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Title: Grimmer and Kamper, The End of Sivard Snarenswayne, and Other Ballads

Editor: Thomas James Wise Translator: George Borrow

Release date: October 6, 2008 [eBook #26792]

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GRIMMER AND KAMPER, THE END OF SIVARD SNARENSWAYNE, AND OTHER BALLADS ***

Transcribed from the 1913 Thomas J. Wise pamphlet by David Price, email ccx074@pglaf.org

GRIMMER AND KAMPER

THE END OF SIVARD SNARENSWAYNE AND OTHER BALLADS

GEORGE BORROW

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

1913

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GRIMMER AND KAMPER

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Grimmer walks upon the floor, Well can Grimmer wield his sword: "Give to me fair Ingeborg, For the sake of Christ our Lord."

"Far too little art thou, lad,
Thou about thee canst not hack;
When thou comest 'mong other kemps,
Ever do they drive thee back."

"Not so little, Sire, am I, I myself full well can guard; When I fight with kempions I Gallantly can ply my sword."

"Kamper dwells in Birting's land, For a stalwart kemp he's known; Thou shalt wed my daughter, if Thou to earth canst hew him down."

Rage and grief his bosom filled, Grimmer through the door retires: "What answer did my father give?" Beauteous Ingeborg inquires.

"Kamper dwells in Birting's land, And he bears a warlike name; If I him to death can smite, I may thee with honour claim."

Answered him the fair young maid: "Ah! my father seeks thy death, Kamper for thee is far too strong, He will work thee rueful scathe.

"But I'll lend a helm to thee, Thou may'st trust upon in fight; And an acton I'll provide, Whereupon no sword will bite.

"I'll give thee a faulchion good,
And a harness on to put;
On earth's ground no sword is found
Through that harness which can cut.

"I will give to thee a sword In thy youthful hand to bear; Thou therewith mayst iron cleave, E'en as though it water were."

Kamper stands on Birtingsborough, Thence so far he sees and wide: "What can be that little wreck Hitherward that seems to glide?"

It was little Grimmer bold
Steered his vessel straight to land;
'Twas the bulky Kamper then
Tow'rds him stretched a friendly hand.

"Welcome, little Grimmer, be! Here no harm thou hast to fear; Half my land I'll give to thee, And my sister's daughter dear."

"Ne'er will I that Ingeborg, My beloved, should hear such shame, That I thy sister's daughter took, And thy friend that I became.

"But we'll go to Vimming's hill, And do battle, as is fit; One of us his life shall lose, Ere the ring of death we quit."

Thereto answered Kamper bold, He had such an eager hand: "I'll the first blow have, forsooth, 'Tis on my own earth we stand."

The first blow big Kamper struck, Given 'twas with wrathful yell; He so hard has Grimmer struck, Down to earth young Grimmer fell.

Upstood little Grimmer then Quickly little Grimmer rose: "Thou shalt also stand me one, Ere the sun sinks to repose."

The next blow was Glimmer's own,
Fierce he hewed with his right hand;
He hewed on Kamper's golden helm,
To his heart down went the brand.

Kamper bellowed as he fell, Dead upon the earth so hard: "Would to God that of my case Knew my brother Rodengard!"

Joyous little Grimmer was,
That the fight to end had come;
Gold and silver much he took,
To the maid he bore it home.

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Blood forth streaming from his wound
Lies the mighty Kamper dead;
Grimmer lives, the brave young swain,
Carries off his gold so red.

When he had the victory won,
Little space he tarried there;
Joyous sailed his men away,
Joyous with their booty fair.

Standing on the battlement,

Standing on the battlement,
Looks the Damsel towards the strand:
"Yonder I my youth espy,
See his vessel touch the strand."

Thanks to brave young Grimmer be, For his faith he kept so well; On next Monday morn, at dawn, Grimmer's bridal feast befell.

MIMMERING TAN

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The smallest man was Mimmering E'er born in the land of Carl the King.

And ere he into the world was brought His clothes already were for him wrought.

Ere yet he could walk across the floor, A ponderous iron cuirass he bore.

And ere he had learnt to ride, to ride, His father's sword to his hip he tied.

The first time he his sword could bear A better knight breathed not the air.

So down he went to the salt sea strand, As the merchants lay before the land.

He saw then, under the steep hill's side, A knight with sheeny armour ride.

Coursing came he at headlong speed, Grim as a lion was his steed.

