

ROBIN HOOD.

A PARLOR PIECE FOR EVENING PARTIES.

(As proposed to be represented in the Back Drawing Room.)

BY WILLIAM BROUGH.

Characters.

ROBIN HOOD, an Outlaw, passing himself off as
*Locksley.*LITTLE JOHN,
SCARLET, } Outlaws, followers of
MUCH, the Miller's son, } ROBIN HOOD.
ALLAN-A-DALE, a wandering minstrel.

HUGO, the tax gatherer.

SIR REGINALD DE BRACY, Sheriff of Nottingham.
KING RICHARD CŒUR DE LION, travelling incognito
as "The Black Knight," on his return from
Palestine.MAID MARIAN, the Sheriff's daughter, betrothed to
Locksley.

ALICE, her attendant.

*Outlaws, Citizens, Soldiers, etc. etc.*SCENE I.—An apartment in the house of the Sheriff
of Nottingham, elegantly furnished.

[NOTE.—In order to put dramas on the stage correctly, it is usual to "consult authorities." In arranging the furniture for this scene, we should strongly advise that the "authorities"—that is to say, Papa and Mamma—should be consulted as to what chairs and tables may be used; as a neglect to do so, might lead to serious chronological mistakes—even to the premature sending to bed of the management.]

Enter ALICE with a dusting-brush.

Alice. There, my work 's done—if my work
I can call work;

It seems all play, though I am maid-of-all-work.
Sure no girl e'er had such a place as this is,
The Lady Marian's such a first-rate Missis.
Dusting her room's mere child's play. Though
I must

Confess her pa' sometimes *kicks up a dust.*

This comes of being Sheriff. I'm aware

The seat of office is no easy chair;

But what care I what fortunes variable

O'ertake that chair, while I am *com-for-table.*

[ALLAN-A-DALE is heard outside playing on the
guitar.

[NOTE.—Should the resources of the establishment include a grand pianoforte, the notes of a guitar may be exactly imitated by laying a sheet of tolerably stiff paper loosely upon the strings. Should the only available piano be an "upright," or a "cottage," the paper may be threaded in and out of the wires. In the absence of a piano, however, or in the event of the "authorities" before alluded to objecting (as they probably would) to any tampering with the internal economy of the

instrument, the guitar accompaniment may be safely left to the imagination of the audience.]

Alice. But hark! those silvery tones—'tis
he; oh joy!

Allan-a-Dale, my own dear minstrel boy.

[ALLAN-A-DALE sings outside.

AIR.—"Lonely I wander."—TROVATORE.

Lonely I wander the wide town through,
In hopes to pick up an odd sixpence or two;
Ne'er shall I quit your door,
Till some odd pence or more,
You place into the hat of the poor troubadour.

Alice. 'Tis he! I knew it; ne'er yet was he
willing

To move on under at the least a shilling.

[Going to the door.

Come in, dear Allan.

Allan (entering). May I?

Alice. May you! stuff;

You know you're always welcome.

Allan (sits down).

That's enough!

Alice. My mistress is so fond of music.

Allan.

True;

And of the gossip that I bring her too.

We wandering minstrels' story-telling powers,
Gain us admission to all ladies' bowers.

Alice. True, we've no other way our news
to get,

For newspapers are not invented yet.

Now for it!

[Sits by him.

Allan. *Alice,* words would tell but poorly
How fair you are!

Alice. You don't call that news, surely!

Have you no fresher tidings?

Allan.

Yes; I've learned

King Richard from his travels has returned.

Alice. Why then Prince John—

Allan.

Prince John I should advise,

His nose put out of joint, to mind his eyes.

Since the king left, nice tricks has he been at.

Alice. *Mice will play in the absence of the
cat!*

Allan. But see, the Lady Marian's coming
hither;

And, as I live—no—yes, say, who's that with
her?

Alice. That; oh, that's Locksley.

Allan. Locksley him d'ye call?
His name is—

Enter ROBIN HOOD (as LOCKSLEY) and MARIAN.

