Alfred Noyes (1880-1959)

5 "Will Shakespeare's out like Robin Hood"

I. Will Shakespeare's out like Robin Hood With his merry men all in green, To steal a deer in Charlecote wood Where never a deer was seen.	
Where never a deer was seen. II.	
He's hunted all a night of June, He's followed a phantom horn, He's killed a buck by the light of the moon, Under a fairy thorn.	5
III. He's carried it home with his April-hearted band. There never was haunch so fine; For this buck was born in Elfin-land And fed upon sops-in-wine.	10
IV. This buck had browsed on elfin boughs Of rose-marie and bay, And he's carried it home to the little white house Of sweet Anne Hathaway.	15
V. "The dawn above your thatch is red! Slip out of your bed, sweet Anne! I have stolen a fairy buck," he said, "The first since the world began.	20

VI.

"Roast it on a golden spit,
And see that it do not burn;
For we never shall feather the like of it
Out of the fairy fern."

VII.	
She scarce had donned her long white gown	25
And given him kisses four,	
When the surly Sheriff of Stratford-town	
Knocked at the little green door.	
VIII.	
They have gaoled sweet Will for a poacher;	
But squarely he fronts the squire,	30
With "When did <i>you</i> hear in your woods of a deer?	
Was it under a fairy briar?"	
was it allast a fally briar.	
IX.	
Sir Thomas he puffs, — "If God thought good	
My water-butt ran with wine,	
Or He dropt me a buck in Charlecote wood,	35
I wot it is mine, not thine!	
X.	
"If you would eat of elfin meat,"	
Says Will, "you must blow up your horn!	
Take your bow, and feather the doe	
That's under the fairy thorn!	40
XI.	
"If <i>you</i> would feast on elfin food,	
You've only the way to learn!	
Take your bow and feather the doe	
That's under the fairy fern!"	
XII.	
They're hunting high, they're hunting low,	45
They're all away, away,	
With horse and hound to feather the doe	
That's under the fairy spray!	
XIII.	
Sir Thomas he raged! Sir Thomas he swore!	
But all and all in vain,	50
For there never was deer in his woods before,	00

And there never would be again!

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