"Now, gallant Sir Knight, to me attend, Wilt let me with thee as a shield boy wend?"

"Thou art too little and young, I fear, My heavy harness thou canst not bear."

At that word Mimmering wrathful grew, The Knight from his steed to earth he threw.

And much more harm to him was done, He smote his head against a stone.

He clomb on the saddle and rode away, He'll fain with other knights have a fray.

And when to the green wood he had won, There met he Vidrik Verlandson.

"Well met, well met, thou stalwart knight, Say, wilt thou for a fair maid fight?"

Then straightway Vidrik made reply: "I'll meet thee, dwarf, or no man am I."

They fought for a day, they fought for twain, Neither could from the other the victory gain.

So good stall-brothership vowed have they, Which should endure to the judgment day.

How should it endure that long time all? It could not last till evening-fall.

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THE END OF SIVARD SNARENSWAYNE

Young Sivard he his step-sire slew To avenge his mother's wrongs; And now to sport in the Monarch's court Young Sivard sorely longs.

It was Sivard Snarenswayne
To his mother's presence strode:
"Say, shall I ride from hence?" he cried,
"Or wend on foot my road?"

"O never shalt thou go on foot Whilst I've a horse in stall; I'll give thee the steed of matchless breed, Which courtiers Grayman call."

They led Grayman out of the stall, His reins were gilt about; His eyes were bright as the clear star-light, And fire from his bit sprang out.

Off Sivard throws his gloves, like snows The stripling's hands appeared; And with all his force he girded the horse, For to trust the groom he feared.

It was Sivard's mother dear,
In a kirtle red was clad:
"The horse I fear will cost thee dear,
And that fear makes me sad."

She followed him a long, long way,
Her heart was filled with woe:
"O take good heed of the Grayman steed,
He many a trick doth know!"

"Now list to me, my mother dear, Quick cast your care aside; To a son of worth thou hast given birth, Who his horse full well can ride."

Away they go, o'er bridges now, And now o'er brooks in flood; Clung so tight to his steed the knight That his boots were filled with blood.

The horse he hurried o'er the wold, Right past the crowded Ting; Then wildly gazed the folk, amazed That the horse he could so spring.

For fifteen nights and for fifteen days
The speed of their race endured;
Before them tall uprose a hall
With the gates all fast secured.

The Dane King stood on the battlement, And thence looked far and wide: "Some drunken peer is coming here, Who his horse full well can ride.

"O that is either a drunken peer, On courser good and keen; Or that, I swear, is my sister's heir, And in battle he has been."

The horse did spit from his mouth the bit, And, neighing, bounded high; Then maids and dames forsook their games And trembled fearfully.

Then maids and dames forsook their games, And shook their weeds below; To meet the boy, his sister's joy, The King of the Danes did go.

It was the mighty King of the Danes,

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And thus the King he cried:
"Ye archers, straight undo the gate,
And fling it open wide."

It was Sivard Snarenswayne,
Through the portal in rode he;
Then dames fifteen of beauteous mien
Before him bent their knee.

The Dane King to his merry men spake:
"I rede ye treat him fair;
I tell to ye for a verity
No jesting he will bear."

It was Sivard Snarenswayne,
He made his courser bound
Ten ells and more the ramparts o'er,
And thus his death he found.

From his gilded selle down Sivard fell, Snapped Grayman's back outright; Wept great and small in the Monarch's hall For the wizard steed and knight.

SIR GUNCELIN'S WEDDING

It was the Count Sir Guncelin, Who to his mother cried: "O I in quest of knightly fame Through foreign lands will ride."

"And if thou from the land wilt ride,
To help thee on thy way,
I give thee the steed, the wondrous steed,
The good steed Carl the grey.

"I'll give the steed for thy time of need, The good grey Carl, but know No spur of steel must grace thy heel, Nor helm be on thy brow.

"Never a warrior must thou heed, But straight thy path pursue, Till thou in fight engage the knight Whose name is Ivor Blue."

It was the Count Sir Guncelin,
By the green hill took his way;
There chanced he to meet little Tilventin,
And bade him promptly stay.

"Now welcome little Tilventin, And where hast thou passed the night?" "I have passed the night at Brattingsborg, Where from helms the fire they smite!"

It was the Count Sir Guncelin,
From under his red helm glared:
"Sir Tilventin it had better been
If that thou hadst never declared."

