



CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

FAMOUS
LEGENDS

Emeline G.
Crommelin

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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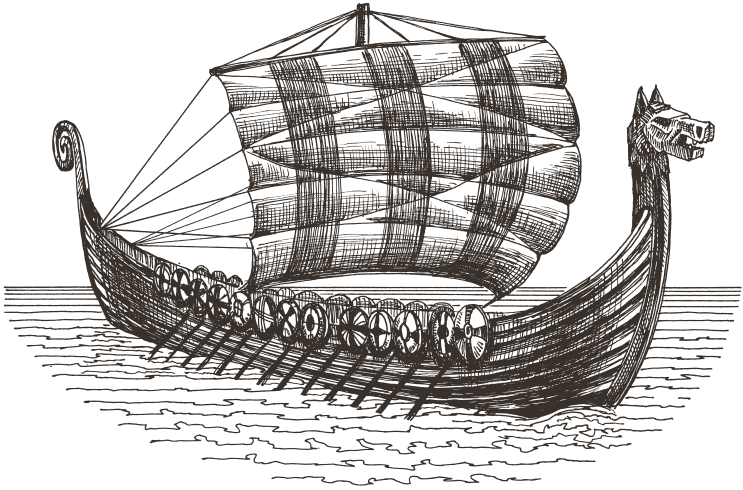


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Famous Legends

by

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adapted and edited by

LISA KELLY



A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

THIS edition was produced in conjunction with Lisa Kelly, the educator behind *A Mind in the Light*, a Charlotte Mason curriculum.

Here's a few words from Lisa—

"As an educator and a mother of two lovely daughters, I spent a great deal of time searching for a curriculum which matched the ardent hope in my heart to nurture the minds of my children as well as their hearts.

Over time I found that the ideas and methods of Charlotte Mason came the nearest to matching the educational principles I could embrace. I added some ideas from Classical methods, but mostly I tried to shine a light on the hidden principles within Charlotte Mason's own books and her PNEU programs. From this was born my own curriculum: *A Mind in the Light*.

This curriculum reflects the depth of my feelings for each and every child's mind and endeavors to give teachers the tools they need to create an atmosphere of learning which stretches, delights and inspires, leading a student to the light. In this light, the mind finds truth, beauty and good."

Learn more about *A Mind in the Light* at
<https://www.amindinthelight.com/>

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“The strange and antiquated rhymes
With melodies of olden times;
As over some half-ruined wall,
Disjointed and about to fall,
Fresh woodbines climb and interlace.
And keep the loosened stones in place.”
~LONGFELLOW— *Tales of a Wayside Inn.*

INTRODUCTION

This little book of famous legends needs no introduction beyond a word of emphasis as to its educational value.

It is needless to point out, perhaps, that these stories—handed down from father to son and circulated in minstrelsy before the days of written history—have been almost the sole preservatives of the romance, chivalry, and splendor of the Middle Ages.

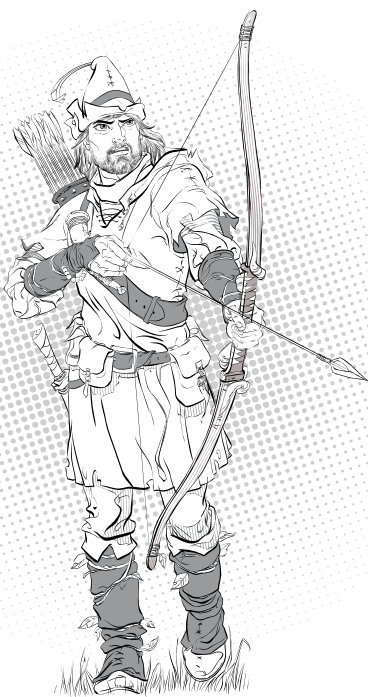
Out of the wealth of myths and traditions my selections have been purposely diverse, that as far as possible each nation and each people might be represented in this marshaling of the picturesque in legendary history.

And thus may the young reader have an insight into what, in the case of each nation, has become of the very fiber of its literature, art, and music.

