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Title: How Robin Hood Once Was a Wait: A Miracle Play or Christmas Masque

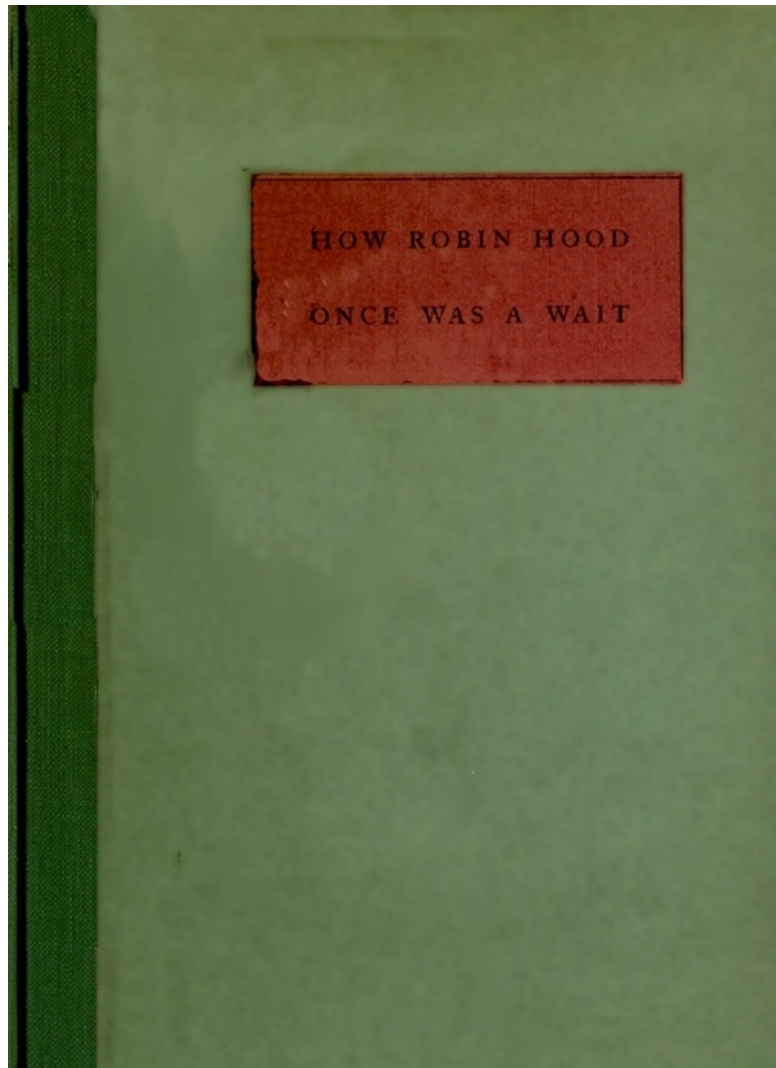
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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HOW ROBIN HOOD ONCE WAS A WAIT: A MIRACLE PLAY OR CHRISTMAS MASQUE \*\*\*



HOW  
ROBIN HOOD ONCE WAS A WAIT

A MIRACLE PLAY  
OR  
CHRISTMAS MASQUE

By  
ROWLAND GIBSON HAZARD

ACTED AT PEACE DALE  
ON  
CHRISTMAS EVE  
1910



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1912

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BY  
R. G. HAZARD

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*To  
The Boys and Girls of Peace Dale—  
the hope of the future*

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This little sketch was prepared very hurriedly in order to give scope to the volunteer efforts of certain of the younger members of the community who had undertaken to provide the entertainment for the Christmas celebration of 1910 of the Peace Dale Congregational Sunday School.

After looking patiently and long for something which they could act for the entertainment of their fellows, they despaired of finding anything they would like.

In their dilemma they appealed to me, saying that their principal desire was to introduce the singing of Christmas carols in some way not too commonplace.

The characters were taken by inexperienced actors who, nevertheless, presented the masque in a very genuine and convincing manner.

The whole time of action was about thirty-five minutes, including the singing of the Christmas carols. I was urged to amplify the action, in order to somewhat prolong the part played by Robin Hood and his men, but, after some effort in this direction, I gave it up, as the principal merit of the masque seemed to me to be its brevity.

Several friends have urged its preservation in print in the hope that it may prove suggestive or useful to others in like predicament.

R. G. H.

Peace Dale, R. I.,  
July 16, 1912.

