved from the only authorities we have, the ballads, to have a peculiar intrinsic probability. That neither of them possesses this intrinsic probability may easily be shown; but first it will be advisable to notice another theory, which is more plausibly founded on internal evidence, and claims to be confirmed by documents of unimpeachable validity.

This theory has been propounded by the Rev. John Hunter, in one of his “*Critical and Historical Tracts*.”‡ Mr. Hunter admits that Robin Hood “lives only as a hero of song”; that he is not found in authentic contemporary chroni-

\* In his *Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands*, livr. xi. Thierry was anticipated in his theory by Barry, in a dissertation cited by Mr. Wright in his *Essays: Thèse de Littérature sur les Vicissitudes et les Transformations du Cycle populaire de Robin Hood*. Paris, 1832.

† London and Westminster Review, vol. xxxiii. p. 424.

‡ No 4. *The Ballad Hero, Robin Hood*. June, 1852.

cles; and that, when we find him mentioned in history, “the information was derived from the ballads, and is not independent of them or correlative with them.” While making these admissions, he accords a considerable degree of credibility to the ballads, and particularly to the “*Lytell Geste*,” the last two *fits* of which he regards as giving a tolerably accurate account of real occurrences.

In this part of the story King Edward is represented as coming to Nottingham to take Robin Hood. He traverses Lancashire and a part of Yorkshire, and finds his forests nearly stripped of their deer, but can get no trace of the author of these extensive depredations. At last, by the advice of one of his foresters, assuming with several of his knights the dress of a monk, he proceeds from Nottingham to Sherwood, and there soon encounters the object of his search. He submits to plunder as a matter of course, and then announces himself as a messenger sent to invite Robin Hood to the royal presence. The outlaw receives this message with great respect. There is no man in the world, he says, whom he loves so much as his king. The monk is invited to remain and dine; and after the repast an exhibition of archery is ordered, in which a bad shot is to be punished by a buffet from the hand of the chieftain. Robin, having himself once failed of the mark, requests the monk to administer the penalty. He receives a staggering blow, which rouses his suspicions, recognizes the king on an attentive consideration of his countenance, entreats grace for himself and his followers, and is freely pardoned on condition that he and they shall enter into the king's service. To this he agrees, and for fifteen months resides at court. At the end of this time he has lost all his followers but two, and spent all his money, and feels that he shall pine to death with sorrow in such a life. He returns accordingly to the greenwood, collects his old followers around him, and for twenty-two years maintains his independence in defiance of the power of Edward.

Without asserting the literal verity of all the particulars of this narrative, Mr. Hunter attempts to show that it contains a substratum of fact. Edward the First, he informs us, was never in Lancashire after he became king; and if Edward the Third was ever there at all, it was not in the early years of his reign. But Edward the Second did make one single progress in Lancashire, and this in the year 1323. During this progress the king spent some time at Nottingham, and took particular note of the condition of his forests, and among these of the forest of Sherwood. Supposing now that the incidents detailed in the “*Lytell Geste*” really took place at this time, Robin Hood must have entered into the royal service before the end of the year 1323. It is a singular, and in the opinion of Mr. Hunter a very pregnant coincidence, that in certain Exchequer documents, containing accounts of expenses in the king's household, the name of Robyn Hode (or Robert Hood) is found several times, beginning with the 24th of March, 1324, among the “porters of the chamber” of the king. He received, with Simon Hood and others, the wages of three pence a day. In August of the following year Robin Hood suffers deduction from his pay for non-attendance, his absences grow frequent, and on the 22d of November he is discharged with a present of five shillings, “*poar cas qil ne poait plus travailler*.”\*

It remains still for Mr. Hunter to account for the existence of a band of seven score of outlaws in the reign of Edward the Second, in or about Yorkshire. The stormy and troublous reigns of the Plantagenets make this a matter of no difficulty. Running his finger down the long list of rebellions and commotions, he finds that early in 1322 England was convulsed by the insurrection of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, the king's near relation, supported by many powerful noblemen. The Earl's chief seat was the castle of Pontefract, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He is

said to have been popular, and it would be a fair inference that many of his troops were raised in this part of England. King Edward easily got the better of the rebels, and took exemplary vengeance upon them. Many of the leaders were at once put to death, and the lives of all their partisans were in danger. Is it impossible, then, asks Mr. Hunter, that some who had been in the army of the Earl secreted themselves in the woods, and turned their skill in archery against the king's subjects or the king's deer? "that these were the men who for so long a time haunted Barnsdale and Sherwood, and that Robin Hood was one of them, a chief amongst them, being really of a rank originally somewhat superior to the rest?"