In some cases, where the beauty depends largely on the literary style and treatment, direct transcripts from the best sources have been made; but for the most part I have reduced the stories to the simplest terms consistent with clearness and human interest. Among the sources drawn upon are Guerber's *Legends of the Middle Ages* and *Myths of Northern Lands*, Chenoweth's *Stories of the Saints*, Washington Irving's "The Phantom Island", Baldwin's "The Story of Roland", Browning's poems, Longfellow's poems, Malory's *Boys' King Arthur*, Ragozin's "Frithjof" and "Roland", etc.

It is the author's hope and belief that this volume will help to inculcate in the child a love for good reading, quicken his imagination, and broaden his horizon.

EMELINE G. CROMMELIN. FEBRUARY 10TH, 1904



ROBIN HOOD

I think there is not one.
But he of Robin Hood hath heard and Little John,
And to the end of time the tales shall ne'er be done
Of Scarlock, George a Green, and Much the Miller's son,
Of Tuck, the merry friar, which many a sermon made
In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws and their trade.

~DRAYTON.

Even the wild outlaw, in his forest-walk,
Keeps yet some touch of discipline.

~OLD PLAY.

I. IN SHERWOOD FOREST

IT was when Richard I, called the Lion-hearted, was king of England that Robin Hood and his merry men lived in Sherwood Forest.

Some people say that when Robin Hood was young he recklessly spent the money he had inherited; and, being an adventurous youth, he fled to the forest that ever since has been associated with his name.

Whether Robin was forced to live there or not, he loved its freedom and wild beauty better than anything else in the world. He loved its thickly wooded hills and valleys, its sparkling streams, and its carpet of bright green; its flowers of every color, and the songs of its birds. Robin was a mere lad when he first made the forest his home. As he grew older, one after another joined him, until he had more than a hundred men, who not only obeyed him, but loved him as well. It was not long before Robin Hood was looked upon as a kind of king, and he and his men defied the laws that the real kings made. They spent much of their time in stopping travelers on their way, and robbing them, or killing the king's deer, with which Sherwood Forest abounded.

It was on this game that the poor Saxons had lived when they were driven into the forest and hemmed in by their enemies. The Normans, who ruled the land, made such severe laws that it was dangerous to hunt or kill the deer, which had been a common dish for the Saxons before they were conquered.

Now Robin Hood was not altogether bad, for he did



A STATUE OF RICHARD COEUR DE LION

many things that were to his credit. He always spared the poor and the weak, never allowed a woman to be oppressed, and divided all booty with his men.

II. MAID MARIAN

If you have heard of Robin Hood, you have heard also of Maid Marian, the fair Saxon maid, whom everyone loved. She, too, loved the beauty and freedom of the wild woods—the birds, the flowers, and the streams. It was amid such scenes that she had lived, from the time she was a child. She had learned from her mother how to dress wounds, and she knew a great deal about the herbs in the forest which had been her school.

Maid Marian was often mistress of the sports in her woodland home. Indeed, she handled the bow with such skill that she could shoot a running deer or flying bird, and thought it no uncommon feat. Robin and Marian met often in their beloved Sherwood Forest. Often they took long walks together, when the hunt was over. Often they sat beneath the old oaks that met above their heads. Often Robin sang some old Saxon song to the notes of Marian's harp. Thus it was that, amid the beauty and the music of the grand old forest, the youth and the maiden grew to love each other. And when deep sorrow came to Marian, no one spoke such gentle words of comfort as Robin.

Marian and her father had not joined in any of the merry times among the hunters since her mother's death, until

the day that was the beginning of a new grief. Their friends welcomed them with great joy, and Marian's father, who was a minstrel, was asked to sing for the company. Taking the harp from his daughter, the minstrel began an old Saxon war song, in which he told how the Saxons once owned the beautiful land, and hunted the deer in the vast forest as much as they pleased, till the Normans came and drove them from their cities, and made severe laws for those who lingered near their old homes; and how their unrelenting conquerors still wrought hardships upon them by killing the beasts and birds that filled the forest.

The song closed with words of sorrow for the friends who had been taken away and would never return.

It was in this fashion that the wandering minstrels used to chronicle in song the mighty deeds of friend and foe. Had it not been for them, many of our most delightful stories, which were remembered from father to son, would have been lost. When people knew how to write these tales, the old minstrels were needed no longer.

