"Speak! speak I thou fearful guest
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrest not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?"

"But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

"Many a viarsail-bout
Wore the long Winter out;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
Filled to over-flowing.

"Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

"I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frighted.

"Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chanting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.
"While the brown ale he quaffed, 
Loud then the champion laughed, 
And as the wind-gusts swept 
The sea-foam brightly, 
So the loud laugh of scorn, 
Out of those lips unshorn, 
From the deep drinking-horn 
Blow the foam lightly.

"She was a Prince's child, 
I but a Viking wild, 
And though she blushed and smiled, 
I was discarded! 
Should not the dove so white 
Follow the sea-men's flight, 
Why did they leave that night 
Her nest unguarded?

"Scarce had I put to sea, 
Bearing the maid with me, 
Fairest of all was she 
Among the Horsemen! 
When on the white sea-strand, 
Waving his armed hand, 
Saw we old Hildebrand, 
With twenty horsemen.

"Then launched they to the blast, 
Bent like a reed each mast, 
Yet we were gaining fast, 
When the wind failed us; 
And with a sudden flaw 
Came round the gusty Skaw, 
So that our foe we saw 
Laugh as he hailed us.

"And as to catch the gale 
Round veered the flapping sail, 
Death I was the helmsman's hail, 
Death without quarter! 
Mid-ships with iron keel 
Struck we her ribs of steel 
Down her black hulk did reel 
Through the black water!

"As with his wings aslant, 
Sails the fierce cormorant, 
Seeking some rocky haunt 
With his prey laden, 
So toward the open main, 
Beating to sea again, 
Through the wild hurricane, 
Bore I the maiden.

"Three weeks we westward bore, 
And when the storm was o'er, 
Cloud-like we saw the shore 
Stretching to leeward; 
There for my lady's bower 
Built I the lofty tower, 
Which, to this very hour, 
Stands looking seaward.

"There lived we many years; 
Time dried the maiden's tears 
She had forgot her fears, 
She was a mother. 
Death closed her mild blue eyes, 
Under that tower she lies; 
Ne'er shall the sun arise 
On such another!

"Still grew my bosom then, 
Still as a stagnant fen! 
Hateful to me were men, 
The sunlight hateful! 
In the vast forest here, 
Clad in my warlike gear, 
Fell I upon my spear, 
O, death was grateful!

"Thus, seamed with many scars, 
Bursting these prison bars, 
Up to its native stars 
My soul ascended! 
These from the flowing bowl 
Deep drinks the warrior's soul, 
Skoal! to the Northland! skoal!" 
Thus the tale ended.