Robin Hood's Golden Prize

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I HAVE heard talk of bold Robin Hood,
Derry derry down
And of brave Little John,
Of Fryer Tuck, and Will Scarlet,
Loxley, and Maid Marion.
Hey down derry derry down

But such a tale as this before
I think there was never none;
For Robin Hood disguised himself,
And to the wood is gone.

Like to a fryer, bold Robin Hood
Was accoutered in his array;
With hood, gown, beads and cricifix,
He past upon the way.

He had not gone past miles two or three,
But it was his chance to spy
Two lusty priests, clad all in black,
Come riding gallantly.

`Benedicete,' then said Robin Hood,
`Some pitty on me take;
Cross you my hand with a silver groat,
For Our dear Ladies sake.

`For I have been wandring all this day,
And nothing could I get;
Not so much as one poor cup of drink,
Nor bit of bread to eat.'

`Now, by my holydame,' the priests repli'd,
`We never a peny have;
For we this morning have been robd,
And could no mony save.'

`I am much afraid,' said bold Robin Hood,
`That you both do tell a lye;
And now before that you go hence,
I am resolvd to try.'

When as the priests heard him say so,
Then they rode away amain;
But Robin Hood betook him to his heels,
And soon overtook them again.

Then Robin Hood laid hold of them both,
And pulld them down from their horse:
`O spare us, fryer!' the priests cry'd out,
`On us have remorse!'

`You said you had no mony,' quoth he,
`Wherefore, without delay,
We three will fall down on our knees,
And for mony we will pray.'

The priests they could not him gainsay,
But down they kneeled with speed;
`Send us, O send us,' then quoth they,
`Some mony to serve our need.'

The priests did pray with mournful chear,
Sometimes their hands did wring,
Sometimes they wept and cried aloud,
Whilst Robin did merrily sing.

When they had been praying an hours space,
The priests did still lament;
Then quoth bold Robin, Now let's see
What mony heaven hath us sent.

We will be sharers now all alike
Of the mony that we have;
And there is never a one of us
That his fellows shall deceive.

The priests their hands in their pockets put,
But mony would find none:
`We'l search our selves,' said Robin Hood,
`Each other, one by one.'

Then Robin took pains to search them both,
And he found good store of gold;
Five hundred peeces presently
Vpon the grass was told.

`Here is a brave show,' said Robin Hood,
`Such store of gold to see,
And you shall each one have a part,
Cause you prayed so heartily.'

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He gave them fifty pound a-peece,
And the rest for himself did keep;
The priests durst not speak one word,
Bur they sighed wondrous deep.

With that the priests rose up from their knees,
Thinking to have parted so;
`Nay, stay,' said Robin Hood, 'one thing more
I have to say ere you go.

`You shall be sworn,' said bold Robin Hood,
`Vpon this holy grass,
That you will never tell lies again,
Which way soever you pass.

`The second oath that you here must take,
All the days of your lives
You never shall tempt maids to sin,
Nor lye with other mens wives.

`The last oath you shall take, it is this,
Be charitable to the poor;
Say you have met with a holy fryer,
And I desire no more.'

He set them upon their horses again,
And away then they did ride;
And hee returnd to the merry green-wood,
With great joy, mirth and pride.

Child #147
Version from Child
LMP
July01

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