The last of all the bards was he,
 Who sung of Border chivalry;
 For, well-a-day their date was fled,
 His tuneful brethren all were dead;
 And he, neglected and oppress'd,
 Wished to be with them, and at rest.

A wandering harper, scorn'd and poor,
 He begged his bread from door to door,
 And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
 The harp a king had loved to hear.

~SIR WALTER SCOTT - *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

Just as Marian's father finished the last words of his song, an arrow came whizzing through the air, and struck the harp. This was the beginning of an attack by the foresters, in which Marian's father was killed.

It was not long after this that Robin's father was slain by one of the foresters, and Robin declared he would have revenge. He knew to whom the arrow belonged, for it was marked with a crown between the feathers. Taking it in his hand, he said: "I shall never rest until I have found the owner of this arrow, and avenged my father's death." His mother, who was overcome by the loss of her husband, soon followed him, and Marian and Robin were both without father or mother.

III. ROBIN HOOD MADE LEADER

THE king had heard so much about Robin Hood killing his deer and defying his foresters, that he sent the sheriff to capture the bold outlaw without delay. But Robin was too much for the sheriff, who lost his life by a well-aimed arrow from Robin's bow. After this sheriff was buried, a man whom Robin had caught and bound in the forest was appointed in his place.

The condition of the poor Saxons seemed to grow ever worse; and Robin was anxious to find out for himself just how affairs stood. So he disguised himself as a beggar, and went to a part of the forest where the Saxons were cutting wood for the abbeys.



ROBIN HOOD

He begged the men to give him something to do. They told him to go to the sheriff, if he would feed himself and a Norman.

“Bad times these are, indeed,” said Robin, “when a Saxon works that a Norman may eat and play.”

“Yes,” answered one of the wood-cutters, “but there are worse times coming.”

Many encounters between the oppressors and the oppressed followed. Finally, Robin Hood, who had been so successful in fighting the enemy, was looked upon as a powerful leader among the Saxons. They hoped he would be able to free them from the rule of the Normans. At last a number of them held a meeting, and decided to build a house in a secluded part of the forest. The house was to be well protected, and surrounded by a moat, or ditch filled with water, and to be entered by ladders only.

Then Robin Hood was chosen leader of the band, because he was the most skillful with his bow, and the most popular with the people.

The men promised, on Robin’s bow, to be true to him and to one another; to obey all his orders, and keep secret all he told them.

Then Robin made them promise never to rob the poor nor trouble the weak, but to help them if need be; never to strike a Saxon, unless struck first by him; never to harm women or children; and, last of all, to keep only what they needed of the booty, and to give the rest to the poor and needy.

It will be interesting to know how one after another

joined this little band in the forest, whose names were associated with their famous leader ever after.

IV. ALAN DALE

ONCE, when Robin and Marian were walking through the forest, they found a young harper, who seemed to be in great trouble. He told them his name was Alan Dale, and he was unhappy on account of a Saxon maid, whom he loved, and could not wed because he was poor. Her father and mother were trying to make her marry a rich Norman lord, whom she did not like.

Ellen, for that was the young girl's name, was kept at home with her parents, while Alan roamed through the forest, and sang sorrowful songs to the notes of his harp. When Robin and Marian had heard the sad story, they were determined to help the young couple.

It happened there was a fair in the dale, and Marian, dressed as a harper, attended it. She sang some old Saxon songs that Alan used to sing, and Ellen, listening, wondered and drew near.

Ellen was so near the harper that she was able to hear what Marian had come to tell her. It was soon arranged that Marian should remain with Ellen in her home, and teach her to play the harp, of which she was very fond.

When Robin came to Marian's home, and found she had not returned from the fair, he dressed himself as a beggar and came to Ellen's house to see if all were well.

He was able to see Marian, who whispered hurriedly to him at the door: "All is going well. I will stay here until the time for the wedding, when we will meet you at the church."

Then the beggar left the house, and no one except Marian knew that he was the bold Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest.

Of course Ellen was very happy that, when the time came for the wedding, Alan Dale was the bridegroom instead of the rich old lord, and Ellen was taken to live in the greenwood instead of the castle.

