

where the ferry crossed the water, sight and sound combined to startle if not to terrify them; for out from behind a pile of rocks there sprang a wild, weird woman, who with waving arms and frantic shouts motioned them to go back. In an instant the whole cavalcade was in confusion. The horses reared and plunged, the men shouted and demanded who was there, and all the while the weird figure, whose tattered garments fluttered fantastically in the wind, waved her skinny arms wildly, and shouted, "Go back!"

Thinking that the woman might have some news of importance to the king, some of the retainers spurred forward and interrogated her; but she would say them nothing but "Go back"; adding at last "For the king alone—for the king alone!" Judging that she might desire to warn him of some treachery, even among his followers, the king rode forward and spoke to her, when, waving her hands towards the water, she screamed, "If once you cross that water, you will never return alive!" The king asked for news; the old witch was not a chronicler, but a prophetess, and catching at the king's rein she sought to turn him back.

By this time the retinue had closed in upon the singular pair, and the queen's anxiety doubtless stimulated the king's action. Shaking from his rein the woman's hand, he cried, "Forward!" and in a few moments the party had left the stormy land for the scarce more stormy sea.