Robin. Locksley, sir, of Locksley Hall.
(Aside to him). Be quiet.

Allan. All right, captain.

Marian. Why, how 's this?
The minstrel seems to know you.

Allan. Know him, miss!

That gentleman 's the leader of our band.

Robin (evasively). Yes; I conduct sometimes.

Marian. I understand.
You play first fiddle, I suppose?

Robin. Just so.

'Twould do you good to see me use my bow.

But never mind my beau; am I not yours?

Allan. I see; our leader's made you overtures.

Marian. How dare you speak, sir, upon such affairs?

Alice, conduct the troubadour down stairs.

Allan. This conduct to a bard!

Alice. There, never mind;
I've luncheon ready.

Allan. True, the bard 's not dined.

Yet if he chose he could speak.

Alice. Well, but don't.

Allan. The bard is hungry—so he thinks he won't.

[Exeunt ALLAN and ALICE.

Marian. Now, Locksley, we're alone, repeat,
I pray,

What you but now were just about to say.

Robin. Rare news, sweet. I've your father's
full permission

To marry you upon one sole condition.

Marian. And that is—

Robin. That I from all rivals snatch
The first prize in to-morrow's shooting match.

Marian. Oh, should your arrow fail!

Robin. That chance look not for.

Marian. But I don't choose to be put up and
shot for.

I'll be no archer's butt. I don't like putting
My future hopes on such an arrow footing.

Robin. I'll hit the bull's-eye, dearest, have
no fears.

Marian. I think pa's mad about his volun-
teers

And shooting matches. Of it what 's the good?

Robin. The fact is, he's afraid of Robin Hood.

To catch him 'tis they drill each raw recruit,
And teach their young ideas how to shoot.

Marian. I wish this Robin Hood was dead.
Don't you?

Robin. Well, no, I can't exactly say I do.

Marian. His ceaseless thefts—

Robin. Such slanders don't believe in.
He 's always Robin, but not always thiev'—

Marian. You take his part? Oh, no, it
can't be!

Robin. Why!

Perhaps he 's quite as good a man as I.

What if I were abused and slandered so,

Would you believe what folks said of me?

Marian. No.

Of course I wouldn't.

Robin. Just so. Then, again,

E'en suppose I were Robin Hood. What then?

DUET.

AIR.—“Will you love me then as now?”

Robin. You have told me that you loved me,
With the blushes on your cheek;

Marian. Can you wonder at my blushing,

'Twas so difficult to speak.

Robin. But suppose the noble Locksley,
Into Robin Hood should change?

Marian. I should say the alteration,

At the very least, looked strange.

Robin. But I ask you would you cut me?

Marian. Well, I almost think somehow—

Robin. You would cease to care about me?

Marian. No; I'd love you then as now.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.—Sherwood Forest.

[NOTE.—The arrangement of this scene will give an excellent opportunity for the exercise of skill on the part of the management. We have seen very effective “forest sets” got up by means of a few trunks of trees roughly painted on pasteboard, and surrounded by evergreens. But should this be found too troublesome or impracticable, it should be borne in mind that in the “good old times,” in the “palmy days of the drama,” before the present rage for *spectacle* had set in, it was considered amply sufficient to have the nature of the scene legibly written on a placard, and hung up in a conspicuous part of the scene. And surely, if this was deemed good enough for Shakspeare, the author of the present drama has no right to feel dissatisfied with it. So we should suggest, in default of any scenic appliances, a sheet of card-board with the words “SHERWOOD FOREST” written upon it, leaving the author to make what protest he chooses against the want of liberality in the management.]

Enter Hugo.

Hugo. Thus far into the thickest of the wood
Have I marched on, nor yet seen Robin Hood.
Oh, how I shudder at his very name!
He 'd deem a tax-collector lawful game.