And there was another wedding that day, for Robin and Marian were married also. When Robin Hood's name was read out in church the people were surprised and startled. Then cheers were given for the bold outlaw and his band, as the happy couple went to their forest home.

A great feast had been prepared for them. The minstrel played and sang, and all made merry.

V. *LITTLE JOHN*

LITTLE John was second to Robin Hood in command. His real name was John Little, some people said; but he was called Little John because he was so tall, being over seven feet high.

One day, Robin went hunting with his men; but, finding the sport poor, he thought he would try it alone, and said:

"If I am in danger and cannot escape, I will blow my horn that you may come and help me."

He had not gone far when he came to a stream at the

foot of a hill. In the middle of the bridge over it, which was a single tree lying across the stream, he met a monstrous big man, and neither would let the other pass. After some angry words, Robin said:

“Let us fight this matter out on the bridge. The one who is able to push the other into the water shall be the victor.”

The stranger agreed to this, and the matter was settled very quickly. They fought with great fury, and neither would give in. Finally, the stranger succeeded in throwing poor Robin into the water, and exclaimed:

“Where are you now, my good fellow?”

“Our battle is ended,” cried Robin, as he waded to the bank of the stream, “and you are the victor.”

Then Robin, who was wet to the skin, blew a loud blast on his horn. At once there appeared fifty of his men, all dressed in Lincoln green, who wanted to know what had befallen their leader.

Robin explained to them that the stranger had tumbled him into the water. At these words, the men were going to seize the stranger, who was quite ready and willing to fight them all; but Robin stopped them, saying:

“My friend, no harm shall come to you. These are my men, and, if you like, you shall be one of them. Will you join our band?”

“I will, with all my heart,” answered the stranger, whose strength and courage had pleased Robin greatly.

When he told them his name, one of the number said he should be called Little John, by which name he was known ever after.

VI. *FRIAR TUCK*

A day of merrymaking had been appointed by Robin Hood and his men. There were jumping, racing, and shooting matches, for which prizes were given. The jugglers did wonderful tricks, and the minstrels sang and played. The holiday closed with a dance in the woodland by the hunters and their friends.

While one of these tests of strength and skill was being made, a member of the band told of a certain friar who could draw a bow with the greatest strength that ever he had seen.

As soon as Robin heard this, he made up his mind to see the famous friar, and started out with one of his men to find him. They had not gone far when Robin saw in the distance the friar walking by the water. He alighted from his horse, and called loudly:

“Carry me over the water, Friar, or you lose your life.”

The friar said not a word; but did as he was told, and put Robin down on the other side of the stream. Just as he did so, however, he said to Robin:

“It is your turn now to carry me over the water, my bold fellow. You do so, or I shall make you sorry.”

Robin looked surprised, but said not a word. Taking the friar on his back, he carried him across the stream, and put him down on the other side. Then he spoke to the friar as he had at first, when he told him to carry him over the water or he would lose his life.

The good-natured friar smiled, and took Robin on his shoulders, as before, but said not a word. When he reached

the middle of the stream, however, he shook him off, and cried:

“Choose now for yourself whether you sink or swim.”

Robin reached the shore after a good ducking, and began shooting arrows at the friar, who swam to a tree nearby. But Robin’s arrows did not hurt the friar, who called:

“You may shoot at me all day, my bold fellow, and I shall stand it.”

Robin did not mind these words, but kept on shooting until he had not one arrow left in his quiver. Then he and the friar fought with their swords, but neither would yield. At last, Robin asked the friar to hold his hand, and let him blow his horn. The friar consented. When the horn had sounded three times, behold, there appeared fifty men, all dressed in Lincoln green!

The astonished friar asked Robin who they were.

“They are my men,” said Robin; “but that is nothing to you.”

Then the friar, remembering that Robin blew his horn three times, asked that he might be allowed to whistle three times.

Robin consented with all his heart.

At once there appeared fifty-three raging dogs, who flew at Robin and his men. Then the friar cried to Robin:

“For every man there is a dog, and two for you.”