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#### LIST OF PERSONS

ROBIN HOOD  
LONG JOHN  
FRIAR TUCK  
WATT  
WILL SCARLETT  
One or two others

WAIT (leader)  
FIDDLER  
CELLO  
CLARINET  
SINGERS—as many as may be

WIDOW  
Eight to twelve children less than fourteen years old

SANTA CLAUS

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#### COSTUMES

Robin Hood—If possible, in a close-fitting green, buttoned to the throat.

Long John—In old clothes, with leggings. With a bow and arrows, one arrow stuck in belt. (None of Robin's men show shirts or collars.)

Watt—Has a bow. Should be a very short man.

Friar Tuck—In a friar's robe, with girdle, holding in his hand a big soup spoon with which he beats time while singing.

Will Scarlett—Also with a bow, but no arrows.

Waits—Waits dressed poorly, as is the custom. Rather ragged clothes.

Widow—With a cap and kerchief and apron. Woollen dress cut full.

Children—Dressed in school clothes, as old as may be.

Santa Claus—Red coat, white trimming. Red cap, white trimming. White beard.

## A CHRISTMAS MASQUE

How Robin Hood once was a Wait

(Curtain rising discloses a wood scene. In center a small house. Snow falls. Robin Hood and his merry men advance from left wings, one singing the XIII Century Rondo)—

King Arthur had three sons, that he had;  
King Arthur had three sons, that he had;  
He had three sons of yore, and he kicked them out of door  
Because they could not sing, that he did.

Chorus—the same.

(Repeat singing.)

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Robin—Well, lads, ye've fed full this day,  
So 'tis well to be gay;

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In spite of the weather  
Let's merry be together.

Yon house stuffed with babes  
Deserves a kind deed,  
But we've nothing to give them,  
Tho 'tis Christmas, as all are agreed.

(The Waits enter from right, tuning instruments and show fear of Robin's men, who advance threateningly towards them.)

Robin (hectoring)—And who gave ye leave to break the mighty silence of our wood?

Wait (deprecatingly)—Softly, Kind Master, we be but simple singers come to joy yon lonely widow with songs of Christmas-tide.

Robin—Singers, idle and vain, we'll have ye know 'tis death to enter here without our license.

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Waits—We be waits, good sir, and have ever license to sing the birth of Christ our Lord, born this day.

Robin (scornfully)—And what be waits?

Wait (with solemnity)—We wait upon the coming of our Lord, Son of Mary and Heaven's Almighty King. And while we patient wait, we sing.

Robin (appeased)—Waits, that's better, and who gave word of this widow and her dozen brats?

Wait—My fiddler here is cousin to the widow's dead man.

[pg 14

Robin (relenting)—What says't thou, Long John and Watt and Jolly Tuck, how would ye like to join this band of Waits for once and sing like Christians to the widow's brats?

Tuck (deep bass)—Ay, 't would be well for once to use the lore I once knew well. I'll go.

Long John—I'll go.

Watt—I'll go, but I can only buzz.

(They advance together towards house grouping towards right, leaving house in full view of audience, who see many children at a lighted window, but not one looking out.)

(They sing after more tuning of instruments)—

Good King Wenceslas.

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1.

Good King Wenceslas looked out  
On the Feast of Stephen,  
When the snow lay round about,  
Deep and crisp, and even;  
Brightly shone the moon that night,  
Though the frost was cruel,  
When a poor man came in sight,  
Gathering winter fuel.

2.

"Hither, page, and stand by me,  
If thou know'st, telling,  
Yonder peasant, who is he?  
Where and what his dwelling?"  
"Sire, he lives a good league hence,  
Underneath the mountain;  
Right against the forest fence,  
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

3.

[pg 16

"Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,  
Bring me pine-logs hither;  
Thou and I will see him dine,  
When we bear them thither."  
Page and monarch forth they went,  
Forth they went together;  
Through the rude wind's wild lament;  
And the bitter weather.

4.

"Sire, the night is darker now,  
And the wind blows stronger;  
Fails my heart, I know not how,  
I can go no longer."  
Mark my footsteps, my good page  
Tread thou in them boldly;  
Thou shalt find the winter's rage  
Freeze thy blood less coldly.

5.

[pg 17

In his master's steps he trod,  
Where the snow lay dinted;  
Heat was in the very sod  
Which the saint had printed.  
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,  
Wealth or rank possessing,  
Ye who now will bless the poor,  
Shall yourselves find blessing.

The First Noël.

1.

The first Noël the Angel did say,  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,

Chorus.

Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël,  
Born is the King of Israel.

2.

They looked up and saw a Star,  
Shining in the East, beyond them far,  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
And so it continued both day and night.

Noël, etc.

3.

And by the light of that same Star,  
Three Wisemen came from country far;  
To seek for a King was their intent,  
And to follow the Star wherever it went.