We have, then, three different hypotheses concerning Robin Hood: one placing him in the reign of Richard the First, another in that of Henry the Third, and the last under Edward the Second, and all describing him as a political foe to the established government. To all of these hypotheses there are two very obvious and decisive objections. The first is, that Robin Hood, as already remarked, is not so much as named in contemporary history. Whether as the unsubdued leader of the Saxon peasantry, or insurgent against the tyranny of Henry or Edward, it is inconceivable that we should not hear something of him from the chroniclers. If, as Thierry says, "he had chosen Hereward for his model," it is unexplained and inexplicable why his historical fate has been so different from that of Hereward. The hero of the Camp of Refuge fills an ample place in the annals of his day; his achievements are also handed down in a prose romance, which presents many points of resemblance to the ballads of Robin Hood. It would have been no wonder, if the vulgar legends about Hereward had utterly perished; but it is altogether anomalous\* that a popular champion

\* Mr. Hunter thinks it necessary to prove that it was formerly a usage in England to celebrate real events in popular song. We

who attained so extraordinary a notoriety in song, a man living from one hundred to two hundred and fifty years later than Hereward, should be passed over without one word of notice from any authoritative historian.\* That this would not be so we are most fortunately able to demonstrate by reference to a real case which furnishes a singularly exact parallel to the present,—that of the famous outlaw, Adam Gordon. In the year 1267, says the continuator of Matthew Paris, a soldier by the name of Adam Gordon, who had lost his estates with other adherents of Simon de Montfort, and refused to seek the mercy of the king, established himself with others in like circumstances near a woody and tortuous road between the village of Wilton and the castle of Farnham, from which position he made forays into the country round about, directing his attacks especially against those who were of the king's party. Prince Edward had heard much of the prowess and honorable character of this man, and desired to have some personal knowledge of him. He succeeded in surprising Gordon with a superior force, and engaged him in single combat, forbidding any of his own followers to interfere. They fought a long time, and the prince was so filled with admiration of the courage and spirit of his antagonist, that he promised him life and fortune on condition of his surrendering. To these terms Gordon acceded, his estates were restored, and Edward found him ever after an attached and faithful servant.† The story is romantic, and yet Adam Gordon was not

submit that it has been still more customary to celebrate them in history, when they were of public importance. The case of private and domestic stories is different.

\* Most remarkable of all would this be, should we adopt the views of Mr. Hunter, because we know, from the incidental testimony of *Piers Ploughman*, that only forty years after the date fixed upon for the outlaw's submission "rhymes of Robin Hood" were in the mouth of every tavern lounge; and yet no chronicler can spare him a word.

† Matthew Paris, London, 1640, p. 1002.

made the subject of ballads. *Caruit vate sacro*. The contemporary historians, however, all have a paragraph for him. He is celebrated by Wikes, the Chronicle of Dunstaple, the Waverley Annals, and we know not where else besides.

But these theories are open to an objection stronger even than the silence of history. They are contradicted by the spirit of the ballads. No line of these songs breathes political animosity. There is no suggestion or reminiscence of wrong, from invading Norman, or from the established sovereign. On the contrary, Robin loved no man in the world so well as his king. What the tone of these ballads would have been, had Robin Hood been any sort of partisan, we may judge from the mournful and indignant strains which were poured out on the fall of De Montfort. We should have heard of the fatal field of Hastings, of the perfidy of Henry, of the sanguinary revenge of Edward,—and not of matches at archery and encounters at quarter-staff, the plundering of rich abbots and squabbles with the sheriff. The Robin Hood of our ballads is neither patriot under ban, nor proscribed rebel. An outlaw indeed he is, but an "outlaw for venyson," like Adam Bell, and one who superadds to deer-stealing the irregularity of a genteel highway-robbery.

