

**ROBIN HOOD: A COLLECTION OF ALL
THE ANCIENT POEMS, SONGS, AND
BALLADS, NOW EXTANT RELATIVE TO
THAT CELEBRATED ENGLISH OUTLAW.
TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED HISTORICAL
ANECDOTES OF HIS LIFE, VOL. II**

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Robin Hood: a collection of all the ancient poems, songs, and ballads, now extant relative to that celebrated English outlaw. To which are prefixed historical anecdotes of his life, Vol. II by Joseph Ritson

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JOSEPH RITSON

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BY JOSEPH RITSON, Esq.

VOL. II.

Dum juga montis aper, fluvios dum piscis amabit,
Dumque thymo pascentur apes, dum rore cicadæ;
Semper honos, notæque tuum, laudesque manebunt.

VING.

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ROBIN HOOD.

PART II.

I.

ROBIN HOODS BIRTH, BREEDING, VALOUR, AND MARRIAGE.

From a black letter copy in the large and valuable collection of old ballads late belonging to Thomas Pearson, esq. and now in the possession of the duke of Roxburgh. This is the collection mentioned in the Harleian catalogue, and would seem to be the greater part of that originally made by old Bagford (see Hearnes appendix to Hemingi Chartularium, p. 662), another volume or two having come, with the rest of his typographical collections, to the British Museum. The 3 vols. which went to Osborne were probably bought of him by Mr. West, at whose sale they

were purchased by major Pearson, by whom the collection was new-arranged, ornamented, and improved.

In reading this song, we are admonished by the editor of the collection of old ballads, printed in 1723, (who thinks it "the most beautiful and one of the oldest extant, written on that subject,") to observe one thing, "and that is, between some of the stanzas we must suppose a considerable time to pass. *Clorinda*" he says, "might be [thought] a very forward girl, if, between Robin Hood's question and her answer, we did not suppose two or three hours to have been spent in courtship: and, between Robin Hood's being entertained at Gamwell-hall, and his having ninety-three bowmen in Sherwood, we must allow some years."

With respect to its antiquity, Dr. Percy, in the new edition of his "Reliques of ancient English poetry," (vol. I. p. xcvi.) expresses a very different opinion; since, according to him it "seems of much later date than most of the others, and can scarce be older than the reign of K. Charles I. FOR," says he, "K. James I. had no issue after his accession to the throne of England:" an observation which, if any way to the purpose, is certainly NOT TRUE. "It may even," he continues, "have been written since the restoration, and only express the wishes of the nation for issue on the marriage of their favourite K. Charles II. on his marriage (sic) with the infanta of Portugal." However this may be, the writess having deviated from "all the old traditions concerning this celebrated outlaw," is no proof that he was "ignorant" of them; and that Dr. Percy chooses to "think it is not found in the Pepys collection," only shews conjecture to be easier than investigation. ¶ In the second volume of that collection, any person, disposed to the search, will find, at least, TWO COPIES of it, both in black letter.

The full title of the original is: "A new ballad of bold Robin Hood: shewing his birth, breeding, valour, and marriage at Titbury Bull-running. Calculated for the meridian of Staffordshire, but may serve for Derbyshire or Kent."

KIND gentlemen, will you be patient awhile ?

Ay, and then you shall hear anon
A very good ballad of bold Robin Hood,
And of his man brave Little John.

In Locksly town, in merry Nottinghamshire,
In merry sweet Locksly town,
There bold Robin Hood he was born and was bred,
Bold Robin of famous renown.

The father of Robin a forrester was,
And he shot in a lusty strong bow 10
Two north-country miles and an inch at a shot,
As the Piuder of Wakefield does know.

For he brought Adam Bell, and Clim of the Clugh,
And William of ' Clowdesle ',
To shoot with our forrester for forty mark,
And the forrester beat them all three.

His mother was neece to the Coventry knight,
Which Warwickshire men call sir Guy ;
For he slew the blue bore that hangs up at the gate,
Or mine host of the Bull tells a lie. 20

V. 14. Clowdesle. For an account of these worthies the reader may consult their old metrical legend in Percys Reliques, volume I. or Ancient Popular Poetry, 1791.

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