

Original Text

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Robin Hood's Fishing

In summer time, when the leaves grow green,
When they do grow both green and long,
Robin Hood that bold outlaw
It is of him I sing my song.

"The thrassle cock and nightengaal
Do chaunt and sing with merry good cheer;
I am weary of the woods," said hee,
"And chasing of the fallow deer.

"The fisher-man more mony hath
Then any marchant two or three;
Therefore I will to Scarborough go
And there a fisher-man will bee."

Hee cald together his weight men all,
To whom he gave or meat or fee,
Paid them their wage for halfe a year,
Well told in gold and good monie.

"If any of you lack mony to spend
If your occasions lie to speake with mee,
If every you chance to Scarburrough com,
Aske for Symon of the Lee."

Hee tooke his leave there of them all,
It was upon a holy day;
Hee took up his inn at a widdows house,
Which stood nigh to the waters gray.

"From whence came thou, thou fine fellow,
A gentleman thou seemist to bee."
"I'th contrey, dame, where I came from
They call me Symon of the Lee."

"Gen they call the Symon of the Lee,

I wish well may thou brook thy name.”
The outlaw knew his courtesie,
And so replied “Gramercy, dame.”

“Symon,” quoth shee, “wilt bee my man,
I’le give to thee both meat and fee.”
“By th’Masse, dame,” bold Robin said,
“I’le sarve yea well for years three.”

“I have a good a shipp,” then she said,
“As any goes upon the sea.
“Anchors and plancks thou shalt want none
Nor masts nor ropes to furnish thee.

“Oars nor sayle thou shalt no want,
Nor hooks faile to thy lines so long.”
“By my truth, dame,” quoth Symon then,
“I weat ther’s nothing shall go wrang.”

They hoyst up sayle and forth did hale
Merrylie they went to sea.
Till they came to th’appoynted place
Where all the fish taken should bee.

Every man bayted his line
And in the sea they did him throw;
Symon lobb’d in his lines twain
But neither got great nor smaw.

Then bespake the companie,
“Symon’s part will bee but small.”
“By my throth,” quoth the master man,
“I thinke he will get none at all.

“What dost thou heer thou long luske,
What the fiend dost thou upon the sea.
Thou hast begger’d the widow of Scarburrough,
I weat for her and her children three.”

Still every day they bayted their lines
And in the sea they did then lay,
But Symon he scrap’d his broad arrows,
I weat he suned them every day.

“Were I under Plumpton Parke,” said hee,
“There among my fellows all,

Look so little you sett by mee,
I'd sett by yee twiyce as small.

“Heigh ho,” quoth Symon then,
“Farewell to the green leaves on the tree,
Were I in Plumpton Parke againe,
A fisher-man I nare would bee.”

Every man had fish enough,
The shipp was laden to passe home.
“Fish as you will,” quoth good Symon,
“I weat for fishes I have none.”

They weyd up ankere, away did sayle,
More of one day then two or three,
But they were awar of a French robber
Coming toward them most desperatly.

“Wo is me,” said the master man,
“Alas, that ever I was borne,
For all the fish that wee have tane,
Alas the day, ‘tis all forlorne.

“For all the gold that I have tane
For the losse of my fish I do not care,
For wee shall prisoners into France,
Not a man of us that they will spare.”

Symon staggerd to the hatches high,
Never a foot that he could stand.
“I would gladly give three hundred pounds
For one three hundred foot of land.”

Quoth Symon, “Then do not them dread,
Neither master do you fear.
Give me my bent bow in my hand,
And not a Frenchman I will spare.”

“Hold thy peace thou long lubber,
For thou canst nought but bragg and bost
If I should cast thee over boord,
There were nothing but a lubber lost.”

Quoth Symon, “Ty me to the main mast
That at my marke I may stand fare,
Give me my bent bow in my hand

And not a Frenchman I will spare.”

They bound him fast to the main mast tree,
They bound Symon hard and seare,
They gave him a bent bow into his hand,
And not a French man he would spare.

“Whom shall I shoot at, thou master man,
For God’s love speake the man to mee.”
“Shoot at the steersman of yon shippe,
Thou long luske now let me see.”

Symon he took his noble bow,
An arrow that was both larg and long;
The neerest way to the steersmans heart,
The broad arrow it did gang.

He fell from the hatches high
From the hatches he fell downe below,
Another took him by the heels,
And into the sea he did him throw.

Then quickly took the helme in hand,
And steerd the shipp most gallantly,
“By my truth,” quod good Symon then,
“The same fate shall follow thee.”

Symon took his noble bow
And arrow which was both straight and long,
The neerest way to the Frenchman’s heart
The swallow tayle he gard gang.

He fell from the hatches high
From the hatches he fell downe below,
Another took him by the heele,
And into the sea did him throw.

The shipp was tossed up and downe
Not one durst venture her to steer,
The Scarborough men were very faine
When they saw that robber durst not com near.

“Com up maser,” Symon said,
“Two shoots have I shott for thee.
All the rest are for myself,
This day for Gods love merry be.”

“Gods blessing on thy fingers, Symon,” he said
“For weel I see thou hast good skill;
Gods blessing on thy noble heart,
Who hast employed thy bow so weele.

“I vow for fish thou shalt want none,
The best share, Symon, Ile give thee,
And I shall pray thee, good Symon,
Thou do not take thy marke by mee.”

“I had thirty arrows by my side,
I thinke I had thirty and three,
Thers not an arrow shall go to waste,
But through a French heart it shall flee.

“Lose me from the mast,” he said,
“The pitch ropes they do pinch me sare,
Give me a good sword in my hand,
Feind a French man I will spare.”

Together have the two shipp run
The fisher and the waryer free.
Symon borded the noble shipp
Found never a man alive but three.

He took a lampe unto his hand
The ship he searched by the light,
He found within that shipp of war
Twelve hundred pounds in gold so bright.

“Com up, master,” Symon said
“This day for God’s love merry bee,
How shall we share this noble shipp,
I pray thee master, tell to me.”

“By my troth,” quoth the masterman,
“Symon, good counsell Ile give thee:
Thou won’t the shipp with thine owne hands,
And master of it thou shalt bee.”

“One half,” quoth Symon, “of this shipp,
Ile deal among my fellows all;
The other halfe I freely give
Unto my dame and her children small.

“And if it chance to bee my lott,
That I shall get but well to land,
Ile therefore build a chappell good,
And it shall stand on Whitby strand.

“And there Ile keep a priest to sing
The masse untill the day I dye.
If Robin Hood com once on shore,
Hee com no more upon the see.”