Thus much of these conjectures in general. To recur to the particular evidence by which Mr. Hunter's theory is supported, this consists principally in the name of Robin Hood being found among the king's servants shortly after Edward the Second returned from his visit to the north of his dominions. But the value of this coincidence depends entirely upon the rarity of the name.\* Now Hood, as Mr. Hunter himself remarks, is a well-

\* Mr. Hunter had previously instituted a similar argument in the case of Adam Bell, and doubtless the reasoning might be extended to Will Scathlock and Little John. With a little more rummaging of old account-books we shall be enabled to "comprehend all vagrom men." It is a pity that the Sheriff of Nottingham could not have availed himself of the services of our "detective."

established hereditary name in the reigns of the Edwards. We find it very frequently in the indexes to the Record Publications, and this although it does not belong to the higher class of people. That Robert was an ordinary Christian name requires no proof; and if it was, the combination of Robert Hood must have been frequent also. We have taken no extraordinary pains to hunt up this combination, for really the matter is altogether too trivial to justify the expense of time; but since to some minds much may depend on the coincidence in question, we will cite several Robin Hoods in the reigns of the Edwards.

28th Ed. I. Robert Hood, a citizen of London, says Mr. Hunter, supplied the king's household with beer.

30th Ed. I. Robert Hood is sued for three acres of pasture land in Throckley, Northumberland. (*Rot. Orig. Abbrev.*)

7th Ed. II. Robert Hood is surety for a burgess returned for Lostwithiel, Cornwall. (*Parliamentary Writs.*)

9th Ed. II. Robert Hood is a citizen of Wakefield, Yorkshire, whom Mr. Hunter (p. 47) "may be justly charged with carrying supposition too far" in striving to identify with Robin the porter.

10th Ed. III. A Robert Hood, of Howden, York, is mentioned in the *Calendar Rot. Patent*.

Adding the Robin Hood of the 17th Ed. II. we have six persons of that name mentioned within a period of less than forty years, and this circumstance does not dispose us to receive with great favor any argument that may be founded upon one individual case of its occurrence. But there is no end to the absurdities which flow from this supposition. We are to believe that the weak and timid prince, that had severely punished his kinsman and his nobles, freely pardoned a yeoman, who, after serving with the rebels, had for twenty months made free with the king's deer and robbed on the highway,—and not only pardoned him, but received him into service *near his person*. We are further to believe that the man who had led so daring and jovial



a life, and had so generously dispensed the pillage of opulent monks, willingly entered into this service, doffed his Lincoln green for the Plantagenet plish, and consented to be enrolled among royal flunkies for three pence a day. And again, admitting all this, we are finally obliged by Mr. Hunter's document to concede that the stalworth archer (who, according to the ballad, maintained himself two-and-twenty years in the wood) was worn out by his duties as "proud porter" in less than two years, and was discharged a superannuated lackey, with five shillings in his pocket, "*poar cas qil ne poait plus travailler*"!

To those who are well acquainted with ancient popular poetry the adventure of King Edward and Robin Hood will seem the least eligible portion of this circle of story for the foundation of an historical theory. The ballad of King Edward and Robin Hood is but one version of an extremely multiform legend, of which the tales of "King Edward and the Shepherd" and "King Edward and the Hermit" are other specimens; and any one who will take the trouble to examine will be convinced that all these stories are one and the same thing, the personages being varied for the sake of novelty, and the name of a recent or of the reigning monarch substituted in successive ages for that of a predecessor.

Rejecting, then, as nugatory, every attempt to assign Robin Hood a definite position in history, what view shall we adopt? Are all these traditions absolute fictions, and is he himself a pure creation of the imagination? Might not the ballads under consideration have a basis in the exploits of a real person, living in the forests, somewhere and at some time? Or, denying individual existence to Robin Hood, and particular truth to the adventures ascribed to him, may we not regard him as the ideal of the outlaw class, a class so numerous in all the countries of Europe in the Middle Ages? We are perfectly contented to form no opinion upon the subject; but if compelled to express one, we should say that

this last supposition (which is no novelty) possessed decidedly more likelihood than any other. Its plausibility will be confirmed by attending to the apparent signification of the name Robin Hood. The natural refuge and stronghold of the outlaw was the woods. Hence he is termed by Latin writers *silvaticus*, by the Normans *forestier*. The Anglo-Saxon robber or highwayman is called a wood-rover, *wealdgenga*, and the Norse word for outlaw is exactly equivalent.\* It has often been suggested that Robin Hood is a corruption, or dialectic form, of Robin of the Wood; and when we remember that *wood* is pronounced *hood* in some parts of England,† (as *whoop* is pronounced *hoop* everywhere,) and that the outlaw bears in so many languages a name descriptive of his habitation, this notion will not seem an idle fancy.

