

Borrow George

The Mermaid's Prophecy



George Borrow
The Mermaid's Prophecy

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=23163299
The Mermaid's Prophecy / and Other Songs Relating to Queen Dagmar:*

Содержание

I. KING VALDEMAR'S WOOING	4
II. QUEEN DAGMAR'S ARRIVAL IN DENMARK	12
III. THE MERMAID'S PROPHECY	16
ROSMER	20

George Borrow

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,
How loudly thou canst lie;
Methinks your boasted Danish King
Has only got one eye.”

“My lovely Dame, a warrior he,
And the best beneath the sun;
He back to Denmark all the land
Benorth Ebb’s stream has won.

“A man is he, and a prince full wise,

In the face dares look his foes;
They fly before him both East and West,
When he with fury glows.

“Who others life and land will risk
And prove war’s pastime fell,
If a prince of blood and courageous mood
Will risk himself as well?

“And do thou hear, my lovely maid,
Be cheerful and content,
For ne’er so long as thou shalt live
This step thou shalt repent.

“And all the time that thou shalt live
Your servant I will be,
And Denmark’s gallant nobles all
Shall bow to thee their knee.”

So they their bridal solemnized
Beneath a lucky star;
So heartily one another loved
Soon Valdemar and Dagmar.

There was rejoicing with great and small,
With rich men and with poor,
But boors and burgers most of all
Rejoiced from their heart’s core.

She came not to burden, she came in peace,
To ease the good boor she came;
If Denmark aye such flowers had
She dearly would prize the same!

The love of every Danish heart
The good Queen Dagmar gained;
Such happy pleasant days there were
Whilst she alive remained.

II. QUEEN DAGMAR'S ARRIVAL IN DENMARK

It was Bohemia's Queen began

Her daughter to direct:

"They'll show thee, when thou to Denmark come,
Much honor and respect.

"And when respect and honor thou win

In Denmark's land of fame,

Let not the boors be with tax opprest,
Thus will they bless thy name.

"Be the first boon thou of thy lord dost crave,

Of thy lord so fair and kind,

That he release Bishop Valdemar,
His uncle, who sits confin'd."

And there was silk and scarlet cloth

Upon the earth outspread;

'Twas Dagmar, the youthful princess fair,
To the strand that down was led.

They hoisted up their silken sails

On the gilded yard so high,

And they in less than two months space

Old Denmark could descry.

Before Mando they anchor cast,
They cast it on the white sand;
They took the princess Dagmar fair
And bore her first to land.

They took the youthful Dagmar fair
And bore her first to land;
'Twas Valdemar King of Denmark old
That stretched to her his hand.

Then there was silk, and scarlet cloth,
So wide on the earth outspread;
On Dagmar wait both Dames and maids,
To Ribe house she was led.

So early in the morning tide
Ere the sun illumed the lift,
'Twas young and beauteous Dagmar Queen
That craved her morning gift.

“The first, first boon that I crave of thee,
My heart's beloved lord,
Let Bishop Valdemar leave his tower
And be to his friends restor'd.

“The second boon I most earnestly crave,
Nor must thou that refuse,

Take off from each plough the tax that's on,
And from prison the captives loose."

"Desist, desist from thy first prayer,
Desist, my Dagmar dear,
If Valdemar Bishop come but out,
He'll widow thee in a year."

She took the gold crown off her brow,
On the table that she set:
"O what shall I do in Denmark, now
My request denial has met?"

"Straight fetch to me hither Sir Strange knight,
And Younker Canute to me call,
They shall away to Oringsdorg
And the prisoners free from thrall."

And when from the tower forth he came
Nor walk nor stand he mought:
"Therein for full twelve years I sat,
So long the time I thought."

A golden comb his sister took,
And combed his yellow hair;
For every lock of his she smoothed
She shed a briny tear.

"And do thou hear, dear sister mine,

Ne'er sorrow for my sake;
If I one single year survive
I'll well my wrongs ywrake."

"O hush, Bishop Valdemar! nor let
Thy fury o'er thee reign;
Comst thou once more into Seaborough tower,
We ne'er shall meet again."

But the Bishop could not stifle his wrath,
So the land he was forced to quit;
It grieved Queen Dagmar to the heart,
That he showed so little wit.

There was great joy over all Denmark
That Dagmar for Queen they had got;
Lived burger and boor in peace without
The plague of plough-tax and scot.

Christ bless the youthful Athelings two,
And lengthen their vital span,
That justice they may, and equity,
Do long in sight of man!

III. THE MERMAID'S PROPHECY

The King he has caught the fair mermaid, and deep
 (*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
In the dungeon has placed her, to pine and to weep,
 Because his will she had not done.

The Queen of the Danes addressed two of her band:
 (*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
“To come to my presence the mermaid command,
 For my will by her it shall be done.”

The mermaid came in, to the Queen she up went:
 (*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
“What wilt thou, O Queen, that for me thou hast sent?
 By me thy will can never be done.”

The Queen the blue cushion stroked down with a smile:
 (*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
“Sit down pretty mermaid and rest thee awhile,
 My will by thee must now be done.”

“Why seek'st thou, O Queen, to betray my young life?
 (*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
For under that cushion is stuck a sharp knife,
 By me thy will can never be done.”

“If thou knowest that, then much more thou dost know,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
So do thou my destiny unto me show,
And thus by thee shall my will be done.”

“If I should thy destiny to thee announce,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
On a fire of faggots thoud’st burn me at once!
By me unwilling your will is done.

“Three babes thou shalt bear, each a beautiful boy,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
And in leaving thy womb they thy life shall destroy,
And thus fair Queen thy will is done.”

“If with me, luckless me, it no better shall speed,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
Inform me what fortune for them is decreed,
For thus by thee can my will be done.”