Before Robin could believe what had happened, two dogs sprang upon his back, and tore his coat to bits. Then Little John and the others beat the dogs back. The friar, seeing he could not fight so many brave men even with his dogs,

made an agreement with Robin Hood that he would live with him and be his chaplain. So the friar left his home in the dale, where he had lived seven years, and was known as Friar Tuck of Robin Hood's band.

VII. THE BARON

A number of the king's men, with a baron at their head, started out to capture Robin Hood. As they journeyed through the forest, they found a man bound to a tree, who seemed to be in great distress.

He was dressed as a beggar, and had been hurt in some way, they thought. The baron ordered his men to set the poor man free. The beggar thanked him graciously, and said:

"As I was coming through the forest, some robbers came up to me, and searched me for gold. Finding none, they tied me to this tree, where I have been ever since."

"They must have been Robin Hood's men," cried the baron.

To this the beggar nodded his head, and said: "They were divided into three bands, and were on their way to meet the men sent to capture them. They intended to kill the leader and to tie the others to trees and leave them to die."

The baron and his men were terrified, and seemed less eager to find Robin Hood and his men.

They thought they would have a good dinner before they continued the search. No sooner had the meat and bread been laid on the grass, and they were about to begin,

when they heard the sound of a horn echo loudly through the forest. They stopped for nothing, but started to run as fast as they could.

In the meantime, the beggar whom they had set free was calling out Robin Hood's name. At once there appeared three bands of men, all dressed in Lincoln green, and carrying bows and short swords.

While the leaders and the bands were seizing the baron and his men, the beggar dropped his disguise, and appeared all dressed in Lincoln green, like Robin Hood's men—indeed, it was Robin Hood himself who had played this trick on the baron.

The baron, who held a written order to capture Robin Hood, and all his men were seized and guarded carefully. The dinner which they had prepared was eaten and enjoyed by the bold outlaw and his archers.

When they had finished, they invited the poor prisoners to eat also; but fear had taken away their hunger.

But Robin Hood did not treat them badly, after all. He took them to another part of the forest, and welcomed them to a fine feast, which they enjoyed. He made them promise never to take part in any attempt to capture Robin Hood or his men; never to refuse them shelter or help if they needed it; and that the baron should pay a sum of money every year for the support of Robin Hood and his men. Then he set them all free.

VIII. THE BISHOP

WHEN Robin Hood heard that the bishop was coming, he and some of his men dressed themselves as shepherds, and waited in the forest for him and his company to pass. While they were waiting, they roasted a fine buck for dinner. As the bishop drew near, he noticed the delicious meat roasting, and, being very hungry, said to his followers:

“I believe those forest rovers, who are always giving trouble, are roasting some fine venison for dinner. If so, we shall eat it, and take the hungry prisoners to the king.”

When the bishop reached the place, he asked one of the “shepherds” what he meant by roasting the king’s venison, and told him it was the last time he would have a chance to do it.

The “shepherd” paid no heed to the bishop’s words, but invited him to join them in their merry feast. The bishop became very angry at this, and ordered his men to bind the saucy fellow to a tree, and said they should all be taken to the king without delay.

Before the men had time to carry out the order, however, Robin blew a loud blast on his horn. In an instant the frightened bishop and his company were surrounded by a band of men, all dressed in Lincoln green, and carrying bows and short swords.

At the same time Robin Hood and the men who were with him dropped the dress of shepherds. There they stood, all dressed in Lincoln green, like the others who had come out of the forest so suddenly.

Now it was Robin's turn. He ordered Little John to bind the poor bishop, who cried: "Mercy, mercy, I pray! If I had known you, I should not have come this way."

Robin and his men went into the forest for a short distance, and ate their dinner. Then Little John spread the bishop's cloak on the ground, and on it emptied the bishop's bag of three hundred pounds. The bishop gave up the gold very willingly, because his life was saved.

But Robin did not intend to let him off so easily, so he asked Alan to bring his harp and play for the bishop to dance. Alan did so, and the bishop danced, in spite of his heavy riding-boots, until he fell exhausted to the ground. Then Robin bade the harper stop his music, and the worn-out bishop cried:

"You may shoot all the deer you wish in Sherwood Forest, and if you or any of your band ever catch me again you may hang me."

