

**THE STORY AND
SONG OF BLACK
RODERICK**

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The Story and Song of Black Roderick by Dora Sigerson

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DORA SIGERSON

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SONG OF BLACK
RODERICK**

THE STORY AND SONG OF
BLACK RODERICK

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

VERSES

**THE FAIRY CHANGELING, AND
OTHER POEMS**

**MY LADY'S SLIPPER, AND OTHER
POEMS**

BALLADS AND POEMS

THE FATHER CONFESSOR

**THE WOMAN WHO WENT TO
HELL**

AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARD

THE COUNTRY-HOUSE PARTY

THE STORY AND SONG
OF BLACK RODERICK
BY DORA SIGERSON *Sigs*

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THE STORY AND SONG OF BLACK RODERICK

THIS is the story of Black Earl Roderick, the story and the song of his pride and of his humbling ; of the bitterness of his heart, and of the love that came to it at last ; of his threatened destruction, and the strange and wonderful way of his salvation.

So shall I begin and tell.

He left his gray castle at the dawn of the morning, and with many a knight to bear him company rode, not eager and swift, like a prince who went to find a treasure, but steady and slow, as we should go to meet sorrow. Not one of the hundred men who followed dared to lilt a lay or fling a laugh-

2 THE STORY AND SONG OF

ing jest from his mouth. All rode silent amongst their gay trappings, for so saith a song:

*It was the Black Earl Roderick
Who rode towards the south;
The frown was heavy on his brow,
The sneer upon his mouth.*

*Behind him rode a hundred men
All gay with plume and spear;
But not a one did lilt a song
His weary way to cheer.*

*So stern was Black Earl Roderick
Upon his wedding-day,
To none he spake a single word
Who met him on his way.*

And of those that passed him as he went there were none who dared to bid him God-speed, and only one whispered at all; she was Mora of the Knowledge, who was picking herbs in a lonely place and saw him ride.

'There goeth the hunter,' said she; 'tis a white doe that thou wouldst kill. High

hanging to thee, my lord, upon a windy day!

And of all the flying things he met in his going, one only dared to put pain upon him, and she was a honey-bee who stabbed his cheek with her sword.

'Would I could slay thee,' she cried, 'ere thou rob the hive of its honey!'

And of all the creeping things that passed him on his way only one tried to stay him; she was the bramble who cast her thorn across his path so his steed well-nigh stumbled.

'Would I could make thee fall, Black Earl, who now art so high, ere thou rob fruit from the branch!'

Only one living thing upon the mountains saw him go without mourning, and he was the red weasel who took the world as he found it.

'Tears will not heal a wound,' saith he, 'but they will quench a fire. Thy hive is in danger, bee,' quoth he. 'Bramble, thy flowers are scattered and thy fruit lost.'