Various circumstances, however, have disposed writers of learning to look farther for a solution of the question before us. Mr. Wright propounds an hypothesis that Robin Hood was "one among the personages of the early mythology of the Teutonic peoples"; and a German scholar,‡ in an exceedingly interest-

\* See Wright's *Essays*, ii. 207. "The name of Witikind, the famous opponent of Charlemagne, who always fled before his sight, concealed himself in the forests, and returned again in his absence, is no more than *witu chint*, in Old High Dutch, and signifies *the son of the wood*, an appellation which he could never have received at his birth, since it denotes an exile or outlaw. Indeed, the name Witikind, though such a person seems to have existed, appears to be the representative of all the defenders of his country against the invaders."

† Thus, in Kent, the Hobby-Horse is called *hooden*, i. e. wooden. It is curious that Orlando, in *As You Like It*, (who represents the outlaw Gamelyn in the *Tale of Gamelyn*, a tale which clearly belongs to the cycle of Robin Hood,) should be the son of Sir Rowland de Bois. Robin de Bois (says a writer in *Notes and Queries*, vi. 597) occurs in one of Sue's novels "as a well-known mythical character, whose name is employed by French mothers to frighten their children."

‡ Kuhn, in Haupt's *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, v. 472. The idea of a northern

ing article which throws much light on the history of English sports, has endeavored to show specifically that he is in name and substance one with the god Woden. The arguments by which these views are supported, though in their present shape very far from convincing, are entitled to a respectful consideration.

The most important of these arguments are those which are based on the peculiar connection between Robin Hood and the month of May. Mr. Wright has justly remarked, that either an express mention of this month, or a vivid description of the season, in the older ballads, shows that the feats of the hero were generally performed during this part of the year. Thus, the adventure of "Robin Hood and the Monk" befell on "a morning of May." "Robin Hood and the Potter" and "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" begin, like "Robin Hood and the Monk," with a description of the season when leaves are long, blossoms are shooting, and the small birds are singing; and this season, though called summer, is at the same time spoken of as May in "Robin Hood and the Monk," which, from the description there given, it needs must be. The liberation of Cloudesly by Adam Bel and Clym of the Clough is also achieved "on a merry morning of May."

Robin Hood is, moreover, intimately associated with the month of May through the games which were celebrated at that time of the year. The history of these games is unfortunately very defective, and hardly extends farther back than the beginning of the sixteenth century. By that time their primitive character

myth will of course excite the alarm of all sensible, patriotic Englishmen, (e. g. Mr. Hunter, at page 3 of his tract,) and the bare suggestion of Woden will be received, in the same quarters, with an explosion of scorn. And yet we find the famous shot of Eigill, one of the mythical personages of the Scandinavians, (and perhaps to be regarded as one of the forms of Woden,) attributed in the ballad of *Adam Bel* to William of Cloudesly, who may be considered as Robin Hood under another name.

seems to have been corrupted, or at least their significance was so far forgotten, that distinct pastimes and ceremonials were capriciously intermixed. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the May sports in vogue were, besides a contest of archery, four *pageants*,—the Kingham, or election of a Lord and Lady of the May, otherwise called Summer King and Queen, the Morris-Dance, the Hobby-Horse, and the "Robin Hood." Though these pageants were diverse in their origin, they had, at the epoch of which we write, begun to be confounded; and the Morris exhibited a tendency to absorb and blend them all, as, from its character, being a procession interspersed with dancing, it easily might do. We shall hardly find the Morris pure and simple in the English May-game; but from a comparison of the two earliest representations which we have of this sport, the Flemish print given by Douce in his "Illustrations of Shakspeare," and Tollett's celebrated painted window, (described in Johnson and Steevens's *Shakspeare*), we may form an idea of what was essential and what adventitious in the English spectacle. The Lady is evidently the central personage in both. She is, we presume, the same as the Queen of May, who is the oldest of all the characters in the May games, and the apparent successor to the Goddess of Spring in the Roman Floralia. In the English Morris she is called simply The Lady, or more frequently Maid Marian, a name which, to our apprehension, means Lady of the May, and nothing more.\* A fool and a taborer seem also to have been indispensable; but the other dancers had neither names nor peculiar offices, and were unlimited in number. The Morris, then, though it lost in allegorical significance, would gain considerably in spirit and variety by combining with the other shows. Was it not natural, therefore, and in fact inevitable, that the old favorites of

