

George Meredith (1828-1909)

3 *Beauty Rohtraut*

(Translation from the German of Möricke)

What is the name of King Ringang's daughter?
Rohtraut, Beauty Rohtraut!
And what does she do the livelong day,
Since she dare not knit and spin alway?
O hunting and fishing is ever her play! 5
And, heigh! that her huntsman I might be!
I'd hunt and fish right merrily!
Be silent, heart!

And it chanced that, after this some time, —
Rohtraut, Beauty Rohtraut, — 10
The boy in the Castle has gained access,
And a horse he has got and a huntsman's dress,
To hunt and to fish with the merry Princess;
And, O! that a king's son I might be!
Beauty Rohtraut I love so tenderly. 15
Hush! hush! my heart.

Under a grey old oak they sat,
Beauty, Beauty Rohtraut!
She laughs: 'Why look you so slyly at me?
If you have heart enough, come, kiss me.' 20
Cried the breathless boy, 'kiss thee?'
But he thinks, kind fortune has favoured my youth;
And thrice he has kissed Beauty Rohtraut's mouth.
Down! down! mad heart.

Then slowly and silently they rode home, — 25
Rohtraut, Beauty Rohtraut!
The boy was lost in his delight:
'And, wert thou Empress this very night,
I would not heed or feel the blight;
Ye thousand leaves of the wild wood wist 30

How Beauty Rohtraut's mouth I kiss'd.
Hush! hush! wild heart.'

1850

(From *The Poetical Works of George Meredith*. With Some
Notes by G. M. Trevelyan. New York: Charles Scribner's
Sons, 1912)