

Borrow George

The Mermaid's Prophecy



George Borrow

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The Mermaid's Prophecy / and Other Songs Relating to Queen Dagmar

I. KING VALDEMAR'S WOOING

Valdemar King and Sir Strange bold
At table sat one day,
So many a word 'twixt them there passed
In amicable way.

“Hear Strange, hear! thou for a time
Thy native land must leave;
Thou shalt away to Bohemia far
My young bride to receive.”

Then answered Strange Ebbesen,
To answer he was not slow:
“Who shall attend me of thy liegemen,
If I to Bohemia go?”

“Do thou take with thee young Lord Limbek,
Nor leave Olaf Lukke behind;
Take rich Peter Glob, and whomsoe'er
Shall best please thine own mind.

“Take Sealand's Bishop, none more learned
There dwelleth North nor South,
And take Sir Albert of Eskilsea,
There's eloquence in his mouth.”

It was the young Sir Strange bold,
He down to the sea shore wends,
And him King Valdemar himself
With nobles many attends.

And they sailed over the briny wave,
They sailed for sennights three,
The nearest way to Bohemia's bounds,
They were at heart so free.

They furled their sail, and their anchor dropped,
To the land they eagerly sped;
So fair a band of knights they were,
Sir Strange at their head.

When a little up the land they'd won
They dispatched their messenger,
Should tell to Bohemia's prince that they
The Dane-king's envoys were.

And to speak with him in secrecy
On a matter of weight they sought;
Then silk upon the earth was spread,
And before the King they were brought.

"Hail to thee, King of Bohemian Land,
Thou sittest a prince in state;
To you sends Valdemar, Denmark's King,
With your daughter he would mate."

"Take napkins, Sirs, and water take,
Sit down at our table board;
We bid ye welcome to our land,
Fit answer we'll award."

To the bower high the monarch sped,
His Queen's advice to take:
"Nobles are here from Denmark come,
And suit for our daughter make."

"If Valdemar, King of Denmark's land,
For our dear daughter woo,
We'll give her to the powerful man,
And precious dowry too."

They decked her with the ruddy gold,
And her to the hall convey'd;
Sir Strange the knight, so fair and fine,
A low obeisance made.

They clad her in the silken vest,
And her to the hall conveyed:
"Here mayst thou see the princess self
In her graces all arrayed."

Then they bore in the playing board,
Was wroughten all of gold;
Sir Strange should with the princess play,
And private converse hold.

The third game they together played
Upon that red gold board,
Sir Strange won the noble maid

For Valdemar his lord.

So deep 'twas getting in the night,
From tables they should rise,
Sir Strange must the princess bed,
Sir Strange bold and wise.

Then they the Damsel attend to bed
To the valiant cavalier,
Sir Strange with respectful grace
Arose when she drew near.

“Now on your honour and knightly truth,
Sir Strange tell to me:
Whether the King of your Danish land
Be handsome or not to see?”

Then answer made Sir Strange good,
Looked up to the star-lit sky:
“By the Saints above, the King of our love
Is handsomer twice than I.”

They spread the silk upon the earth,
And the princess led to the strand,
To her parents dear, she bade good-night,
And away they bore from land.

It was the good Bohemian King
To advising his daughter fell:
“Think, think my child, on honor and fame
When thou in Denmark dwell.

“Pious and virtuous, kind and good,
To prove thyself essay
To thy subjects all, for thus wilt thou
Become their hope and stay.”

The nobles steered their ship from the land,
No cares their hearts oppress,
And they the land of Denmark made
In two months tide and less.

It was the beauteous Dagmar Queen
Before Mando neared the land,
And lo! the bold King of Denmark rode
His courser on the sand.

“Tell me, Sir Strange Ebbesen,
Ere we come nearer land,

What squinting fellow 'tis who rides
So brisk on the yellow sand?"

"Be welcome, beauteous Dagmar Queen,
Speak thereabout no word;
For know 'tis Valdemar of Denmark,
Of kingdoms three the lord.

"My gracious liege, lady Dagmar fair,
Of princes he's the flower,
He castles has, and fortresses,
Three kingdoms own his power."

"Shame, shame befall thee, Strange dog,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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