He hates all taxes. Well, those we now levy
 In the king's absence I confess are heavy ;
 And not quite constitutional, folks say :
 Well, let them talk, what matters if they pay.
 The tax on incomes, p'rhaps we might relax,
 Or soon there 'll be no incomes left to tax.
 And yet I don't know—tax them as you will,
 This Anglo-Saxon race seems prosperous still.
 To *the last stick* you bring them down—what
 then ?
 You find *th' elastic* race spring up again.

SONG.

AIR.—“ *The Postman's Knock.* ”

What a wonderful land this England must be
 (A remark that's been made before) ;
 You take her last shilling in taxes, and she
 Is still good for some millions more.
 What with income-tax, house-tax, assessments,
 and rates,
 No Englishman knows what he 's at ;
 His house is his castle, but we storm the gates,
 As we come with the double rat-tat.
 Every morn, as true as the clock,
 The poor-rates or taxes are sure to knock.
 [*He brings a large money-bag from under his cloak.*]
 This morning's work has brought me glorious
 profit,
 My bag 's so heavy.

LITTLE JOHN, MUCH (*the Miller's son*), SCARLET,
 and other Outlaws, enter and surround him.

Little John. Let us ease you of it.

Hugo. Thieves ! Robbery ! Police !

Much. Peace, what 's the good,

To holloa till your safe out of the wood ?

Little John. Give us the sack (*snatching it from him*).

Hugo. Nay, it 's not mine, you see ;
 Don't take it, or they 'll give the sack to me ;
 Mine 's a good situation.

Much. Well, at present,
 Your situation might be much more pleasant.
 Let 's hang him.

Hugo. No, no ; quarter, pray.

Much. Just so ;

We 'll quarter you, but hang you first, you
 know.

You, as a tax-collector, can't be nettled
 To find the *quarter* you 've applied for settled.
 Bring him along.

Scarlet. Had we not better wait
 Till Robin Hood himself decides his fate ?

Hugo. Yes, do.

Scarlet. He comes.

Enter ROBIN HOOD in forester's costume, with bow
 and arrows.

Robin. Now, lads, what means this stir ?

Little John. We 've caught a Norman tax-
 collector, sir.

Robin. A Norman ! Hated race ! Our coun-
 try's curse !

And a tax-gatherer, which is even worse !
 The Norman's visit each true Saxon hates,
 'Specially when he calls about the rates.
 We loathe his written laws ; yet even more
 The printed papers he leaves at one's door.

Hugo (*kneeling*). Spare me !

Robin. Perhaps we might.

Much. What means this whim ?

Robin. Who is there we could better spare
 than him ?

Go ; you are free.

Hugo. Oh, thanks !

Robin. Now, list to me.

Your name is *Hugo*. I let you go free.

So, when some Saxon in your law's fell pow'r,
 Implores your pity, think upon this hour.
 Spare him as you're now spared ; and when
 you would

Remorseless be, remember Robin Hood !

Hugo. Fear not. Oh, sir, I am so glad I met
 you.

Remember you ! I never shall forget you.

Robin. No words. Away !

Hugo. My thanks no words can speak.
 (*Aside.*) The rate-payers shall smart for this
 next week. [*Exit.*]

Scarlet. I 'm sorry that you spared him.

Robin. Cruel varlet !

To say so I should blush, if I were *Scarlet*.

What think you, *Much*, of it ?

Much (*sulkily*). I 'm sorry, too.

Robin. In that case, *Much*, I don't think *much*
 of you.

Black Knight (*calls outside*). What ho, there !
 Help !

Robin. Hark ! there 's a call. What is it ?

Little John. That call may p'r'aps not mean
 a friendly visit.

Black Knight (*outside*). Help !

Much. By all means, if you have any pelf.

Scarlet. Oh, yes, we 'll help him.

Much. I shall help myself.

Enter THE BLACK KNIGHT. *They surround him.*

Robin. Now, sir, who are you through our
 forest bawling ?

Your name and business tell ; we 've heard
 your calling.

Black Knight. A weary knight, who all the
 weary day

Has wandered through this wood and lost his
 way,

Craves food and rest.