Noël, etc.

4.

[pg 19]

This Star drew nigh to the north-west,  
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,  
And there it did both stop and stay,  
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

Noël, etc.

5.

Then entered in those Wisemen three,  
Full reverently upon their knee,  
And offered there, in His Presence,  
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

Noël, etc.

6.

Then let us all with one accord,  
Sing praises to our Heavenly Lord,  
That hath made Heaven and earth of nought,  
And with His Blood mankind hath bought.

Noël, etc.

[pg 20]

God Rest You, Merry Gentlemen.

(Old English Noël.)

1.

God rest you, merry gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
Remember Christ our Saviour  
Was born on Christmas Day,  
To save us all from Satan's power,  
When we were gone astray;

Chorus

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

In Bethlehem, in Jewry,  
 This blessed Babe was born,  
 And laid within a manger,  
 Upon this blessed morn;  
 The which His Mother, Mary,  
 Did nothing take in scorn.

O tidings, etc.

3.

From God our Heavenly Father,  
 A blessed Angel came;  
 And unto certain Shepherds  
 Brought tidings of the same:  
 How that in Bethlehem was born  
 The Son of God by Name.

O tidings, etc.

4.

[pg 22]

Now to the Lord sing praises,  
 All you within this place,  
 And with true love and brotherhood  
 Each other now embrace;  
 This holy tide of Christmas  
 All other doth deface.

O tidings, etc.

(At second carol, the children come out with half-eaten apples and oaten cake, to stand listening to the singing. The children mingle with the waits and offer them bites of their apples, etc. The widow comes out with a big steaming pot of mead to thank the waits. Offers pot. Robin's men each try to take first drink. Robin stops quarrel and hands it to Tuck, who drinks hastily, and so burns his mouth.)

Widow—Oh! kind gentlemen, bless your hearts for this. It's many a year since I heard the sound of a Christmas carol. It does my old heart good. Bless ye, bless ye.

[pg 23]

(Describes the fiddler cousin, falls on his shoulder, and makes talk of his family—*sotto voce*.)

(Robin's men draw off and sing again)—

King Arthur had three sons, that he had.

(A basket lowered from above with Santa Claus in it begins to appear to the audience. No one on stage sees it. Santa Claus reaches out and taps Robin on the head, smartly, with a bit of rope. Knocks off his hat.)

Robin (terrified)—Saints preserve us. Who smote me?

(Sees balloon. Points to it. All cry out in alarm.)

Robin—An air-man; a Miracle! The day of miracles!

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Santa Claus (intones high tenor voice)—Fear not, except for thy sins. I came to hear; what music was it ye sang?—Nay be not affrighted—I'll e'en stand among ye. So shall ye see I bode no ill.

(Alights from his car.)

Robin—Canst fly? How else cam'st hither? Truly a Miracle art thou.

Santa Claus—No Miracle am I, but the dear Christ's Almoner; who comes this night and every Christmas-tide bearing gifts for all good children and a good gift for all, even Jesus' love and

Praise God for this and all good deeds, and by such shall these wild hearts (turns to Robin's men) learn gentle love for all mankind.

(Exit. Robin leads his men, exit to right. Waits follow.)

Santa Claus—And now, good people all, take note of Music; see how she sways rough men and brings the good that's in us all to turn them into better paths. King Arthur did quite right to those three sons who would not sing.

I've brought ye Xmas joys  
For all good girls and boys.  
I command ye all to sing  
In praise of our Lord King;  
The Prince of Peace and God of Love  
Who sitteth on the throne above.

[pg 26]

(Exit in balloon-basket upwards, leaving baskets of presents on stage.)

(Audience rises and sings)—

Adeste Fideles.

O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyfully triumphant,  
To Bethlehem hasten now with glad accord;  
Lo! in a manger  
Sits the King of angels;

:|| O come, let us adore Him, ||:  
Christ the Lord.

Raise, raise, choirs of angels!  
Songs of loudest triumph,  
Thro' heavens' high arches be your praises pour'd;  
Now to our God be,  
Glory in the highest;

[pg 27]

:|| O come, let us adore Him, ||:  
Christ the Lord.

Amen! Lord, we bless Thee,  
Born for our salvation,  
O Jesus, forever be Thy Name adored;  
Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing;

:|| O come, let us adore Him, ||:  
Christ the Lord.

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### Transcriber Notes:

Throughout the dialogues, there were words used to mimic accents of the speakers. Those words were retained as-is.

Errors in punctuation and inconsistent hyphenation were not corrected unless otherwise noted.



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