It was the Count Sir Guncelin, His sharp sword out he drew; It was little Tilventin, Whom he did to pieces hew.

He rode away unto Brattingsborg, On the door he struck with his spear: "Doth any warrior bide therein, Who will come and fight me here?"

It was the Knight Sir Ivor Blue, He turned to the West his eye: "Now help me Wolf and Asmer hawk, I hear a kemp's fierce cry." p. 18

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It was the Knight Sir Ivor Blue, He turned to the East his eye: "Now help me, Odin, for thou hast might, I hear Sir Guncelin's cry!"

It was the Count Sir Guncelin,
His helm o'er his white neck flung;
That sound in the ear of his mother dear
Through the dark night-time rung.

The Dame awoke at black midnight, And unto her Lord she cried: "Now deign, now deign, thou highest God, With my son in this fray to bide!"

The first course that together they rode, So strong were the knightly twain, Struck Guncelin Sir Ivor Blue, And stretched him on the plain.

"Now listen, Count Sir Guncelin, If thou'lt but let me live, My young and newly wedded bride, I unto thee will give."

"I will not take thy wedded bride Upon marriage stands my mind; Give me Salentia, sister thine, And my fate to her's I'll bind."

They rode away to the bridal feast, Withouten more ado; Of stalwart knights, and warrior wights, They invited the best they knew.

They invited Vidrik Verlandson, And Diderik, knight of Bern; They invited Olger the Daneman too, Who in battle is so stern.

They invited Silvard Snarenswayne, Who before the bride should ride; And thither came also Langben the Jutt, To sit at the Bridegroom's side.

They invited Master Hildebrand,
The bridal torch he carried;
And he was followed by Kempions twelve,
Deep drank they whilst they tarried,

And thither came Folker Spilleman, With his humour the kemps must bear; And thither came King Sigfrid Hoon, To his own pain and care.

Then came the proud Dame Grimhild, To prepare the bride for the hall; With iron she caused her feet to be shod, And her fingers with steel tipped all.

And thither came Dame Gunda Hetta,
'Mid the Norland hills her house;
And there doth she pass a right merry life,
With dance and with carouse.

Thither came likewise Dame Brynhild, She cut for the bride the meat, Her followed slender ladies seven, 'Midst the knights they took their seat.

They follow'd the bride to the chamber in. Of a luncheon slight to taste; And there she eat four tuns of pottage, Which pleased her palate best.

Then before her sixteen oxen-bodies, And eighteen swine disappear; And before her thirst she could assuage, She drank seven tuns of beer. p. 22

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So mighty the press of their garments was, As they led the bride to the hall, That they brushed down, ere they ushered her in, Full fifteen ells from the wall. They led the bride to the bride-bench up, And sat themselves down so light, That a bench of stone which they sat upon, Sank into the ground outright. They placed before her the very best food, p. 25 Nor did she the food decline; Fifteen oxen the sea-wife ate, And also ten fat swine. The bridegroom's eyes were upon her fixed, And at length surprised he grew: "Ne'er have I seen a youthful bride, To the dish such justice do." Up then sprang the Kempions all, And to one another did say: "Now, whether shall we cast the bar, Or fight in knightly way?" The warriors began to describe the round, Upon the verdant earth; For the honour and pride of the young sea-bride, Who should look on their deeds of worth. The young bride up from the bride-bench sprang, Two hands so weak had she; Towards her Langben the Giant leapt, Fine sport began to be. Then danced the table, then danced the bench, p. 26 And the sparks from the helms flew high; Out ran the valiant warriors all: "Dame Devil thou mak'st us fly!" Then there arose a mightier dance, From Ribe unto the Slee; The shortest warrior dancing had Fifteen ells beneath the knee. The shortest warrior in that dance, Was little Mimmering Tan; He was among that heathenish throng The only Christian man. **EPIGRAMS** p. 27

Honesty

No wonder honesty's a lasting article, Seeing that people seldom use a particle.

A Politician

He served his God in such a fashion As ne'er put Satan in a passion.

The Candle

For foolish pastimes oft, full oft, they thee ignite, I oft a pastime prove for tongues with folly rife; By wasting of thyself thou yieldest others light, And I in self same way must use my luckless life.

He ate, and drank, and slip-shod went, Was ever grieving and misgiving; For nothing fit, nor competent, At last not even fit for living.

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

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