

Robin Hood and the Tanner (Child 126A)

- 1 IN Nottingham there lives a jolly tanner,
 With a hey down down a down down
 His name is Arthur a Bland;
There is nere a squire in Nottinghamshire
 Dare bid bold Arthur stand.
- 2 With a long pike-staff upon his shoulder,
 So well he can clear his way;
By two and by three he makes them to flee,
 For he hath no list to stay.
- 3 And as he went forth, in a summer's morning,
 Into the forrest of merry Sherwood,
To view the red deer, that range here and there,
 There met he with bold Robin Hood.
- 4 As soon as bold Robin Hood did him espy,
 He thought some sport he would make;
Therefore out of hand he bid him to stand,
 And thus to him he spake:
- 5 Why, what art thou, thou bold fellow,
 That ranges so boldly here?
In sooth, to be brief, thou lookst like a thief,
 That comes to steal our king's deer.
- 6 For I am a keeper in this forrest;
 The king puts me in trust
To look to his deer, that range here and there,
 Therefore stay thee I must.
- 7 'If thou beest a keeper in this forrest,
 And hast such a great command,
Yet thou must have more partakers in store,
 Before thou make me to stand.'
- 8 'Nay, I have no more partakers in store,
 Or any that I do need;
But I have a staff of another oke graff,
 I know it will do the deed.'
- 9 'For thy sword and thy bow I care not a straw,
 Nor all thine arrows to boot;
If I get a knop upon thy bare scop,
 Thou canst as well shite as shoote.'
- 10 'Speak cleanly, good fellow,' said jolly Robin,

‘And give better terms to me;
Else I ’le thee correct for thy neglect,
And make thee more mannerly.’

11 ‘Marry gep with a wenion!’ quoth Arthur a Bland,
‘Art thou such a goodly man?
I care not a fig for thy looking so big;
Mend thou thyself where thou can.’

12 Then Robin Hood he unbuckled his belt,
He laid down his bow so long;
He took up a staff of another oke graff,
That was both stiff and strong.

13 ‘I ’le yield to thy weapon,’ said jolly Robin,
‘Since thou wilt not yield to mine;
For I have a staff of another oke graff,
Not half a foot longer then thine.

14 ‘But let me measure,’ said jolly Robin,
‘Before we begin our fray;
For I ’le not have mine to be longer then thine,
For that will be called foul play.’

15 ‘I pass not for length,’ bold Arthur reply’d,
‘My staff is of oke so free;
Eight foot and a half, it will knock down a calf,
And I hope it will knock down thee.’

16 Then Robin Hood could no longer forbear;
He gave him such a knock,
Quickly and soon the blood came down,
Before it was ten a clock.

17 Then Arthur he soon recovered himself,
And gave him such a knock on the crown,
That on every hair of bold Robin Hoods head,
The blood came trickling down.

18 Then Robin Hood raged like a wild bore,
As soon as he saw his own blood;
Then Bland was in hast, he laid on so fast,
As though he had been staking of wood.

19 And about, and about, and about they went,
Like two wild bores in a chase;
Striving to aim each other to maim,
Leg, arm, or any other place.

20 And knock for knock they lustily dealt,

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

- 21 'Hold thy hand, hold thy hand,' said Robin Hood,
'And let our quarrel fall;
For here we may thresh our bones into mesh,
And get no coyn at all.
- 22 'And in the forrest of merry Sherwood
Hereafter thou shalt be free:'
'God-a-mercy for naught, my freedom I bought,
I may thank my good staff, and not thee.'
- 23 'What tradesman art thou?' said jolly Robin,
'Good fellow, I prethee me show:
And also me tell in what place thou dost dwel,
For both these fain would I know.'
- 24 'I am a tanner,' bold Arthur reply'd,
'In Nottingham long have I wrought;
And if thou 'lt come there, I vow and do swear
I will tan thy hide for naught.'
- 25 'God a mercy, good fellow,' said jolly Robin,
'Since thou art so kind to me;
And if thou wilt tan my hide for naught,
I will do as much for thee.
- 26 'But if thou 'lt forsake thy tanners trade,
And live in green wood with me,
My name 's Robin Hood, I swear by the rood
I will give thee both gold and fee.'
- 27 'If thou be Robin Hood,' bold Arthur reply'd,
'As I think well thou art,
Then here 's my hand, my name 's Arthur a Bland,
We two will never depart.
- 28 'But tell me, O tell me, where is Little John?
Of him fain would I hear;
For we are alide by the mothers side,
And he is my kinsman near.'
- 29 Then Robin Hood blew on the beaugle horn,
He blew full lowd and shrill,
But quickly anon appeard Little John,
Come tripping down a green hill.
- 30 'O what is the matter?' then said Little John,

‘Master, I pray you tell;
Why do you stand with your staff in your hand?
I fear all is not well.’

- 31 ‘O man, I do stand, and he makes me to stand,
The tanner that stands thee beside;
He is a bonny blade, and master of his trade,
For soundly he hath tanned my hide.’
- 32 ‘He is to be commended,’ then said Little John,
‘If such a feat he can do;
If he be so stout, we will have a bout,
And he shall tan my hide too.’
- 33 ‘Hold thy hand, hold thy hand,’ said Robin Hood,
‘For as I do understand,
He ’s a yeoman good, and of thine own blood,
For his name is Arthur a Bland.’
- 34 Then Little John threw his staff away,
As far as he could it fling,
And ran out of hand to Arthur a Bland,
And about his neck did cling.
- 35 With loving respect, there was no neglect,
They were neither nice nor coy,
Each other did face, with a lovely grace,
And both did weep for joy.
- 36 Then Robin Hood took them both by the hand,
And danc’d round about the oke tree;
‘For three merry men, and three merry men,
And three merry men we be.
- 37 ‘And ever hereafter, as long as I live,
We three will be all one;
The wood shall ring, and the old wife sing,
Of Robin Hood, Arthur, and John.’