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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE SONGS OF RANILD ***

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THE SONGS OF RANILD

BY
GEORGE BORROW

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1913

THE SONGS OF RANILD.

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SONG THE FIRST.

Up Riber's street the dance they ply,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
There dance the knights most merrily,
For young King Erik Erikson.

On Riber's bridge the dance it goes,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
There dance the knights in scollop'd shoes,
For young King Erik Erikson.

'Twas Riber Wolf the dance who led,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
In faith to his King he had been bred,
For young King Erik Erikson.

And next him danced the Tage Mouse,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
Who Seneschal was in Ribe house,
For young King Erik Erikson.

And then danced bold Sir Saltensee,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
Followed by wealthy kinsmen three,
For young King Erik Erikson.

The noble Limbekk dances next,

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The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
Whose power the King had often vexed,
For young King Erik Erikson.

After him danced the Byrge Green,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
Then many a knight of handsome mien,
For young King Erik Erikson.

And then came dancing Hanke Kann,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
His Lady followed, good Dame Ann,
For young King Erik Erikson.

The next that came was the Ridder Rank,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
His Lady behind him, Berggard Blank,
For young King Erik Erikson.

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And then the high Volravn came,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
His wife behind, who has no name,
For young King Erik Erikson.

And then came dancing Sir Iver Helt,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
Who followed his sovereign over the Belt,
For young King Erik Erikson.

Long stood the Ranild Lang apart,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
Ere he to join the dance had heart,
For young King Erik Erikson.

"And were it not for my lovely hair,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
In that brave dance I'd have a share,
For young King Erik Erikson.

"But for my cheeks so rosy red,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
The foremost in that dance I'd tread,"
For young King Erik Erikson.

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Then Ranild Lang to dance began,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
And a ditty sang as he led the van,
For young King Erik Erikson.

Sweet he warbled, light he sprang,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
After him every warrior sang,
For young King Erik Erikson.

Then up the Spindel Sko arose,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
And on Ranild Lang her troth bestows,
For young King Erik Erikson.

With silk was snooded her hair of gold,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
She danced before them free and bold,
For young King Erik Erikson.

And into the Castle they dance their way,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
With drawn swords 'neath their scarlet array.
For young King Erik Erikson.

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Never, I ween, was a braver dance,
The Castle's won, the Castle's won!
It wins the Castle of Rosenkrands,
For young King Erik Erikson.

SONG THE SECOND.

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To saddle his courser Ranild cried:
For thus the tale was told to me—
"To visit the rich Greve I will ride,
Though banish'd from the land we be."

To the house came Ranild spurring hard,
For thus the tale was told to me—
There stood the Greve arrayed in mard,
Though banish'd from the land we be.

"Hail, hail, Sir Greve, arrayed so fine!
For thus the tale was told to me—
I want my bride, the little Kirstine,
Though banish'd from the land I be."

Then up and spoke her mother dear:
For thus the tale was told to me—
"Thou hast no bride, Sir Ranild, here,
For banish'd from the land ye be."

"O if I can't my little bride get,
For thus the tale was told to me—
On fire your house and your gear I'll set,
Though banish'd from the land I be."

"O rather than ruin us in thy wrath,
For thus the tale was told to me—
Receive thy bride and ride thy path,
Though banish'd from the land ye be."

They o'er her threw the blue cloak with speed,
For thus the tale was told to me—
And placed her upon Sir Ranild's steed,
Though banish'd from the land he be.

They had for their bridal bed alone,
For thus the tale was told to ne—
The holt, the field, and the mead new mown,
For banish'd from the land they be.

"The forest can hear, and the mead can view,
For thus the tale was told to me—
We here must live as outlaws do,
For banish'd from the land we be."

"Hadst thou not helped the King to slay,
For thus the tale was told to me—
In peace at home we now might stay,
But banish'd from the land we be."

He struck her a blow the table o'er,
For thus the tale was told to me—
"Should'st guard thy tongue, child, guests before,
Though banish'd from the land we be."