\* Unless importance is to be attached to the consideration that May is the Virgin's month.

the populace, Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, and Little John, should in the course of time displace three of the anonymous performers in the show? This they had pretty effectually done at the beginning of the sixteenth century; and the Lady, who had accepted the more precise designation of Maid Marian, was after that generally regarded as the consort of Robin Hood, though she sometimes appeared in the Morris without him. In like manner, the Hobby-Horse was quite early adopted into the Morris, of which it formed no original part, and at last even a Dragon was annexed to the company. Under these circumstances we cannot be surprised to find the principal performers in the May pageants passing the one into the other,—to find the May King, whose occupation was gone when the gallant outlaw had supplanted him in the favor of the Lady, assuming the part of the Hobby-Horse,\* Robin Hood usurping the title of King of the May,† and the Hobby-Horse entering into a contest with the Dragon, as St. George.

We feel obliged to regard this interchange of functions among the characters in the English May-pageants as fortuitous, notwithstanding the coincidence of the May King sometimes appearing on horseback in Germany, and notwithstanding our conviction that Kuhn is right in maintaining that the May King, the Hobby-Horse, and the Dragon-Slayer are symbols of one mythical idea. This idea we are compelled by want of space barely to state, with the certainty of doing injustice to the learning and ingenuity with which the author has supported his views. Kuhn has shown it to be extremely probable, first, that the Christmas games, which both in Germany and England have a close resemblance to those of Spring, are to be considered as a prelude to the May sports, and that they both originally symbolized the victory of Summer over Winter,‡

\* As in Tollett's window.

† In Lord Hailes's *Extracts from the Book of the Universal Kirk*.

‡ More openly exhibited in the mock battle

which, beginning at the winter solstice, is completed in the second month of spring; secondly, that the conquering Summer is represented by the May King, or by the Hobby-Horse (as also by the Dragon-Slayer, whether St. George, Siegfried, Apollo, or the Sanskrit Indras); and thirdly, that the Hobby-Horse in particular represents the god Woden, who, as well as Mars\* among the Romans, is the god at once of Spring and of Victory.

The essential point, all this being admitted, is now to establish the identity of Robin Hood and the Hobby-Horse. This we think we have shown cannot be done by reasoning founded on the early history of the games under consideration. Kuhn relies principally upon two modern accounts of Christmas pageants. In one of these pageants there is introduced a man on horseback, who carries in his hands a bow and arrows. The other furnishes nothing peculiar except a name: the ceremony is called a *hoodening*, and the hobby-horse a *hooden*. In the rider with bow and arrows Kuhn sees Robin Hood and the Hobby-Horse, and in the name *hooden* (which is explained by the authority he quotes to mean wooden) he discovers a provincial form of *wooden*, which connects the outlaw and the divinity.† It will be generally agreed

between Summer and Winter celebrated by the Scandinavians in honor of May, a custom still retained in the Isle of Man, where the month is every year ushered in with a contest between the Queen of Summer and the Queen of Winter. (Brand's *Antiquities*, by Ellis, i. 222, 257.) A similar ceremony in Germany, occurring at Christmas, is noticed by Kuhn, p. 478.

\* Hence the spring begins with March. The connection with Mars suggests a possible etymology for the Morris,—which is usually explained, for want of something better, as a Morisco or Moorish dance. There is some resemblance between the Morris and the Salic dance. The Salic games are said to have been instituted by the Veian king Morrius, a name pointing to Mars, the divinity of the Salii.—Kuhn, 488–493.

† The name Robin also appears to Kuhn worthy of notice, since the horseman in the May pageant is in some parts of Germany called Ruprecht (Rupert, Robert).

that these slender premises are totally inadequate to support the weighty conclusion that is rested upon them.

Why the adventures of Robin Hood should be specially assigned, as they are in the old ballads, to the month of May, remains unexplained. We have no exquisite reason to offer, but we may perhaps find reason good enough in the delicious stanzas with which some of these ballads begin.

"In summer when the shawës be sheen,  
And leavës be large and long,  
It is full merry in fair forest  
To hear the fowlës song;  
To see the deer draw to the dale,  
And leave the hillës hee,  
And shadow them in the leavës green  
Under the green-wood tree."

