

## SCENE I

*The greenwood. Background of trees and bushes. Robin Hood and his men – a dozen or so – are furbishing up their weapons and generally busying themselves, some sitting, some standing. Little John, near Robin Hood, is whistling cheerfully and occasionally stealing sidelong glances at his master, who looks gloomy.*

*Little John.* This is a merry morn, I trow,  
Beneath the greenwood tree;  
There is no merrier man than I  
In Christianity.  
Pluck up thy heart, my master dear,  
And wipe thy frowns away;  
And think it is a full fair time  
This blessed month of May.

*Robin Hood.* Yet one thing grieves me, Little John,  
And brings my heart much woe,  
That I may not one Sabbath day  
To church with others go.  
It is a fortnight now and more  
Since there I chanced to be  
[*With decision.*] To-day will I to Nottingham  
And none shall hinder me!

*Much.* Take twelve, then, of thy yeomen too,  
Well weaponed by thy side,  
Who might thy life attempt alone  
The twelve would not abide.

*Robin Hood [firmly].* Of all these merry men of mine  
Not one with me shall go;  
But Little John for company  
To bear my good crossbow.

*Little John.* Nay, Master, thou shalt bear thine own,  
And mine I'll bear with me;  
And at a feather we will shoot  
Beneath the greenwood tree.  
[*Sets up feather as target.*]

*Robin Hood.* Nay, at no feather will I shoot,  
Good Little John, with thee;  
But for every one that thou may'st hit,  
I'm sure I can hit three.

[*Little John shoots several times and hits the feather with every shot. He turns triumphantly to Robin.*]

*Little John.* So have I hit the mark each time,  
Now, Master, thou must try;  
I wager thou'll not hit the mark,