He struck her on her face so fair:
For thus the tale was told to me—
"In Erik's death I had no share,
Though banished from the land I be."

SONG THE THIRD.

So wide around the tidings bound
That Ranild's prisoner taken;
Had he been aware how it would fare
He had not Hielm forsaken.
The death of woe, spaed long ago,
They'll wreak on him now, I reckon.

Into the hall steps Ranild tall,
And withouten trepidation;
Bids his Lord good bye, and the chivalry
Who have at court their station.
O, Lord Christ! be each man kept free
From misfortune and tribulation.

"In mind dost bear, King Erik dear,
On whom may blessings pour,
That service I wrought in your father's court,
Of all his swains the flower?
Both in and out I've borne you about
In sunshine and in shower."

"Yes, service you wrought in my father's court,

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For money and clothes imparted,
And betrayed his life to the foeman's knife,
Like a monster treacherous hearted.
And as sure as now the crown's on my brow,
To the wheel thou shalt be carted."

"Hew off, I intreat, my hands and feet,
Most willingly them I proffer;
My eyes blood red tear out of my head,
And the worst death let me suffer;
But all the pains that Ranild gains
For his treason scarce enough are."

"Thine eyeballs twain thou may'st retain,
And thy hands and feet unriven;
But thou thy breath shalt yield to a death
The cruellest under heaven;
And be it known, for my father alone
This punishment is given."

Ranild they brought from Roskild out,
He wrung his hands with sorrow;
And the women all salt tears let fall,
Who lived in that ancient borough.
The wretched wight wished all good night,
And a light heart on the morrow.

Ranild they bore the town before,
The wheel his sight saluted:
"Christ guard each noble from such like trouble,"
In agony he shouted,
"If at Hielm I'd staid it had better sped,
Nor to that had I been devoted.

"Would God would send a trusty friend,
Who would my message carry,
To Kirstine fair, who sits in care,
To Ranild true to tarry.
O Christ help all my babies small,
And bless my bosom's dearie!

"Ye Christian folk, whom, with dying look,
On the mead I am discerning,
A pater pray for my soul, to stay
Of God the anger burning;
That me He receive this very eve
To the joys for which I'm yearning."

CHILD STIG AND CHILD FINDAL

Child Stig and Child Findal two brothers were they,
There ne'er were two brothers more gallant and gay.

Child Stig serves the Dane King in bower and hall,
High dames brushed his hair, and fair maidens withal.

Child Stig by the board of the Monarch he stood,
To him little Kirstin was cruel of mood.

"Full seven years I have been Lord of the Rune,
Of its power I'll make trial this same afternoon."

With his right hand he skinked the wine and the mead
And cast with his left the Rune characters dread.

To cast them on Kirstin the gallant Stig meant,
But under the dress of Rigissa they went.

O pallid as ashes the gallant Stig grew,
And red as the blood was Rigissa to view.

The gallant Child Stig placed his cap on his head,
And unto his foster dame's chamber he sped.

"Dear Foster dame, give me some counsel, I pray,
How I may escape from this palace away.

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"To cast the Rune letters at Kirstin I meant,
But under the dress of Rigissa they went.

"I will mount my good courser so true and so tried,
And away to the ends of the earth I will ride."

Said she: "Shouldst thou travel all Finland around,
This night at thy couch will Rigissa be found.

"And e'en shouldst thou ride to the earth's farthest land,
This night by thy couch she will certainly stand.

"But, Child Stig, I advise thee, call up a good heart,
And home to thy bed and thy slumbers depart.

"She'll tap on the door of thy chamber, I ween,
But still do thou keep, let her in by no mean.

"But ten fingers has she, so tiny and small,
And with them from the door she will pick the nails all.

"She will set herself down on the side of thy bed,
And play with the long yellow locks of thy head.

"So fondly she'll stroke thy fair cheek in the dark,
But do thou remain as thou wert stiff and stark.