The poetical character of the season affords all the explanation that is required.

Nor need the occurrence of exhibitions of archery and of the Robin Hood plays and pageants, at this time of the year, occasion any difficulty. Repeated statutes, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, enjoined practice with the bow, and ordered that the leisure time of holidays should be employed for this purpose. Under Henry the Eighth the custom was still kept up, and those who partook in this exercise often gave it a spirit by assuming the style and character of Robin Hood and his associates. In like manner the society of archers in Elizabeth's time took the name of Arthur and his Knights; all which was very natural then, and would be now. None of all the merrymakings in merry England surpassed the May festival. The return of the sun stimulated the populace to the accumulation of all sorts of amusements. In addition to the traditional and appropriate sports of the season, there were, as Stowe tells us, divers warlike shows, with good archers, morris-dancers, and other devices for pastime all day long, and towards evening stage-plays and bonfires in the streets. A Play of Robin Hood was considered "very proper for a May-game"; but if Robin Hood was peculiarly prominent in these entertain-

ments, the obvious reason would appear to be that he was the hero of that loved green-wood to which all the world resorted, when the cold obstruction of winter was broken up, "to do observance for a morn of May."

We do not, therefore, attribute much value to the theory of Mr. Wright, that the May festival was, in its earliest form, "a religious celebration, though, like such festivals in general, it possessed a double character, that of a religious ceremony, and of an opportunity for the performance of warlike games; that, at such festivals, the songs would take the character of the amusements on the occasion, and would most likely celebrate warlike deeds,—perhaps the myths of the patron whom superstition supposed to preside over them; that, as the character of the exercises changed, the attributes of the patron would change also, and he who was once celebrated as working wonders with his good axe or his elf-made sword might afterwards assume the character of a skilful bowman; that the scene of his actions would likewise change, and the person whose weapons were the bane of dragons and giants, who sought them in the wildernesses they infested, might become the enemy only of the sheriff and his officers, under the 'grene-wode life.'" It is unnecessary to point out that the language we have quoted contains, beyond the statement that warlike exercises were anciently combined with religious rites, a very slightly founded surmise, and nothing more.

Another circumstance, which weighs much with Mr. Wright, goes but a very little way with us in demonstrating the mythological character of Robin Hood. This is the frequency with which his name is attached to mounds, wells, and stones, such as in the popular creed are connected with fairies, dwarfs, or giants. There is scarcely a county in England which does not possess some monument of this description. "Cairns on Blackdown in Somersetshire, and barrows near to Whitby in Yorkshire and Ludlow in Shropshire, are termed Robin Hood's



pricks or butts; lofty natural eminences in Gloucestershire and Derbyshire are Robin Hood's hills; a huge rock near Matlock is Robin Hood's Tor; ancient boundary-stones, as in Lincolnshire, are Robin Hood's crosses; a presumed loggan, or rocking-stone, in Yorkshire, is Robin Hood's penny-stone; a fountain near Nottingham, another between Doncaster and Wakefield, and one in Lancashire, are Robin Hood's wells; a cave in Nottinghamshire is his stable; a rude natural rock in Hope Dale is his chair; a chasm at Chatsworth is his leap; Blackstone Edge, in Lancashire, is his bed.\* In fact, his name bids fair to overrun every remarkable object of the sort which has not been already appropriated to King Arthur or the Devil; with the latter of whom, at least, it is presumed, that, however ancient, he will not dispute precedence.

"The legends of the peasantry," quoth Mr. Wright, "are the shadows of a very remote antiquity." This proposition, thus broadly stated, we deny. Nothing is more deceptive than popular legends; and the "legends" we speak of, if they are to bear that name, have no claim to antiquity at all. They do not go beyond the ballads. They are palpably of subsequent and comparatively recent origin. It was absolutely impossible that they should arise while Robin Hood was a living reality to the people. The archer of Sherwood who could barely stand King Edward's buffet, and was felled by the Potter, was no man to be playing with rocking-stones. This trick of naming must have begun in the decline of his fame; for there was a time when his popularity drooped, and his existence was just not doubted,—not elaborately maintained by learned historians, and antiquarians deeply read in the Public

