

Borrow George

**The Verner Raven, The Count
of Vendel's Daughter, and Other
Ballads**



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THE VERNER RAVEN

The Raven he flies in the evening tide,
He in day dares not intrude;
Whoever is born to have evil luck
In vain may seek for good.

Lustily flies the Verner Raven,
High o'er the wall he's flown,
For he was aware that Irmindlin fair
Sate in her bower alone.

He southward flew, and he northward flew,
He flew high up in the cloud;
And he beheld May Irmindlin
Who sorrowing sate and sew'd.

“Now hear me, little Irmindlin,

Why weep in this piteous way?
For father or mother, or is it for brother,
That adown thy cheek tears stray?"

It was Damsel Irmindlin,
Swift out of the window looked she:
"O who is he that will comfort me,
And list to my misery?

"Hear thou, wild Raven, bird of Death,
Fly thou hither down to me;
And all my trouble and all my care
I'll straight relate to thee.

"My father gave me the son of a king,
We were fitted the one for the other,
But he was into the Austrian land
Dispatched by my cruel step-mother.

"So happily we should together have lived,
For he my whole love won;
But she wished to give me her sister's son,
Who was liker a fiend than a man.

"I had a gallant brother once,
Sir Verner by name was he,
But he was transformed by my cruel step-dame
And driven to a strange countrie."

“Hear thou, Damsel Irmindlin,
What wilt thou give me, say?
I’ll carry thee straight to thy plighted youth,
If with me thou wilt fly away.”

“Thou shalt from me the ruddy gold,
And the silver white receive;
If thou bear me to my Bridegroom bold,
And me from my woe relieve.”

“Keep thou thyself thy silver and gold,
Such gifts I do not crave;
The first son thou conceivest of him,
That, that from thee I’ll have.”

Then straight she took the Raven’s foot,
Laid that her white hand upon;
She swore to him by her Christian faith,
That he should have the son.

Then took he Damsel Irmindlin,
He placed her on his back;
Then flew he over the wild sea waves
As fast as he could track.

It was the Verner Raven wild,
On the turret he alighted:
“Now sit we, Damsel, upon the house,
Where dwells thy Bridegroom plighted.”

Out came bold Sir Nilaus,
A silver cup in his hand:
“Be welcome, Damsel Irmindlin,
Here to this foreign land!

“What shall I give to thee, Raven wild,
That hast brought to me my Bride?
No better tidings I have heard,
Since from Denmark forth I hied.”

Thanks be to brave Sir Nilaus,
He kept his faith so well;
The Monday next that followed,
His bridal it befell.

They their bridal solemnised
With glee and utmost joy;
When forty weeks away had flown
She brought into the world a boy.

It was the Verner Raven,
Perched on the turret tall:
“What thou did'st promise me, Irmindlin,
To thy mind I'd have thee call.”

So sorely she wept, and her hands she smote,
Because it a girl was not:
“Thee shall the wild Death Raven have,

That will cost thee thy life, I wot!”

There came flying over the house
The Raven, with looks to scare;
So sorely then wept both Maidens and Dames,
And their hands wrung in despair.

Sir Nilaus went, and proffered the bird
Proud castles many a one;
He proffered him even the half of his land
If he only might keep his son.

“If I get not the little babe,
Thou sorely shall rue it straight,
Thee I limb from limb will tear
And thy kingdom devastate.”

She has taken the babe, and in linen white
Hath wrapped it tenderly;
“Farewell, farewell, my dearest son,
Thou owest thy death to me.”

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