IX. KING RICHARD

KING Richard I had heard a great deal of Robin Hood's deeds and pranks. He wished to see the bold outlaw and his merry men, who roved as they liked through the forest. So the king and his twelve lords dressed themselves as friars, and rode to the place where they thought they would find Robin and his men.

When Robin saw the company of friars draw near, he mistook the king for the abbot, as he was taller than the others. He seized his horse by the head, and cried:

“It is against such fellows as you that I make war.”

“We are messengers from the king,” said the king himself; “and he is waiting, at a short distance from here, to speak to you.”

“God save the king!” shouted Robin, “and all who wish him well.”

“You are a traitor,” cried King Richard, “for you do not wish him well yourself.”

“If you were not one of his messengers,” said Robin, “I should make you sorry for what you say. I am as true to the king as any of his subjects. I have never harmed any but those who live by taking from others that which does not belong to them. Come with me, for you are welcome—

“All hail the lordlings of high degree,
Who live not more happy though greater than we.
Our pastimes to see,
Under every green tree.
In all the gay woodland, right welcome ye be.”

~MACDONALD

King Richard and his men wondered what sort of cheer Robin intended to give them; but they did not wonder long. Robin led the king’s horse to his own tent, saying as he did so:

“I treat you this way because you come from the king. For his sake, no matter how much gold you may have with you, it is safe.”

Then he blew a loud blast on his horn, and lo! from all directions came Robin Hood’s men, all dressed in Lincoln green. There were a hundred and ten men, and every man bent the knee to Robin Hood.

The king was surprised to see them pay such respect to their master, and thought his courtiers might learn something from these woodland rovers. Then a fine dinner was prepared for the king and his lords, and they declared they had never dined better. Marian and Ellen were presented to the guests. When the feast was over, Robin and his archers entertained the company with such skillful archery as the king had never seen in any land before. He said to Robin, with whom he was greatly pleased:

“If I should get a pardon from King Richard, would you serve him well in all things?”

“With all my heart,” answered Robin; and so said all his men with one accord.

Then, to the surprise of all the forest rovers and their bold leader, the king cried:

“It is King Richard who stands before you!”

At these words, Robin Hood and all his band fell on their knees before him.

But King Richard bade them rise, and told them he would give them the pardon he had promised, and that they should enter his service. He would make them his bodyguard, and they should remain in the castle with him as long as they desired.

When King Richard left the forest, Robin Hood rode by his side, and Marian and Ellen were in the gay procession. Never was there a grander display than when the king and his followers entered the city. They were welcomed by shouts and cheers from the crowd, rich and poor, young and old. When the people saw Robin Hood riding by the king’s side, they cheered him also loudly.

And they are gone to London court,
Robin Hood and all his train;
He once was there a noble peer,
And now he's there again.

X. DEATH OF ROBIN HOOD

ROBIN Hood stayed at the castle until King Richard died. Then he and the faithful followers who had remained with him went back to the forest. They were glad to return to the freedom and the sports of the outdoor life, for which they had longed ever since they went with the king to his castle.

During the years that followed, Robin lost many of his men, which grieved him greatly. But a greater sorrow than all came when Marian was taken away. Just before she died, she reminded Robin, who stood beside her, of the happy days they had spent together in the forest.

Robin was never quite the same after Marian and some of his comrades had left him.

But when the new king offered a reward for his capture, he played some of his old tricks, and ruled in his forest home as long as he lived.

One day, poor Robin was wounded sorely in a fight. As he fled with all the strength he had left, he said to Little John, his faithful companion:

“I can shoot no more, for the arrows will not so fly. I am wounded. I will go to my cousin, the abbess, who lives near, and she may make me well again.”

Robin reached Kirkley Hall, where his cousin dwelt. When he knew he could not live long with his failing strength, he blew three blasts on his horn. Little John, who sat under a tree nearby in the greenwood, heard the feeble sound, and said:

“Robin must be dying, for his blast is very weak.”

When Little John reached him, Robin asked for his bow and arrows. Then, fitting an arrow into the bow carefully but slowly, he shot it from the window of Kirkley Hall, and said piteously:

“Bury me where the arrow falls, and place my bow at my side.”

Little John did as his master wished, and Robin Hood was buried under the yew-tree, just where the arrow had fallen.