"She'll kiss thee full oft on thy lips rosy red,
But do thou lie still as were life from thee fled."

Child Stig he gave ear to his foster dame's rede,
And away to his bed he betook him with speed.

'Twas late in the even, and down fell the dew,
Rigissa flung o'er her her mantle of blue.

The lovely maid she her blue mantle put on,
And unto the chamber of Stig she is gone.

On the door of the chamber begins she to knock:
"Arise, O Child Stig, and thy chamber unlock."

"At the Ting to appear, I have summoned no wight,
And none I'll admit to my chamber at night."

She's fingers, ten fingers, so tiny and small,
And out of the door she has picked the nails all.

Fifteen iron nails, and a big stud of brass,
Then into the chamber Rigissa could pass.

She sat herself down by the side of the bed,
And played with the locks of the young gallant's head.

She kissed him full oft on his mouth rosy red,
But still he remained as were life from him fled.

In her arms the young Stig she so fondly did press,
But quiet he lay nor returned her caress.

Child Stig he awoke, and cast up his eyes:
"Who wakes me from sleep in this manner?" he cries.

"If I cannot, Rigissa, my rest for thee take,
To the Dane King, thy brother, complaint I will make."

"O thou may'st complain if thou feelest inclin'd,
But thou art the man on whom standeth my mind."

The very next morning ere high was the sun,
Child Stig to complain to the Dane King is gone.

"Dear Lord, I have this to complain of to thee,
For thy sister at night I at rest cannot be."

The King in displeasure his footboy address'd:
"To come to my presence my sister request."

Rigissa came in, 'fore the table stood she:
"What mean'st thou, O brother, by sending for me?"

"O here is a knight doth complaint of thee make,
He cannot at night his repose for thee take."

"It is but God's truth that his chamber I sought,

But nothing unseemly betwixt us was wrought.

“Steel, glowing steel, I will bear on my hand,
And of crime with Child Stig I acquitted will stand.”

Long stood the Dane King, full of thought was his head:
“With no better man I my sister can wed.”

All hearts in the Dane King’s palace were gay,
The Dane King has given his sister away.

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There was pleasure and smiling in every look,
For his beloved Lady Child Stig the maid took.

Child Stig he brews ale, and the wine doth prepare,
He the Dane King invites to his castle so fair.

The King and his gallant men all biddeth he,
And the Queen of the Danes of the party should be.

Outspake the fair Queen, on her steed as she rode:
“Methinks I behold of Child Stig the abode.”

And thereto the page at her bridle replied:
“Of Stig the brave castle is known far and wide.

“Within with the richest of gold it is graced,
Without with white silver ’tis all over cased.”

And, lo, when the gate of the castle they gained,
Five shaggy white bears stood before it enchained.

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And when in procession they entered the court,
Within it the hart and the roebuck did sport.

In the midst of the court was a silver trough long,
Of birds and of animals round it a throng.

Above spread the poplar and linden their shade,
In its coolness the hart and the little hind played.

An apartment they entered, full lofty and fair,
Was crowded with women so courtly of air.

All of red amber composed was the floor,
The roof with gilt letters was written all o’er.

The table it was of the red shining gold
The napkin of Agerwool rare to behold.

The walls were constructed of fair marble stone,
The beams of the roof of the whitest whale bone.

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On the floor they are dancing with rapture so high,
Tall, slender, and stately Sir Stig dances by.

Straight and slim as a sapling Child Stig dances up,
In each hand holding a fair silver cup.

Child Stig to the health of his bonny bride quaffed,
And forest and meadow delightedly laughed.

The forest it bloomed, the boughs leaves put forth—
She excels every damsel in beauty and worth.

Late in the evening the mist it descends,
Child Stig his young bride to her chamber attends.

Now gallant Child Stig has o’ercome his distress,
He sleeps in the arm of a lovely princess.

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And Damsel Rigissa is free from her fright,
By the side of Child Stig she reposes each night.

LONDON:

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