Robin. Your name?

Black Knight. I may not tell it.
I can repay your kindness.

Robin. I don't sell it.

Little John. No; but we'll take your money
all the same. [*Advancing towards him.*]

Robin. What! rob a fasting, weary man!
For shame!

Come in. We grant the shelter that you seek;
We spoil the strong, but we befriend the weak.

Black Knight. Mine's but a momentary weak-
ness, mind;

You'll see how strong I come out when I've
dined.

Robin. No matter. Go (*to outlaws*), make
ready for our guest.

And see that everything is of the best.

[*Exeunt outlaws.*]

Sir, you are bold to venture through this wood.
Have you no fears of meeting Robin Hood?

Black Knight. Would I could meet him hand
to hand!

Robin. Well, stay.
After you've dined and rested, perhaps you
may.

Are you his enemy?

Black Knight. I am the foe

Of all their country's laws who overthrow.

Robin. Nay, then of foes you'll find a decent
lot.

There is King Richard to begin with.

Black Knight. What?

Robin. Yes, if the people don't obey the laws,
The king himself is the unwitting cause.

Why quit his kingdom on a wild-goose chase,
Leaving a cruel tyrant in his place?

Black Knight. Does John oppress the people?

Robin. Have you eyes
To see their sufferings, ears to hear their cries,
That you can ask the question? Why, 'tis
known

Beneath his laws no man's life is his own,
Save such as Robin Hood and his brave outlaws,
Who, in the forest free, don't care about laws.
So when folks' grievances too heavy press,
They fly to Robin Hood to seek redress.

In vain the tyrants as a traitor brand him;
The common people love and understand him.

DUET.

AIR—"A famous man was Robin Hood."

Robin. Oh, a famous man is Robin Hood,
The English people's pride and joy;
The tyrants he has long withstood,
Who try our freedom to destroy.

Black Knight. What you've just told me, do
you know,
Has filled my mind with strange alarm.

Robin. While Robin, though, can bend the bow,
Be sure his friends he'll keep from harm.

Both. A famous man is Robin Hood,
No wonder he is England's joy;
Where tyrants are to be withstood,
It's very plain that Rob's the boy.

Enter LITTLE JOHN.

Little John. The dinner's ready.

Robin. Come, then, worthy knight,
Let good digestion wait on appetite. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The fair outside Nottingham. Stalls with toys, fruit, cakes, etc., on them. Swings, shows, etc. People attending the stalls, peasants walking about.*

[NOTE.—The appearance of this scene will doubtless vary considerably in different establishments. A table with an open umbrella fixed over it makes a very good stall, while toys, cakes, fruit, and other articles to put on them ought to be readily obtainable, especially with a guarantee from the management that the "properties" shall not be demolished until after the conclusion of the performance. Should there be any difficulty in fixing swings, the simplest way is to do without them. The same remark will hold good as regards the shows; though, as only the outside of them is seen, a curtain or a tablecloth hung against the wall, with a showman standing in front of it to invite folks in, will answer every purpose. A picture of wild beasts, or a giant, or a dwarf, or a king, or a queen—or, in fact, a picture of any possible or impossible object, hung on the curtains, would improve the effect, but is by no means essential.]

The scene opens to a confusion of cries, such as "What'll you buy—buy—buy?" "Walk up—walk up—be in time." "Gingerbread-nuts, sir!—best spice-nuts, sir!" "This way for the giant!" "All the fun of the fair!" and others suggested by the articles on the stalls, all the cries being repeated together.

Enter the SHERIFF of NOTTINGHAM and his daughter MARIAN, followed by ALLAN-A-DALE and ALICE, attended by soldiers.

Sheriff. Silence! D'ye hear? Be quiet—
cease this din.

[*All are quiet immediately.*]

Bring chairs here.