Records. And what do these names prove? The vulgar passion for bestowing them is notorious and universal. We Americans are too young to be well provided with heroes that might serve this purpose. We have no imaginative peasantry to invent legends, no ignorant peasantry to believe them. But we have the good fortune to possess the Devil in common with the rest of the world; and we take it upon us to say, that there is not a mountain district in the land, which has been opened to summer travellers, where a "Devil's Bridge," a "Devil's Punch-bowl," or some object with the like designation, will not be pointed out.\*

We have taken no notice of the later fortunes of Robin Hood in his true and original character of a hero of romance. Towards the end of the sixteenth century Anthony Munday attempted to revive the decaying popularity of this king of good fellows, who had won all his honors as a simple yeoman, by representing him in the play of "The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington" as a nobleman in disguise, outlawed by the machinations of his steward. This pleasing and successful drama is Robin's sole patent to that title of Earl of Huntington, in confirmation of which Dr. Stukeley fabricated a pedigree that transcends even the absurdities of heraldry, and some unknown forger an epitaph beneath the skill of a Chatterton. Those who desire a full acquaintance with the fabulous history of Robin Hood will seek it in the well-known volumes of Ritson, or in those of his recent editor, Gutch, who does not make up by superior discrimination for his inferiority in other respects to that industrious antiquary.

\* See some sensible remarks in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1793, by D. H., that is, says the courteous Ritson, by Gough, "the scurrilous and malignant editor of that degraded publication."

\* *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 86, p. 123.

## THE GHOST REDIVIVUS.

ONE of those violent, though short-lived storms, which occasionally rage in southern climates, had blown all night in the neighborhood of the little town of San Cipriano, situated in a wild valley of the Apennines opening towards the sea. Under the olive-woods that cover those steep hills lay the olive-berries strewed thick and wide; here and there a branch heavy-laden with half-ripe fruit, torn by the blast from its parent tree, stretched its prostrate length upon the ground. An abundant premature harvest had fallen, but at present there were no means of collecting it; for the deluging rains of the night had soaked the ground, the grass, the dead leaves, the fruit itself, and the rain was still falling heavily. If gathered in that state, the olives are sure to rot.

"*Pazienza!*" in such disasters exclaim the inhabitants of the *Riviera*, with a melancholy shrug of the shoulders. And they needs must have patience until the weather clears and the ground dries, before they can secure such of the olives as may happily be uninjured.

On the day we speak of, the 21st of December, 1852, the proprietors of olive-grounds in San Cipriano wore very blank faces; they talked sadly of the falling prices of the fruit and oil, and the olive-pickers crossed their hands and looked vacantly at the gray sky.

In the spacious kitchen of Doctor Morani were assembled a body of young rosy lasses in laced bodices, and short, bright-colored petticoats, come down from the neighboring mountains for the olive-gathering, much as Irish laborers cross over to England for the hay-making season. These girls arrive in troops from their native villages among the hills, carrying on their heads a sackful of the flour of dried beans and a lesser quantity of dried chestnuts. They offer their services to the inhabitants of the valley at the rate of four pence English a day; about three

pence less than the sum demanded by the women of the place. But the pretty mountaineers ask, in addition to their modest wages, a shelter for the night, a little straw or hay for their beds, and a small daily portion of oil and salt to season the bean-flour and chestnuts, which constitute their sole food. They are then perfectly contented.

The old Doctor had hired several of these damsels to assist in getting in his olive crop, with the customary additional compact to spin some of the unwrought flax of the household when bad weather prevented their out-of-door work, as well as regularly in the evening between early dusk and bed-time. Happy those to whose lot it fell to be employed by Dr. Morani! Besides not beating down their wages to the utmost, it was the Doctor's wont, out of the exuberance of a warm-hearted, joyous nature, unchilled even by his sixty winters, to give to his serving men and maidens not only kind words and encouraging looks, but also what made him perhaps still more popular, humorous jokes and droll stories.

The Doctor, indeed, concealed something of the philosopher under the garb of a wag. His quaint sayings and doings were frequently quoted with great relish among this rural population. He had a way of his own of shooting facts and truths into the uncultivated understandings of these laborers,—facts and truths that never otherwise could have penetrated so far; he feathered his philosophical or moral arrows with a jest, and they stuck fast.

Signora Martina, his wife, was a good soul, and, though a strict housewife, was yet not so thrifty but that she could allow a little of her abundance to overflow on those in her service; and these crumbs from her table added many delicious bits to the bean-flour repasts. So, as we have said, happy the mountain girls taken into