William Morris (1834-96)

2 The Sailing of the Sword

| Across the empty garden-beds, | |
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| When the Sword went out to sea, | |
| I scarcely saw my sisters' heads | |
| Bowed each beside a tree. | |
| I could not see the castle leads, | 5 |
| When the Sword went out to sea, | |
| Alicia wore a scarlet gown, | |
| When the Sword went out to sea, | |
| But Ursula's was russet brown: | |
| For the mist we could not see | 10 |
| The scarlet roofs of the good town, | |
| When the Sword went out to sea. | |
| Green holly in Alicia's hand, | |
| When the Sword went out to sea; | |
| With sere oak-leaves did Ursula stand; | 15 |
| O! yet alas for me! | |
| I did but bear a peel'd white wand, | |
| When the Sword went out to sea. | |
| O, russet brown and scarlet bright, | |
| When the Sword went out to sea, | 20 |
| My sisters wore; I wore but white: | |
| Red, brown, and white, are three; | |
| Three damozels; each had a knight, | |
| When the Sword went out to sea. | |
| Sir Robert shouted loud, and said: | 25 |
| When the Sword went out to sea, | |
| Alicia, while I see thy head, | |
| What shall I bring for thee? | |
| O, my sweet Lord, a ruby red: | |
| The Sword went out to sea. | 30 |
| Sir Miles said, while the sails hung down, | |
| When the Sword went out to sea, | |
| O, Ursula! while I see the town, | |
| ,, | |

| What shall I bring for thee? Dear knight, bring back a falcon brown: The Sword went out to sea. | 35 |
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| But my Roland, no word he said When the Sword went out to sea, But only turn'd away his head; A quick shriek came from me: Come back, dear lord, to your white maid. The Sword went out to sea. | 40 |
| The hot sun bit the garden-beds When the Sword came back from sea; Beneath an apple-tree our heads Stretched out toward the sea; Grey gleam'd the thirsty castle-leads, When the Sword came back from sea. | 45 |
| Lord Robert brought a ruby red, When the Sword came back from sea; He kissed Alicia on the head: I am come back to thee; 'Tis time, sweet love, that we were wed, Now the Sword is back from sea! | 50 |
| Sir Miles he bore a falcon brown, When the Sword came back from sea; His arms went round tall Ursula's gown: What joy, O love, but thee? Let us be wed in the good town, Now the Sword is back from sea! | 5560 |
| My heart grew sick, no more afraid, When the Sword came back from sea; Upon the deck a tall white maid Sat on Lord Roland's knee; His chin was press'd upon her head, When the Sword came back from sea! | 65 |

1858

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