[*SHERIFF and MARIAN sit at one side.*]

Now, before the sports begin,
If any one has anything to say,
Any complaints to make or fines to pay,
Or any business to transact, in short,
Let him now bring it in the Sheriff's Court.
Only, I warn you, I am in a hurry,
So at your peril you'll the Sheriff worry!

[*One or two peasants who have approached him turn away frightened.*]

Does no one speak? Sure ne'er was town so
bless'd,

With not a single wrong to be redress'd!

Marian. I think that maid would speak, if you'd but let her.

What is it, girl? Speak.

Sheriff. Nonsense! She knows better. The court's adjourned.

Hugo runs in.

Hugo. Nay, for one moment stop.

Sheriff. What seek you?

Hugo. Justice!

Sheriff. We've just closed the shop. You are too late.

Hugo. But I've been robbed.

Sheriff. Pooh-pooh!

Hugo. Half murdered!

Sheriff. Call again to-morrow—do.

Marian. Who robbed you, friend?

Hugo. 'Twas Robin Hood, miss.

Sheriff. What?

Hugo. And I know where to find him.

Allan (in the crowd). I hope not.

Alice. What's it to you, pray?

Allan. Nothing, dear.

Sheriff (to Hugo). You mean To tell us that you Robin Hood have seen?

Hugo. I have.

Sheriff. And know where he hangs out?

Hugo. I do,

For I was all but hanging out there too.

Come with your guards—I'll lead you to him straight.

Sheriff. Well, till our shooting-match is over, wait.

Hugo. You know you promised a reward.

Sheriff. Just so.

We'll talk of that when we have caught him, though.

Allan (aside to ALICE). Dear Alice, if you love me, get that man

Away from here, by any means you can.

Alice. Easily. Hugo's an old friend of mine. Won't you come in and take a glass of wine

[To HUGO.]

After your troubles?

Hugo. I shall be enraptured.

[*Exit ALICE and HUGO.*]

Allan (aside). How to save Robin now from being captured?

Sheriff. Now, then, good people, let the sports begin.

Re-enter ALICE.

Alice (aside to ALLAN). All right. The pantry I have locked him in.

Marian. Why is not Locksley here? Pa', can't you wait?

Sheriff. Not I; it's his fault if he comes too late.

Marian. Mind, if he doesn't win me, I declare,

I'll have no other for a husband. There!

Sheriff. Peace, girl. Now, who shoots first?

First Peasant. Good sir, 'tis I!

Sheriff. You see the mark? Ready! Present! Let fly!

[*Peasant shoots an arrow off. All laugh at him. Missed it! Who's next? (Another comes forward to shoot.)*]

Mind how you take a sight. Ready! Present! Let fly!

[*Second Peasant shoots.*]

Good! in the white.

ROBIN HOOD (*as Locksley*) runs in.

Robin. So; just in time, I see. Confound that stranger!

I couldn't leave him.

Allan (aside to him). Robin; you're in danger.

Robin. I know; I always am. Who cares? Look out! [*He shoots.*]

Sheriff. Right in the bull's eye. Shout, you villains; shout.

[*The populace all shout.*]

Locksley, your hand. You've nobly won the prize;

My daughter's yours.

Enter HUGO. He starts at seeing ROBIN.

Hugo. Eh! can I trust my eyes! 'Tis he; secure him! There stands Robin Hood!

[*Soldiers seize ROBIN.*]

Sheriff. What!

Hugo (holding out his hand). The reward, sir; if you'll be so good.

Sheriff. What! he! my future son, the out-law! Pshaw—

An out-law can't become a son-in-law!

Marian. Speak to me, Locksley! Say it is not so.

Hugo. I told you I'd remember you, you know.

Robin. For this I saved you from the halter?

Hugo. Yes.

I like the halteration I confess.

Sheriff. Speak! Are you Robin Hood?

Robin. Well, without sham, Since you ask so politely, sir, I am.

Farewell, dear Marian. As you see, I'm sold.

Marian. No, it can't be!

Sheriff. To prison with him.

