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Robin Hood and the Tanner

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Bold Arder went forth one summer morning
To view the merry green wood;
For to hunt for the deer that run here and there
And there he espied Robin Hood.
Aye, and there he espied Robin Hood.

What a fellow art thou? quoth bold Robin Hood,
And what is thy business here?
For now, to be brief, thou dost look like a thief
And I come for to steal the king's deer.
Aye etc.

No, I am the keeper of this parish
The king hath a-put me in trust;
And therefore I pray thee to get on thy way
Or else to upstand thee I must.

'Tis thou must have more partakers in store
Before thou upstand me in deed,
For I have a staff, he is made of ground gaffe
And I warrant he'll do my deed.

And I have another, quoth bold Robin Hood,
He's made of an oaken tree,
He's eight foot and a half and would knock down a calf
And why shouldn't a' knock down thee?

Let us measure our staves, says bold Robin Hood
Before we begin and away,
If by half a foot mine should be longer than thine
Then that should be counted foul play.

Then at it they went, for bang, for bang,
The space of two hours or more.
Every blow they swung makes the grove to ring
And they play their game so sure.

Then bold Robin Hood drew forth bugle horn,
And he blew it both loud and shrill,
And direct thereupon he espied Little John
Come running a-down the hill.

O what is the matter? then said Little John
You are not doing well, he said.
O, says bold Robin Hood, here's a tanner so good
And I warrant he's tanned my hide.

If he's such a tanner, then says Little John,
A tanner that tans so true,
We'll make-a no doubt but we'll have a fresh bout
And I warrant he'll tan my hide too.

That thing shall not be, says Bold Robin Hood,
For he is a hero so bold,
For he has best play'd, he is master of his trade
And by no man shall he be controll'd.

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