“The first shall be King in old Denmark of them,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
The next shall succeed to the gold diadem,
By me can thus thy will be done.

“The third as the wisest of mortals shall shine,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
And for him thou art doomed thy young life to resign,

Thus all your will, fair Queen, I've done."

In her mantle of azure the Queen wrapt her head,
(The mermaid dances the floor upon)
And unto the hall to the Monarch she sped,
For she her will had fairly done.

"Now hear my entreaty, my heart's belov'd Lord,
(The mermaid dances the floor upon)
To my own disposal this mermaid award,
For she my will has fairly done."

"I'll not give her thee, nor her life shalt thou save,
(The mermaid dances the floor upon)
For my seven brave vessels she swamped in the wave,
My pleasure thus she has not done."

Black, black as a clod grew the Queen at that word,
(The mermaid dances the floor upon)
And down she fell senseless before the King's board,
Because her will she had fairly clone.

"My Queen and my dearest! thy heart shall not break,
(The mermaid dances the floor upon)
Thou art free to the strand the fair mermaid to take,
Because thy will she has fairly done."

The mermaid in scarlet so fine she array'd,
(The mermaid dances the floor upon)

Although she had heard her own death by her speed,
For thus, for thus, her will she'd done.

The Queen gave command to the maids in her train:

(The mermaid dances the floor upon)

“Convey ye the mermaid hence down to the main,
For she my will has fairly done.”

Upon the blue billows the mermaid they place,

(The mermaid dances the floor upon)

The Queen fell to weeping, and sad was each face,
For she her will, alack! had done.

“O prythee don't weep, and O prythee don't grieve,

(The mermaid dances the floor upon)

Heaven's portals stand open thy soul to receive,
Now I thy will have fairly done.

“In the mansions of Heaven thou aye shalt remain,

(The mermaid dances the floor upon)

And there perfect quiet and rest thou shalt gain —
Now all thy will, fair Queen, I've done!”

ROSMER

Buckshank bold, and Elfinstone,
And more than I can mention here.
They caused to be built so stout a ship,
And unto Iceland they will steer.

They launched the ship upon the sea,
Which bellowed like a wrathful bear;
Down to the bottom the vessel sank,
A laidly Troid has dragged it there.

Sank to the bottom the young Roland,
And round about he groped awhile.
Until he found the path which led
Unto the bower of Ellenlile.

Young Roland towards the mountain goes,
He saw the little sparkles fly:
“Betide whate’er the Lord God will
I here will house me verily.”

Young Roland into the mountain went,
Benumbed with cold his limbs they shook:
“What dost thou here, thou wretched man,
On whom the Lord with pity look?”

Then up and spoke Dame Ellenlile:
“Young swain why hither hast thou come?
What message hast thou brought to me?
Thou’dst better far have staid at home.

“Now hie thee to the chamber in,
So frozen and so wet withal;
But cometh Rosmer Giant home
He’ll tear thee into pieces small.

“Now sit thee down, thou wretched lad,
And at the fire thy body cheer;
If Rosmer Giant come striding in
He’ll stick thee on this spit, I fear.”

Then home came Rosmer Shank-stretcher,
And thus in anger he began:
“Full certainly there’s hither come
Some Christian woman, child, or man.”

Then forward stepped she, Ellenlile,
And swore so high and solemnly:
“A crow which bore a dead man’s leg
E’en now across the house did fly.

“A crow which bore a dead man’s leg
Just now across our house did fly;
He cast it in, I cast it out,

And that I trow full speedily.”

But Rosmer shrieked and sprang about:

“Some Christian wight thou dost conceal,
And I will spit and burn thee, Dame,
Unless the truth thou dost reveal.”

Then Ellenlile her mantle donned,

And went and stood by Rosmer’s knee:
“O here’s a swain from Iceland come,
And he’s of nearest kin to me.”

“If there’s a swain from Iceland come,
And if he be thy kinsman near,
Then I to him will safety pledge,
No harm from me he need to fear.”

When he two years in the sea had been,
Young Roland he would fain be gone;
For Ellenlile was now with child,
A deed of folly had been done.

When that perceived proud Ellenlile,
Near Rosmer King she took her stand:
“Now wilt thou give the stranger lad
Leave to return to his own land?”

“And if the swain for home doth long,
Then I will take him to the shore;

And I will give him silver and gold,
And in a coffer it will store.

And so he took the ruddy gold,
And in a coffer it he laid;
Unknown to him proud Ellenlile
So sly therein herself convey'd.

He takes the man beneath his arm,
The coffer on his back he throws;
Then away, away beneath the salt spray
Striding the Giant Rosmer goes.

“Now have I brought thee to the land,
And moon and sun thou canst behold;
And now to use as thou shalt chuse
I give this coffer filled with gold.”

“I thank thee, Rosmer, honest man,
Thou’st brought me out of the ocean wild;
And now I’ll tell thee a piece of news,
The proud Dame Ellen is with child.”

Then ran the tears down Rosmer’s cheeks,
As falls the dew on hill and plain:
“If thou hadst not my troth and oath
Here as thou standest thee I’d brain.”

Rosmer hied to the hill so fast,

As hind before the hart doth run;
And when he came within the hill
Behold proud Ellenlile was gone.

But Ellenlile took Roland's hand,
'Midst sport and jest away they hied;
To young Roland she told her tale,
And Roland served her as a guide.

When Rosmer saw his love was gone,
So full was he of grief and dool,
He turned him into a huge grey rock,
And there he standeth like a fool.

Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.

Edition limited to Thirty copies.

by Houghton Mifflin & Co., for Clement Shorter.

***END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE
MERMAID'S PROPHECY***