Enter the BLACK KNIGHT, followed by LITTLE JOHN, MUCH, SCARLET, and Outlaws.

Black Knight. Hold!

Sheriff. Who 's this, that comes in style so harum-scarum?

Who are you?

Black Knight (throwing off his disguise). Richard, Rex Britanniarum. [*All kneel.*]

All. Long live the king!

King. He means to; and what 's more, To live at home, his people to watch o'er.

Release your prisoner. Robin Hood, come here.

[*ROBIN kneels to the KING.*]

As Earl of Huntingdon, henceforth appear.

Robin (bringing MARIAN forward). This peerless maid, sire, who was late so cheerless—

King. Now has her Earl, so she 's no longer peerless.

We pardon all that 's past; let none bear malice.

Now all take hands.

Allan. Good! I 'll take yours, then, Alice.

Alice. Well, since the king commands.

There! I submit. [*Gives her hand.*]

(*Aside.*) I almost feared he 'd never ask for it!

Hugo. But my reward?

Robin. You 'll get it.—Don't be hurt.
(*To audience.*) Reward us all! Not after our desert:

By no high standard, pray, our acting test;
Whate'er we 've done—we 've acted for the best.

FINALE.

AIR.—“*There 's nae luck about the house.*”

Old Christmas comes but once a year,
The time for mirth and fun;
'Tis not a time to be severe
On those their best who 've done.
At such a time, to laugh 's no crime,
Don't harmless jokes despise;
Unbend a while—at folly smile,
Be merry though you 're wise.
For there is no luck about the house
That Christmas fails to cheer;
'Tis no bad rule to play the fool,
If only once a year.

All repeat in chorus.

For there is no luck about the house, &c.

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

(Provided you have one; if not, it doesn't.)

LETTERS FROM AUNT BETSY BROOMCORN.

LETTER I.

DEAR MR. GODEY: It 's nigh about three years since I come to Scrub Oak to live with Cousin Brewstir; and, as I was tellin' Flory the other day, I 've a'most forgot all my old-fashioned ways, and I don't s'pose anybody would know me for the schoolma'am in Pendle Holler, over twenty years ago I remember as well as if 'twas only yesterday, how Deacon Arza Pendle come over after me in a bellus-top shay, and how Susan cried when she tied on my bunnet, and how Archy slid my little trunk—covered with a spotted calfskin tacked on with brass nails, and my two first letters on the top in brass nails, too—under the seat, shook hands with me and the deacon, and put up the bars after we drove out of the door yard. I looked back when we had got to the bend in the road, where you lose sight of the house, and I could see Archy standin' lookin' after us yet. Susan's winder was open, and if I didn't see her, I knew she was there, and I knew, too, how much they both hoped and feared for me. I hadn't tried to do anything after John's death till then, and maybe I shouldn't have courage enough to keep me up after all; but I kept sayin' to myself all the time, “I will, I will;” and I shut my lips together tight, so that I shouldn't even

feel them tremble, and tried to think about the posies and little bushes along the side of the road. There was wintergreen, young sasafaras, May-apples and lady-slippers. The red and yellow keys hadn't all dropped off the maple trees, and the popples was bright yet with their young leaves. All the birches was covered with tawsels that swung in the air with the tender leaves, and the wind brought us the smell of the young spruce cones, and the hemlock buds that was sweeter than the very best of the queer little bottles of perfume with outlandish letters all in gold printed on the glass, that Flory has on her table up stairs. I heard the birds singin' among the trees, and my heart begun to beat softer, and I was a'most glad that I was goin' away from home, when all at once, Deacon Pendle spoke out for the first time, “That 's a purty place over the lake yonder. I wonder how it comes to be deserted.” I caught hold of the side of the shay, as if he had struck me a blow with his great whip. I couldn't help sayin' “oh,” such a painful feelin' of suffocation came over me all at once. My heart gave a jump and then a'most stood still. The Deacon looked scared when he turned round and see how I shook. He stopped his horse and jumped down as spry as a boy.